



**Department of Political Science**  
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**Chair of *COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS***

***Power to the New Left!***  
***The First Ulivo government experience***  
***(1996-1998) in the framework of the Second***  
***Republic***

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## **Introduction**

The Ulivo Republic only lasts two years, from 1996 to 1998. It develops in a period characterized by the uncertainties of a weak system that is trying to leave the structured First Republic to enter in the Second one, which is still shaping itself. The collapse of communism, the vanishing XX century ideologies, the dissolution of the Parties' Republic, globalization, a slowing down economic growth, unemployment, public debt, distrust towards politics, institutional instability are all elements that fuel Italian fragility.

These nineties' structural changes seem to question the Italian ability to respond to present and future challenges. Moreover, the crisis of the representative democracy becomes evident in the newly emerged bipolar system. This crisis leads the nation towards new scenarios, albeit without a unitary project or a constituent agreement, as instead had been the case at the beginning of the Italian Republic.

Severe economic measures, capable of remedying to past mistakes, become necessary to face the declining large-scale industry and the huge debt in public finances.

By the moment of facing those challenges, the Italian system was already fragile.

In this context, the Italian liberal and conservative factions entrust the entrepreneur Silvio Berlusconi, whose role and ambitions had marked the transitional phase of the country, embodying something bigger than his sole personal capacities. His victory was the result of the Right wing's reaction to those parties that had founded the Republic, of an anti-communist push that outlasted communism itself, and of a neo-liberal ideology hegemonizing the West since the eighties. The "Cavaliere" has represented the individualist response to the globalization challenges, being the first to govern the new bipolar system.

The ability of the left of facing those new challenges is questioned, being it divided between the research of a new post-communist identity and the ambition to govern. The Democratic party of the left (Pds), the leftist leading

party, arrived unprepared at the '94 elections and disastrously failed against the social-political block led by Berlusconi. The latter, in fact, had well interpreted the ongoing changes.

The resulting debate within the party sees the contraposition of two different ways of interpreting the future. On one hand, the social-democratic aspiration towards a European mass party, on the other hand, the conception of a more modern party based on the U.S. model.

This contraposition is destined to last for more than a decade and seems to provide an answer to what is Left in the new millennium. In the middle of the nineties, in fact, the outdated obligation to the class struggle started to be replaced by a new left, undoubtedly softer and more liberal, opposed by a minoritarian and antagonist radical left. This identity crisis, dating back to the dissolution of the Italian communist party (Pci), has never abandoned the progressist front.

Even the "centre" is subjected to a restructuring. The Christian democracy (Dc), heavily hit by investigations and modernization, proves unable to face the renovating challenges and it is forced to disband. The catholic world tears apart and the consequent diaspora allows the single Catholic to align according to its preferences, thereby relegating to the past the myth of the political cohesion of the catholic block. The religious voting commitment wanes, and the single individual chooses autonomously on the basis of his own political idea, moving either towards the left or towards the right. Even the Church modifies its attitude towards the political and social reality, in Italy and elsewhere. On the basis of the evaluation of the rampant undergoing changes, it aims at launching a new evangelization process to be opposed to the global disorder. That peculiar relationship between the Church and the State, that had for years influenced the political debate, is downsized.

The democratic left looks for a middle ground with the post-marxist and post-socialist representatives. The Dossetti's heirs aspire to a common political evaluation, based on the idea that the two worlds might meet each other in their solidaristic nature and the effort to understand reality. The democratic Catholicism therefore tries to combine different realities in a common arena.

The end of their political unity, albeit already visible since 1976 (when the catholic candidates were registered as independent in Pci list), allows for a more structural connection between the two cultural realms, or at least for an attempt. At the same time, the left opens the debate on how to widen its borders to include catholic reformism. It is exactly in this discussion that the Ulivo takes shape, as the destination of diverse cultures. It simultaneously represents the point of departure for a long-term project, whose main representative will be Romano Prodi. For the first time in Italian history, the political pole inspired by the social catholicism join the forces with the post-communist left creating an alternative, politically and programmatically, to the neo-liberal right.

The Ulivo manages to be a symbol of something bigger than a mere coalition of diverse parties; nonetheless, it has to deal with difficulties proper of that historical moment: among the others, a system that is bipolar, but not bipartisan. The debate on the shape and development of the party that had characterized the Left, is soon transposed on the Ulivo, divided among the divergent opinions about the prospects to give to the coalition. The cohabitation, already delicate, begins to crumble. The myth of the political unity of the catholics is replaced by the political unity of the center-left.

The nineties' Italy urged a radical change. The local movements, especially in the south, demand a national reform towards federalism and the citizens want to legitimize the government through the popular vote, somehow overcoming the traditional parliamentary democracy. The entire period is marked by individualistic fragmentation, where the Thatcherian idea of a non-existing society, made up only of individuals, both men and women, becomes a new myth. Individuals are less inclined towards the fight to "change the world" and more prone to make individualistic decisions. On the pure political arena, these behaviors are translated into the personalization of politics, with Berlusconi being the leading example. Plebiscitarian democracy, intended to last, manages to contaminate also the center-left.

It is no coincidence that the recent secretaries of the Democratic party, successor of the Ulivo experience, have been directly elected with primary

elections open to the citizens. Similarly, it is no coincidence that three out of the four elected secretaries were simultaneously mayor or regional presidents: evidence of a double popular legitimization.

The Ulivo represents the intuition that has to confront with all the above-mentioned challenges. It expressed the desire to move the state towards a federal reform, to change the form of government in order to empower the executive and the importance of balancing the public account to guarantee the entrance in the monetary Union. The center-left attempt at providing a concrete political response to the uncertainties of the Republic materializes in the Ulivo experience. The present research tries to shed light on the real nature of the coalition: his origins, the inherent problems, the meaning and legacy of its progressivism as well as its weaknesses.

## Literature Review

The evaluation of a significant political event might be divided in three types of judgment. The first, the more immediate one, is of electoral nature and concerns the electoral preferences. The second constitutes instead an initial scientific analysis that, usually, is carried out by political analysts and it often starts on the electoral data. The third judgment is that of the historians and it determines the overall evaluation of a phenomena in light of the time passing and the national and international evolution.

In order to better reconstruct the object of the present work, to analyze its historical events and to draw up conclusions, the sources have been divided. Starting with the monographies, I proceeded with an initial historiographic research of the available materials; considering the fact that the Ulivo is a too recent political experience for an extensive historic evaluation. Instead of an overall evaluation of the political phenomenon, it is more probable to find in-depth single-topic analysis (on economics, catholic world, left etc.).

Successively, I went on with the collection of the materials provided by political analysts, comprehensive of evaluations written in the years of the events under examination ('93-98). The following step was the analysis of the reports by the protagonists of those events, who wrote books in order to explain their political choices and articulate their reflections. This represents a collection of more personal materials, useful to understand the impressions of the single individuals. Together with the monographies, it was fundamental to collect articles of academic magazines of that period, depending on the topic and the political orientation. The reconstruction of the statements and the political news, instead, is based on the collection of articles taken from the newspapers dating back to the analyzed historical period.

Archival research assumes significant relevance for the present paper. Parliamentary and commissions meeting minutes, memorandum of the debates in congress and conferences' documents were essential for the development of the research. Latterly, I could personally interview some of



the protagonists of that period which proved fundamental in the conclusion of the work.

At the historiographical level, albeit being only at the beginning, there are some volumes that concern with the Italian economy of the nineties, the catholic diaspora and the problems to be faced by the Second Republic.

On the economic question for example, an interesting perspective on the difficulties of the Italian economy is provided by the volumes of Antonella Crescenzi (*La lepre e la tartaruga*, Castelvechi 2018) and Piero Craveri (*L'arte del non governo*, Marsilio 2016), together with Salvatore Rossi (*La politica economica italiana dal 1968 a oggi*, Laterza, 2007). Also Luciano Gallino, in his *La scomparsa dell'Italia industriale*, Einaudi 2003, retraces all the problems of the Italian industrial crisis, useful to understand the challenges in the period '93-98.

On the historic reconstruction of the nineties politics, instead, a group of catholic historians offer a relevant starting point to understand the crisis of politics and the hypothetical solutions. Agostino Giovagnoli (*La Repubblica degli italiani*, Laterza, 2016), for example, travels through the Italian history and manages to provide an interesting reading of the Ulivo period that briefly touches all the political questions of that period. Umberto Gentiloni Silveri (*Storia dell'Italia contemporanea 1943-2019*, il Mulino, 2019) insists on the limits of bipolarism and the weakness of the coalition. Daniela Saresella (*Cattolici a sinistra*, Laterza 2011) retraces the diaspora of the catholic movement, concentrating on that faction that moves towards the left. Paola Gaiotti de Biase (*Il potere logorato. La lunga fine della Dc. Cattolici e Sinistra*, Edizioni Associate, 1994) analyzes those divisions within the catholic world leading to the diaspora, while Pietro Scoppola (*La Repubblica dei partiti: evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico*, il Mulino, 1997; *La democrazia dei cristiani*, Laterza, 2005) illustrates the problem of the encounter between the leftist catholics and the post-marxists.

For what concerns the critique towards the ruling class of the Second Republic, relevant is the contribution by Simona Colarizi and Marco

Gervasoni (*La tela di Penelope. Storia della Seconda Repubblica* Laterza, 2012) who analyze all the ruling class of the Second Republic and its limits. The historical impact of Silvio Berlusconi on the center-left arena, instead, is studied by Paul Ginsborg and Enrica Asquer (*Berlusconismo, analisi di un sistema di potere*, Laterza 2012) and by Antonio Gibelli (*Berlusconi passato alla storia*, Donzelli, 2010). Additionally, important for the analysis over berlusconism are the volumes by Giovanni Orsina (*Il berlusconismo nella storia d'Italia*, Marsilio, 2013) and Emanuela Poli (*Forza Italia. Strutture, leadership e radicamento territoriale*, il Mulino, 2001). An accurate collection of essays about the history of those years can be found in the three volumes of *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, Carocci 2014. Moreover, many political scientists were intrigued by the Ulivo experience, in particular because of the internal debate over the form of the party-system. Piero Ignazi (*Il potere dei partiti*, Laterza, 2002; *Partiti politici in Italia. Da Forza Italia al Partito Democratico*, il Mulino, 2008; *Politica in Italia, edizione '95*, il Mulino, 1995) analyzes at length the structure of the parties, either the leftist or the rightist ones.

On the personalization of politics, very interesting is the work by Mauro Calise ( *Il partito personale: i due corpi del leader*, Laterza, 2000, *La terza Repubblica: partiti contro presidenti*, Laterza, 2006); while on the political parties, the pieces by Oreste Massari ( *I partiti politici nelle democrazie contemporanee*, Laterza, 2004) and Gianfranco Pasquino ( *Autopsia della Bicamerale*, *Politica in Italia*, 1999; *La transizione a parole*, il Mulino, 2009) underline the difficulties of the system's transformation. Furthermore, Roberto D'Alimonte analyzes the elections and the changes of the Italian politics (*Maggioritario ma non troppo*, il Mulino, 1995; *Politica in Italia 1997*, il Mulino, 1997), whereas the researches by Ilvo Diamanti are important to understand the electoral flows of that period as well as the new political subjects (*La Lega. Geografia, storia e sociologia di un nuovo soggetto politico*, Donzelli, 1995; *Mappe dell'Italia politica. Bianco, rosso, verde, azzurro e... tricolore*, il Mulino, 2009).

The present research needed an in-depth study based on the politicians' narratives, protagonists of those events. For example, the volumes published by Romano Prodi (*Missione incompiuta*, Laterza, 2015; *Insieme*, San Paolo, 2005), Massimo D'Alema (*Controcorrente*, Laterza 2013; *Un Paese normale*, Mondadori, 1995), Iginio Ariemma (*La casa brucia*, Marsilio, 2000), Gerardo Bianco (*La paravola dell'Ulivo*, Rubbettino, 2012) as well as the journalistic elaborations by Marco Damilano (*Chi ha sbagliato più forte*, Laterza 2013) and Bruno Vespa (*Storia d'Italia da Mussolini a Berlusconi*, Mondadori, 2005) were extremely useful in collecting the details necessary for the research. In particular, the former MP Andrea Colasio (*Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, il Mulino, 2018) provided for a valuable reconstruction of the organizational structure represented by the "Comitati per l'Ulivo" (The Committees for the Ulivo).

As regards the magazines, I consulted essays collected over years in "Micromega" for a comment on the governmental left; "il Mulino"; "Critica Marxista" for the more leftist wing of the coalition; "Civiltà Cattolica"; "Appunti di cultura e politica"; "Polis", and various editions of "Politica in Italia". Every article expressed a different opinion on the heterogenous world of the center-left.

For what concerns the newspapers, useful to trace the chronicle of those years, I mainly consulted the newspapers of reference for the center-left coalition, such as "la Repubblica", the "Corriere della Sera", "la Stampa" and "l'Unità", together with some articles extracted from the opposition press.

The analysis of the political and ideological positions as well as of the diverse operational choices was also made through archive materials. Essentials were the parliamentary acts of the Chamber of Deputies, the memorandums of the parliamentary commissions and the conferences' documents, to understand either the debates within the left or the ecclesial ones on the Church-society relationship. I also made use of audio-visual sources of registered conferences, especially on Radio Radicale, extremely useful to know both the political opinions at the moment and the reflections made in the following years.

To conclude, the research could evolve thanks to the essential contribution provided by the interviews I conducted to the former minister Giulio Santagata, for the catholic political world; to the Honorable Aldo Tortorella for the leftist wing of the Pds and to President Massimo D'Alema, one of the founding fathers of the Ulivo. The answers to the questions I posed them favored the formulation of the hypotheses of the present research.

## Chapter I

### **The genesis of a dream**

## ***1.1 The first steps***

We usually associate Romano Prodi as the leader of the winning political coalition in the 1996 national elections. He is a mild-mannered, determined, even-tempered man and an able mediator, he has no excellent communicative showman skills, but he is perfectly anchored to the highest values of the catholic social tradition. However, the Professor is not a politician to be underestimated, indeed, he adopts the marathon runner aspect: he is not necessarily able to convince the audience at a short distance, but tenaciously able to defeat his opponents in the long run, getting less tired of its contenders<sup>1</sup>: the government test. If we look at his first steps as the absolute protagonist of Italian politics in the mid-nineties, we can believe that he was a new man who came from far away to build a complicated, plural<sup>2</sup>, experimental, but equally new<sup>3</sup> political phenomenon, capable of overcoming the traditional political and parties' distinctions of Italian politics.<sup>4</sup> Also, we can see that his attempt to conquer power starting from central Italy<sup>5</sup>, his Bologna, with a movement or party establishment, allows him to respond to two different needs: defending the central role of Politics in order to avoid that the decision-making power falls in the hands of other institutions (legal<sup>6</sup>, economic<sup>7</sup>, financial and so on ...); and, at the same time, responding with a wave of "good anti-politics"<sup>8</sup> to the public opinion solicitations. The latter asks for a rhythm change regarding to the problems caused by an improper use of the parties' powers<sup>9</sup>. We do not intend an anti-politics as the institutions disintegration or disregard for them, but as an alternative form to the past

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<sup>1</sup> I. Montanelli, *La storia d'Italia. Dal governo Dini all'Ulivo*, Telemontecarlo, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> G. Brunelli, *Il pluralismo e la coerenza*, in "il Regno-attualità", 8, 1995, pp. 193-198.

<sup>3</sup> R. Lampugnani, *Il nome di Prodi scompiglia i giochi*, in "l'Unità", February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> M. Calise, *La Terza Repubblica, Partiti contro presidenti*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2006, pp. 81-98.

<sup>5</sup> M. Caprara, *La sfida di Prodi "partendo dal Centro"*, in "Corriere della Sera", February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> T. Maiolo, *La notte del garantismo*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2015, pp. 50 and on.

<sup>7</sup> L. Abete, *Partiti, ora basta*, in "Corriere della Sera", August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> G. Valentini, *Né con Bossi né con i partiti*, in "la Repubblica", October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> E. Galli della Loggia, *Il mito e la realtà della società civile*, in "Corriere della Sera", August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

ones, in hope of entering the new majoritarian system,<sup>10</sup> giving to Italy a unique large centre-left pole.<sup>11</sup> There is no doubt that the political season, inaugurated in the mid-nineties, meets all these needs. However, it is necessary to underline that Romano Prodi is not a new man in Italian politics<sup>12</sup>. Besides his experience as technical minister carried out for about nine months during the first republic, and his experience in the Reggio Emilia town council with the Christian democracy membership card, he is a person with a very high technical and political formation<sup>13</sup>. Having been pupil of Beniamino Andreatta<sup>14</sup>, an important man of the Italian institutions, Prodi has had responsible tasks at the Industrial Reconstruction Institute (Iri), making himself known in the political chronicles for his significant economic actions, and not always in common agreement with the various executives<sup>15</sup>. It is even more important the fact that his name is repeatedly analysed by the political forces in various moments of Italian post-cold war history and in the context of the institutional crisis that crossed the country at the beginning of the decade. He has been considered as the glue of a possible majority capable of uniting left-wing catholics and the post-communist social-democratic left. The Romano Prodi formation, in fact, has already been seen essential to define the man as the meeting point between two cultures, well before the personalistic aspect of the '96 electoral campaign, influenced by the new structure of the system<sup>16</sup>.

In 1993, Italy experiences the referendum victory promoted to introduce the parliamentary election with a majoritarian system<sup>17</sup>, and the country is preparing to the transition period from the First Republic blocked democracy,

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<sup>10</sup> M. Smargiassi, *La politica? Impegnarsi è un dovere*, in "la Repubblica", August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> D. Seresella, *Cattolici a Sinistra*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2011, pp.183 and on.

<sup>12</sup> C. Visani, *Prodi critica Berlusconi e annuncia: "Torno in politica"*, "l'Unità", August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> G. Gerosa, *Chi è Prodi*, in "Prodi", edited by A.Di Raimondo, Edizioni Prc, Roma, 1995, pp. 91-97.

<sup>14</sup> G. Bazoli, L. Elia, P. Giarda, V. Paglia, *Un riformatore solido e geniale*, Diabasis, Reggio Emilia, 2007, pp. 69-76.

<sup>15</sup> R. Prodi, M. Damilano, *Missione Incompiuta. Intervista su politica e democrazia*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2015, pp. 31-64.

<sup>16</sup> I. Diamanti, *Prefazione*, in *Principi del governo rappresentativo*, edited by B. Manin, il Mulino, Bologna, 2010, p. X.

<sup>17</sup> N. Tranfaglia, *La crisi della Repubblica. Il sistema politico e i partiti dell'ultimo decennio*, in *Almanacco della Repubblica*, edited by M. Ridolfi, Bruno Mondadori, Pavia, 2003, pp. 362-370.

where centrist forces are always ruling, to the alternation proper of bipolar system. The main goal is to bring the Italian parties' complex universe from pluralism to bipolarism, one right and one left, and in that way to try to define the perimeter of the political confrontation. It is the pure proportional system, which makes each party enjoy its representation in Parliament according to the percentage of votes, which was replaced by the Mattarellum law, named after its author Sergio Mattarella, which absorbs the clear signals of the referendum. The electoral system becomes, since the approval, majoritarian for 75% of the chairs and proportional for the remaining 25%,<sup>18</sup> expliciting bipolarism, typical principle of many western democracies<sup>19</sup>, but with the maintenance of a proportional residue in defence of the many and different political cultures of the nation.

The judicial earthquake which strikes a large number of parliamentarians<sup>20</sup>, combined with the opinions that the Italians expressed in April '93, push the Prime Minister of the time, the socialist Giuliano Amato, into a confrontation with the President of the Republic to confer a new government office or to dissolve the Chambers in advance<sup>21</sup>. In fact, Amato takes note of the situation<sup>22</sup> and makes a gesture of institutional sensitivity, by putting his mandate in the hands of President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. The Prime Minister's resignation opens a crisis that forces the parties of the constitutional framework into a close confrontation about the fate of the legislature, making them aware of the fact that an alternative parliamentary majority to the previous one can be found. The importance of this moment lies in the fact that, according to current legislation, the President of the Republic appoints the President of the Council of Ministers, but only the parliamentary majority, through a formal confidence vote can allow the exercise of his functions<sup>23</sup>. Somehow, in Italy the government and its political direction depend on

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<sup>18</sup> M. Palazzotto, *Come funziona il Mattarellum*, in "il Post", December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> M. Calise, *Il partito personale. I due corpi del leader*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2010, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> I. Ariemma, *La casa brucia. I Democratici di sinistra dal Pci ai giorni nostri*, Marisilio, Venezia, 2000, p.129.

<sup>21</sup> T. Martines, *Diritto Costituzionale*, Giuffrè, Milano, 2005, pp. 444-447.

<sup>22</sup> *Governo, Amato s'è dimesso*, in "La Stampa", April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1993.

<sup>23</sup> T. Martines, *Diritto Costituzionale*, cit., pp. 295-302.



Parliament: as long as there is a majority in its support, the executive will live. Otherwise, it cannot even be born. The situation is dramatic and the many political parties of the chambers, elected by proportional vote, are called to defend themselves from the operation of "Mani Pulite", the investigation that inspects them, their leaders and the refined corruption system, which has lasted for decades. Simultaneously, they have to perform their political-administrative tasks. It is a job carried out with more difficulties due to the bombs exploded by the organized crime, and because of the economic crisis and the general attack on democratic institutions<sup>24</sup> which Italy dramatically suffers<sup>25</sup>.

However, the transition is not just about the institutional system. The Pds (*Partito democratico della sinistra*), formerly the Italian communist party and heir of the workers' movement, is forced to deal continually with its own history<sup>26</sup> in an exhausting, never-completed search for its identity<sup>27</sup>. It tries to understand what to pass down from the ancient and fascinating communist tradition to the new family of the Italian left movement, which is a little bit social democratic, a little bit liberal, but anyway different from the previous one. Even the Christian democracy, which is dominant in this very moment, is engaged in a difficult transition. The national secretary at the time, Mino Martinazzoli, focuses on an extremely difficult attempt to drag his own ruling class towards a new form<sup>28</sup>, the Italian popular party (Ppi). The objective is no longer to be just a laic party of catholic matrix, like the Dc, but is to answer to new centrist and liberal needs, in a different context than the usual struggle with communism, meanwhile discharged, with the aim to have a role in the future Italian majority. The socialists are disappearing<sup>29</sup> faster and faster because of the investigations, while the other parties see their consensus

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<sup>24</sup> C. Guarnieri, *Giustizia e politica*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2003, pp. 156-189.

<sup>25</sup> G. Galli, *I partiti italiani 1943/2000*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2001, p. 385.

<sup>26</sup> P. Bellucci, M. Maraffi, P. Segatti, *Pci, Pds, Ds. La trasformazione dell'identità politica della sinistra di governo*, Donzelli, Roma, 2000, pp. 97-104.

<sup>27</sup> L. Cafagna, *La grande slavina. L'Italia verso la crisi della democrazia*, Marsilio, Venezia, 1993, pp. 151-157.

<sup>28</sup> G. Maestri, *I simboli della discordia. Normativa e decisioni sui contrassegni di partito*, Giuffrè editore, Roma, 2012, pp. 137-138.

<sup>29</sup> C. Pinto, *La fine di un partito. Il PSI dal 1992 al 1994*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1999, pp. 115 and on.

reduced in a country that demands renewal politics on every field. These same traditional families, divided between the struggle to survive and their own evolution, are called to respond to the country after the governmental resignation, trying to make an effort to find a balance in this institutional confusion. The Hon. Martinazzoli, an experienced politician and repeatedly minister, has to propose valid options for the configuration of a stable majority. This occasion opens the way for the very first intervention to the government by the progressive reformist forces, embodied in the Pds<sup>30</sup>. There are frequent contacts with Achille Occhetto, the national secretary who strongly wanted the transition from the Italian communist party to the Pds, going from “hammer and sickle” to “oak”, according to the different symbols of the two political parties. Among the many reasons for the "Turn" (la Svolta), there was that one aiming at giving to progressives the government test, abandoning the communist symbols that had for years guaranteed the socialist dream. The communist consensus was always vast, but never sufficient for the achievement of power, intended as a means for the realization of its ideal. The new left has, as its main objective, participation in an executive<sup>31</sup>, but it is obvious that changing name, however traumatic it is for its members, is not a sufficient condition to obtain the consent of those who had never seen favourably the communist traditions and its inheritance<sup>32</sup>. The Pds maintained the internal bureaucratic structures, real and personal property, even some symbols of the old Pci. It has lost its political weight and large slices of its programmatic platforms, but however met a certain diffidence and ambiguity in the country. One wonders whether the post-communists are really different from the communists<sup>33</sup>, considering that many of them belong to both categories and, in order to demonstrate internal and international reliability, the Pds political forces aspire to roles in the government. It is useless to specify that a large part of the progressive ruling

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<sup>30</sup> C. Petruccioli, *Rendiconto*, il Saggiatore, Milano, 2001, pp. 137-139.

<sup>31</sup> A. Caporale, *Il Pds va al governo, ma in punta di piedi*, in “la Repubblica”, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

<sup>32</sup> G. Crainz, *Il Paese reale. Dall’assassinio di Moro all’Italia di oggi*, Donzelli, Roma, 2012, pp. 163-183.

<sup>33</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *La Repubblica degli italiani (1946-2016)*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2016, p. 236.

class had a local government experience, assuming positions of mayor, councillor, President of the regional and provincial council, without having a danger of a revolution! Actually, they have no national government experience and, in this sense, they can be assisted by the just approved majoritarian electoral law, which supports bipolar system. Anyway, the possibility to form a unity government with the Catholics presents in 1993, through the entry of the Pds into the executive. There are those who see in this institutional passage the concrete possibility of realizing an historical compromise<sup>34</sup> in the berlinguerian perspective, almost fifteen years later, overcoming ancient obstacles. The close confrontation between the Dc and the Pds immediately meets obstacles, like the debate over whom should be the Prime Minister, in spite of the frequent contacts among the leaders of the party. Achille Occhetto wants to accept the renewal signals that arrive from public opinion and, favoured by the minor involvement of his party in judicial investigations, he proposes three alternative conditions: a support for a head government who is a man of the left, belonging to the same Pds; the premiership entrusted to a man of the institutions, which is not a party member; or Mariotto Segni<sup>35</sup> as head of government. He is a Christian democratic intellectual on a collision with his own party, welcomed by the Occhettian ruling class because of his positions in favour of the majoritarian, whose candidacy has no success in the DC. In particular, Martinazzoli himself asks that Segni should not be proposed as Premier<sup>36</sup> during the consultations with the Head of State, a choice considered inappropriate because of the split that Segni himself had with the leaders of his own party. The idea of an institutional bipartisan and absolutely neutral figure does not displease the Christian democrats, who immediately announce their opposition to any hypothesis of a government led by the Pds. Giorgio Napolitano, a very high level and long-standing figure, is the name that circulates in the corridors of

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<sup>34</sup> C. Baccetti, *I postdemocristiani*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2007, pp. 189-195.

<sup>35</sup> A. Occhetto, *La gioiosa macchina da guerra*, Editori Internazionali Riuniti, Roma, 2003, p. 75.

<sup>36</sup> M. D'Alema, *Controcorrente*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2013, p. 28.

Via delle Botteghe Oscure, and is particularly favoured by Occhetto. Napolitano, who is the President of the Chamber, can well represent that institutionality required by political forces, being a man of guarantee also within the same left party.<sup>37</sup> The Pds, in fact, is far from being a united bloc.<sup>38</sup> The various currents, exploded within the Pds, represent the contraposition to the typical “democratic centralism” of the former Italian communist party. Division reigns in many basic areas, from the role of the left in Italy and Europe to the maintenance of the communist heritage; from the incorporation of new political cultures (such as the environmentalist) to the movement towards the social democracy; from international politics to governability. Therefore: the leftist currents are far away from being united, and Giorgio Napolitano could be a person bringing together all the red leaders, even those reluctant to go to the government with the Christian democrats. Martinazzoli, however, excludes the Napolitano solution<sup>39</sup> and starts circulating names of others able to unify the different political cultures. It is in this context that the figure of Romano Prodi is proposed<sup>40</sup>, particularly appreciated also by the number two of the Pds, Massimo D’Alema. Prodi can be the bridge between the two political formations on which they could build a government of broad agreements (“governo di larghe intese”) to continue the legislature<sup>41</sup>. According to Martinazzoli, he is a man sufficiently new<sup>42</sup> to give a signal of renewal who, nevertheless, coming from the Catholic party, can guarantee that continuity to the heirs of Sturzo, in order to carry on the historical institutional control they have had since the dawn of the Republic. According to D’Alema and his area, Prodi, being of a catholic-social matrix, former scholar at the Catholic University of Milan and friend of Dossetti<sup>43</sup>, represents that world with which something more than a dialogue can be established: a

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<sup>37</sup> M. Segni, *La rivoluzione interrotta. Diario di quattro anni che hanno cambiato l'Italia*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1994, pp. 219-222.

<sup>38</sup> A. Occhetto, *La gioiosa macchina da guerra*, cit., p. 72.

<sup>39</sup> M. D’Alema, *Controcorrente*, cit., p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> I. Ariemma, *La casa brucia*, cit., p. 120.

<sup>41</sup> M. Martinazzoli, A. Valle, *Uno strano democristiano*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2009, pp. 150-151.

<sup>42</sup> M. D’Alema, *Controcorrente*, cit., p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> F. Prodi, R. Prodi, *Insieme*, cit., p. 127.

general government agreement with Pds ministers in various departments<sup>44</sup>. It is an opportunity to give continuity to the legislature, to free the post-communists from the government exclusion cage and to demonstrate to the country and to the western political world that the Catholic universe and the laic social-democratic world can live together under one political roof. This is considered possible in a new era that left behind the division represented by the Berlin wall. But there is more than that. D'Alema is a careful scholar of Italian politics and population, and realizes that the "Mani Pulite" blows are creating something absolutely new on the western political scene. The entire ruling class is continually attacked and, step by step, it is unstructured, not by physiological changing processes but, on the contrary, by the imposing activity of the judiciary. Wearing out the political parties through the activity of the judiciary means undermining the realities that gave birth to Italian democratic institutions. Delegitimizing them poses a risk to create a dangerous vacuum in the political life of the country<sup>45</sup>. This may create a domino effect capable of leading Italy into chaos, losing the institutional heritage and leaving citizens in the uncertainty of their future. The parties' conduct has sometimes been disputable, but they have contributed to create the country as it is known. For better or for worse, they have performed an essential function for the creation and maintenance of the Italian democratic system, therefore their weakening weakens Italy itself<sup>46</sup>. Acknowledging all the above, also means to focus on a premiership that could be the expression of those parties and not on a single man who, however authoritative, comes from other institutions not used to delineate the political direction of the whole country<sup>47</sup>. This is the reason why a part of the Pds members pushes for a sufficiently political name, as Romano Prodi, standing between the renovating need and a party appointment. Among the various profiles that are

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<sup>44</sup> N. Augias, A. Covotta, *I cattolici e l'Ulivo: sfogliando la Margherita*, Donzelli, Roma, 2005, pp. 13 and on.

<sup>45</sup> M. Cotta, P. Isernia, *Il gigante dai piedi d'argilla. La crisi del regime partitico in Italia*, il Mulino, Bologna, 1996, pp. 411 and on.

<sup>46</sup> Massimo D'Alema, *Controcorrente*, cit., p. 22.

<sup>47</sup> I. Ariemma, *La casa brucia*, cit., p. 118.

outlined, there is also the name of the Governor of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, who seems to be very close to President Scalfaro, with whom he maintains a close and continuous discussion concerning all the main problems of the country<sup>48</sup>. D'Alema opposes with valid political reasons to the hypothesis of giving the government to a technician, an absolutely new experience and a never practiced path for the Republic. D'Alema does not see Ciampi as less competent (D'Alema himself will support him as President of Republic and Treasury Minister<sup>49</sup>) but he thinks that the latter's executive may weaken the Parliament and its political force. Hence, the decision by that Pds faction not to support Ciampi's appointment. The concern regards the shift of the decision-making centre. In particular, allowing the Presidency of the Republic to appoint a prime minister without evident political collocation means to legitimize a choice that, even if perfectly fitting in the constitutional parameters, is beyond the limits of the institutional practice established so far. It is no coincidence that, before then, the only example of technical political power of the Prime Minister was that of the Badoglio government during World War II.<sup>50</sup> Ciampi is not certainly an army general, but neither is a politician expressed by popular will.

Professor Romano Prodi calls frequently the political leaders and the President of the Republic, who waits for the development of negotiations between Rome and Bologna in a chaotic 1993. Even Segni is willing to accept the role of vice-premier in a Prodi's government supported by Dc and Pds<sup>51</sup>. In the end, Achille Occhetto refuses to support a new government headed by Dc and proposes other names to President Scalfaro during their consultations at the Quirinale; meanwhile Ciampi receives the assignment with a famous "it's your turn",<sup>52</sup> carrying out a transitional government without any Pds

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<sup>48</sup> U. Gentiloni Silveri, *Tra vincolo esterno e coesione nazionale. La parabola del governo Ciampi nelle riflessioni e nelle carte del presidente*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, Carocci, Roma, 2014, pp. 389-397.

<sup>49</sup> U. Gentiloni Silveri, *Contro scettici e disfattisti. Gli anni di Ciampi 1992-2006*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2012, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup> C. Petruccioli, *Rendiconto*, cit., p. 149.

<sup>51</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2018, pp. 58-59.

<sup>52</sup> U. Gentiloni Silveri, *Tra vincolo esterno e coesione nazionale*, cit., p. 393.

minister. Actually, there are different reasons which deny to Pds the possibility to enter the government ("the missed opportunity"<sup>53</sup> according to some authoritative party leaders of the time<sup>54</sup>). The first one is the absence in the leftist party of common intents in supporting Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.<sup>55</sup> Despite this, Achille Occhetto assumes the responsibility to give the official support of his whole party<sup>56</sup> and to suggest to the future President of the Republic some of the possible ministers, including Luigi Berlinguer at the head of the University and Research Ministry. Everything changes when the Parliament decides to deny the judges' authorization to proceed against Bettino Craxi,<sup>57</sup> causing the great anger of the Pds which prefers keeping the party compact and remaining in opposition, rather than creating an alliance with those who oppose to justice. The Ciampi's government starts and lasts about a year, relegating to the past the very first attempt to bring Romano Prodi to Palazzo Chigi: these are the very first steps of a still to be born Ulivo experiment.

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<sup>53</sup> A. Maccanico, *Intervista sulla fine della prima repubblica*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1994, pp. 8 and on.

<sup>54</sup> P. Fassino, *Per passione*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2003, p. 266.

<sup>55</sup> A. Asor Rosa, *La sinistra alla prova: considerazioni sul ventennio 1976-1996*, Einaudi, Torino, 1996 p. 164 and on.

<sup>56</sup> A. Occhetto, *La gioiosa macchina da guerra*, cit., p. 81.

<sup>57</sup> I. Ariemma, *La casa brucia*, cit., pp. 122-123.

## ***1.2 1994***

The first elections with the Mattarella law are held in March 1994, after the experience of the Ciampi's government, with a 4% threshold<sup>58</sup> to reduce the influence of minor parties on the national debate. Three large groups take part in the electoral competition, thanks to a system that favours the creation of coalitions. The leftist one, headed by the majority party, the Pds led by Achille Occhetto, is accompanied by Rifondazione comunista, the Greens' federation, what is left of the Italian socialist party, the Rete, the Democratic alliance and the Christian socialists, creating a group that takes the name of "Progressives"<sup>59</sup>. On the right there are instead two coalitions destined to coexist after the vote, led by the businessman Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of the newly formed political force "Forza Italia". He represents a real turning point in Italian politics. Berlusconi allies with the Northern League and the centrists of the Christian democratic centre in the central-northern regions, with the name of "Polo della Libertà"; while presenting himself with the Italian social movement and other personalities of the Ccd in the remaining regions, under the name of "Polo del buon Governo".<sup>60</sup> He succeeds in demonstrating himself as the new man<sup>61</sup>, which is contrary to the traditional strategies of political parties, and is capable of attracting liberal votes and unite the single souls of the Italian centre-right. It is a difficult operation, but it perfectly fits the bipolar and majority view. The Italian social movement, the party heir to the fascist traditions, which never completely disappeared in republican Italy<sup>62</sup>, finds in Fi a stage for reaching the government, leaving the

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<sup>58</sup> Documentazione e ricerche, *Il sistema di elezione del Parlamento nazionale*, Camera dei deputati, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>59</sup> G. Ferrara, *Gli errori progressisti*, in "la Repubblica", July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.

<sup>60</sup> G. D'Agostino, R. Vigilante, *Le elezioni politiche del marzo 1994. Prime approssimazioni*, in "Italia Contemporanea", 195, June 1994, pp. 221-227.

<sup>61</sup> C. Vulpio, *Fini: "Segni è un illusionista se non riconosce la Destra. Berlusconi è il nuovo"*, in "Corriere della Sera", January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>62</sup> N. Rao, *La fiamma e la celtica. Sessant'anni di neofascismo da Salò ai centri sociali di destra*, Sperling e Kupfer, Milano, 2006, p. 247.



political cage that has characterized its ruling class as "exile at home"<sup>63</sup>. Simultaneously, the Northern League distinguishes itself from the Msi, by being declaredly anti-fascist, with clear secessionist ambitions and rooted exclusively in the deep Northern Italy<sup>64</sup>. The two have in common the will to contrast partitocracy, in spite of the fact that one of them is an extremely long-lived and deeply rooted party. They are undoubtedly heterogeneous forces unwilling to hide their diversity, even towards the majority shareholder of the coalitions<sup>65</sup>. Next to them there is also a neo-centrist formation which, from a bipolar majoritarian perspective, meets many difficulties since its inception. We talk about the "Pact for Italy", made up by the Segni pact and the Italian popular party, that galaxy of catholics in the diaspora after the end of the "Balena Bianca", which does not recognize a natural political alliance in the Berlusconi pole.<sup>66</sup>

Silvio Berlusconi wins and is nominated as Prime Minister by the new majority. It is interesting to analyse his success and the reasons behind it, in order to understand the development of the political scenario immediately after 1994. Despite the complexity of this phase of Italian politics, the latter has the merit to create fertile ground for an equally original initiative in the left. Trying to understand Berlusconi means trying to understand his opponents too.

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<sup>63</sup> R. Perdicchi, *Tarchi, la voce della fogna che scosse il Msi: "Ecco perché fui mandato via"*, in "il Secolo d'Italia", November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

<sup>64</sup> I. Diamanti, *La Lega. Geografia, storia e sociologia di un nuovo soggetto politico*, Donzelli, Roma, 1995, pp. 53-62.

<sup>65</sup> S. Folli, *Fini avverte Berlusconi: "Non siamo amanti clandestini"*, in "Corriere della Sera", January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.

<sup>66</sup> G. De Rosa, *Tre poli per le elezioni del 27-28 marzo*, in "Civiltà Cattolica", 3445, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, pp. 496-505.

### ***1.3 The victory of the Cavaliere Berlusconi***

Silvio Berlusconi is not a new man in Italian public life<sup>67</sup>. He is known in the national chronicles because of his televisions, his long and productive entrepreneurial activity and his relations with the Italian political parties, especially with the Socialist party of Bettino Craxi.<sup>68</sup> Forza Italia, the top-ranking party company, is officially created with its descent on January<sup>th</sup> 26, 1994. It succeeds in combining the pluralist plot of the complex Italian politics with the "need for the new" demanded by the public opinion since the early nineties<sup>69</sup>. To this we might add the bipolar structure that the country is trying to reinforce<sup>70</sup>, in the difficult framework of the Second Republic. New are the symbols of this young party, "Forza Italia", which appears in the national competition for the first time after that the "the judges revolution" has wiped out the historical parties of the constitutional arch and its ruling groups.<sup>71</sup> New are also the faces within Berlusconi ruling class, which enter Parliament for the first time, divided in two groups. On one hand, there are deputies chosen among Publitalia's managers, so politically inexperienced leaders, that are instead representatives of that "civil society" whose myth is being chased in those years. On the other hand, there is a part of the old political ruling class looking for a new safe harbour to work on.<sup>72</sup> Some of the Cavaliere's most important collaborators, in fact, come from a nourished socialist experience, while others have alternated a Christian democratic past with a faithfully craxian one, finding in the Premier's revolutionary ambitions a new impulse for their own mission, almost always in an anti-communist function<sup>73</sup>. Particular attention shall be paid to those who come from a

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<sup>67</sup> G. Crainz, *Autobiografia di una repubblica. Le radici dell'Italia attuale*, Donzelli, Roma, 2009, p.156.

<sup>68</sup> G. Santomassimo, *L'eredità degli anni Ottanta. L'inizio della mutazione*, in *Berlusconismo: analisi di un sistema di potere*, edited by P. Ginsborg and E. Asquer, Editori Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2011, pp. 3-9.

<sup>69</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *La Repubblica degli italiani*, Editori Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2016, pp. 204-205.

<sup>70</sup> R. Chiaberge, *Sartori: il Mattarellum e le idee sbagliate*, in "Corriere della Sera", November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>71</sup> A. Pizzorno, *Il potere dei giudici. Stato democratico e controllo della virtù*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1998, pp. 69 and on.

<sup>72</sup> A. Mastropaolo, *Le elezioni politiche del marzo 1994*, in "Italia Contemporanea", 1994, n.156, pp. 461-470.

<sup>73</sup> A. Gibelli, *Berlusconi passato alla storia*, Donzelli Editore, Pomezia (Roma), 2010, pp 29-33.

betrayed past of 1968, from extra-parliamentary struggle and militancy, but who rediscover themselves as liberal and liberists, often engaged in the communication sectors of the party<sup>74</sup>.

The catholics' diaspora which follows the dissolution of the great "Balena Bianca", allows Berlusconi to fill a vacuum left by the Dc<sup>75</sup>, without replacing its political structure. He immediately moves towards the right in a perfect bipolar perspective. His party also attracts the consensus of the more traditionalist electorate<sup>76</sup>, the conservatives of the old catholic party, previously kept under control by the balance of currents that had dominated the Dc logic for years. Berlusconi fills even the vacuum left by the Psi, in its craxian conformation, thanks also to the policy of disintermediation with the citizen, pillar of berlusconism and heritage of the historic socialist leader. According to this disintermediation, the plebiscite relationship between the leader and the population is more important rather than the mass party, traditionally theorized in the 1900s<sup>77</sup>. "Sua Emittenza" constitutes a new political reference point in which the famous "conflict of interest" becomes more than a possible judicial issue, because it assumes the identikit of a *modus operandi* of Berlusconi as politician<sup>78</sup>. His managers and the bonds built during his private working life prove essential for the construction of his proposal to the country and his political program. During a critical period of the italian democracy, Berlusconi provides certainties thanks to his network and his determination<sup>79</sup>, which are appreciated by a large percentage of italians who see him as the possibility to overcome the last fifty years party politics.

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<sup>74</sup> *ivi*, p. 35.

<sup>75</sup> P. Ignazi, *Partiti politici in Italia. Da Forza Italia al Partito Democratico*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2008, pp. 60 and on.

<sup>76</sup> G. Baldini, *Forza Italia: un partito unico*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni ottanta a oggi*, edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, Carocci, Roma, 2014, pp. 423 – 435.

<sup>77</sup> D. Palano, "La democrazia senza partiti", Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2015, pp. 95 and on.

<sup>78</sup> D. Campus, *L'Antipolitica al governo. De Gaulle, Reagan, Berlusconi*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2006, pp. 162 and on.

<sup>79</sup> F. Raniolo, *Forza Italia: a leader with a party*, in "South European Society and Politics", 2006, 3-4, pp. 439-445.

The investigative structure set up by Tangentopoli also has to be considered in this scenario. On one hand it tries to destroy the power access between politics and the economy, when it is based on corruption<sup>80</sup>. On the other hand, it also tries to eliminate the party nucleus on which the Italian republican democracy was founded and which has structured the country-system, until the nineties.<sup>81</sup> The derived anti-political phenomenon<sup>82</sup>, of which the new bipolar system is partially the fruit and which Berlusconi tries to take advantage of, contributes to the success of the right. The Cavaliere has shown the ability of fighting the old party structures (still present in the Progressive coalition), symbol of that misconduct fought by the judges. It doesn't matter if the investigations touch less the opponents. The adversaries' traditional party structure, aggravated by the post-communist matrix, represents one of the cornerstone of Berlusconi's political struggle, meeting the discontent of the dissenting public opinion, already influenced by the judicial enquiries<sup>83</sup>. Damaging the parties, the mediation bodies between the state and citizens, means also to indirectly defend the neoliberal logic that sees disintermediation as the best tool to update the market. Disintermediation is perfectly represented by berlusconism in which a large part of the country begins to recognize themselves.

Even anti-communism is a glue that increases Silvio Berlusconi's consensus.<sup>84</sup> It is a type of political stance that has allowed the unity of the political formations opposed to those who imagined the "other society" and that has influenced all post-war politics<sup>85</sup>. Nonetheless, the fall of the Berlin wall and the failure of soviet statism have downsized the rhetoric "against the reds", and contributed also to the dissolution of many political forces that saw

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<sup>80</sup> S. Acquaviva, *Italia Corrotta? La parola ai politologi*, in "Corriere della Sera", May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1992

<sup>81</sup> A. Giangrande, *Tangentopoli da Craxi a Berlusconi. Le mani sporche di Mani Pulite*, A.G. Editore, 2015, p.166.

<sup>82</sup> M. Tarchi, *L'Italia populista. Dal qualunquismo a Beppe Grillo*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2003, pp. 279-304.

<sup>83</sup> A. Mastropaolo, *Antipolitica. All'origine della crisi italiana*, L'ancora del Mediterraneo, Napoli, 2000, pp. 107 and on.

<sup>84</sup> F. Dei, *Pop-politica: le basi culturali del berlusconismo*, in "Studi Culturali", December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, pp. 3-5.

<sup>85</sup> M. Barbanti, *Funzioni strategiche dell'anti-comunismo nell'età del centrismo degasperiano*, in "Italia Contemporanea", n.170, marzo 1988.

that conflict as the very first reason for their existence. "Sua Emittenza" manages to recover and strengthen that sentiment which is still alive in many Italians. He increased its rhetoric recognizing the fact the anti-communism outlasts communism itself<sup>86</sup>. This is also due to the fact that many leaders of the Pci are merging into new social-democratic formations that aspire to govern the country, maintaining leading roles and surviving the failure of those same political projects for which they fought<sup>87</sup>. But the berlusconian anti-communism is extremely different from that of the Christian democrats or craxians. The Dc has always given a profoundly different alternative to the socio-economic model of the Italian communists<sup>88</sup>, strongly supported by the majority of the Italian electorate. Even Bettino Craxi has proposed his vision of the world<sup>89</sup>, a vision of modernization of society contrasting politically with the socialist traditional ambition. The berlusconian version of anti-communism sometimes coincides with a form of anti-statism instead, even if not always fully recognized by its electorate.<sup>90</sup> State intervention, fiscal imposition, excessive bureaucracy, an intrusive and oppressive state, seem to be the issues targeted by a centre-right formation which wants to give the dream of an unburdened Italy, without parties (indiscriminately accused) and, in general, with less state and less taxes for everyone.

In this regard, it is evident the contrast between the real country and the legal country<sup>91</sup> that Berlusconi seems to give to the public debate. To the handcuffed, corrupt bureaucrat, hostile to the good functioning of the market, who is the symbol of a slow and ineffective public machine<sup>92</sup>, he contraposes a vision of the enthusiastic and productive Italian, with great skills embodied

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<sup>86</sup> G. Bocca, *L'anticomunismo senza comunisti*, in "la Repubblica", February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>87</sup> F. Martini, *L'ultima notte del Pci: un pasticcio brutto*, in "la Stampa", February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>88</sup> M. Follini, *La DC*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2000, pp. 79 and on.

<sup>89</sup> G. Crainz, *Il segno di Craxi sugli anni Ottanta*, in "la Repubblica", January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010.

<sup>90</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *La Repubblica degli italiani (1946-2016)*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2016, pp.213-216.

<sup>91</sup> G. Orsina, *L'antipolitica dei moderati: dal qualunquismo al berlusconismo*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta ad oggi* edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, Carocci, Roma, 2014, pp. 403-321.

<sup>92</sup> S. Berlusconi, *Discorsi per la democrazia*, Mondadori, Milano, 2001, pp. 33-34.

in the self-made man. Since its debut with "Italy is the country I love"<sup>93</sup>, the goal is to emphasize the myth of "people", of "civil society"<sup>94</sup> which manages to produce those successes that the country benefited in the post-war period, against the brakes of the P.A. and against its elite. It is the private rather than the public dimension that has allowed the country to grow. In his propaganda, the work of private entrepreneurs has given italians the opportunity to improve their life standards<sup>95</sup> more than the rules imposed from above. We must start again on this basis, with a "friendly state" that guarantees the "right not to be afraid"<sup>96</sup>. Similarly, it is important to specify the fact that there is never a direct praise of illegality, but the finer approach to the rules<sup>97</sup>. Taxes are too high, bureaucracy is too long and complex and general impositions of the public administration are excessive. All the above seems to favour the spread of illegality<sup>98</sup>. There is not a cultural issue that is proper of a part of the italian people, there is instead a direct responsibility of the legal country from which the real country has to defend itself<sup>99</sup>. Moreover, he is the supporter of a politics focused more on public policies rather than on the mediation among the parties, acting like a modern enterprise: going straight to the point without being trapped in palace intrigue<sup>100</sup>. In substance, that politics based on the compromise among different cultures is targeted by this new tendency that, inspired by the Tangentopoli approach, is ready to take the power over the first republic ruins<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> S. Berlusconi, *L'Italia che ho in mente. I discorsi a braccio di Silvio Berlusconi*, Mondadori, Milano, 2000, pp. 24-25.

<sup>94</sup> S. Lupo, *Il mito della società civile. Retoriche antipolitiche nella crisi della democrazia italiana*, in *Antipolitica*, Meridiana, 2000, pp. 17-43.

<sup>95</sup> S. Berlusconi, *L'Italia che ho in mente*, cit., pp. 292 and on.

<sup>96</sup> *ivi*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>97</sup> S. Berlusconi, *Discorsi per la democrazia*, Mondadori, Milano, 2001, pp. 267 and on.

<sup>98</sup> G. Tremonti, *Lo stato criminogeno. La fine dello stato giacobino. Un manifesto liberale*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1997, pp. 50 and on.

<sup>99</sup> V. Feltri, *L'anomalia non è lui*, in "il Giornale", January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>100</sup> E. Poli, *Forza Italia. Struttura, leadership e radicamento territoriale*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2001, pp. 25-54.

<sup>101</sup> D. Campus, *L'antipolitica al governo. De Gaulle, Reagan, Berlusconi*, cit., pp. 138-147.

Within the centre-right electoral network, a noteworthy presence is the one of anti-antifascists, as described by Giovanni Orsina<sup>102</sup>. They represent a varied silent majority which is difficult to ascribe within the traditional political categories, but exhaustively delineated by Orsina, who manages to describe their role within the success of Berlusconi. There are not only the fascist period nostalgics who, instead of being against politics, are the supporters of an even older, pre-republican politics. But there are also some liberals, worried that the "Republic of the parties" has given to Italy a form of freedom obstructionism.<sup>103</sup> There are those who recognize an added value in the unity of the right wing against the political division of the opposite field, which risks engulfing an already problematic public machine. But there are also those who are looking for a new element, tired of the twentieth century divisions. All these types combined in the anti-antifascist category are waiting for an organic representation within the Republic.

So, Berlusconi is a complex phenomenon, with important and profound roots that is underestimated in 1994 by his left-wing opponents. He has imposed himself on the Italian panorama riding new and less new crises, trying to give a strong anti-political answer "to the unprecedented intertwining of the social, democratic and national problems"<sup>104</sup> which convinces not only the middle classes, but the entire Italian population.

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<sup>102</sup> G. Orsina, *L'antipolitica dei moderati: dal qualunquismo al berlusconismo*, cit., pp. 404-408.

<sup>103</sup> G. Orsina, *Questione istituzionale e costruzione del sistema politico democratico*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli (CZ), 2007, pp. 201-256.

<sup>104</sup> A. Reichlin, *Democrazia senza il Pds?*, in "l'Unità", April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

#### ***1.4 The Northern League and the Italian social movement alliances***

The system of alliances designed by the Berlusconi group favours the electoral winning. It provides for diverse coalitions in the North and in the South of the country. In the northern constituencies Forza Italia is presented in a coalition that takes the name of the "Polo della Libertà", comprising the Northern League party, led by Umberto Bossi and the Christian democratic centre of Pierferdinando Casini, reduced from the dissolution of catholic unity. In the South, instead, the alliance takes the name of "Polo del Buon Governo" and provides for an agreement with the Italian social movement led by Gianfranco Fini, an extreme right-wing party well rooted in the south, which is accompanied by other representatives of the Christian democratic centre<sup>105</sup>.

Northern League and Msi are very different, and the first one is more recent than the other. Umberto Bossi often underlines the anti-fascist line<sup>106</sup> of his party, while claiming the will to implement a strong federalism, at times secessionist,<sup>107</sup> which has nothing in common with some fundamental dictates of the constitution and with the post-fascist patriotism. They see national unity as an indisputable value and even the Church, through the pope's words, will rebel against the disruptive action of the "green shirts"<sup>108</sup>. Berlusconi's ability also lies in understanding how to assemble a heterogeneous political group, and he is aware of the fact that all these forces are needed to defeat the progressive grouping.

At the turn of the seventies and the eighties a tripartite image of the peninsula, split among North, Central and South Italy, emerges because of the

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<sup>105</sup> M. Razzi, *Forza Italia, storia dei suoi voti*, in "la Repubblica", November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008.

<sup>106</sup> F. Abati, Bossi: "La Lega è antifascista perché anticeutralista", in "Il Fatto Quotidiano", February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

<sup>107</sup> M. Huyseune, *Modernità e secessione. Le scienze sociali e il discorso politico della Lega Nord*, Carocci, Roma, 2004, pp. 62 and on.

<sup>108</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *La Repubblica degli italiani*, cit., pp. 216-221.



undergoing economic and social transformations. The Northern Italy malaise combined with the push of some local movements allows the birth of the Northern League phenomenon. It arises especially because of the progressive dissolution of the Dc<sup>109</sup> and the Tangentopoli issue, in open controversy with the other national parties that have allegedly been protagonists of that criminal reality. Umberto Bossi has the merit of having gained consensus introducing the "northern question"<sup>110</sup> in opposition to the southern question which had for decades been at the centre of the political debate. In a country that in the nineties is experiencing a systemic crisis on almost all directions, Bossi manages to exploit those controversies<sup>111</sup> about the inefficient, excessive, dissipative state, contrasting the productivity of the North to the assistance politics of the South. In 1992 the League secretary was the most voted man with 240,000 preferences and a rooted consensus in the North with 8.6% of the votes<sup>112</sup>. He becomes an essential ally for Berlusconi and, having some common anti-political elements, manages to combine the two perspectives of anti-systemic struggle. The League, in fact, aims at representing an alternative to traditional parties, suffering the possible alliance with the Msi members which are, on the contrary, long-standing political animals. Among the others, one of the main resources of that moment lies in the electoral representation of the whole North production sector, which fuels a contraposition with the Italian economic problems South of Rome. If the large Italian industry has been in crisis for some time<sup>113</sup>, the small-medium enterprises represent the country's great resource<sup>114</sup>, especially in the areas that the "carroccio" proposes to defend. These are parts of an Italy

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<sup>109</sup> P. Scoppola, *La Repubblica dei partiti*, il Mulino, Bologna, 1997, pp. 459 and on.

<sup>110</sup> L. Cafagna, *La questione settentrionale nell'Italia contemporanea: un'autointervista*, in *La questione settentrionale. Economia e società in trasformazione*, edited by G. Berta, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2008, pp. 1-12.

<sup>111</sup> I. Diamanti, *Mappe dell'Italia politica. Bianco, rosso, verde, azzurro e...tricolore*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2009, pp. 65-71.

<sup>112</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2012, p.25.

<sup>113</sup> L. Gallino, *La scomparsa dell'Italia industriale*, Einaudi, Torino, 2003.

<sup>114</sup> A. Bonomi, *Il capitalismo molecolare. La società al lavoro nel Nord Italia*, Einaudi, Torino, 1997, pp. 35 and on.

that do not longer consider Southern Italy as an investment opportunity for which, in the past, the state was ready to give tax preferential treatment.

The Italian social movement, till that moment relegated to a marginal role in the Italian political debate, with the dissolution of other traditional parties increases its consensus, trying to be part of an appropriate alternative to the progressive bloc. In 1993 Berlusconi<sup>115</sup> expresses his support for the candidacy of Fini, the Msi party secretary, to the mayor of Rome, initiating a right-wing legitimizing operation<sup>116</sup>. The possible constitutional process of the movement and the whole cultural operation that would follow, are not relevant for the Cavaliere. He, on the contrary, shows his interest for the people who vote for the post-fascist movements and its ruling class, not for the cultural confrontation with that world<sup>117</sup>. However, the problem is crucial and it has to do with the choice of Msi members to be adversaries of the "Svolta di Salerno"<sup>118</sup>, becoming for many years the antagonists of constitutional parties. The bipolar system allows, contrary to what has happened up to that moment, to treasure the votes of the extreme right, gathering not only the anti-system populist expressions, but combining them with those popular anti-republican ones that have slithered in the peninsula since 1946. The Msi will make a conversion operation to attempt to legitimize itself by trying to abandon the post-fascist schemes, but this happens in 1995 in Fiuggi, several months after the political operation of Silvio Berlusconi. The left wing has to deal with all of the above, that proved victorious in the 1994 elections. First of all, the left has to be well aware of the possibility of appearing as a "conservative" assemblage of stratified interests, not only from the structural point of view, but also for what concerns their programmatic choices<sup>119</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> D. Marceddu, D. Turrini, *18 anni fa la prima pietra del berlusconismo. A Casalecchio nacque l'alleanza con Fini*, in "il Fatto Quotidiano", November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011.

<sup>116</sup> E. Berselli, *Post-italiani. Cronache di un paese provvisorio*, Mondadori, Milano, 2003, p. 57

<sup>117</sup> G. Fini, *Il ventennio: io, Berlusconi e la destra tradita*, Rizzoli, Segrate, 2013, pp. 23-45.

<sup>118</sup> T. Baris, *Crisi del paradigma anti-fascista e retoriche politiche delle nuove destre tra prima e seconda Repubblica*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta ad oggi*, edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, pp. 437-455.

<sup>119</sup> C. Castellano, *La sinistra e i ceti medi*, in "La Repubblica", May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

### ***1.5 The debate within the left***

The berlusconian projectile force strikes the left that pays its uncertainty of the Turn of a few years earlier. The conflict polarization, the leaderism, the legitimization of the most radical areas of the Italian right, begin to produce the symmetrical effect to the anti-communism: the anti-berlusconism. It sometimes replaces a careful and profound reading of the actual reality, leaving space for a more personal struggle<sup>120</sup>. But one of the main effects of the Forza Italia phenomenon that Italy itself has to face is the reduction of anti-fascism to a historical memory, instead of a shared and essential value in the political arena. The disappearance of the traditional parties of the Constituent due to Tangentopoli, the passage to the Second Republic with the reformist and revisionist pressures of the Constitution, the explicit candidacy of anti-system forces for the government of the country, push the public opinion to archive anti-fascism as a fundamental component of the actual parties<sup>121</sup>. The idea to contrast the right because it is full of exponents who never recognized themselves in the Republic democratic structure, does not work anymore. The European elections of a few months after the national ones, in fact, testify the Berlusconi axis growth, Italian social movement and the Northern League included. In this regard, there is a force in the right wing that, although being heterogeneous, has destroyed the Pds leaders plans, forcing the party to a serious revision of its politics and the recently taken choices<sup>122</sup>.

The last secretary of the Italian communist party and first leader of the Pds, Achille Occhetto, the man-symbol of the dissolution of Italian communism, decides to resign and leaves the party in the hands of a new leadership. Occhetto is accused by many not only of being unable to use the appropriate

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<sup>120</sup> A. Occhetto, *La gioiosa macchina da guerra. Veleni, sogni e speranze della sinistra*, Editori Internazionali Riuniti, Roma, 2013, pp. 83-85.

<sup>121</sup> F. Focardi, *La guerra della memoria. La Resistenza nel dibattito politico italiano dal 1945 a oggi*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2005, pp. 242-344.

<sup>122</sup> I. Montanelli, *Una corona per Silvio*, in "la Voce", April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

tools to bring the Pds to the government, but also of underestimating the Berlusconi phenomenon<sup>123</sup>. He did not manage to give a strong identity to the party born on the ashes of the Pci. The Turn had been made, but it was incomplete. Occhetto will report that he resigned because of following pressure from some leaders close to him, and that his entire administrative office was marked by continuous internal opposition that did not allow the party unity, fundamental in achieving the government goal<sup>124</sup>. Regardless of these considerations, the choice made in 1994 to combine all the left political formations of the country has left the centrist front uncovered, which becomes the reference area of the alliances in the mind of the next leading class in the debate immediately following the defeats<sup>125</sup>.

Two party leaders, Massimo D'Alema and Walter Veltroni contended the party secretariat in the summer of 1994.

Massimo D'Alema, until then headgroup in the Chamber of Deputies for the Pds, is a leader who grew up in the party with the berlinguerian tradition. His intent is to fulfil the '91 Turn, trying to consolidate the party tradition of the Pds and to frame it in a more social-democratic perspective, on the model of the European democracies<sup>126</sup>. Veltroni is a parliamentarian, the director of "l'Unità", with excellent communicative skills and very close to the pro-American democratic idea of the party<sup>127</sup>. He imagines a plural Pds, capable of being an important part of that anti-Berlusconi political forces agglomeration that can be combined together and give a new government to the country. He sees the party as a machine capable of making faster decisions and closer to its leader than to the all leading group<sup>128</sup>. He claims that, in a bipolar perspective, the final choice of the premiership is up to citizens through primary elections. They represent two very different conceptions destined to clash quickly, without a supporting congress, because Occhetto's

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<sup>123</sup> A. Occhetto, *Italia in mano a ex craxiani e piduisti*, in "la Repubblica", May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>124</sup> L. Telese, *Qualcuno era comunista. Dalla caduta del Muro alla fine del Pci: come i comunisti italiani sono diventati ex e post*, Sperling and Kupfer, Milano, 2009, pp. 693-694.

<sup>125</sup> M. Riva, *Occhetto generale sconfitto*, in "la Repubblica", April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.

<sup>126</sup> M. Fuccillo, *D'Alema: "Accetterei a patto che..."*, in "la Repubblica", June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>127</sup> A. Romano, *Compagni di scuola*, Mondadori, Milano, 2008, pp. 110-111.

<sup>128</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., pp. 59-60.

resignation opens up a different procedural scenario. He has not openly initiated a congress phase in which to discuss errors and positivity of the whole party, but he resigned earlier. This means starting the process of an internal consultation of the National Council for the choice of the new secretary: the managers and not the simple members will choose the new leader. A particularity lies in the consultative vote that is organized just before the Council meeting, which has to choose the secretary by voting<sup>129</sup>. Indeed, mid-rank leaders are asked to vote between D'Alema and Veltroni, just in order to understand the orientation of the base. This "consultative referendum" has no legal weight in view of the actual vote of the Council. The Democratic party of the left gathers to discuss the new line and to vote the next secretary on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1994, at the Fiera di Roma. The ruling class, that approved the Turn of Achille Occhetto a few years earlier, is divided about the succession. Veltroni appears as the young leader who dreams about something new that speaks to many interlocutors that, till that moment, have been excluded by the left; while D'Alema is equally convinced that they have to combine parties of different traditions, but with those they can converge. Grown up in the party structures, he retains the support of a large part of them. The consultative vote data show that the base is more veltronian than dalemian. 41.9% of the preferences have chosen the director of "l'Unità", against 36% who has opted for the former headgroup of the Chamber. Veltroni also enjoys a certain support by the media<sup>130</sup>, especially by his newspaper and the group referring to "la Repubblica", who recognize him as the thirty-eight years old man able to create a party model more open to transformations and innovations of the 2000 society.

The two visions of the party and of the society are so different that an experienced politician, like Piero Fassino, refers to them as "differences for a political anthropology". Fabio Mussi, another historical representative of the italian left, also defines the two candidates as "distinct personalities, cultures,

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<sup>129</sup> S. Marroni, "*Vota il leader*". *Il PDS scopre il fax*, in "la Repubblica", June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.

<sup>130</sup> A. Padellaro, S. Truzzi, *C'era una volta la sinistra*, Paper First, Roma, 2019, p. 83.

temperaments and passion", highlighting a human difference that goes beyond the mere candidacy differences.<sup>131</sup> The challenge is very hard. Veltroni starts speaking around 11:00 am, after having finished to write the final speech at 3:00 am<sup>132</sup>. He immediately makes clear that the task of the left is to win, to get to the government of the country, but with a new approach that has to overcome the "Hercules' columns of liberalism and statism"<sup>133</sup>. He cites all the great leaders of the western left like Brandt, Palme, Clinton, together with the most mythical revolutionaries like Nelson Mandela.<sup>134</sup> He makes clear his idea of the kennedian<sup>135</sup> left, which looks to the American democratic party as a point of reference, and explaining that the assembly has the task to elect the secretary of a party, not the leader of the entire centre-left pole. That leader, in fact, has to be successively legitimized through the coalition primaries, that ascribe into the perspective of this new left formation open to the associations, to environmental issues, to the democratic centre and to the society in general<sup>136</sup>. Veltroni asks for modernity, innovation and inflexibility towards the Berlusconi right, accused to see politics so far different from what it should be. A perfect bipolarism<sup>137</sup> displays in his words, so rooted that he is able to conceive the idea of bipartisanism as an objective to reach and a necessity for a functioning democracy. The relationship with the centre takes, in this logic, a deeper value than a simple alliance, a political-cultural element at the basis of its vision of the future of Italy. Fabio Mussi believes that veltronian politics is about the fluidity and the contamination of different cultures, so much to be fascinated by it and to support his candidacy. Despite being D'Alema's university mate, he will decide to vote for Walter Veltroni as national secretary at the National Council.

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<sup>131</sup> F. Rondolino, *Veltroni o D'Alema: ora si vota*, in "l'Unità", July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>132</sup> S. Di Michele, "Un governo dei democratici", in "l'Unità", July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>133</sup> S. Marroni, *Veltroni-D'Alema, all'ultimo voto*, in "la Repubblica", July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>134</sup> W. Veltroni, *Il discorso al Consiglio Nazionale*, in "l'Unità", July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>135</sup> W. Veltroni, *La bella politica. Un'intervista di Stefano Del Re*, Rizzoli, Milano, 1995, p. 132.

<sup>136</sup> W. Veltroni, *Il discorso al Consiglio Nazionale*, cit., in "l'Unità", July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>137</sup> M. D'Alema, *Controcorrente*, Editori Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2013, pp.36-37.

The perspective of Veltroni's secretariat convinces the outgoing Secretary Occhetto, many of his close collaborators such as Petruccioli and Fassino<sup>138</sup>, as well as catholic leaders such as Paola Gaiotti de Biase and others<sup>139</sup>.

A good part of the "miglioristi" current, headed by Giorgio Napolitano, on the other hand, sees in Massimo D'Alema the right man for a left able to go to government through the logic of open alliances, even remaining anchored to a social-democratic tradition still to be entirely built. In fact, D'Alema has, among the others, the objective to give a substance to the Turn. The latter represents a point of confrontation with the former secretary Occhetto<sup>140</sup>, accused of not giving to the party the identity needed in order not to become weaker after the changing of the name and symbol of the Italian communist party.

D'Alema begins to speak just before midday and he immediately manifests his different way of thinking even about the procedures used for the secretary election. He criticizes his own competition, clarifying that it must be the Congress to legitimize new theses and ruling class<sup>141</sup>, which is fundamental to understand past errors, the sense of responsibility and modern perspectives to pursue. He points a lot to the strengthening of the party structure, to the point that he and Veltroni are seen as the contraposition between conservation and innovation<sup>142</sup>, partytism and leaderism, mediation and government art. A political confrontation which, at its base, sees two different ways to understand the society.

At the time of "national solidarity", the former Fgci ("Federazione giovanile comunisti italiani") secretary became the spokesman for the european idea, seeing in german and french socialism as well as in traditional english labourism, the reference point for the Pds transformation process. There is much more pro-european stance than kennedian ambition in the Dalemian

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<sup>138</sup> A. Caporale, *L'ombra di Achille anche sull'ultimo sprint*, in "la Repubblica", June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>139</sup> P. Cascella, *E in sala si fanno i conti*, in "l'Unità", July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>140</sup> M. Pannara, *La sconfitta di Achille, leader della Bolognina*, in "la Repubblica", July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.

<sup>141</sup> M. D'Alema, *Un Paese Normale*, Mondadori, Milano, 1995, pp. 74-86.

<sup>142</sup> *ivi*, p.76.

perspective. Acknowledging Marc Lazar's critiques <sup>143</sup>, he focuses on defending the role of the party as innovation stage and not as an expendable subject at the others' dependency. It is a capillary structure, federalist in the organization, which consolidates the relationship with the trade unions, rooted in the society in order to understand and analyse it deeply. Unlike the catch-all party, D'Alema is committed to delineate a model that represents a part of the progressive bloc, but that is simultaneously capable of discussing with all the other probable allies. It is a political-social strategy, different from the veltronian political-cultural one. In his intervention there is the contradiction of a left that tries to read the messages of globalization without wanting to lose the bridge with its traditions. There are specific references to a political action that has to continue Bruno Trentin's trade union work, in the awareness that there is a famous trade unionist such as Luciano Lama who is attending the assembly; there are also references to a state that has to guarantee competitiveness among privates, respect for rules, without the public being always necessarily the state property. Even D'Alema, like his opponent, has in mind the strategy of building the centre-left government, therefore going towards an increasingly downsized centre. In the awareness to redesign the country's constitutional structure, especially in its electoral logic. Already in the summer of '94 a law protecting a double-round competition is proposed to the party, with a clear reference to a set of alternation rules that must be established together with the opposition. Finally, there is the desire to underline how, under Veltroni, there are greater margins of collaboration, regardless of the result, with respect to the term under the Achille Occhetto leadership. This represents another shot against a leader that has never been fully appreciated by a part of the leftist ruling class<sup>144</sup>. Giorgio Napolitano never misses an opportunity to underline the complementarity of both candidates; while Aldo Tortorella, head of the

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<sup>143</sup> M. Lazar, *I progressisti*, in *Milano a Roma – Guida all'Italia elettorale del 1994*, edited by I. Diamanti and R. Mannheimer, Roma, Donzelli, 1994, p.83.

<sup>144</sup> F. Stefanoni, *Occhetto e D'Alema, il duello infinito a colpi di "sei obsoleto" e "sei un serial killer"*, in "Corriere della Sera", October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



“democratic communists”, already in opposition to the 1989 Turn, recognizes in D'Alema the best skills to guide the party towards its continuous and difficult identity transition. Sitting next to Walter Veltroni in the room, the director Ettore Scola.<sup>145</sup>

The following day the National Council votes on the new national secretary of the Pds and the result overturns the few weeks earlier consultation. With 249 votes, a large majority against Walter Veltroni's 173 votes, Massimo D'Alema becomes the new leader of the Pds, inaugurating a new political season for the Italian post-communists<sup>146</sup>. The "party punch" has won, as authoritative Italian commentators will later claim<sup>147</sup>.

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<sup>145</sup> S. De Michele, *Un governo ai democratici*, in “l'Unità”, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>146</sup> I. Ariemma, *La casa brucia*, Marisilio, Venezia, 2000, pp. 163-165.

<sup>147</sup> E. Scalfari, *Le alleanze mancate*, in “la Repubblica”, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.

## Chapter II

### **Constructing the alternative**

## ***II.1 Berlusconi Cabinet***

The Italian Parliament of 1994 is constituted by different groups that for the first time have been formed by means of the bipolar system. This goes hand in hand with the loss of centrality on the part of those who still want to tip the balance of political stability, despite the substantial changes from the points of view of the elections and political competition. For example, this happens to the Italian popular party, which, together with the Segni pact, does not go over a consent of 16%, and has consequently to change its post-democrisian<sup>148</sup> ambitions. The Parliament is also composed of some progressive members, who are mainly led by the Democratic party of the left, the Northern League, the Italian social movement, and Forza Italia, which has won the elections. The Italian social movement changes the name of its list in "National alliance" and obtains 77.5% of the seats compared to the previous legislature, so increasing the institutional turnover rate together with Forza Italia and the League.

The electoral law and the majoritarian electoral system with single-member constituencies aim at making the political picture clearer and at reducing the number of parties in Parliament. Indeed, proportional representation lets only seven lists manage to meet the electoral threshold, but that is not enough to reduce the fractioning. Many parties manage to obtain a seat at the Chamber of Deputies or at the Senate without presenting a proper list for the proportional system, but through the appointment of their candidate at the single-member constituency after alliance agreements. The final result is that around twenty<sup>149</sup> parties will be formed within the Chamber of Deputies after the elections.

The majority is established through the collaboration of the League, Forza Italia and the Italian social movement, all of them having obtained 16.585.516 votes, not without difficulties. Obviously, Silvio Berlusconi is the premier

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<sup>148</sup> P. Natale, *La nuova mappa geopolitica*, in *Milano a Roma. Guida all'Italia elettorale del 1994*, edited by I. Diamanti and R. Mannheimer, Donzelli, Roma, 1994, pp.85-92.

<sup>149</sup> A. Chiaramonte, *Le elezioni del 21 April*, in *Politica in Italia edizione 97*, edited by R. D'Alimonte, D. Nelken., Il Mulino, Bologna, 1997, pp. 43-64.

and the centre of the coalition, but the relationship between the members of the group is not easy to manage. More specifically, the fact that the Italian social movement becomes part of the executive raises doubts on an international scale<sup>150</sup>, and also within the League, which is not entirely convinced of the allies'<sup>151</sup> ruling class, even though the attempt to obtain a stable majority at the elections of the President of the Chamber of Deputies as well as of the President of the Senate have taken place in harmony. It is Carlo Scognamiglio, a member of Forza Italia, that presides over the Senate after having overtaken Spadolini, a long-term politician that Gianni Agnelli supported. Scognamiglio's appointment is supported by long applause on the part of businessmen during a Confindustria<sup>152</sup> congress. It is the League member Irene Pivetti, a fervent catholic, who becomes the President of the Chamber of Deputies; she takes up her new office with a speech in which she says to rely on "the will of God"<sup>153</sup>. For the first time after years, Berlusconi and his allies break with the tradition to leave one of the two Italian highest-ranking offices in question to the opposition parties, as a form of institutional guarantee. This may be considered as an example of demonization of the opponent.

The "Cavaliere" does not only attract tax evaders or the people who risk losing some kind of privilege, as instead Occhetto has declared<sup>154</sup>, but is something more. Indeed, although he is criticised even by the liberals on many questions, such as the Rai issue and the conflict of interests in view of the European Parliament elections, as it was mentioned in an article written by Sergio Romano<sup>155</sup>, his consensus is everything but a temporary phenomenon. What is known as berlusconism can influence the Italian society and become part of it; this becomes a true menace for the new leader of the Pds Massimo D'Alema, who does not consider his opponent only as a

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<sup>150</sup> A. Carioti, *Dal ghetto al palazzo: l'ascesa di Alleanza nazionale*, in *Politica in Italia edizione 95*, edited by P. Ignazi, E. Katz, il Mulino, Bologna, 1995, pp. 73-95.

<sup>151</sup> *Il Carroccio diviso*, in "La Stampa", May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>152</sup> *Spadolini? Per amicizia*, in "Corriere della Sera", March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>153</sup> I. Pivetti, *Atti Parlamentari*, Camera dei deputati, XII legislatura, *Discorsi*, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>154</sup> M. Caprara, *Occhetto sbatte i pugni sul tavolo*, in "Corriere della Sera", February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>155</sup> S. Romano, *Per favore rientrate nei ranghi*, in "La Stampa", October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

*paper tiger* of Italian politics. The majority engages also some deputies of Segni's list known as Pact of Italy, among whom there is Giulio Tremonti, who obtains the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Silvio Berlusconi begins to build an executive with the intention to make the government a sort of enterprise. However, he has to face a low and irregular economic recovery that starts making its way in the nation. So much so that some important Italian businessmen that had not voted for the Cavaliere, such as the leader of Confindustria Luigi Abete<sup>156</sup>, that had supported Mariotto Segni, start to look favourably at the new executive. It is the appointment of Lamberto Dini as the Minister of Treasury<sup>157</sup> that reassures Italian businessmen. The former Director of the Bank of Italy, together with Tremonti, has to adopt the first financial law of the government in order to guarantee strictness and the so much-hyped development that was promoted during the electoral campaign.

At the same time, the Italian's popular party faces a crisis which brings to the resignation of its leader Mino Martinazzoli, who is substituted by Rocco Buttiglione, a philosopher that is far from the power struggles of the Christian democracy, but culturally opposed to the mindset of the former leader. Buttiglione is interested in Berlusconi's group, even though he does not choose to take part in it immediately. His interest is also related to the fact that the President of the Episcopal conference of Italy (CEI), the cardinal Camillo Ruini, suggests that the catholic ruling class supports what the new majority of voters<sup>158</sup> do. As a consequence, if the majority of Italians vote for the right wing, the conclusions to arrive at are logical. However, the party is not entirely on the same wave. There is a huge part of the popular ruling class, i.e. the catholic-democratic current, for which it is difficult to support the Italian right-wing. Indeed, they oppose berlusconism and his government.

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<sup>156</sup> *Confindustria sprona il cavaliere ribelle*, in "La Stampa", March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>157</sup> Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, *Comunicato concernente la formazione del Governo*, Gazzetta Ufficiale, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>158</sup> S. Magister, *La Chiesa e la fine del partito cattolico*, in *Politica in Italia edizione 96*, edited by M. Caciagli, D. Kertzer, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1996, p. 244.

Having a strong consensus, Berlusconi decides to tackle the justice issue, which has an important impact on public opinion. The liberal and new Minister of Justice of Italy Alfredo Biondi prepares a decree that focuses on the contrast between politics and the magistrates, and that sparks much controversy<sup>159</sup>. Many newspapers oppose it, and many people protest against that decree, which was defined as *salva ladri* (that is, a decree that guarantees protection to corrupted politicians), or as *colpo di spugna* (something that wiped the slate clean of the surveys conducted by public prosecutors). The Cavaliere threatens that everybody would come back to the electoral ballot<sup>160</sup>, taking into serious consideration this measure. However, his majority is broadly divided: on one hand, the Interior Minister and second important man of the League, signs the legislative act; on the other hand, Bossi demands him to indulge in self-criticism, and opposes the entire League to Berlusconi<sup>161</sup>. Even some members of the Italian social movement sharply criticize<sup>162</sup> the Cavaliere, hinting that he would have been the man of the absolute novelty, but he actually revealed a conservative attitude which is ready to defend partitocracy from the attacks of the judicial system<sup>163</sup>. In just a few weeks, polls register 18 %<sup>164</sup> consensus for Forza Italia, that is a huge decrease in comparison with the latest elections, probably in part because of the instability of the voters who are increasingly far from systemic logics. Over the weeks, the situation becomes increasingly tense. The government starts discussing extensively the financial law that has to be passed to the Chambers in autumn, as well as amnesty for building code violations, tax agreement and tax cuts for the businesses that work in the Southern regions of the State. All these laws are characterised by a concurrence of opinions on the part of the majority<sup>165</sup>. However, the central problems are represented by

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<sup>159</sup> V. Feltri, *Gli italiani non vogliono il decreto Biondi*, in "Il Giornale", July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>160</sup> F. Geremicca, *Il seduttore sull'orlo di una crisi di nervi*, in "la Repubblica", July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>161</sup> Maroni: *il Governo mi ha imbrogliato*, in "Il Giornale", July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>162</sup> *Alle urne se il decreto non passa*, in "Corriere della Sera", July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>163</sup> A. Cowell, *A lost Hurrah! Italy's Premier Sees His Aura Fade*, in "The New York Times", July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>164</sup> E. Scalfari, *Forza ladri*, in "la Repubblica", July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>165</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2012, pp. 64-65.

the so-called "baby pensioni", that is a kind of early retirement; the increase of the minimum contribution up to forty years; the liquidation going into matching funds; and the industrial recovery threatened by the two-million-billion public debt. The attack on the retirement system not only risks touching an essential point for the consensus of the League, but it also manages to reunite trade unions<sup>166</sup>, which in fact organize a general strike that sees three million people<sup>167</sup> protesting on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1994. It almost sounds like a vote of no confidence for the government of Berlusconi, who is even threatened by the League to put forward a series of amendments to the laws proposed by their allies as well as the signing of a document that supports trade unions. The events of the First Republic repeat themselves, and the idea to change the leader of the government starts to be drawn. Berlusconi reacts strongly by appealing to the right of the voters to see their preferences, expressed only a few months before, being respected, especially according to the majoritarian electoral system. However, his situation goes down when he receives warnings from the OECD about the public accounts of Italy<sup>168</sup>, and worsens on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1994 in Naples during a UN summit, when the Cavaliere receives a notification of investigation from judges, who sift through all his businesses. The President tries to react by threatening to hold a march for freedom, to which Buttiglione replies by mentioning "dictatorial intentions"<sup>169</sup>. Berlusconi tries also to use the anti-communist rhetoric, by saying that he does not want to leave Italy in the hands of the communists, but his office is becoming increasingly difficult<sup>170</sup>. The issues of Forza Italia in managing parliamentary democracy<sup>171</sup> are evident, and out of the government the opponents start to gain ground, as the victory in Brescia of Mino Martinazzoli shows, supported by the Pds and the Italian's popular party. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, on the eve of another general strike, Berlusconi gives

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<sup>166</sup> *Avete rotto il patto sociale*, in "Corriere della Sera", October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>167</sup> P. Ignazi, *Il potere dei partiti*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2002, p.179.

<sup>168</sup> G. Mammarella, P. Cacace, *Il Quirinale*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2011, pp. 244-247.

<sup>169</sup> *Parlamento delegittimato*, in "la Repubblica", December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>170</sup> G. Bocca, *Se questa crisi fosse un boomerang*, in "la Repubblica", December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>171</sup> O. M. Petracca, *Fatale contraddizione*, in "Corriere della Sera", November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1994.

in to the pressures of trade unions and reaches an agreement with them about retirements. The financial law is approved, but the left and the Ppi propose a motion of no confidence which seems to be also supported by Umberto Bossi, who is increasingly far from the Cavaliere. The atmosphere is tense, and Forza Italia talks about a possible *coup d'état* or a civil war<sup>172</sup> secretly organized against their group. However, even on the part of the opponents the situation is very uneasy. After only eight months, Berlusconi seems compelled to resign, therefore the first government of the Second Republic ceases to exist, even though the Cavaliere advocates for the possibility to go to vote<sup>173</sup>. On the other hand, the left parties take into account a transitional government in order to clear the air with the right wing and go to vote after having adopted some constitutional reforms.

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<sup>172</sup> Marcello Dell'Utri, "*Clima di guerra*", in "la Repubblica", November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1994.

<sup>173</sup> V. Testa, *Governeremo fino al 2000*, "la Repubblica", January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1995.



## ***II.2 Romano Prodi is getting ready***

After the surprise victory of Silvio Berlusconi, Romano Prodi discusses the Italian political situation, about which he is really worried, with some old friends, politicians and intellectuals. They analyse the majoritarian electoral system and understand that there is no room for a centre party, and it is therefore necessary to choose one of the two blocs. In this respect, the centre-left bloc has to represent the union of different ideas and cultures, that is the catholic and democratic one as well as the social democratic one, in order to group the hopes of the voters that had been divergent up to that time. The law and the changing of the international political situation require a leader that is able to sum up the above-mentioned characteristics and be the protagonist of an electoral coalition. It seems that Romano Prodi is the right person to fulfill this task<sup>174</sup>. He is a Christian democrat but without being a member of the party leading class and he keeps himself far from the logic of division of the Christian democracy. Prodi is considered as an equilibrium point between different traditions, therefore from that moment on, he begins to think concretely about being involved in active politics, and a few weeks later announces his decision to get on the field. His goal is to create a group that may gather the energy coming from the centre-left bloc. He meets some people coming from the political and cultural world and draws the idea (which came to nothing almost immediately) to run for the local elections of 1995 in Emilia Romagna. The Ppi leader Rocco Buttiglione reacts reluctantly<sup>175</sup> to the will of the former President of Iri to run for the elections. For his part, Prodi takes his time to study the correct strategies, being conscious of how fast Italian politics evolves. On September 13<sup>th</sup>, Prodi meets Massimo D'Alema before the debate in Emilia, and on the early days of December, discusses the mistakes of the centre and progressive blocs and analyses the possible strategies<sup>176</sup> to adopt with the President of Tuscany Vannino Chiti,

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<sup>174</sup> F. Prodi, Romano Prodi, *Insieme*, Edizioni San Paolo, Milano, 2005, pp. 126-130.

<sup>175</sup> *Ma a Prodi e D'Alema dico: l'unica alternativa siamo noi*, in "la Repubblica", August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>176</sup> M. Damilano, *Chi ha sbagliato più forte. Le vittorie, le cadute, i duelli dall'Ulivo al Pd*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2013, pp.45-50.

the President of Emilia Romagna Antonio Lo Forgia, Edmondo Borselli, his friend and collaborator Arturo Parisi, and the young director Dario Franceschini in the headquarters of Nomisma in Bologna. The more the crisis of Berlusconi government deepens, the more Prodi tries to rapidly find a new solution that is different from those that have already been proposed. On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Cavaliere resigns and the idea of Prodi being the new President becomes increasingly firm.

Although the right wing wants to go to the voting ballot, the ability of the Pds ruling class, which leads the opposition in Parliament, is to permeate the fracture of a heterogeneous coalition, hoping to start a transitional phase that would have ended with a centre-left cabinet. During those days, D'Alema tries to find an agreement with the Ppi and the League<sup>177</sup> to form an alternative majority to that of Berlusconi: a government nominated by the President of the Republic and supported by the *ribaltone*<sup>178</sup>, that is an outturn of the majority, of the elections of the previous March.

One of the early names that circulates in the appropriate fora is that of Romano Prodi<sup>179</sup>, which was rejected<sup>180</sup> almost immediately. The League, which considers itself as the symbol of the fight against the old parties, does not share the idea to cast the vote of confidence to a Christian democrat, therefore another name has to be chosen. One of the greatest exponents of the Ppi, Beniamino Andreatta, clarifies that the alternatives<sup>181</sup> are the following: a possible government in the hands of an opponent of the former majority, or to a moderate party member, that could be a centrist exponent of the former majority. It is Silvio Berlusconi himself that announces to the Head of the Italian State Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, the name of the moderate liberal Lamberto Dini, who is already Minister of Treasury, as the new leader of the executive. He takes the oath of office on January 17<sup>th</sup> together with twenty ministers

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<sup>177</sup> M. D'Alema, *Controcorrente*, cit., p. 38.

<sup>178</sup> V. Testa, *Vogliamo un Silvio Secondo*, in "la Repubblica", January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>179</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Prodi: un cattolico che piace a Bossi*, in "la Repubblica", December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>180</sup> R. Luna, *Bossi oppure Bobo? La lega va alla conta*, in "la Repubblica", December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>181</sup> G. Sabbatini, *Si è in gioco la democrazia*, in "la Repubblica", January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

without any political past, except of Susanna Agnelli, who had worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>182</sup>.

This is an interim government created in a perfect parliamentary and constitutional harmony, but in complete opposition to the majoritarian ideas that had characterized the electoral clash a year before. The new President arrives in the Chamber of Deputies on January 25<sup>th</sup>, and obtains 302 votes in favour, 39 in against and 270 abstentions. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995 he receives 191 votes in favour at the Senate. The progressive and popular members together with the League support the executive committee; the right-bloc abstains and Rifondazione comunista votes in against: the general idea seems to be to go to vote as soon as possible, at least by the end of the year<sup>183</sup>.

### ***II.3 Come forward, Romano!***

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the day after the vote of confidence, the Ppi parliamentary leaders of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate hold a meeting to talk about the recent political situation and the future possibilities. Also Romano Prodi is invited to participate in the meeting, and is rapidly chosen as a possible leader of a centre-left coalition<sup>184</sup> in the presence of other important personalities such as Beniamino Andreatta, to whom Prodi has been assistant, Sergio Mattarella, Leopoldo Elia and Rosa Russo Jervolino. Reactions have been contrasting: on one hand, the Italian socialists, Mario Segni and other local leaders of the Ppi, like Rosy Bindi, happily accept the news; on the other hand, the national leader of the Ppi and other personalities react unfavourably, therefore a long argument inside the party begins and will be led to the court. Even the new allies of the government, the members of the Democratic party of the left, are caught off guard by this proposal; they try to be on the same page, but they start to disagree on Prodi's candidacy. D'Alema is not enthusiastic about the way in which the candidacy of Prodi has been

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<sup>182</sup> Simona Colarizi, Marco Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., p. 68.

<sup>183</sup> P. Calandra, *I governi della Repubblica. Vicende, formule, regola*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1996, p. 523

<sup>184</sup> G. Luzi, *Arriva Prodi l'anti-Berlusconi*, in "la Repubblica", February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995.

announced, while Veltroni acknowledges the possibility to put forward a democratic party that includes all the cultures of the Italian left wing<sup>185</sup>, soon after the defeat at the congress. Although there was no immediately general support to the project, Romano Prodi decides to follow a path characterised by political study and schedule with the aim to become the Prime Minister of Italy, hoping to go to vote as soon as possible<sup>186</sup>.

However, at first it is important to focus on the political project. They start focusing on form, reality, choice of members, proposals, alliances, symbols. In the following days, they think about a possible name that in the future might be approved by the Italians<sup>187</sup> and the political forces of the same area. They look for someone characterised by solidity (that Italy lacks), hope and culture, sided by the symbol of the Oak that represents post-communists. They turn out to choose the Olive tree<sup>188</sup>, which is well rooted in the history of Italy and because it grows from North to South, therefore it unifies the country, symbolizes peace and is as solid as the proposal for Italy. It is not well known whether the Olive tree is a symbol that may represent a list, a new political party or a different personality<sup>189</sup>. However, what is clear is that it is important to build a community that respects the values of solidarity of the centre-left wing and that sees itself as part of this project in order to know how to take action at the appropriate time. It is even said that the Head of State Scalfaro accepts the candidature<sup>190</sup> of Romano Prodi advanced by the populars: this is an important sign that brings the candidate to try.

It is an equipe formed by about ten people among friends and collaborators of Romano Prodi to help him put the project into practice. To be precise, the ruling class faithful to him is mainly composed by Gianclaudio Bressa, Pier Vittorio Marvasi, Andrea Papini, Arturo Parisi, Gianni Pecci, Giulio

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<sup>185</sup> G. Buccini, *Veltroni: credo negli uomini nuovi*, in "Corriere della Sera", February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>186</sup> V. Monti, *Ma Romano prepara il Partito democratico*, in "Corriere della Sera", February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>187</sup> F. Fantozzi, Parisi: *l'Ulivo germogliò in San Petronio*, in "l'Unità", February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

<sup>188</sup> M. Marozzi, *Quell'estate di 20 anni fa quando nacque l'Ulivo*, in "Corriere della Sera", July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

<sup>189</sup> G. B., *Segni, un nuovo partito può nascere*, in "la Repubblica", February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>190</sup> G. De Rosa, *La transazione infinita. Diario politico 1990-1996*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1997, p. 152.

Santagata, Silvio Sircana and Giorgio Calò<sup>191</sup>, the majority of whom has private work, intellectual or local political experience, but no experience in national party politics. On February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1995, the “Comitato per l’Italia che vogliamo”, whose President is Gianni Pecci<sup>192</sup>, is formed in Bologna, and aims at gathering the support of those people who believe in a new political project that is connected to the majoritarian-bipolar systems and far from the traditional party systems; those people want to help the political proposal of Romano Prodi that is still in progress. The first objectives defined by the Committee are the following: growth and development of democracy, economy and civil society in Italy<sup>193</sup> and in Europe. Their outline becomes the main reasons of the support to Prodi. It is a way to conceive the political competition that is focused on the personalization of the discussion, which does not define the structure of support, but is instead focused on building a program. Indeed, it is specified that the Committee is not a party, but a group of people that are willing to devote a part of their free time to debate and proposals. Creating a Prodi's party is the object of a tight discussion at the meeting, but it does not concern the committees, which are aimed at unifying the "civil society<sup>194</sup>" they often refer to. In this respect, the similarities with Forza Italia are not got by, and are different. The adopted method is top-down and replies to the political set formed by Berlusconi in 1994. Perhaps, using the expression *berlusconization* of the system can be exaggerate, but the personalization of the left in the political competition through its specific means has to be underlined. More specifically, the means in question are: *leaderism*<sup>195</sup>, that is the verticalization of the discussion; a highly-qualified group of experts, the personnel that support the leader; a system of polls that is used as a reference point (which in this specific case have been assigned to the guide of Calò); an organizational process that belongs to the centre and

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<sup>191</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell’Ulivo*, cit., p.105.

<sup>192</sup> *ivi*, p.121.

<sup>193</sup> Comitato per l’Italia che Vogliamo, *Statuto – Articolo 2*, Bologna, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1995. [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it)

<sup>194</sup> A. Caporale, *Nel nome di Prodi nasce il Polo dei Democratici*, in “la Repubblica”, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>195</sup> M. T. Meli, *Scende in campo Prodi, sfida alla destra*, in “La Stampa”, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995.

spreads widely through the country; and the purposes established by the main ruling group instead of the citizens to whom the Committee refers.

#### ***II.4 The issue of identity: the Committees between a movement and a party***

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, during a discussion with the main leaders of the centre-left bloc, the ruling class opposing to the right wing makes a historic decision in a theatre not far from *Montecitorio*. In presence of some intellectuals that support the progressive culture such as, Ettore Scola, Rita Levi Montalcini and Vittorio Foa, the leader D'Alema pronounces an investiture speech for Romano Prodi, and says:

“We assign you our strength. It is made of the votes of a third of Italians and of 700.000 women and men that joined *la Quercia* (the Oak).”<sup>196</sup>

This speech has surprised many present people, especially the centre allies, and a key moment for the history of the centre-left bloc arrives: the main party of the group, whose symbols are hammer and sickle, announces that Romano Prodi, of Christian democrat origins, is the Prime Minister candidate<sup>197</sup>. Therefore, the coalition against which the right-wing will run during the following elections<sup>198</sup>, which period is still unknown, has been formed. Those words include a key point that reveals D'Alema's frame of the issue. Bestowing force means neither declaring the abandon for a new leader, nor organizing confusingly their own political legacy in favour of a new leader. It means instead partially handing over their sovereignty on the part of the parties for a desired personalization of the system<sup>199</sup>; it does not take away the power from the groups, who, like a rubber band, can restore their

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<sup>196</sup> V. Monti, *D'Alema abbraccia Prodi: nostro premier*, in “Corriere della Sera”, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>197</sup> P. Corrias, *Professore sarà premier*, in “La Stampa”, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>198</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Caro professore, lei è il leader*, in “la Repubblica”, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>199</sup> R. D'Alimonte, A. Chiaramonte, *Il nuovo sistema elettorale italiano. Le opportunità e le scelte*, in *Mayritario ma non troppo*, il Mulino, Bologna, 1995, pp. 37-81.

sovereignty in case of strong disagreements. Basically, the reduction of parties is not a gift or a contract in favour of third parties but is structured as a pure alliance. The Pds sides with other parties of the left and of the democratic centre, and finds in Prodi the temporary leader<sup>200</sup>, nothing but the official president of the pact. This is the point from which a shared program should be designed.

After having obtained the support of the left wing, the dream of a political representation of a vast area<sup>201</sup> may come true. This representation is not populist but popular, reformist, progressive, secular and catholic, and capable of being the rival of the right bloc. The problem related to the people that should side with the leader becomes central within the coalition, especially inside Prodi's ruling class. The "Comitato per l'Italia che vogliamo" is a concrete reality but needs to become part of the whole nation. The real problem lies in the issue related to how the people, who feel to be part of the Committee but are not card-carrying, should be considered. The question is: should or should not the Ulivo party be created? On April, Prodi's staff consult the Italian legal expert Paolo Barile in order to have clarifications related to the public financing to the parties, implying that the party of Prodi is quite ready. Barile specifies that the Statute of the "Comitato per l'Italia che vogliamo" cannot be considered as legally equivalent to a political party but clarifies that he knows about the hypothesis to create a parallel subject that is coherent with the message that the Committee wants to convey and that will be officially presented at the electoral competitions. It is a real list that is linked to the job of the Committee but differs from it at the same time<sup>202</sup>.

It is not a simple discussion about who has to put forward the proposal, which has not been written yet and needs to be agreed with the other subjects, but about a fundamental dynamic that is related to the message to convey to citizens. On one hand, the party as an instrument of mediation between the

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<sup>200</sup> F. Verderami, *D'Alema: con Prodi si può vincere*, in "Corriere della Sera", April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>201</sup> V. Monti, *Prodi: il mio non è un sogno matto*, in "Corriere della Sera", April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>202</sup> Andrea Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., pp. 103-105.

requests of the citizens and State institutions, therefore the filter of the ruling class<sup>203</sup>, has been demonized by the discredit campaign and the judicial enquiry. On the other hand, it is impossible not to acknowledge the importance that it has had for decades for the development and the safeguard of the democracy of the country. Being part of a party also means to find a community that sees itself represented by a leader, like an army for his general officer, so that his guide role may be preserved during tough moments. It is a role of protection and legitimization that a community may perform in any situation, especially in the event of attacks that might be internal or external to the coalition. The higher is the number of the people composing the community of membership, the more legitimate it is, and the purchasing power with their allies rises during the times of choice<sup>204</sup>. The problem is to give citizens the possibility to employ their democratic power, otherwise there would be no State in which the "prince" might exercise his role; he could have a people but risks not to have the means to guide their energy.

Against the creation of the Ulivo party there are those who argue that what comes from the personality of Prodi is a totally new element. This novelty, compared to the party-based system, that had been the base of the Italian government up to that time, fascinates a part of the ruling class, which, despite some polls in favour of the "party option", is convinced that is able to represent something more. The goal is to gather the "unimportant society", that is those men and women who are tired of partitocracy but that are active in the social sphere, associations and parishes and that consider Romano Prodi as a representative personality of their world. He is a bridge between different cultures and different ways of seeing political work, the added value to the coalition. It is thought that this added value, together with an intense program and cooperation activity with the committees intended to be developed, can increase the consensus for the coalition. The Ulivo is an important and

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<sup>203</sup> S. Pupo, *Partiti come comunità intermedie e Stato moderno in Costantino Mortati*, in "Nomos. Le attualità del diritto", 3, 2015, pp. 77-82.

<sup>204</sup> G. Ballardini, *Segni: l'Ulivo non può crescere sotto la Quercia*, in "Corriere della Sera", April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1995.



original reply to the need on the part of the left bloc to develop a socio-cultural unity, before any political strategy.

Although the different ideas about the topic influence also the intellectual world<sup>205</sup>, a decision needs to be taken rapidly in order to organize the tasks accordingly<sup>206</sup>. Arturo Parisi may be considered as the leader of the front in favour of the party, but Giulio Santagata, who connects Prodi with local structures that want to be part of the program, is for the "added value". Santagata himself tells about a stormy meeting<sup>207</sup>, which was the last one about that topic, and took place in Bologna, when Arturo Parisi gives up to the new idea of Prodi as a link of many identities instead of a classic party leader. The idea of the "added value" as a possible propulsive thrust of the coalition wins<sup>208</sup>.

During those hours, the hypothesis that the centre-left coalition may be the prototype for something deeper in which investing during the following years is formulated within the ruling class of Prodi, taking into account the majoritarian and bipolar systems. They argue that the arrival point of a matured democracy is the alternation, therefore the presence of two groups, without many political parties in the field. According to the idea of Prodi's supporters, the changing of the Italian Democracy system is not only bipolarization, but the two-party system, that would make the former stronger by taking into account another value: governability. The fact that many parties support the creation of a coalition may force the committee to continuous mediation attempts, which is not always possible, and the risk is to weaken the executive up to its fall. The presence of one party that sums up its reference cultures<sup>209</sup> in a series of proposals is the point of arrival of a democracy that has overcome its transitory period. Naturally, it is not only about a long-perspective thought that is not shared by the whole ruling class,

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<sup>205</sup> E. Galli della Loggia, *L'Ulivo di Prodi o Garibaldi*, in "Corriere della Sera", May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995.

<sup>206</sup> M. Gaggi, *Romano: sì a Bossi. Bertinotti? Vedremo*, in "Corriere della Sera", April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>207</sup> M. Gaggi, *Romano: sì a Bossi. Bertinotti? Vedremo*, in "Corriere della Sera", April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>208</sup> L. Ricolfi, S. Testa, *Il mito del valore aggiunto dell'Ulivo*, in "il Mulino", 2, 2002, pp. 232-242.

<sup>209</sup> W. Veltroni, *Un'Italia unita, moderna e giusta*, in "la Repubblica", June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

but also about something that is rationally reachable only in time and by means of careful analyses linked to one's own different traditions and to the points of agreement<sup>210</sup>. But before that, it is important to think about the way to consolidate the coalition, which is the real test ground of contrasting cultures.

## ***II.5 The structure of the committees***

When starting to organize the tasks for the "Comitati per l'Italia che vogliamo", Prodi's staff define the roles: the organization of the Program is given to the President Gianni Pecci and Andrea Papini; the coordination of the committees is given to Gianclaudio Bressa, while Pier Vittorio Masi and Silvio Sircana are entrusted with the Press and Communication sector, and Giulio Santagata<sup>211</sup> with the organization of the "Viaggio in Centro Città" sector. To be precise, Santagata, who has a staff composed of five people, has the delicate task to be the connecting man with the organization centre, being conscious that the "city centre" project aims at being the point of departure to enlarge the consensus for Prodi. Indeed, by means of a bus journey throughout Italy, Romano Prodi wants to start a first real electoral campaign in order to better understand Italian social and productive situations and to increase his visibility. This is the moment to let the "Comitati per l'Italia che vogliamo" grow, which in May will count 2,500 units throughout the country. The objective of the staff is to reach 5,000 units before the forthcoming national elections, taking into account some guidelines that have been given to increase growth and capillary distribution. The committees are linked to the central Committee, which is located in Bologna, but they do not depend on it<sup>212</sup>. They develop like cells and have to arise spontaneously, without any

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<sup>210</sup> G. Merlo, *Pd: l'utopia del possibile*, Effatà, Cantalupa (To), 2008, pp. 98-102.

<sup>211</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., pp. 124-125.

<sup>212</sup> G. Bressa, A. Parlatore, *Ai comitati per l'Italia che Vogliamo di sostegno alla candidatura di Romano Prodi alla Presidenza del Consiglio*, in *La storia dell'Ulivo: la costituzione dei comitati*, la Comunità per l'Ulivo, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it).

authorization or imposition from the centre. The participants in the committees have to choose autonomously to follow the program elaborated by Prodi; as a consequence, the creation or the breakup of a committee is something that can only be recognised. In this respect, the committee is formed by between 20 and 30 people in order to make the management easier and to let different opinions be exchanged easily. The coordinators, who are divided between Rome and Bologna headquarters, would like to establish a different communication compared to that of Berlusconi, who mainly uses television. The line of face-to-face communication, which is preferred and favours the meeting with every voter<sup>213</sup>, is exposed by Prodi and his program in every headquarter. For this reason, small and non-dispersive committees are preferred, so that everyone can give their opinion about each point exposed by Prodi. The points in question are nothing but the guidelines that have been presented some months before in the magazine "Micromega"<sup>214</sup>, in which the leader of the coalition publishes an article where he draws his strategy for a possible Italian government; the text has then been posted on an online forum and has become available to all members. In order to enlarge the number of members of the movement, communication has been focused on a periodical, the fortnightly "L'Italia che vogliamo", which was published around seven times between 1995 and 1996 and sided with a series of summer courses hosting no more than 600 enrolled each during summer 1995.

Exactly like a party, the movement has members in the territory as well. More specifically, the ruling group has appointed 98 local coordinators as a reference point for the organization centre in relation to the development of the different cells spread throughout the country.

Like a local leader of a party, the coordinator of the movement has an essential role, not only because he resolves disagreements between the members, but also because he oversees the work and manages the relations with other realities of the territory, such as parties or associations. These directors, who are often selected among the political-intellectual class of the country, are

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<sup>213</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Prodi, la politica senza Tv*, in "la Repubblica", March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>214</sup> R. Prodi, *Governare per cambiare*, in "Micromega", October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1994, pp. 7-22.

trusted by the Prime Minister candidate, and receive important management powers. Indeed, out of 98 persons, 18 persons chosen for this role are university professors, among whom there is Valerio Onida, the future President of the Constitutional Court, and Omar Calabrese, a famous sociologist that contributed to theorize about the system of communication of the committees. There are different politicians that immediately believe in the project, so much so that they become central to it. Some of them are: the mayor of Messina Franco Provvidenti, the young future Prime Minister and student of Andreatta, Enrico Letta, who is responsible for the committees in Tuscany, and Giovanni Procacci, the future member of Parliament up to 2013, who is responsible for Puglia<sup>215</sup>.

Thus the first real tour of the electoral campaign begins, a journey of the city centre, on which a docufilm for the campaign<sup>216</sup> will be created. The coach, which is fine to host the staff, is chosen as the means of transport. There are some chairs, a bathroom, and a small sofa where Prodi can have a rest from time to time<sup>217</sup>. The first stop, which has been haphazardly<sup>218</sup> chosen, is Puglia, from March 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, 1995. The first municipality is Tricase<sup>219</sup>, followed by Foggia, Acquaviva, Masagne and Casamano. The objective is to analyse the production facilities of the country, that is the small and medium enterprises that have been the object of intensive academic studies on the part of Prodi, in order to understand their resources as well as their difficulties. It is an electoral campaign, but it is also an occasion to analyse the situation from the point of view of a Prime Minister. During the first month, the Veneto region, one of the engines of the country and land of the League, is another stop. Here, they go to Marghera<sup>220</sup>, the symbol of Northern-East workerism. Then, he also goes to Marche, Abruzzo, Tuscany and Sicily<sup>221</sup>, the latter

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<sup>215</sup> *I coordinatori regione per regione*, in "l'Unità", May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995.

<sup>216</sup> Comitato per l'Italia che vogliamo, *In viaggio per cento città* (1996), [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it), 1996.

<sup>217</sup> M. Rebeschini, *In pullman con Prodi*, Moderna, Bologna, 1995, p. 5 and on.

<sup>218</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Il professore alla scoperta del profondo sud*, in "la Repubblica", March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>219</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Il tour de force di Prodi: "Faccio come Gandhi"*, in "la Repubblica", March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>220</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Prodi tra le tute blu di Marghera*, in "la Repubblica", March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>221</sup> *Il Professore a Capaci: "Più lavoro senza mafia"*, in "la Repubblica", May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1995.

visited from May 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> , and "Padania"<sup>222</sup>, from May 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>. The coach journey of Italy ends in Bologna, with the "Festival dell'Unità", where the red colour of socialism meets the white one of catholic solidarism<sup>223</sup>. However, there is also another important stop: the first Ulivo convention, which hosts more than 10,000 people<sup>224</sup> in Naples. The date is June 17<sup>th</sup>, at the San Paolo stadium, in presence of Walter Veltroni, the Mayor of Naples Antonio Bassolino, and the leader of socialists<sup>225</sup> Valdo Spini. No leader of any other party participates, which means that the propaganda campaign of the committees, whose structure is similar but not identical to that of a party, has not been totally appreciated. But above all, it seems to be the symbol of another dividing line between the Ulivo as a coalition and the sovereignty of parties. This contrast is everything but useful for the unity of the left wing. Prodi himself talks to the crowd during his speech, but addresses the leaders of the coalition parties, by inviting them to behave as a unified and sole group<sup>226</sup>, being conscious that they run individually according to proportional representation, but the majoritarian electoral system offers 75% of seats to candidates from the whole centre-left bloc.

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<sup>222</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Prodi, un professore nella tana lumbard*, in "la Repubblica", May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>223</sup> L. Nigro, *Lo zoccolo duro del centrosinistra*, in "la Repubblica", April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>224</sup> M. Smargiassi, *I diecimila di Prodi battezzano l'Olivio*, in "la Repubblica", June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>225</sup> S. Marroni, *Il professore e i segretari*, in "la Repubblica", June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>226</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Prodi alle prime battaglie. Il rebus delle candidature*, in "la Repubblica", June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

## ***II. 6 The body is taking its shape***

Committees, that are formed without the need to be authorized by the organization centre<sup>227</sup>, can even choose their name. Indeed, "Comitato per l'Italia che vogliamo" is the name of the project as a whole and comes from a study that suggests that even when choosing a name, one has not to be superficial. It is not by chance that the word "committee" implies grouping people, but it is not sided with the word "party"<sup>228</sup>, in order to avoid falling into the trap of ambiguity. The word "per" (for) sounds like a symbol of a movement that wants to be an alternative, a study whose purpose is to put forward something that makes things better, without thinking to be *contra personam*. The phrase "Italia che vogliamo" (the Italy that we want) is related to the feeling of national unity, in this case the centre-left unity; the "that we want" part implies the collective participation in the project. Each word has a specific function. From a local point of view, each cell tries to find its name, some of which are connected to political culture, such as the "Liberal democrats", the "Progressisti anonimi" (Nameless Progressives), the "Lib-Lab"; others are related to thematic fields such as "l'Università che vogliamo"<sup>229</sup> (the University that we want), or "Per il carcere che vogliamo" (For the prison that we want). Some names of committees are those of specific places, such as the "Teatro Massimo Bellini" (Massimo Bellini Theatre), or the "Biblioteca Nazionale" (National Library) in Florence; other names are devoted to important personalities such as "Benedetto Croce", "Roberto Ruffilli" and "Ilaria Alpi". There are even the funny ones, such as "il Fagiolo per l'Ulivo" (The bean for the Olive Tree) or "i Perplexi per Prodi" (The perplexed for Prodi).<sup>230</sup> At the end of 1995, the members of the committees amount to about 59,800; this number was intended to grow by 6,000 units before early days of February 1996, with a 18% participation only in the Lazio

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<sup>227</sup> La Comunità per L'Ulivo, *Nota esplicativa delle modalità cui attenersi nel reperimento delle risorse economiche*, in *La storia de L'Ulivo: la costituzione dei comitati*, [www.perluivo.it](http://www.perluivo.it)

<sup>228</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Prodi: "No, non farò un partito."*, in "la Repubblica", April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>229</sup> W. Dondi, *Cresce il movimento per L'Ulivo. 30 comitati al giorno*, in "l'Unità", May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995.

<sup>230</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., pp. 152-154.

region. Romano Prodi claims the cultural diversity of the committee members by saying that the fact that in 3299 places of debate (data registered on November 1995), people of catholic and democratic, socialist and reformist, and liberal democrat managed to debate properly under the leaves of the Olive Tree is a value. They come from different cultures but believe in the same political project.

Committees are created as spontaneously as they break up. Only 44% of the early 100 committees will resist time, while the others will break up because of contrasts. The diversity of identities is a strength point for the Ulivo, but it is also a challenging element when having to structure the movement. It is not by chance that the centre had suggested that the groups should have been composed by no more than 30 people per cell. Supporting the leader may be what all the members share, but all the issues that the ruling class face become points of clash. For instance, the issue of identity is very important and divides those who support the need to create a purely political and autonomous subject, from those who want to preserve an exclusive-support structure for the leader. The dichotomy between party and movement becomes object of debate, that sometimes becomes stormy<sup>231</sup>, even in the main base. There are also those who argue that the essential element of the movement is to be qualified as a movement, leaving aside the idea of becoming a party and appearing as something brand new. Some members see this process as a new way to select the members of the future ruling class from the grass roots level, while others see also the "added value" as the best way to prepare themselves for the majoritarian competition. Furthermore, the debates in the committees are full of references to the possibility to become the source of a creation of a future Democratic party<sup>232</sup> in the bipolar and two-system view. One very interesting element is that they also think about the method to select the candidates at the single-member district, for example with primary elections, following the american model. The hypotheses for primaries are usually sided with the choice of the coalition leader, but some

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<sup>231</sup> M. Smargiassi, *E noi ci chiameremo Partito democratico*, in "la Repubblica", March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>232</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., pp. 166-167.

members of the base also propose the use of primaries for the selection of the single parliamentarians. This reasoning seems to be more linked to the vision of parties as big electoral committees instead of heavy organizations whose role is to choose the whole ruling class.

For many people, the majoritarian system implies that the idea of Prodi as a leader, who has been appointed by all the leaders of the coalition parties, is more than a simple addition of votes; therefore, if he won the elections, he might have the legitimacy and the strength to govern the country for five years. A huge part of the members argues that any *ribaltone*, which is typical of parliamentary democracy, is not going to happen and the system, in their opinion, starts to appear as *de facto* presidential.

## ***II.7 The base***

Analysing the kind of members of a movement often means to understand who can absorb more easily a political message. At the end of 1995, the leading group is conscious that the members of the committees constitute a varied group. 33% of the members, therefore a huge part, is around 40 years old, while 27% is around 30 years old. There are also few under 25 young adults, corresponding to 4.5%, while over 60 years old people reach 6%. Around 67% of the members is married, while 6%<sup>233</sup> is divorced. The staff is well conscious that their representatives, especially the local ones, do not represent every social class of the country, especially because of their medium-high cultural and social profile. This is an important element that helps understanding that the base of the "Comitato per l'Italia che vogliamo" cannot manage to represent the diverse left world all alone<sup>234</sup>. In relation to the labour market, 55% of the members is an employee, 31% of which is a state worker, in so building the "hard core" of the consensus that is typical of

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<sup>233</sup> *ivi*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>234</sup> M. Gilbert, *L'Ulivo e la Quercia*, in *Politica in Italia. Edizione 1996*, edited by M. Caciagli e D. Kertzer, il Mulino, Bologna, 1996, pp. 121-137.



the big left groups and that is part of many experiences of italian reformism. This is what Giovanni Orsina defines as "la croce e delizia" (pleasure and pain) of the centre-left italian parties: an important consensus that is difficult to decrease but also to increase<sup>235</sup>. Only 1% of the representatives comes from the labour force world.

Even in relation to the religious view it is important to learn that the catholic world is balanced by a fair amount of atheistic and agnostic people, that is 19.4%. Catholic members are around 50%, of which the majority belongs to the left bloc and the minority to the centre bloc. 50% of the members says to have had previous political experience, and some of them are simultaneously appointed with other offices inside the party. This last element shows that committees do not seem to be incompatible a priori with other political appointments. 68% of supporters is active in associations, meaning that they are part of those people who want to develop their personality in social promotion: a sort of identikit of the active citizenship that support the Ulivo<sup>236</sup>.

The topics are objects of contrast as well. Indeed, the main priorities of the Ulivo are ranked differently by the members. There are those who argue that unemployment should be the first evil to fight against, while others want that the centre-left bloc focuses more on constitutional reforms by changing the structure of a country that is still bounded to the post-war order. Obviously, the differences depend also on geographic areas: the North, which is richer than the South, is more focused on institutional reforms, while in the South, which has historically been in greatest need, the labour issue is vitally important. However, only 7.6% of the members sees the tax system as a strategic point, without putting it at the margins compared to more urgent issues<sup>237</sup>.

It is usual that a movement is formed by men and women with different experiences and that had previously experienced different political cultures.

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<sup>235</sup> G. Orsina, *Il Pd è molto stretto dentro un'identità sociologica, geografica e ideologica che è la sua croce e delizia*, Tagadà, La7.it, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

<sup>236</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., pp. 178-179.

<sup>237</sup> *ivi*, p. 180.

One of the values of movements is probably to manage to sum up heterogeneous experiences, going beyond divisions and looking for new identities. The "Comitati per l'Italia che vogliamo", which are the main support to Prodi's candidature, dare the traditional route of the members of a party, which is often characterized by structures that are similarly organized but whose members come from different cultural systems<sup>238</sup>. The committees guarantee instead a horizontal spread of participation, in which the organization offers a perspective of candidature that goes towards the top. It is not possible to challenge a leader with a congress motion. However, it is possible to discuss different issues together taking into account the diversity of experiences, as the membership cards of some participants show. This is the prototype of a party that aims at becoming the protagonist of a group, and has to make different people get along, seeing the process of decision as something that passes through a work of cohesion. This is the still-small dream of a possible Democratic party.

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<sup>238</sup> R. Biorcio, *Sociologia politica. Partiti, movimenti sociali e partecipazione*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2005, pp. 51-80.

## Chapter III

### **The transition phase**

### ***III.1 The catholic question***

#### *The first moves of the Church*

The Ulivo is mainly composed of catholics often politically and spiritually formed around those who gave a major contribution to the evolution of catholic thinking. The analysis of the catholic question of the nineties is extremely complex. However, the delineation of some of its traits allows to understand generally a matter that the coalition cannot, willingly or not, neglect.

Between 1974 and 1981, the clerical institutions are subjected to two major defeats: the referendum on divorce and that on abortion. In both cases a consistent part of the catholic movement votes contrarily to the Church directives, following the ongoing modernization process of the society. The catholic universe as a whole collides with secularization that is seen as threat by the most conservative wing. As a consequence, scholars such as Augusto del Noce and Gianni Baget Bozzo accuse the Christian Democracy of being co-responsible of the issue.<sup>239</sup>

Considering the catholic movement as the “set of organizational activities in the social and political realms carried out by laymen inspired by the Christian faith, in relation with the ecclesiastic hierarchy”, its internal pluralism of ideas and articulations cannot absolutely be denied.<sup>240</sup> The “governance” of the movement is not simple, but it tends to be synthetized in the common subjection to the papal figure, without which Catholicism cannot exist and vice-versa. In the eighties, the Episcopal Conference of Italy (CEI), established in 1952 by direct papal will, assumes the strategic role of leading, organizing and gathering the fragmented, albeit profoundly rooted, world of catholic activism, in the aftermath of the evidences brought by the referenda. Shortly before, in the middle seventies during the “national solidarity”, the Church has been focusing on how to contribute to the

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<sup>239</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *Chiesa e democrazia. La lezione di Pietro Scoppola*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2011, pp. 143-199.

<sup>240</sup> A. Canavero, *Chiesa e cattolici nell'Ottocento: un bilancio storiografico*, in *Rileggere l'Ottocento. Risorgimento e nazione*, edited by M. L. Betri, Comitato di Torino dell'Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano/Carocci, Torino-Roma, 2010, p. 53.

individual development on the grounds of dialogue and strengthening of the Italian democratic institutions.

For example, between October 30<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1976, an ecclesial convention was held in the EUR district of Rome with the title “Evangelization and human promotion” for whose conclusions the Jesuit father Bartolomeo Sorge was entrusted.<sup>241</sup> The latter claims the necessity to combine the announcing of the Gospel with the social and political commitment. He also asserts that integralism is the woodworm of the Gospel, since it is finalized at its corrosion, use and consumption and, in substance, to its destruction.<sup>242</sup> Also thanks to the contribute of intellectuals such as Pietro Scoppola, Achille Ardigò, Paola Gaiotti de Biase, Nicolò Lipari, Giuseppe Lazzati, the long convention demonstrated how catholic pluralism, in its entirety, is a resource to Christianity.<sup>243</sup> In defense of the opposite theses and in decisive minority, a young philosopher Rocco Buttiglione represents “Comunione e Liberazione”.

The early papacy of John Paul II is soon characterized by the desire to face an element of uncertainty of the Church, divided between the mediation and presence formulas which struggle to coexist. In the very first years of his pontificate, he decides to convey an image of a strong and solid institution, united in the defense of the faith, without the latter suffering the inferiority complex with respect to the dominant cultures.<sup>244</sup> The church has to be a “social force”<sup>245</sup> whose expressions reflect the awareness of an agonizing Italy, in perennial crisis, as in the case of the CEI document of October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1981 named “The Italian Church and perspectives for the Country”.<sup>246</sup> It is in this scenario that the ecclesial Convention is summoned in Loreto, between April 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 1985. There, through the papal guidelines

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<sup>241</sup> *Per un’animazione cristiana*, in “Avvenire”, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1976.

<sup>242</sup> L. Fumo, *La Chiesa: i cattolici, a titolo personale, possono aderire ai partiti non-cristiani*, in “La Stampa”, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1976.

<sup>243</sup> S. Magister, *La Chiesa di vetro*, in “L’Espresso”, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1976.

<sup>244</sup> T. Forcelllese, *Giovanni Paolo II e il mondo cattolico italiano*, in *Shock Wojtyla*, edited by M. Impagliazzo, p. 59.

<sup>245</sup> A. Acerbi, G. Frosini, *Cinquant’anni di Chiesa in Italia. I convegni ecclesiali da Roma a Verona*, EDB, Bologna, 2006, p. 146.

<sup>246</sup> CEI, *Enchiridion della Conferenza episcopale italiana, 3, 1980-1985*, EDB, Bologna, 1986, pp. 427-455.

announced on April 11<sup>th</sup>, a sentiment of strong reaction to secularization starts to be manifested, thereby officially developing the concept of affirmation of the identity and its principles.<sup>247</sup> Moreover, it is affirmed that “the faith shall have a guiding role and a leading efficiency in the journey of the nation towards the future”<sup>248</sup>, enunciating firmly the contrast to secularization as an irreversible process, that neither can be accompanied nor evangelized.<sup>249</sup> This is the context in which the CEI increases its vigor and it becomes fully entrusted of the Italian affairs, being enabled to directly refer to His Holiness without the mediation of the State Secretary.

In the middle of the nineties, the CEI manages to become a part of the historical 1984 Concordat, officially becoming an institutional subject. In order to revise the details of the regulations on ecclesiastical institutions and goods, after the accord signed by Bettino Craxi and Agostino Casaroli, a commission co-chaired by the bishop Attilio Nicora and the professor Francesco Margiotta Broglio is convened. The law enacting the revision will be passed the following year and provides an explicit recognition to the CEI in its art.13, clause 2.<sup>250</sup> It is not an insignificant detail since, together with judicial subjectivity, the institution is entitled to manage the proceeds of the “eight per thousand” (“8 per mille”). In substance, both juridical role and availability of resources increase.

Acknowledging its ever-increasing strength and the beginning of a process of regulation of catholic pluralism, the CEI has to face the nineties major global transformations implementing papal directives. The collapses of the communist world and of real socialism, for example, pose the serious question about the role of the Catholics, that cannot insist on the anti-communist propaganda anymore. In the September 30<sup>th</sup> 1991 public announcement in fact, it is declared that, despite the

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<sup>247</sup> C. Ruini, *Nuovi segni dei tempi. Le sorti della fede nell'età del mutamento*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005, pp. 7-13.

<sup>248</sup> CEI, *Riconciliazione cristiana e comunità degli uomini. Atti del II Convegno ecclesiale. Loreto 9-13 aprile 1985*, AVE, Roma, 1985, pp. 45-62.

<sup>249</sup> C. Ruini, *L'impatto di Giovanni Paolo II sull'Italia e sulla Chiesa italiana*, in *Shock Wojtyla*, edited by M. Impagliazzo, p. 449.

<sup>250</sup> I. Bolgiani, *La Chiesa cattolica in Italia. Normativa pattizia*, Giuffrè, Milano, 2009, p. 23.

failure of the communist ideology, those false ideas on freedom that tend to emarginate christian ethics and the traditions of the people in question continue to exist.<sup>251</sup>

Four days later, as a reaction to the first evidences of the judicial problematics afflicting Italy, the pastoral note of the Ecclesial commission of Justice and Peace (“Commissione ecclesiale Giustizia e Pace”) is issued.<sup>252</sup> The note underlines the loss of perceived morality in the conscience of many Italians and it will be accompanied, some time after, by an article of the Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini.<sup>253</sup> Tangentopoli arouses a certain scandal and a series of public notices send the message that the Church has also the task of reeducating the citizenship towards a certain statehood.<sup>254</sup>

Similarly, significant are the “Appeal to hope and responsibility” (“Appello alla Speranza e alla responsabilita”) in June 1992 and the Montecassino conference in September 1994 where Cardinal Ruini, elected as CEI President in 1991, proposes its cultural project oriented towards the christian sense.<sup>255</sup> Lucid realist with fine intelligence, he is aware that faith can constitute a unifying element for the country and that the Church itself has to fully perform its function of public institution. In accordance with John Paul II, he believes that the community he leads has to further explore the ethical and cultural transformation of those years, with the various anthropological derivatives which are related to the ongoing globalization process. This means to analyze the passage from the mass society to that of individuals, with evident political outcomes.

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<sup>251</sup> CEI, *Comunicato dei lavori del Consiglio episcopale permanente*, 30 settembre 1991, in *Enchiridion della Conferenza episcopale italiana*, 5. 1991-1995, EDB, Bologna, 1996, pp. 195-196.

<sup>252</sup> *Educare alla legalità*, *ivi*, p. 200.

<sup>253</sup> C. M. Martini, *Per restaurare la legalità violata*, in “Avvenire”, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1992.

<sup>254</sup> G. Brunelli, *Chiesa, società e politica: i cattolici e le prospettive del paese*, in “il Regno”, n. 687, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1994, pp. 92-93.

<sup>255</sup> C. Ruini, *Verità e libertà. Il ruolo della Chiesa in una società aperta*, Mondadori, Milano, 2008, pp. 29-44.

### *The catholics in politics*

The political disorientation of the early nineties leads the catholic component to adopt diverse choices. In October 1992, in the hope of starting an internal renovation capable of understanding the needs of modern times, Mino Martinazzoli is elected as Dc secretary and Rosa Russo Jervolino is entitled of the presidency. The events of “Mani Pulite” force many organizations to substitute many of their leaders in order to leave space to new personalities less involved in the scandals, linked to the moral question and, surely, not hit by the burden of “*damnatio gubernandi*”.<sup>256</sup> Among the more experienced believer leaders, in countertendency with respect to the traditional centrist position of the party, a group is convinced of having to give to Italy a new institutional asset, majoritarian and bipolar. The referendum initiative of the demo-christian Mariotto Segni has to be framed in this context and various are the intellectuals that look at the initiative with interest, as explicitly declared by Pietro Scoppola.<sup>257</sup> The pluralism of the catholic movement that is also strongly reflected on the political arena shows an opening towards a re-evaluation of the Western socialist experience, especially after the dissolution of the Pci and the foundation of a new leftist project. The magazine “Appunti”, to cite one, dedicates a copious issue to the new Pds where numerous catholic intellectuals intervene analyzing and approaching to the programmatic convergences with the new subject. Paola Gaiotti de Biase herself favorably comments on the pluralist nature of the new left in which many ethics converge, exactly as it shall be in an articulated and complex society<sup>258</sup>.

Meanwhile, the difficulty in supporting a profound change of the party leads to develop the concept of regeneration of the catholic identity in reference to the politics of Sturzo. Martinazzoli in fact decides to close the historical cycle of the Dc and to launch the project of the new Italian popular party. Although maintaining

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<sup>256</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *Cattolici e politica dalla prima alla seconda fase della storia repubblicana*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni '80 a oggi*, edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, Carocci, Roma, 2014, p. 196.

<sup>257</sup> P. Scoppola, *Un Patto per la riforma*, in “Appunti di Cultura e di Politica”, XVII, 1992, 2, pp. 1-3.

<sup>258</sup> P. Gaiotti de Biase, *Il tempo della modernità. Le politiche del Pds per sostenere le scelte delle donne*, ivi, pp. 4-16.



the matrix of catholic inspiration, the party aims at being more modern, more open to new transformations in the hope of transposing the best legacy of the Dc in the new political actor. Doubts arise also within that same world, considering that the Dc obtained 30% of the votes in the '92 elections as well as that it defends interests that risks dissolving through a drastic change. In the first weeks of 1994, Mario Gozzini expresses his perplexities about the hopes that the Ppi aims at offering<sup>259</sup>. Even the "Osservatore Romano" does not miss the opportunity to loudly support the necessity to reinforce a catholic pole in the Italian political scenario<sup>260</sup>.

The new party demonstrates the intention to remain in the centrist orbit, although the victory at the referenda and the electoral law push for a polarization of the system. To this end, the two extremist wings of the formation abandon the project moving either towards Berlusconi or towards the progressives. Pier Ferdinando Casini and Clemente Mastella, two young catholic leaders, form the Democratic Christian Center ("Centro cristiano democratico") and see Berlusconi their obvious point of reference in the majoritarian system. Alternatively, Ermanno Gorrieri, since the beginning closer to the values of social catholicism, creates the Social Christians ("Cristiano sociali") and decides to "catholicize" the Occhetto formation. Adding to this scenario the foundation of the Pact for Italy ("Patto per l'Italia") by Segni, created in open controversy with Martinazzoli leadership, it is easy to deduce that already in 1994, the catholic movement has definitely taken the road of the diaspora. Pietro Scoppola, in front of the current political scenario, manifests delusions and perplexities wondering whether Italy has forced a system's change in a political and electoral context that was still immature. Albeit sympathizing for the courageous choice of the ex-minister Gorrieri of openly siding with the post-communists, Scoppola understands that the berlusconian army, in that fragmented context, can prove decisive.<sup>261</sup> Actually, he anticipates the March elections' results, imagining the moods and feelings of most Italian electorate at the voting ballot.

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<sup>259</sup> M. Gozzini, *Oltre gli steccati. Cattolici, laici e comunisti in Italia*, Sperling e Kupfer, Milano, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>260</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *Il partito italiano. La Democrazia cristiana dal 1942 al 1994*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1996, p. 152.

<sup>261</sup> P. Scoppola, *Ancora transizione*, in "Appunti di Cultura e Politica", XIX, 1994, 2, pp. 1-6.

Also the League phenomenon contributes to the fragmentation of the catholic consensus, considering its rootedness in those northern territories that, once, were of demo-christian vocation<sup>262</sup>. The productive revolution of the precedent two decades has enriched a territory that for years had been an emigrating pole, developing a sense of belonging that overcame the traditional christian values<sup>263</sup>. The attention was shifted to sentiments of aversion towards the Southerners and the foreigners, orientations that had been alien to the logic of catholicism. Umberto Bossi manages to render those territories his own feud.

Berlusconi wins and the catholic alliance reduces by half its consensus with respect to the previous vote, forcing Martinazzoli to resign. Giuseppe Dossetti also makes himself heard again, afraid of a possible attack by the new rightist majority towards his “Costituzione”.<sup>264</sup> Rosa Russo Jervolino maintains her regent role for a few months until the election of the new secretary the CI Rocco Buttiglione, who sympathizes towards the Cavaliere moves<sup>265</sup>. The election of the philosopher as the leader of the new catholic party foresees that the objective of giving to Italy a new demo- christian reference point has been temporally set aside.<sup>266</sup>

Slightly after the creation of the Dini government in February 1995 Buttiglione signs an organic agreement with Forza Italia, also in reaction to the declarations of a big part of the ruling class, among which the party president Bianchi, about the support towards Romano Prodi. The Italian popular party has officially moved towards the right, but the National Council is immediately convoked with the task of ratifying the agreement. 102 are the contrary votes and 99 those in favor, therefore the motion is dismissed. Buttiglione contests an alleged irregularity and only a few days later the Council is convoked again to elect the new national secretary. The unanimous choice falls on Gerardo Bianco. The battle for the control

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<sup>262</sup> M. Marzano, *Il cattolico e il suo doppio. Organizzazioni religiose e Democrazia cristiana nell'Italia del dopoguerra*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 1996, pp. 279-280.

<sup>263</sup> P. Segatti, *L'offerta politica e i candidati della Lega alle elezioni amministrative del 1990*, in “Polis”, August 1992, p. 257

<sup>264</sup> U. Allegretti, *Dossetti, difesa e sviluppo della Costituzione*, in Giuseppe Dossetti. *La fede e la storia*, edited by A. Melloni, il Mulino, Bologna, 2007, pp. 67-146.

<sup>265</sup> C. Baccetti, *I postdemocristiani*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2007, pp. 78-81.

<sup>266</sup> G. De Rosa, *La transizione infinita. Diario 1990-1996*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1997, pp. 123-124.

of the party risks ending in court until, with an accord signed in the following weeks, Rocco Buttiglione is granted both the symbol of the crossed shield and the weekly newspaper “la Discussione”. He creates the new United Democratic Centre (“Centro Democratico Unito”). Gerardo Bianco instead, remains secretary of the populars and maintains the newspaper “il Popolo”.<sup>267</sup> Equal division is foreseen also for the traditional building in Piazza del Gesù. The catholic movement further fragments on the political arena but, this time, it is clearly divided towards two diametrically opposed directions.

### *Church and politics*

Buttiglione turns his gaze towards Berlusconi with the approval, it seems, of the Secretary of State Angelo Sodano<sup>268</sup> that somehow blesses the organic alliance of the Italian right from the Vatican.<sup>269</sup> Martinazzoli would have never moved his party towards Berlusconi, especially because of a series of structural divergences that have been detected before. He, in fact, resigned as Defense minister to oppose to the approval of the Mammi law of 1990, favorable to the role of Fininvest on the Italian broadcasting market.<sup>270</sup>

Anyway, being aware of the reduced force of the populars and the fragmentation of the catholic world, the Church continues his journey towards the cultural project oriented toward the christian sense<sup>271</sup>, something more than a reaction to the progressive dissolution of the Dc<sup>272</sup>. The Rome Church cannot identify politically in a party that has lost the relative majority of the consensus and decides to definitely launch a new line. In November 1995, the CEI organizes the third

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<sup>267</sup> C. Baccetti, *I postdemocristiani*, cit., pp. 92 and on.

<sup>268</sup> *La svolta di Rocco? Forse il Vaticano...*, in “la Repubblica”, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>269</sup> M. Politi, *Il cardinale Sodano apre le porte a Fini*, in “la Repubblica”, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>270</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *Cattolici e politica dalla prima alla seconda repubblica*, cit., p. 197.

<sup>271</sup> F. Bonini, *Progetto culturale orientato in senso cristiano*, in *Dizionario della comunicazione*, edited by D. E. Viganò, Carocci, Roma, 2009, pp. 960-970.

<sup>272</sup> A. Acerbi, *La Chiesa italiana durante il pontificato di Giovanni Paolo II*, in “il Regno”, 2004, 10, pp. 359-360.

ecclesial Convention in Palermo, where it expressly acknowledges the existence of new italian bipolar system, in front of which it refuses to take an official position. The Church decides not to be openly involved in a political formation or another, but to commit to be a strongpoint in defense of the so-defined “non-negotiable values of humanity”: the primacy and centrality of the person, the sacred and inviolable nature of life in every moment of the existence, the female contribution to the social development, the role and stability of the family revolved around marriage, social plurality and education freedom, particular attention to the weakest, freedom and inviolable rights of men and peoples, solidarity and social justice at global level.<sup>273</sup>

Actually, in the relationship between Church and politics, the new polar star is the principle of equidistance between the two blocs. It does not “take the field” for one or the other political formation but it defends, whenever necessary, those non-negotiable values that the Church is intended to promote. That vision of the Church-institution leads to the disintermediation in the relationship with society. The lack of a key party of christian matrix, composed of politicians, intellectuals and militants to confront with, forces the Church to maintain a line of direct impact with the society, catholic or not. The political-institutional relationships are all left to the CEI and the latter’s power increases by the moment it is understood that the catholic world is fragmented, the political unity of the catholic, as a principle, has been set aside but that catholicism is still there. Believers are there, and they are many and see in the clerical institution their reference point, not only in the theological-spiritual sense but also in the social one. From this standpoint, some are the accusations of “neogentilismo” and the references to the “non expedit”.<sup>274</sup> The latter is however dealt with as an issue in that same convention and it is declared substantially useless.

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<sup>273</sup> CEI, *Il vangelo della carità per una nuova società in Italia. Atti del III Convegno ecclesiale*, Palermo, 20-24 novembre 1995, AVE, Roma, 1997, pp. 60 and on.

<sup>274</sup> G. Rumi. *L'impegno sociale e politico. Introduzione del professor Giorgio Rumi ai lavori del secondo ambito*, ivi, p. 221.

In the nineties the political social-campaigns in protection of those non-negotiable principles are very harsh, as is the case of the document intended to mobilize the faithful in the anti-gay struggle,<sup>275</sup> or in case of the issue of the abortion pill for women. On this ground, the CEI finds a natural interlocutor in the berlusconian pole where the right, that pulls the centre and not vice-versa, becomes more radical on the religious question, arriving at publicly accusing the left of atheism.<sup>276</sup> The political realism of the Holy See manages to go beyond the behaviors, sometimes personal, sometimes collective, not properly in compliance with the canons of the good christian of some leaders of the centre-right alliance. Even the League finds some forms of backing in the ecclesial hierarchies, as in the case of the Como bishop Alessandro Maggiolini,<sup>277</sup> in particular in relation to the potential threat represented by the union of individuals with different religious beliefs due to mixed marriages.<sup>278</sup> In this scenario, the premier candidacy by Romano Prodi is not welcomed by the leaders of the CEI, despite the presence in the coalition of personalities such as Pietro Scoppola, catholic intellectuals of the editor “il Mulino”<sup>279</sup> and diverse clericals sided with the Bolognese Professor<sup>280</sup>, that see in the Ulivo a new hope and the realization of the project of the progressive catholicism, finalized at the enactment of profound social reforms.<sup>281</sup> This attitude by part of the Vatican will be determinant also for some deep human fractures, as in the case of Camillo Ruini himself that had officiated the wedding of Romano Prodi.<sup>282</sup>

The demo-christians, disunited by now, are no more determinant in their unitary dimension, but they are not necessarily condemned to a definitive irrelevance. Beyond the role of the Church as institution and social force, the Cardinal Ruini

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<sup>275</sup> *Vaticano contro i gay: “lontano da scuole, famiglie e sanità”*, in “Corriere della sera”, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1992.

<sup>276</sup> *Fini: “Non votate l’ateo D’Alema”*, in “la Repubblica”, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>277</sup> D. Soresella, *Cattolici a sinistra*, cit., p. 183.

<sup>278</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., p. 71.

<sup>279</sup> E. Berselli, *Post-italiani, Cronache di un paese provvisorio*, Mondadori, Milano, 2003, p. 125.

<sup>280</sup> L. Ciotti, *Quale Ulivo? Lettera aperta di un prete di strada a Romano Prodi*, in “Micromega”, 1, 1996, pp. 19-24.

<sup>281</sup> G. B. Bozzo, *L’intreccio. Cattolici e comunisti 1945-2004*, Mondadori, Milano, 2004, pp. 11-12.

<sup>282</sup> M. Politi, *E con Prodi vescovi divisi tra i due poli*, in “la Repubblica”, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

sets up another catholic strategy. In order to circumvent the majoritarian system and to continue to have a relevant role within the political debate, it suffices to place candidates close to the Vatican in both formations.<sup>283</sup>

It is enough to look at regional election in Lazio and Lombardy where Badaloni and Formigoni, both representatives of Comunione and Liberazione, win.<sup>284</sup> The Church manages to assume an advantageous position, similar to a lobby, decisively more convenient with respect to a party embodying catholic unity that Ruini never wanted to revive.<sup>285</sup>

Certainly, the vision of the CEI President is majoritarian and capable of influencing a significant part of the catholic world, but many are also the dissenting opinions. Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Cardinal Achille Silvestrini and a big part of the charitable world represent an example.<sup>286</sup> Those democratic catholics that disagree with the “ruinian” direction and the attitude of the pontificate based on the recovery of a certain integralist “catholic pride”, have certainly supported the candidacy of Romano Prodi and the Ulivo project. However, the Ulivo project, in the phase of the construction of an appropriate alternative for the country-system, is not able to conduct a careful analysis of those increasingly evident dynamics of separation between State and laity. An analysis of the relationship between Church and society seems not to be included on the agenda, with the consequence of negatively influencing the political project of the entire coalition. If it is true that the Church is defective in the analysis of the important political legacy that the Dc has provided to Italy; it is equally true that the rich tradition of the democratic-catholicism, of which Prodi and his are heirs, seems to progressively vanish in front of the absence of a deep understanding of the impact of the modern catholic world on society. The quasi-absence of such a reflection on the topic might represent an element of weakness for every political perspective.

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<sup>283</sup> G. Ferrara, *La Dc è morta, ma i dc “contano” dappertutto*, in “Corriere della Sera”, March 23<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>284</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., p. 73.

<sup>285</sup> C. Ruini, *Nei 150 anni dell'Unità d'Italia: prospettive*, Dehoniane, Bologna, 2011, p. 325.

<sup>286</sup> A. D'Angelo, *Il mondo del volontariato (1980-2010)*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, vol. II, edited by E. Asquer, E. Bernardi, C. Fumian, Carocci, Roma, 2014, pp. 113-114.

### ***III.2 The Mayors' movement***

Year 1993 not only gives the country the possibility to elect, on the first possible occasion, the national Parliament with the majoritarian system, it also allows the citizens to vote directly for the mayor candidate at the administrative elections. For the first time in Italy, a voter can support a candidate for the seat of first citizen, without the mediation of a list or a party. Substantially, the fate of the municipal council is strictly linked to that of the mayor. The one who obtains the majority of voting at the run-off, that is the second-round in case of the impossibility to reach 51% in the first voting, launches his five-years administration and continues as long as he is supported by the majority. The majority outturn (“ribaltone”) is not a possibility and, in case of a motion of no confidence or of resignation, the citizens are called again at the voting ballot. It is intuitive that this mechanism has strengthened the mayors' role, since their leadership is almost entirely dependent on the consensus they manage to gain on their territory. Legitimation for the winner is straightforward, ample and confers a political power which is unprecedented to the past. The governance within the municipalities is positively impacted in terms of stability and the politicians that win that type of electoral competitions starts looking with self-confidence at the wider national politics. The fact of having been legitimized by direct voting, more than having been subjected to the intermediation of the parties or associations, allows to launch political initiatives with greater autonomy with respect to the parties themselves.

It is not a coincidence that in 1994, Romano Prodi meets a series of local representatives such as Rutelli, Rome mayor and Enzo Bianco, Catania mayor, essential to understand the territory and useful to construct a network capable of involving first and foremost localism.<sup>287</sup> After a while, Massimo Cacciari, Venice mayor, makes a statement in which he affirms that the progressive bloc is not sufficient to win the elections and that it is necessary to try gaining also the votes of those individuals that do not necessarily associate to a leftist thinking<sup>288</sup>. The idea begins circulating that the big coalition to which the philosopher-mayor refers

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<sup>287</sup> G. Buccini, *Squadra pronta: c'è anche il bigliettaio*, in “Corriere della Sera”, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>288</sup> M. Smargiassi, *Cacciari: “per vincere basta coi Progressisti”*, in “la Repubblica”, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1994.

might be reinforced by involving those who have experienced collective cohesion on the basis of their own person. In short, the idea is that a group of mayors might be able to look at a proposal for the political elections<sup>289</sup>. Towards the end of 1994, a subsistent group of first citizens recognize the need to give their contribution to the formation opposing the right. For this reason, they gather in more than one occasion to give substance to the “National democratic convention” (“Convenzione democratica nazionale”)<sup>290</sup>. They express the necessity to give voice to a reformist culture, close to environmentalism and capable of combining the social-democratic thinking with the democratic-catholic one. Based on their personal political experience, they advance the desire of choosing the candidates of a possible coalition through the primaries, in order to give more space to the citizens. Someone begins supporting the project of the creation of committees throughout the national territory, first step for the establishment of an aggregation of plural forces. A proper party of the mayors seems to set in, with the objective of electing a mayor for Italy having, as main aim, to be a unifying element among the souls of the center-left. Exactly in those weeks, Romano Prodi was beginning his own political route, whose ideas seem to coincide with many points of the democratic convention: the two projects are destined to convergence. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1995, in fact Romano Prodi meets the leading group of the Convention in an event named “A mayor for Italy”. It is the moment in which the mayors’ movement officializes its support to the former Iri president<sup>291</sup>, finding out that they converge also on the hypothesis of the primaries. For the first citizens, the possibility of choosing the candidates in the uninominal constituencies is of fundamental importance, since the anomaly of a bipolar system that hides a larger political pluralism<sup>292</sup>.

The “proportionalization” of the majoritarian system starts to be considered as a risk and the primaries are seen as way to settle controversies and to limit compromises on the choice of the ruling class. Prodi himself receives some

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<sup>289</sup> *Noi sindaci pronti alla riscossa*, in “la Repubblica”, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>290</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell’Ulivo*, cit., pp. 182-189.

<sup>291</sup> S. Marroni, *I sindaci in campo: “Prodi leader delle cento città”*, in “la Repubblica”, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>292</sup> G. Pasquino, *La transizione a parole*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2000, pp. 219-225.



communications by the professor Oreste Massari<sup>293</sup> who underlines the importance of giving to the citizens the right to choose, comparable to the right to express their opinion in the referenda. An equal importance is attached to the question related to the Prodi "army". A coalition leader in fact has to be the synthesis of diverse political cultures that is expressed through a programme. The defence of both the program and the leader is up to the ruling class. Some representatives of the Mayors' movement ask to the coalition to provide to Romano Prodi the appropriate number of candidates that, not only recognize themselves in the project in the electoral campaign, but also is able to defend the leader throughout the legislature. The will is to find a way to solve the problem of the absence of a Prodi party. The support of the Mayors' movement to the Ulivo is one of the most interesting political novelties introduced by the coalition, as Massimo Cacciari himself affirms<sup>294</sup>.

### ***III.3 Heated atmosphere***

In an always increasing heated atmosphere, so much so that the stability of the Italian society seems undermined, as Prodi himself notices<sup>295</sup>, all the parties prepare to the imminent administrative elections of 1995, thereby postponing a possible dissolution of the Parliament to the aftermath of the elections. Gianfranco Fini definitively transforms the Msi in National alliance ("Alleanza nazionale") trying to purge the party from the fascist legacy and to appear as a new social and liberal right in the eyes of the citizens. "God, homeland and family" continues to be the codewords of the party, as demonstrated by the anti-abortion campaign in defense of the families carried out in front of the churches<sup>296</sup>. The leaders, however, consider themselves purified. At the Fiuggi congress in January 1995, that ratifies the death of the Msi, the authorities of the main opponent political forces, among which Pds and League, emblematically observe a minute of silence to remember the victims

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<sup>293</sup> O. Massari, *I partiti politici nelle democrazie contemporanee*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2004, pp. 121-149.

<sup>294</sup> M. Cacciari, *Manifesto per la nuova Italia*, in "Micromega", 1, 1996, pp. 7-12

<sup>295</sup> Prodi: "Ora la lotta minaccia la società", in "Corriere della Sera", January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>296</sup> *An davanti alle Chiese: il Ppi cede sull'aborto*, in "la Repubblica", February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

of Auschwitz<sup>297</sup>. The new party program is redacted by a known Italian political scientist, Professor Domenico Fisichella, but many of the militants of the tricolored flame will continue to feel nostalgic about the regime, despite those changes on the surface.

In April, 15 regions and 77 provinces go voting to elect their local representatives, leading to the centre-left victory in nine regional elections. In Tuscany the League that supports the Dini government with the Pds, aligns in the same coalition of the latter, while its consensus sharply decreases in its Lombardy where a six-point loss gave the party only the 14% of the votes<sup>298</sup>. The Ulivo is still in construction and it has not been experimented at the local election but, nonetheless, the centre-left coalition composed of the “traditional party” has obtained an important and favorable result. The parties seem to return and to get back their appeal on the territory<sup>299</sup>. Paradoxically, the premier candidate does not consider the result as an extremely positive one. The risk is that the old system might re-surge and that the various elements, still in the assemblage phase, might decide to do without the prodian project<sup>300</sup>. The successive proof is however the referendum on the ban of advertising spots in film, practically a direct vote upon Silvio Berlusconi and his broadcasting network. Walter Veltroni himself, main sponsor of the prodian project within the Pds, is entrusted to head the referendum committee, demonstrating that the very match is berlusconism against anti-berlusconism<sup>301</sup>. Many are the intellectual film directors aligned with Veltroni, but the personalization of the conflict ends to be a boomerang. Berlusconi strikingly wins, also thanks to the mobilization of his Fininvest<sup>302</sup>, and the parties set aside for a while the idea of anticipated elections.

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<sup>297</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., p. 69.

<sup>298</sup> *Per il Senatùr la sfilata della rivincita*, in “Corriere della Sera”, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>299</sup> A. Di Virgilio, *Le elezioni regionali e amministrative: bipolarizzazione con riserva*, in *Politica in Italia. Edizione 1996*, edited by M. Caciagli e D. I. Kertzer, il Mulino, Bologna, 1996, pp. 58-86.

<sup>300</sup> V. Monti, *Il leader del Pds ha ragione, però badiamo ai contenuti*, in “Corriere della Sera”, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1996.

<sup>301</sup> A. Chimenti, *Storia dei referendum*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1999, pp. 149-165.

<sup>302</sup> C. De Gregorio, *Fininvest è bello. Precettate le star per una tre giorni Tv*, in “la Repubblica”, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

The perennial climate of electoral campaign reveals a nation practically divided in two factions with extremely uncertain results. The Pds decides to lessen the pressure for the dissolution of the chamber and to take longer time to delineate a more solid strategy<sup>303</sup>, looking not only at the centre but also to Rifondazione and the League. Bossi is repeatedly cajoled<sup>304</sup>, imagining of giving a future to the current majority supporting the Dini government, majority comprising also the current President of the Council. In the meanwhile, he continues his governmental journey reaching a historical agreement with the trade unions on the restructuration of the Italian retirement system, finalized to the re-balancing of public accounts<sup>305</sup>. In reality, the gradual increase of the retirement age seems to be insufficient to contrast the huge public debt and the inflation threat and the government is accused, by the entire right, of being not liberal enough<sup>306</sup>. However, the real problem of the government is still the political legitimation. Not only the executive was born with a proper “ribaltone”, although in compliance with the constitutional norms, but all the parties consider it a transitional executive, thereby unable to make major reforms given the absence of a solid parliamentary support.

Berlusconi, willing to take advantage of the events and calling to new elections<sup>307</sup>, claims the illegitimacy of the government, since it is a technical, non-political one and further stresses on the weakness of the executive and the need of changing the leader. In December, the financial law is approved and, exactly like one year before, the governmental experience closes there.

However, elections are not in the interests of all the parties. D'Alema and Berlusconi, unexpectedly seem ready to stipulate an agreement to change the “rules of the game” and the rightist leader opens to the possibility of renouncing to the immediate vote. The agreement can be based on a project of constitutional reform that allows for a shared modification of the rules of the game, entrusting the government to someone that is supported by both parties of the relative majority.

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<sup>303</sup> G. De Rita, *Se votassimo tra tre anni*, in “Corriere della Sera”, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>304</sup> D'Alema: “Preparatevi il voto non è lontano...”, in “la Repubblica”, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>305</sup> *Applausi dal “Financial Times”*, un accordo di portata storica, in “Corriere della Sera”, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>306</sup> P. Ignazi, *Il potere dei partiti*, cit., p. 188-190.

<sup>307</sup> G. Ferrara, *Vince il partito antielezioni*, in “Corriere della Sera”, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

The President of the Republic has already identified the profile: Antonio Maccanico, expert of the institutional practice to which an explorative mandate is conferred to probe on the support of the parliamentary groups. The hypothesis of a “broad-based government” (“larghe intese”) however finds the opposition either by the left or the right, with Gianfranco Fini that convinces his entire new Alleanza nazionale on the pro-vote faction<sup>308</sup>. According to someone, the choice not to vote would be nothing more than a way to wear down the figure of Romano Prodi who has been campaigning for months; therefore, various are the direct accusations moved towards D’Alema<sup>309</sup>. Prodi also strives to go to vote. Supported by an articulated network of committees formed in the last few months, he releases declarations almost everywhere in order not to let the Ulivo project die<sup>310</sup>. He is invited as guest on the first episode of “Porta a Porta” on Rai 1 hosted by Bruno Vespa<sup>311</sup>, where he reiterates its opposition to the Maccanico attempt, to the point of having renounced to governmental positions. As a response to a host’s question on the various hypothetical alliances, he repeats the concept of the Ulivo as something completely new, a wind of change for the country that has not been understood yet by many “palace journalists” (“giornalisti di palazzo”). He is also live guest in his friend Enzo Biagi program and gives interviews to almost all newspapers. He opposes the possibility of a broad-based government and pushes the public opinion to support anticipated elections. However, Prodi has neither a seat nor deputies that can represent his battle in the appropriate fora, therefore he seems to be playing his game on a completely alien field, far from the usual and strict logics of Italian politics<sup>312</sup>. The absence of a traditional party continues to weigh a lot on the fate of the professor, as many commentators suggest<sup>313</sup>. The objective of the Ulivo leader is however exactly this: contrasting the traditional politics of parties’ survival to contrapose a new party, belonging to the citizens

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<sup>308</sup> *Ma Fini aveva dato il via libera a Silvio*, in “la Repubblica, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>309</sup> *E adesso il tempo è scaduto*, in “la Repubblica”, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>310</sup> *Prodi: no alle larghe intese: potrebbero distruggere l’Ulivo*, in “la Repubblica”, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>311</sup> Rai Teche, “Porta a Porta” *compie 20 anni*, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, [www.teche.rai.it](http://www.teche.rai.it)

<sup>312</sup> G. Sartori, *Democrazia, burocrazia e oligarchia nei partiti*, in “Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia”, 3, 1960, pp. 119-136.

<sup>313</sup> A. Panebianco, *La strategia del Professore*, in “Corriere della Sera”, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995

rather than the members. The party of the committees that ask for the inclusion of the civil society to rebel to the palace intrigue<sup>314</sup>. The government seems close to its naissance on the basis of an agreement providing for a semi-presidential reform of the system, a sort of reference to the French model, but the other parties of the constitutional arch halt the attempt<sup>315</sup>. D'Alema confirms the idea that a constitutional reform has to be of parliamentary nature, hence it is important not to include such a reform in a government agreement. He also denies the possibility of an accord with the adversaries within the current legislature. Scalfaro acknowledges the impossibility to hold the legislature and send Italians to vote for new elections, scheduled on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1996<sup>316</sup>.

### ***III.4 The Program***

The discussion within the committees has for long been based on those points investigated in his article on “Micromega”, published in 1994.<sup>317</sup> The essential element of that set of directives is represented by Europe, main ambition of the entire ulivist formation. Meeting the Maastricht criteria; launching a significant series of reforms to rebalance Italian finance and to decrease public debt, is the decisive step to enter the euro zone; the soft state (“lo Stato leggero”), with a compatible welfare state and a particular attention to education are the immediately successive points. Prodi aims at liberalizing and rendering Italian economy more competitive. He is convinced that Italy had developed a form of capitalism that is not sufficiently mobile according to the new globalization pushes and sometimes immobilized on State participation. Therefore, it is necessary to diffuse the economic power by creating a plurality of oligopolies thereby opening to international competitiveness. According to the former Iri President, the focus on the small and medium enterprises is vital, while an organic perspective on the industrial asset of the country, in relation to large industries, is absent. Privatization

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<sup>314</sup> V. Monti, *Prodi: “Non smonto dall’Ulivo, né dalla bici”*, in “Corriere della Sera”, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1996.

<sup>315</sup> G. Ballardini, *Macchiano: fatale il modello francese*, in “Corriere della Sera”, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>316</sup> M. Caprara, *Prodi: torniamo al futuro*, in “Corriere della Sera”, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>317</sup> R. Prodi, *Governare per cambiare*, in “Micromega”, 4, 1994, pp. 7-22.

together with the idea to let the market operate seem to imply the absence of a global vision by the state, whose function is relegated to that of referee. The public is reduced in favour of the private, in the hope that the latter is able to produce wealth and to limit inequality on his own. Also the profound differences between the Italian North and South, at that moment, seem not to be structurally analyzed. More than a head-on intervention on the gap between the South and the rest of the country, the preferred approach seems to be that of facilitating investments of the small and medium southern enterprises, maybe with tax cuts.

On education, Prodi looks up the German model, that is an institution capable of creating competences, without relegating the technical schools to a marginal role in the Italian education system. First point to be reached is, moreover, the enlargement of compulsory schooling up to sixteen years old.

The relationship with Europe is fundamental not only in monetary terms but also in relation to the development of programmatic policies that would be shared and widened in a European context.

These are the main confrontation basis over which Ulivists discuss in the committees, aware of the fact that the professor has been motivated in the elaboration of those points by discussions with personalities of the caliber of Leopoldo Elia, Giovanni Sartori, Sabino Cassese and others.<sup>318</sup>

Also the institutional plan continues to be extremely relevant. The idea of reinforcing the principle of self-government of the local entities gains ground, as long demanded by the mayors, and to establish a Chamber of the regions that represent their instances. It means to change bicameralism and to introduce new principles of federalism. The powers granted to the Prime minister have to be reinforced and governability, that is the space of maneuver of the premier and the stability of the majority supporting him, has to be guaranteed. In short, the Prodi's plan reinforces the conviction to devolve more specific weight to the coalition programme as the real unifying element of the formation, the real protective shield

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<sup>318</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., p. 207.

of the premier. The absence of a well-rooted party that might have defended the leader from internal or external strikes, leads overloading of responsibility the shared programme. It is not intended to be only a synthesis of proposal, but a commitment behind which the government and the legislature can be safeguarded.

In early August 1995 the coalition presents to the press the seven scholars entrusted with the elaboration of a first draft of the theses: the national committee for the programme<sup>319</sup>. The experts are Luigi Spaventa, former minister in the Ciampi government and delegated to the economic issues; Adriano Bombiani, minister of the Amato government, responsible for the health care system; Laura Marchetti, counsellor for the Greens, empowered of the environmental section; Stefano Zamagni, economists and responsible for university, school, family, immigration and equal opportunities; Valerio Onida, former regional coordinator the prodian Committee, responsible for institutional reforms and public administration; Gianni Bonvicini delegated to the foreign affairs; and Giovanni Maria Flick, responsible for justice. Many other are the personalities that, through the months, commit to concretely contribute to the first redaction of the political proposals, among them an extremely young Giovanni Floris and the deputy Giuliano Pisapia<sup>320</sup>.

In the following months, the coalition leaders advance with the decision to establish a Ulivo Policy Convention (“Convenzione programmatica dell’Ulivo”), after having created a national guarantee commission for the political coordination of the coalition, chaired by Arturo Parisi. The objective is that of favoring the bottom-up participation of those citizens that recognize in the project, allowing them to modify and approve the programme. Theoretically, the procedure shall be the following: the experts write a draft programme that is discussed and approved (with eventual modifications) by the Policy Convention. In order to be involved, it is necessary to sign the “Charter of the Ulivo principles” and to pay 10.000 lira. The points are then discussed in every provincial assembly that, in turn, has to elect some delegates for the Policy Convention. The delegates, that have faculty of suggesting the

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<sup>319</sup> G. Battistini, *Prodi e i magnifici 7. Corriamo per vincere*, in “la Repubblica”, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>320</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell’Ulivo*, cit., p. 211.

modifications discussed and approved in the provincial assembly, might be seven for each uninominal constituency at the Chamber, together with the ex-officio delegates, expression of the political parties' power. In so doing, the members of the decisional organ are around 7000.<sup>321</sup>

In December 1995 the famous 88 Ulivo Theses are distributed, a green book full of systematic proposals, with a blank space for the notes and the personal ideas on the themes of the programme. The idea of allowing everyone to intervene on the directives of a possible future government represent an absolute novelty in terms of participation.

In the first fourteen points the attention revolves around a new reform of the state, the revision of perfect bicameralism and the re-elaboration of public administration. The institutional question is reiterated, and a debate opens in the direction of a double-round majoritarian system<sup>322</sup>, standing on the principle of a strong premiership intensely wanted by the coalition leader. In substance, parties can show up on their own in the first-round and then converge on a single candidate at the second-round. In a way the Ulivo seems to acknowledge its role as an electoral cartel among diverse subjects rather than a single political subject. This process does not deny the possibility of having a unitary subject for both blocs since the first-round, however, looking at the political reality of the moment, this institutional hypothesis seems to be more focused on coalitions than bipartisanship. Another granted possibility is that of choosing a candidate over which to sign the cross on the ballot paper, in this way political legitimacy directly comes from the citizen in prevision of the future premier. Undoubtedly, it is a proposal looking at the future, to establish more stable majorities coherent with the electoral vote, but it also is a mortgage on the present. The Programme is intended to assume the role of unifying element of the coalition and the premier has to be considered, correspondingly with these political objectives, as a prime minister of the legislature, adjuring the possibility of leaders' change, as had been the case in the preceding years.

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<sup>321</sup> A. Colasio, *ivi*, pp. 212-213.

<sup>322</sup> Movimento per l'Ulivo, *Il programma de L'Ulivo, Tesi n. 1-88*, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it)



The possibility of introducing a constructive vote of no confidence is not excluded. It would imply to indicate an alternative prime minister, provided that the majority continues to be that resulted in the elections. In their proposal of institutional modification, the Ulivo Theses somehow propose a Parliament with a binding mandate: if the government falls and the majority composition changes, new elections are to be held shortly.

Another aspect regards the intention not to redact institutional rules internally to the majority. Proposals have to be exposed and eventually elaborated together with the opposition forces in an institutional commission to be created in Parliament at the beginning of the new legislature. The Bicameral commission for the institutional reforms represents one of the cornerstones of the ulivist project.

The economy is the backbone of the programme: 25 are the theses dealing with it. Obviously the main point, exactly as in the professor's directive, is represented by the desire to enter the euro and regularize the national accounts to achieve that objective. Ample space is however devoted to national reformism where privatize, liberalize and open the market are key phrases that often appear, as to indicate the very direction of the industrial planification of the coalition. There are then recalls at the fight against tax evasion, fiscal federalism and the possibility of investing in the South, together with the topic of taxation on financial activities, on business income and real estates. All of the above has to be seen in the perspective of creating that "normal country" capable of competing with European enterprises and be in line with the other member-states.

Also foreign politics has a quite relevant role within the ulivist project: 8 points. Essentially, the role of Italy within the international organizations of reference is underlined, starting from the United Nation. Of particular interest is a passage in which European Union is referred not only as something to strive for, but also as something one shall want to be able to change. One of the objectives is in fact that of modifying the Maastricht treaty and of favoring the integration of additional states.

The program is vast, ambitious and touches crucial elements for the social battles of the future Italy, as the policies regarding the hydrogeological instability, the urbanization government, the protection regarding social justice and the functioning of criminal and civil justice systems. In reality, the bottom-up decision-making process will be neglected. Considering the speed at which elections are held, the leaders decide to organize a single big encounter, a sort of mega convention in Milan one month before the elections. In the Convention 10.000 delegates participate that cheer the 88 theses, since that moment assumed as the official program of the coalition<sup>323</sup>.

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<sup>323</sup> R. Armeni, *L'Ulivo chiama tutti a Milano*, in "l'Unità", March 23<sup>th</sup>, 1996

## Chapter IV

### **The People's Song ("La canzone popolare")**

#### ***IV.1 The political campaign***

The political campaign preparation of 21<sup>st</sup> April of the Ulivo coalition means not only to support its own project, the 88 theses program, but it also means to study the best way to make the alliance to bear its fruits. That is to find the appropriate strategy which permits to win in the uninominal constituencies, balancing the territorial rooting of a candidate and the party needs. The other side of the coin is to extend the centre-left formations towards all possible forces that do not identify themselves with the Forza Italia project. As a matter of fact, the bipolar system forces to choose between one of the two blocs, otherwise the risk is that the party which is able to meet the threshold, condemns itself to be irrelevant. Italy arrives at a political situation where, tendentially, it is necessary to choose one of the two sides even at the cost of creating scissions, as it is in the Italian popular party.

Choosing to concentrate its economic program on the liberalization policies with the object of creating more industrial power centres, in order to favour the enterprise' competitiveness, indicates that a part of the Italian left formation is definitely open towards the free market.<sup>324</sup> The Pds seems to embrace the liberal revolution and for the first time in the Republic history, it concretely perceives the sensation to escape from the eternally opposition role in order to become part of the government. Giorgio Battistini writes in the "la Repubblica" and entitles his article *I nipotini di Gobetti*, "all liberals" where he denounces a certain agreement among various components of the Ulivo formation which risks losing the historical reasons that occupied the political fight scenery of the left formation.<sup>325</sup> The Theses' economic points, in particular the objectives concerning Europe, are decisive to guarantee the support for the coalition by Lamberto Dini. Outgoing President of the Council and the ex-Minister of the Berlusconi government, Dini is the man of centrist and liberal formation whose contribution makes clearer the coalition

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<sup>324</sup> R. Prodi, *Note programmatiche a firma di Romano Prodi*, in *La storia de l'Ulivo: la costituzione dei comitati*, La comunità per l'Ulivo, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it).

<sup>325</sup> G. Battistini, *I nipotini di Gobetti*, in "la Repubblica", March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

heterogeneity. His candidacy in the centre-left formation was consolidated through the creation of the list “Rinnovamento italiano”, where also the “Patto Segni” flows into with the clear goal to recover some of citizens of the centre formation who previously supported Silvio Berlusconi but remained disappointed of his political experience. A strategy which is attributed to Massimo D’Alema who has solicited in order to create an additional branch of The Ulivo slightly moved towards the right, rather than allowing the Prime Minister presence in the catholic list of the Popular.<sup>326</sup>

Another crucial moment to the possible widening of the coalition regards Rifondazione comunista. The ex-comrades represent the world that does not accept the hypotheses of the Italian left moving towards the European social-democratic pole and that it is in clear contrast towards the liberal pushes characterizing the potential allies. Fausto Bertinotti’s party with the president Armando Cossutta, one of the historical leaders of the Italian communists, has not only doubts about the coalition where there is the presence of important forces belonging to the catholic democratic and centre formations’ world, but he also is in clear disagreement with some points of the programme. If for the ulivist formation is extremely necessary to enter the monetary Union, doing all the efforts to achieve this goal, Rifondazione believes that the economic policies of the Maastricht Treaty are radically wrong. In 1992 Lucio Magri presented his reasons opposing the Treaty in the Chamber of Deputies, representing its own parliament group. He explained his position saying that Italy loses not only its national sovereignty but it goes against the “full functioning of the market economy, but not in the obvious and common sense of market recognition, but rather a radical and systematic reduction of everything which is non-commercial; that are all those instruments through which all European democracies during the Keynesian period had learnt to govern the excesses of the market blind game”.<sup>327</sup> This is a substantial difference between the two formations but, no matter how difficult to find an

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<sup>326</sup> G. Bianco, *La parabola dell’Ulivo, 1994-2000. Conversazione con Nicola Guiso*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2012, pp. 125 and on.

<sup>327</sup> Lucio Magri, *Resoconto Stenografico n. 81*, in “Atti Parlamentari”, Camera dei deputati, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1992, pp. 5338-5345.

agreement, the unity is the key factor to win the elections and, by virtue of this, to find a compromise: desistence. According to this agreement of non-belligerency, there are some electoral constituencies in the uninominal where the Ulivo, without presenting itself, carries its votes to a Rifondazione candidate and vice versa. Contrary to what happens in the proportional system where each party presents its own list. It is a tactic electoral agreement without any program mediation which reveals to be decisive in the competition.<sup>328</sup>

The Pds left wing, the democratic communists, welcomes the Ulivo alliance including the agreement with the Dini list that, as Chiarante specifies, is necessary to coalition but it expresses a different culture from the progressive one. Chiarante also pays attention to the electoral agreement with Rc, clarifying that the real desistence reveals when there is no desistence. In substance, it can be said that in order to maintain the electoral coalition stable even in the aftermath of the voting, all the left forces should give their own contribution to govern together in case of victory, Rifondazione too.<sup>329</sup>

The electoral campaign is moving accompanied by the song “Canzone Popolare” of Ivano Fossati, the coalition soundtrack suggested by the Pds secretary assistant Gianni Cuperlo.<sup>330</sup> This is another element of change, evidence of new political spectacle, a kind of answer to the hymn of “Forza Italia” launched in the radio two years before. The Pds wants to demonstrate that the times must change, and it tries to draft on itself a less statist imagine, which is softer, favours the dialogue with the big italian private enterprises. The party visit to the Fininvest on April serves this goal.<sup>331</sup> Romano Prodi, from his point of view, shows a certain determination and broadcasts an imagine based on his personal competences combined with the desire to achieve the essential goal of Europe against which the right formation manifests scepticism.<sup>332</sup> The public opinion perceives the capability to hold

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<sup>328</sup> C. Roselli, *Storia di una Rifondazione*, Lulu press, Morrisville, 2010, p. 15

<sup>329</sup> G. Chiarante, *Alleanze e identità della sinistra*, in “Critica Marxista”, 1, 1996, pp. 6-9.

<sup>330</sup> M. Damilano, *Finemondo*, in “l’Espresso”, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

<sup>331</sup> F. Rondolino, *Massimo D’Alema: “Parlerò ai lavoratori della Fininvest”*, in “l’Unità”, March 23<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>332</sup> P. Castagnetti, *La destra euroscettica*, in “il Popolo”, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

the alliance, in spite of the differences, and recognizes a certain political genius in finding out the way to ally with neo-communists without permitting them to be part of the coalition. The grouping operation does not end with the desistance agreement, but there are fifteen acronyms that join the centre-left formation. Together with the Pds, the Popular, the Dini and Mario Segni list: European left, Democratic alliance, the Greens, the Democratic union (of Maccanico), the Movement of the united communists, the Christian socials, the Labour federation, the Movement for the reformist left union, the Socialists dissidents, the Republican party of Giorgio La Malfa and the Liberals of Zanone. Most of the fifteen political formations recognize in the Ulivo have no enough consensus to meet the threshold, but they can reach the Parliament through the victory in the “armoured” uninominal electorate constituency, that is sure. Once being elected to the Chamber, generally, they propose the party acronyms again, creating their own parliamentary group or being part of the mixed one, confirming the political fragmentation. It is evident that the bipolar majoritarian system has difficulties to contain the complicated italian pluralism.

In this contest, one of the main cruxes is represented by the ruling class selection to be nominated in different electoral constituencies. The real problem rises with Romano Prodi and the citizen-members of the “Comitati per l’Italia che vogliamo”. A coalition choice has to prevail over the majoritarian system, either in electoral terms or in the selections of the candidates. Valerio Onida, one of the most active committee members, suggests looking for men and women who are the expression of that civil society and who support the Ulivo. He also proposes to give a sign of renovation asking to nominate the regional secretaries and party functionaries only in the proportional list.<sup>333</sup> The debate also concerns the role of the various committees: considering them as a support to the leader figure is different than considering them as the never-born Prodi party. In the latter case, the committees shall have major weight in the selection of the candidate.

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<sup>333</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell’Ulivo*, cit., p. 228.

It is natural that the committee members demand to have a role and to support the personalities that are the expression of vast consensus, but in front of this complicated game it is inevitable the verticalization of the candidates. It means that not always a territory ends up represented by a politician of that constituency, but sometimes representatives are placed in an electoral constituency rather than in another one for “party reasons”, raising some doubts. After the classical division of the districts into safe, less safe and difficult ones, a further subdivision is based on the power relationship among the parties. To Pds and Popular alone, which meanwhile introduced the name of Prodi in its voting list and became “Popular per Prodi”, are assigned the 67% of the districts considered safe, while others are divided among the minor formations taking into account the role of Rifondazione.<sup>334</sup> An interesting information, already during the electoral campaign and the lists’ elaboration, regards the number of “ulivists”, strictly faithful to Prodi and members of no other party, that would have been able to enter the Parliament. They would have constituted the primary support structure to the leader in a variegated centre-left pole. There will not be many, considering that the committees are evaluated in the same way as the small parties, giving the idea that the partitocracy criterion of the list formation was prevalent compared to the “added value”.

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<sup>334</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell’Ulivo*, cit., p. 258



## ***IV.2 The elections***

On April 21<sup>th</sup>, 1996 elections are held and the centre-left formation in its entirety wins for the first time in Italian history. However, not everything is clear. The Italians who vote represent the 82,5% of those who has the right to vote, and they know for sure that the winning formation will indicate to the Head of the State a Prime Minister who has been presented as such during the electoral campaign of the last months. But the voting is divided like the Italian electorate.<sup>335</sup> On one side there is the result of the proportional system, on the other side the majoritarian one, which gives more seats. For what concerns the proportional results, the parties opposed to the centre-left obtain 16.481.785 votes against 16.270.935 of the Ulivo and Rc, a bit more than 40% which seems to attribute the victory to the Berlusconi Polo. Actually, in the majoritarian system things are different because the Ulivo obtains 16.729.360 votes against 15.028.986 for the Pole. This victory certifies the half million-votes difference for the left formation between the proportional and the majoritarian systems. The first party of the Parliament is Pds with 21,1% consensus, that it is followed by FI with 20,6%, An with 15,7%, League with 10%, Rc with 8,6%, Ppi with 6,8%, Casini and Buttiglione with their formations Ccd-Cdu takes 5,8% and Dini's Rinovamento Italiano obtains 4,3%.<sup>336</sup> The very first evidence is the missed victory of the berlusconian pole that is defeated because of its internal division. Those 16 million votes of the proportional system are in fact the fruit of a sum of parties which present themselves unallied in the majoritarian electoral system, first of all because they could not find an agreement with the Pannella-Sgarbi list and secondly because the League decided to compete on its own. Even the division in some electoral constituencies counted. As a matter of fact, the Pino Rauti group has not allied with An, presenting independent candidates and contributing to the consensus loss, hence reduction of seats, for the centre-right formation.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> M. Michetti, *Elezioni 1996: una analisi del voto*, in "Critica Marxista", 1, 1996, pp.17-25.

<sup>336</sup> A. Chiaramonte, *Le elezioni politiche del 21 aprile*, cit., pp. 43-63.

<sup>337</sup> L. Mattina, A. Tonarelli, *I candidati. Visioni politiche e carriere*, in "Italian political science review", XXVI, December 1996, pp. 483-517.

However, Italians reward the Ulivo coalition at the voting ballot. The “added value”, the horizon for a European Italy with a balanced account and a reformist ambition is considered more efficient than the single parties in the proportional system. This unity of the left manages to convince and becomes decisive to influence even the confused voters. It appears obvious that the project, the candidates chosen in the electoral constituencies, the accurate construction of the alliance network, have all influenced the final result. It is also necessary to underline that Berlusconi arrives already defeated at this competition.<sup>338</sup> Only two years before, he was the new man in the Italian politics that changed all the rules of the game and that was ready to govern Italy as it was a big successful enterprise. His government project failed only some months later and it seems not to matter if there was the “ribaltone” or that the League has proved unreliable. All that matters is that politics has its own rules and his resignation as President of the Council is a defeat in the eyes of the electorate. Therefore, the choice falls on Romano Prodi, whose Ulivo formation is not strong enough to govern on its own.

Rifondazione comunista obtains 8,6% of the votes and proves essential for the majority that, without the “red help”, obtains only 35% in the proportional constituencies. That anti-Maastricht left formation, that has criticized the Ulivo program to the point of not endorsing it, becomes the key factor to head over the legislature, forcing the whole reformist axis to negotiate with Bertinotti and his group. 292 are the seats for the Ulivo in the Chamber of deputies to which the 34 of Rc are added. Out of these 292 members, 145 belong to Pds, 67 are the popular, 26 belong to the Dini list and 16 to the Greens. They are all ulivists but those strictly supporting Prodi, members of no other parties, seem to be 16, Prodi included, since he is elected in the majoritarian constituency of Bologna. Among them Gianclaudio Bressa and Andrea Papini are close to the professor from the very first moment, but in percentage terms the strictly prodians represent only 6% of elected. The fact

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<sup>338</sup> G. Orsina, *La rivoluzione del Cavaliere*, in “L’Italia della Repubblica”, Rai Uno, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, [www.raiscuola.rai.it](http://www.raiscuola.rai.it)

of having abandoned the Prodi party idea and having pointed to the “added value” to the coalition with the program being the shield and constraint for the government and the legislature, exposes the coalition’s leader to evident risks, considering the political fragmentation. 24 are the political parties that are created in Parliament in the aftermath of elections, 15 of them belong to the Ulivo coalition. This provides a clear evidence that party pluralism continues to be decisive for the Italian political equilibria.<sup>339</sup>

An important element that goes unnoticed in that moment is relative to the League’s results.

The League and Rifondazione are the real winners of the elections because they considerably increase their consensus, especially the Bossi party which is able to reach double figures. In the opinion of Ilvo Diamanti, the impact of the League phenomenon is not sufficiently evaluated at the ’96 elections, especially the speed with which it evolved, that hides deeper meanings.<sup>340</sup> Undoubtedly, the men of Umberto Bossi are well rooted in the northern provincial territory, up to the point of creating their own local ruling class capable of guaranteeing a stable consensus. In order to understand this passage, it is important to consider the voting results of the smallest provincial territories which represent the real feud of the League, based on high and capillary consensus. The small cities are those giving their votes to the League with crushing percentages, as in the case of S. Pietro Mussolino (62%), Zermeghedo (59%) and Montorso (56%) whose results might well explain the reasons for the League’s success. These are zones in which the League has permeated for long. Already at the end of the eighties the party used to gain the double figures consensus near to 10%, but the question is more complicated. The “green shirts” represent an industrially organized model which is recognised in the post-fordism model. The small and middle enterprises grow in the Italian productive system and acquire increasing strategical importance compared to big poles. This favours the increase of

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<sup>339</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell’Ulivo*, cit., p. 267.

<sup>340</sup> I. Diamanti, *L’importanza di Zermeghedo. Perché la Lega ha vinto senza che nessuno se ne accorgesse. Alcuni modesti consigli per affrontare la sindrome leghista*, in “Micromega”, 2, May-June 1996, pp. 55-66.

independent middle class which decides to invest in the industrial suburbs rather than in the metropolis. This is one of those cases in which looking at the province, rather than Milan or Turin, proves more essential to understand a part of the country.

### ***IV.3 The Prodi Government***

The Programme constitutes the gluing element for the coalition, but some are the uncertainties during the electoral campaign. There are some personalities who, albeit appreciating the difficult European goal, internalize the problem of the relationship between fight at the public debt and the commitment to the welfare state<sup>341</sup>: epochal challenge for the nineties' Italy. The perspective to enter the monetary Union generates some preoccupations, since not everyone is convinced that Italy can survive eventual recoils. Even the institutional reform, equally central for the centre-left formation, is not safe from the critiques of the intellectuals sympathising for the Ulivo. It is the case of the constitutionalist Lorenza Carlassare, who, writing for "l'Unità" admonishes the parties asking them not to surrender to abstract models of forms of government.<sup>342</sup> Also Aldo Tortorella, albeit defending his support to the secretary D'Alema, often intervenes on the topic, reminding that the system efficiency is mainly guaranteed by the possibility of participation, a precondition for the democratic system.<sup>343</sup>

The Ulivo is certainly not a social-political bloc, but it is a coalition that, despite having some common elements, manifests its own fragility because it is composed by different interests, cultures and traditions. Even during the electoral campaign, a division emerges between those who conceive this political experiment as a simple alliance and those who see it as a forward-

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<sup>341</sup> A. Grandi, *Una nuova qualità dell'occupazione*, in "Critica Marxista", 1, 1996, pp. 10-14.

<sup>342</sup> L. Paolozzi, *Lorenza Carlassare: "Costituzione: no ai modelli astratti"*, in "l'Unità", April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>343</sup> A. Tortorella, *Non c'è efficienza senza partecipazione*, in "Critica Marxista", 1, 1996, pp. 2-5.

looking project at its initial phase.<sup>344</sup> The consolidation of this union shall pass through the government test and through the program realisation: more the results are, longer-lasting will be the coalition.

The choice of the Head of State to receive the representatives of the Ulivo instead of the party leaders confirms the idea that the coalition counts more than the political parties in the bipolar system.<sup>345</sup> However, to this new practice does not correspond the formation of a single political Ulivo group within the Parliament.

Romano Prodi presents himself to the Chambers on May 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, obtaining 173 votes in favour in the Senate and 322 in the Chamber of Deputies, after having attended a discussion in which the fragility of the majority is demonstrated.<sup>346</sup> The professor makes his speech underlying the electoral programme, binding it to the entire legislature and pausing on three essential achievements: the historical goal of the monetary Union, the balance of the public debts and the achievement of a new constitutional agreement to be stipulated also with the opponents. There are also references to the economic relaunch of the South and the fight to unemployment, especially among the youth.<sup>347</sup> All the allied leaders applaud the speech, but Rifondazione through the discourse of its leader imposes argument almost completely in opposition to the President's words. He supports a clear opposition to the Maastricht parameters; he contraposes the reduction of the working hours, at equal salary, to the balance restoration, defined as the "new totem"; to the privatisation arguments he opposes State participation in the economy; to the hypotheses of "round tables" he reacts saying that they are failed, either in discussing over prices or over salaries; moreover, Prodi himself is accused of "continuity" in relation to the previous

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<sup>344</sup> "Una presidenza al Polo", in "La Stampa", April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1996.

<sup>345</sup> Camera dei deputati, *Formazione del governo Prodi*, in "Rapporto con il Governo", May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1996, [www.legislature.camera.it](http://www.legislature.camera.it)

<sup>346</sup> A. Tortorella, *Pds e Rifondazione oltre la "desistenza"*, in "Critica Marxista", 2, 1996, pp. 8-11.

<sup>347</sup> R. Prodi, *Dichiarazioni programmatiche del governo*, in "Atti Parlamentari", Camera dei deputati, Rome, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1996, pp. 71-83.

administrations.<sup>348</sup> In the first session of the legislature, the centre-left reformist group argues with the antagonist leftist group, even if they are parts of the same majority. Bertinotti orders to vote for confidence, but there are all the prerequisites for a precarious alliance that has nothing in common except the objective of the unique coin. A strong opening towards the local autonomies' strengthening is noticed, judged as the "necessary challenge", in line with the idea of Massimo Cacciari, one of the leaders of the Mayors' movement. The latter describes that historical moment as the unique occasion to render Italy a federal Republic.<sup>349</sup> Massimo D'Alema immediately claims his leadership in the coalition victory expressing "joy and proud of million women and men, of that big leftist population who has been excluded from the government for years that today constitutes the fundamental base of the Republic government."<sup>350</sup>

The minister's choice is dictated by many conditions which represent an innovation for the Italian politics. According to Prodi, the fact of being a political leader detached from the parties, representative of the "added value" of the coalition, shall allow his leadership to be autonomous from the other parties' leaders. It is a leadership which has to commit to the government and its strengthening, not to the strictly party issues. Indeed, he takes on the responsibility of choosing a number of ministers of high institutional profile who are not always the direct expression of the secretaries. Among them: Giorgio Napolitano, Pds member and future President of the Republic, chosen to become the Minister of the Interior; Giovanni Maria Flick, future President of the Constitutional Court and Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, who will also be future President of the Republic, and who becomes The Minister of Treasure and Balance. Prodi himself confesses that Ciampi was doubtful on accepting the nominee, but that the patriotic sense prevailed in view of achieving the

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<sup>348</sup> F. Bertinotti, *Resoconto stenografico e sommario*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei deputati, Rome, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996, pp. 295-300.

<sup>349</sup> M. Cacciari, *Unica soluzione, la federazione*, in "Micromega", 2, 1996, pp. 17-21.

<sup>350</sup> M. D'Alema, *Resoconto stenografico e sommario*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei deputati, Rome, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996, p. 309.

complicated European goal. The ex-head of the Bank of Italy as a condition for the acceptance of the role, asks for: being considered only a technical minister and having a fast track with Palazzo Chigi in order not to be involved in the parties' dynamics.<sup>351</sup> It is natural that the government should be the expression of the majority forces who support it, therefore the ministers are proportional to the power relations, as it is taught by the old "Manuale Cencelli". The Pds, the Ppi, and Rinnovamento italiano take respectively six, three and three ministries. Walter Veltroni, main supporter of the Ulivo project within the Pds, assumes the role of Vice President of the Council and of Minister of the Cultural Heritage; Vincenzo Visco is charged with the Finance Ministry; Luigi Berlinguer goes to the University and Research; Pier Luigi Bersani to the Industry; Franco Bassanini to the Public Function; Claudio Burlando to the Transport; Livia Turco to the social Solidarity and Anna Finocchiaro to the Equal Opportunities. In the catholic component, Beniamino Andreatta assumes the role of the Minister of Defence, Michele Pinto is owner of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rosy Bindi to the Healthcare. In the Rinnovamento Italiano: Lamberto Dini becomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tiziano Treu becomes the Minister of Labor and Augusto Fantozzi is the Minister of Foreign Trade. For the Greens, Edo Ronchi is the Minister of the Environment, while Antonio Maccanico guides the Ministry of Post and Communications. The Minister of the Public Works is Antonio Di Pietro, ex-judge and main prosecutor of the "Mani Pulite" investigations, while for the undersecretary of the Council Presidency Prodi chooses Arturo Parisi, his right-hand man since the beginning.

The above-mentioned composition of the government manages to attract many expectations, not only by the political actors on the same scene but especially by the citizens. The latter see in the reformist Ulivo project the possibility of entering Europe and modernize the country.<sup>352</sup> The ruling class

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<sup>351</sup> R. Prodi, *Carlo Azeglio Ciampi Ministro del Tesoro e l'adesione all'Euro*, Radio Radicale, Florence, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

<sup>352</sup> P. Flores D'Arcais, *Cosa farà l'Ulivo da grande?*, in "Micromega", 3, 1996, pp. 7-12.

is conscious that globalisation is a too big phenomenon to be managed on their own.<sup>353</sup> The opportunities it can open can be taken only through a bigger organization related to that process of unification of the European states, Eastern ones included, to which the Ulivo aspires. This huge historical objective, upon which the destinies of the European nations depend, is added to many other delicate problems that the coalition is called to face. Small and medium enterprises, for example, which increase its productive power especially in the North, seems to be the engine of Italian development. Contrasting the increasing unemployment, especially among the youngers, pointing to the strengthening of the enterprise structure, also in relation to the globalized market, is another challenging goal that Prodi and his ministers want to face.<sup>354</sup>

#### ***IV.4 Public policies: the reformism***

The main obstacle for the government is that of enacting economic policies finalized to the entrance in the monetary Union. To enter the Euro zone countries are called to meet five criteria of the 1992 Maastricht Agreement: price stability with the inflation rate at its minimum; the public debt-GDP rate has to be maintained under 60%; the public deficit-GDP rate has to be under 3%; an adequate exchange rate with small fluctuation margins to permit the entrance in the European Monetary System; and long-term interest rates.<sup>355</sup> The undertaking seems massive considering that the Italian parameters are far away from the required ones. However, one month after his nomination, Minister Ciampi presents the Document of economic-financial program (Dpef) where he predicts an entrance in the euro zone on the short-run, already at the beginning of 1999.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> C. De Benedetti, *Elogio della globalizzazione*, in "Micromega", 1, 1998, pp. 211-222

<sup>354</sup> A. Fumagalli, *Gli imprenditori chiedono le riforme*, in "Micromega", 2, 1996, pp. 36-41.

<sup>355</sup> A. Crescenzi, *La lepre e la tartaruga. L'economia italiana dal boom degli anni Cinquanta alla crisi dei giorni nostri*, Castelveccchi, Rome, 2018, pp. 68 and on.

<sup>356</sup> L. Spaventa, V. Chiorazzo, *Astuzia o virtù? Come accadde che l'Italia fu ammessa nell'Unione monetaria*, Donzelli, Roma, 2000, pp. 21-23.



In the summer of the same year, Prodi is interviewed by Enzo Biagi at the Festival of the friendship of Reggio Emilia and he admits that the future economic reforms are going to ask for many sacrifices to Italians, indispensable to the final goal.<sup>357</sup> In the following months, the Parliament approves a six thousand billion financial manoeuvre, with an impressive cut of the public expense and the addition of the euro tax in order to meet the 3% criterion. However, the rigour proposed by the government raises some doubts in some exponents of the alliance like Luciano Barca, who denounces the lack of confrontation on the topic, and heavy reactions either by the oppositions and by the militants of Rifondazione.<sup>358</sup> In November, the radical left takes to the street in Naples to protest against the economic reforms announced by the Ulivo but, paradoxically, the centre-right formation gathers in Rome the same period to celebrate the “No Tax Day”.<sup>359</sup> Ironically, the centre-right shares the idea and the protest of Rifondazione, even if with different motivations. These measures reveal to be decisive in the first months of the 1997 when the data demonstrate: that the lira can meet the parameters of the European Monetary System (EMS), due to an exchange rate fixed at 985,11 on the deutsche mark; the inflation decreases to 1,7%; the growth rate of the Country is 1.5%; there is the decrease of the debt interest and a 4% reduction in public deficit in eight months, arriving at 2,7%.<sup>360</sup> These are record data, in spite of the increase of fiscal pressure which arrives at 43%. However, they prove to be insufficient: structural reforms are needed.<sup>361</sup>

Italy is a country where a big part of the population is weak in terms of purchasing power and where youth unemployment touches the 58%. The employment issue, to be faced in accord with the new globalization challenges, is essential and can be dealt with only in collaboration with the

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<sup>357</sup> E. Biagi, R. Prodi, *Quattro chiacchiere con il Presidente del Consiglio*, in “Popolari in festa”, Radio Radicale, Reggio Emilia, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1996.

<sup>358</sup> L. Barca, *La sinistra e la legge finanziaria*, in “Critica Marxista”, 4, 1996, pp. 13-17.

<sup>359</sup> A. Longo, *I muscoli del Polo*: “Via il governo”, in “la Repubblica”, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>360</sup> A. Canziani, R. Camodeca, *Il debito pubblico italiano nell'apprezzamento economico-sociale (1971-2005)*, University of Brescia, Department of Management, December 2006, paper n. 59, [www.unibs.it](http://www.unibs.it).

<sup>361</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., p. 92.

trade unions.<sup>362</sup> In September 1996 an agreement with the social components is reached. It creates basis for the so-called “pacchetto Treu”, approved in the following months, that represents a set of labour market reforms introducing the first flexibility measures. For the first time the interim work and the apprenticeship are instituted, accompanied by a progressive reform of the professional formation system and the regulation of the community service activities. Moreover, the labour union agreement, lately reaffirmed into the legislative provision, considers the possibility to stipulate the contracts areas at wage reduction in order to relaunch the zones which are in crises.<sup>363</sup> Some years later Prodi himself will affirm that the provision was intended also to allow small and medium enterprises to invest in technological innovations in order for them to compete in the globalized market. Flexibility measures are used to reduce labour costs and to increase the profit margins, without being ready in case of financial crisis.<sup>364</sup>

For what concerns the social security system, Prodi asks to Paolo Onofri, trusted economist, to study a set of reform to be included in the Programme Theses. Onofri identifies in the enlargement of the Dini reform of the previous year, in the retirement system reform (including the cuts to the baby pensions), in the alignment of the public system to the private one and in the contributory system application, the possible proposals to be presented to the majority. According to the executive, the youth problem should also be faced through the cuts at their fathers’ pensions, but Rifondazione opposes by defending the general principle of social state inviolability, while the Pds supports the old Dini reform margining the Onofri proposal.<sup>365</sup> The Bersani decrees on liberalizations are instead welcomed. For example, the decree on

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<sup>362</sup> G. Buffo, M. Paci, B. Trentin, *Stato sociale e lavoro: quale innovazione*, in “Critica Marxista”, 1, 1997, pp. 9-20.

<sup>363</sup> T. Treu, L. Pero, *Il bicchiere mezzo vuoto*, in “Mondo Operaio”, 3, 2016, pp. 22-26.

<sup>364</sup> R. Prodi, *Carlo Azeglio Ciampi Ministro del Tesoro e l’adesione all’Euro*, Radio Radicale, Firenze, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

<sup>365</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., pp. 90-91.

electricity, whose production was state monopoly until '96, allows privates to set up new power plants, favouring competitiveness in the sector.<sup>366</sup>

Even federalism is a theme discussed by the government, despite the will to leave to the Parliament the task of constitutional revision.<sup>367</sup> In the summer 1996 Prodi opened to a possible convergence on the argument with the Bossi's League, clearly opposing to the secession idea. While the Chamber President Violante and the ex-Chamber President Pivetti are discussing on the indivisibility of the Nation<sup>368</sup>, the measure of Minister Bassanini opens the administrative federalism season which aims at simplifying bureaucratic procedures and at decentralizing as much as possible the administrative functions in the relationship among the State, the regions and the local autonomies.<sup>369</sup> The particularity of the bill, which becomes law in May, 1997, is that of entering the normative structure through means of ordinary law without undermining the Constitution, possibility that is entirely left to the Chambers.

The Turco-Napolitano law also has to be framed in the reformism of that period. Proposed by the Ministry of social solidarity and the Interior ministry, deals with immigration issues through the enactment of containment policies, integration policies, contrast to clandestinity and by means of facilitating regular migration.<sup>370</sup> In that very moment the emergency is represented by the refugee flow from Albany, at that time in the middle of a humanitarian emergency.

At the cultural level, a 70% increase in the investments is recorded, also thanks to the political role of Veltroni in the Ulivo project. Meanwhile, the healthcare system sees the enactment of an innovative measure: Minister Rosy Bindi promotes the transformation of the hospital structures into public

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<sup>366</sup> S. Benedettini, C. Stagnaro, *Quando l'Italia era capace di aprirsi al mercato e di correre insieme all'Europa*, in "il Foglio", March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

<sup>367</sup> G. Napolitano, M. Cacciari, *Il federalismo prossimo venturo*, in "Micromega", 1, 1997, pp. 26-33.

<sup>368</sup> L. Violante, I. Pivetti, *Italia una e indivisibile?*, in "Micromega", 3, 1996, pp. 13-26.

<sup>369</sup> F. Bassanini, *La riforma della pubblica amministrazione in Italia*, in "Slides sspa", [www.bassanini.it](http://www.bassanini.it).

<sup>370</sup> Parlamento italiano, *Disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulle condizioni dello straniero*, in "Gazzetta Ufficiale", March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

enterprises with the introduction of the general director figure. Competences, then, are transferred from municipalities to the regions that are, in fact, strengthened in the management of the National Healthcare System.<sup>371</sup>

In Foreign politics the executive tries to assume a primary role in the creation of the new Europe, considering all the economic efforts finalized at being a part of it. However, on the general international scenario, Italy assumes a role of defence of its own interests especially in the framework of atlanticism, hand in hand with the USA and the international organisations of which both are members.

Decisive is the relationship with those international and regional organisations, for example, in the war dynamics in Albania and Kosovo, in which Italy is involved in the biennium 1997-1999.

Absent instead are particular reforms in the university, school and research systems. The driving force of the productive system represented by universities is underestimated in this period, in which reformism prefers a discutible division of the formation years (the famous “three plus two”) over a larger reform to support research and development of the Italian athenaeums. On the contrary, the will to support professional training courses, the autonomy principle of the single school unities, the uniformity with non-state schools, the absent commitment to an entire institutional model whose cultural and organizational elements need to be reformed, represent the big missed opportunity of the centre-left.<sup>372</sup> Probably they lacked sufficient time to enact their reforms or, simply, they lacked a proper project.

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<sup>371</sup> Parlamento italiano, *Norme per la razionalizzazione del Servizio sanitario nazionale*, in “Gazzetta Ufficiale”, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>372</sup> A. Sasso, *Scuola: una questione nazionale*, in “Critica Marxista”, 4, 1997, pp. 9-16.

#### ***IV.5 The doubts within the majority***

Year 1997 opens with a series of congresses of the parties composing the majority which have to structure their development processes. In January the Italian popular party gathers to elect a new national secretary after the previous year fractures resulting in the Buttiglione scission. The outgoing secretary Bianco claims of having exercised his role in an extremely delicate moment, in-between the internal laceration and the national election victory, and clarifies the importance of the popular identity.<sup>373</sup> The catholics have no intention in creating a unique subject, a Democratic party in which to merge with the social-democrats; rather they continue to insist on the structure of their own party. Indeed, the post-democrats of the centre-left express a vast number of parliamentarians, to which it has to be added the number of their mayors, regional presidents and local representatives.<sup>374</sup> Losing this network does not represent a hypothesis, especially if, in an eventual new subject, the internal majority should be entitled to the post-communists that, at the moment, have stronger power relations.

The Party system is neither questioned by the populars who are among the main supporters of Prodi but continue to consider party identity as an essential element to strengthen the coalition's centre that the Ppi is intended to represent. Three are the clashing motions but the strongest two are those by Franco Marini, future President of the Senate and Pierluigi Castagnetti. The first one is the heir of the oldest centrist tradition, strictly bound to the party framework after his experience as responsible of the organisation; the second one has a more liberal-democratic, Eurocentric and modern vision of the party.<sup>375</sup> Marini wins with an ample 58% consensus of the delegates and he inaugurates a new season.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> G. Luzi, *Bianco pronto a fare il bis*, in "la Repubblica", January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>374</sup> F. Geremicca, *All'ombra della vecchia DC*, in "la Repubblica", January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>375</sup> G. Luzi, F. Geremicca, *Caccia aperta ai voti del Polo*, in "la Repubblica", January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>376</sup> G. Luzi, C. Malaparte, *Ppi, Marini segretario e il partito si divide*, in "la Repubblica", January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

Also the Pds organises a congress. It holds in February in Rome with the objective “to join and to innovate the Italian left”.<sup>377</sup> The main idea is to propose to the members a path leading to the absorption of other leftist components, minor ones, to ultimate the transformation towards the big European social-democratic Party that D’Alema aspires to guide.<sup>378</sup> Actually, the party strengthening within the social-democratic ideology and the constitutional reforms are the two big themes around which the entire “dalemian” secretariat develops. The thesis that the secretary exposes at the congress acknowledges the winning choices of the previous months, stressing the will to reinforce the two internal poles, the leftist and centrist ones, as the real gluing element of the coalition. He defends the public policies promoted up to that moment, but he also stresses on the idea of a new left capable of riding the new processes of global transformation without adapting to the old schemes but re-thinking itself.<sup>379</sup> The task of the left has to be to manage and direct innovation, not contrasting it, both economically and institutionally. In this occasion, a big debate opens between D’Alema and Sergio Cofferati, the Cgil secretary sided to opposite convictions.<sup>380</sup> The Pds leader proposes an opportunity welfare system in opposition to the labour right and the national negotiation and in so doing accuses Cofferati of conservatism. The leader of the left is the protagonist of a historical collision with the trade union, almost providing the idea of three different lefts in the country: a reformist one, an antagonist one and a unionist one. Actually, the fragmentation is also internal to the party, divided between those who want to invest more in the Ulivo project and those who follow the social-democratic line of the secretary. This suggests the re-emergence of the crucial point: the identity weakness characterizing the left at the beginning of the millenium. It is not a coincidence that among the speakers of the congress that received more

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<sup>377</sup> M. D’Alema, *Unire e innovare la sinistra italiana*, in “l’Unità”, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>378</sup> G. Cantarano, *L’antipolitica. Viaggio nell’Italia del disincanto*, Donzelli, Roma, 2000, pp. 83-85.

<sup>379</sup> G. Chiarante, *Verso il congresso del Pds*, in “Critica Marxista”, 4, 1996, pp. 8-12.

<sup>380</sup> S. Marroni, *Il day-after di Sergio Cofferati: “Non rompo con il Pds”*, in “la Repubblica”, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

applauses, there appears a seventeen-years old girl, Francesca, who criticises all the ruling class,<sup>381</sup> especially the secretary, praising other persons such the intellectual Baricco, who has just written in “Micromega” that “Politics is dead”<sup>382</sup>. The party has more than 680.000 members, but it is unsure of its direction. That is why some evidences of anti-politics do not come as surprise. In this regard, Aldo Tortorella alerts the audience on the possible creation of the “Leader party” which would be not ready nor able to face these challenges, therefore he invites to create a pole which is more open to the diverse subjectivities. According to Tortorella, the solution has to be found in the profound and disciplined dialogue with the “unimportant society”, with the immense progressive associationistic network of the country, thereby always maintaining the party structure.<sup>383</sup> In the end, the D’Alema motion wins with 98% of the consensus, accepting some of points promoted by the veltronian current.<sup>384</sup> However, the wide approval does not hide the substantial differences within the party. Some weeks after in Gargonza, a meeting to support the Ulivo is organized and many politicians and intellectuals attend the convention. The primacy of the coalition over the parties is re-stated, whose value exceeds that of the sum of parties, and a convergence towards a single subject able to strengthen the government and its perspectives is theorized. Obviously, Prodi, Veltroni and also intellectuals such as Paolo Flores D’Arcais are all favourable to this hypothesis, while the party leaders remain on the opposing stance.<sup>385</sup> D’Alema himself claims the decisive role of the parties in the society as well as in the Ulivo victory. Without doubting on the “added value” of the coalition, he underlines how the victory arrived not only thanks to the alliances with Dini and Rifondazione, but also thanks to the political operation damaging the right in

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<sup>381</sup> C. De Gregorio, “*Sinistra devi volare*”. Francesca, 16 anni, sfida D’Alema 98%, in “la Repubblica”, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1997.

<sup>382</sup> A. Baricco, *La scatola e l’apricatole*, in “Micromega”, 1, 1997, pp. 57-63.

<sup>383</sup> A. Tortorella, *Il partito dei leader e l’unione tra diversi*, in “Critica Marxista”, 5, 1997, pp. 3-7.

<sup>384</sup> P. Ignazi, *Il potere dei partiti*, cit., p. 202.

<sup>385</sup> W. Veltroni, *Intervento del vicepresidente del Consiglio*, in “Dieci idee per l’Ulivo”, Gargonza, March 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 1997, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it).

December 1994. In substance, he specifies that the Ulivo would have not existed without those parties.<sup>386</sup> Arturo Parisi will later affirm that in Gargonza they want to accuse the partitocracy, intensifying the conflict between the ulivist civil society and the partitocratic ruling class.<sup>387</sup> The new against the old. Also Marini, just nominated, is clearly opposing to the processes of convergence which exclude the maintenance of the simple electoral alliance, affirming that the synthesis of different forces in a single subject is unthinkable in that historical period.<sup>388</sup> The parties defend themselves by castling on their own and this choice can have consequences also on the government: the defence of its own positions with the scope of opposing an eventual Ulivo party might signify maintenance of the governmental alliance, but not necessarily with the same leader of the executive.

#### ***IV. 6 The 1997 crisis***

In April 1997 the government launches a fifteen thousand billion manoeuvre to make the debt/GDP further decrease under the 3%. The majority however crumbles over a foreign politics measure: the UN peace mission in Albany. The “Alba” mission, in which Italy has a primary role, is approved by the coalition as well as by the centre-right, indispensable support considering the strong opposition by Rc. The government however holds.<sup>389</sup>

In Autumn 1997, with general astonishment, Italian accounts are neatly in recovery. The relation deficit/GDP is 2,8%, the inflation rate is 1,4%, the market interests rate is 6%, the spread is at about 1: only the public debt

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<sup>386</sup> M. D’Alema, *Intervento del segretario del Pds*, in “Dieci idee per l’Ulivo”, Gargonza, March 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 1997, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it).

<sup>387</sup> M. D’Alema, *Controcorrente*, cit., p. 43.

<sup>388</sup> F. Marini, *Intervento del segretario del Ppi*, in “Dieci idee per l’Ulivo”, Gargonza, March 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 1997, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it).

<sup>389</sup> A. Possieri, *Un riformismo incompiuto: il primo governo Prodi*, in *L’Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, Carocci, 2014, p. 525.



remains far away from the European standards.<sup>390</sup> The following financial policy, by virtue of the obtained results, aims at continuing the transition process and at promoting a series of investments especially in the South of the country. It is in those days of October that the representation of the two lefts theory, one in opposition and the other leading the government of change, manifests its dramatic face.<sup>391</sup> At the financial measure approval, Bertinotti presents three conditions: pensions inviolability, the reduction of the working hours at 35 on equal pay and the guarantee of an extensive number of hiring for the youngers living in the South of Italy. At the beginning, the majority strongly opposes and claims that the law is non-amendable.<sup>392</sup> Then in front of the Rc threats of making the government fall, a mediation process starts. Thanks to the theories of the French Prime Minister Jospin, who also poses the working hours reduction as an objective of his executive,<sup>393</sup> the Prodi government signs a document in which it commits to dealing with the question on the basis of enterprises' collaboration. It is also said that the resources gained from the 0,2 GDP surplus might be used to incentivize employment policies.<sup>394</sup>

For Bertinotti this commitment is not enough and after a number of failed negotiations, on October 9<sup>th</sup> in Parliament, the Prime minister invites allied leader to assume their responsibilities in front of the country. Coming to nothing and in front of another closure, Prodi announces his resignation.<sup>395</sup> The Ulivo is closing its government experience slightly more than one year after its oath, one step away from the entrance in Euro.<sup>396</sup>

There will be various protests of the population against Rifondazione in the following days, as is the case with the Assisi march, and equally numerous are the signals of support for Romano Prodi. The leftist electorate

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<sup>390</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., p. 299.

<sup>391</sup> A. Tortorella, *Le due sinistre*, in "Critica Marxista", 4, 1996, pp. 2-7.

<sup>392</sup> G. Luzi, *E Prodi prende tempo*, in "la Repubblica", October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>393</sup> Osservatorio, *La lezione della Francia*, in "Critica Marxista", 2, 1997.

<sup>394</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, p. 295.

<sup>395</sup> C. Maltese, *Anche il professore perde la pazienza*, in "la Repubblica", October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>396</sup> U. Russo, *Bertinotti silura Prodi*, in "la Repubblica", October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

demonstrates to be against the fracture within the alliance.<sup>397</sup> Therefore, acknowledging the divergence among the base orientations and the ruling class choices, Rc cedes and reaches an agreement on principle with the executive: the President of the council commits to the reduction of the working hours with a law proposal to be presented in the Chambers within few month, with the effective realization to be completed by the end of the legislature.<sup>398</sup> The majority applauds to the agreement, Bertinotti confirms his confidence and the Ulivo breathes a sigh of relief. The government is safe, but the fracture is deep.

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<sup>397</sup> C. De Gregorio, *Bertinotti – D'Alema senza pace*, in "la Repubblica", October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>398</sup> V. Sivo, *Trentin: "Niente di più assurdo che ridurre l'orario per legge."*, in "la Repubblica", October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

Chapter V

**The end of the dream**

## ***V. 1 The Bicameral committee***

In accordance with the election program, the Parliament decides to devote a period to the revision of the constitutional Chart, in order to modify its second part and give a new institutional set-up to Italy. In line with what has been aimed to by the centre-left bloc in the previous legislatures, especially when D'Alema was the leader, the constitutional reform is considered as a central element of the majority political action, in so raising growing expectations on the part of citizens. The purpose is to give a new government and State structure to Italy, in order to strengthen the democracy of the alternative and shape the Second Republic. Together with this, the will to modify the judicial system, which, after the “*Mani pulite*” scandals, is one of the unsolved issues of the system. Shaping so profoundly the mechanisms of the Republic means to twist the *pactum societatis*, even without changing the first part of the Constitution that relates to the rights and duties of citizens. Taking into account how complex the job is and how sensitive the topic about the life of the institutions is, the political class as a whole has to be responsible for its role in the revision process, without letting the Chart change by using majority voting (“a colpi di maggioranza”). Writing together the rules means, both for the right and the left bloc, to recognise each other as legitimate, be part of a new institutional framework through which promoting the development of the Italian democracy.<sup>399</sup>

This is a huge problem considering that a part of the right bloc has never recognised himself within the constitutional logics, from which it has remained excluded for more than fifty years. The development process that aims at overcoming the perfect bicameralism and creating a system that can make the executive stable is part of D'Alema's pro-European view to make Italy a *normal country*. While building an increasingly social democratic party on the political front, D'Alema wishes for the creation of a bipolar structure that emulates the Western Europe model, where mass parties pull

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<sup>399</sup> S. Rodotà, *La democrazia esigente*, in “Critica Marxista”, 5, 1996, pp. 16-19.

centre-right and centre-left governments that alternate power in the government.

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1997, the third committee of the history of the Republic that is defined as *Bicameral* because is composed of 35 deputies and 35 senators gathers to elect the committee bureau. Massimo D'Alema is elected President, accompanied by the three vice presidents: Leopoldo Elio, from the Ppi, the political scientist and Forza Italia ideologue Giuliano Urbani, and Giuseppe Tatarella from Alleanza nazionale.<sup>400</sup> According to regulation, the committee is formed on a proportional basis, by respecting the structure of the parliamentary groups.<sup>401</sup> Among the 70 parliamentarians there are the leaders of almost every group, including Fini, Berlusconi, Cossutta and Mattarella, who will have to approve a series of reforms that will then have to be submitted for the approval of the Chambers, gathered in plenary session. The core of the issues is immediately approached; more specifically, the members discuss two options: a system that is strongly focused on the Prime Minister, who will consequently have more power, or a semi-presidential system constructed on the model of the french one. On the session of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, the committee is convened to vote the parliamentary bills on which putting the basis for the internal discussion, and find agreements on the issues related to the structure of the State, the Italian participation in the EU, and the collateral framework, whose speakers were respectively Francesco D'Onofrio (Ccd), Natale D'Amico (Ri) and Marco Boato (Federation of the Greens).<sup>402</sup> What remains to be clarified is the draft on which the discussion about the structure of the government should be based. Two speakers, who advance their proposals, clash over this topic: Cesare Salvi (Pds), and Armando Cossutta (Rc). During the session taking place the following day, the relation of Armando Cossutta, supporting a more powerful premiership, is beaten by that of Salvi, who directs the works towards the semi-presidential system. The

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<sup>400</sup> S. Buzzanca, *A D'Alema anche i voti di Forza Italia*, in "la Repubblica", February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>401</sup> M. Mazziotti Di Celso, G. Salerno, *Manuale di diritto costituzionale*, Cedam, Padova, 2018, pp.364-368.

<sup>402</sup> Commissione parlamentare per le riforme costituzionali, *Cronologia dei lavori*, Servizio studi della Camera, Roma, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1997, [www.camera.it](http://www.camera.it).

reactions of the parties are conflicting<sup>403</sup>: the right wing has always appreciated a system which is similar to the french one, in which the Head of State may be elected directly, while minor parties, both leftist and centrist ones, are against this choice. Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine that the Pds-An-Fi axis, which is fundamental to approve the draft, considers a double-round system, which would cause difficulties to both the more radical and centrist wings. The harmony that was reached during the previous weeks of work seems not to be absolute now, but the President D'Alema is determined to go on with the tasks. Even some Ulivo members are perplexed; indeed, the committee is an exclusive parliamentary component, therefore works separately from the government, but it forms different majorities compared to the original ones, which risk to influence the general strength of the majority. More specifically, the two-track ("doppio binario") principle, that implies the contemporary subdivision of the works between government and Parliament, might weaken the image of the government; the same is for the attention paid to the Bicameral committee. However, the government seems also to increase its power to put forward a series of enabling laws that are fundamental for the reform process that is taking place.<sup>404</sup> Despite all the appropriate offices, the agreement between the majority and the opposition on continuing their work is paradoxically concluded on June 18<sup>th</sup> at Gianni Letta's house, who is a close collaborator of Silvio Berlusconi. Massimo D'Alema, Franco Marini, Silvio Berlusconi and Gianfranco Fini gather and agree upon what has been defined by journalists as the "patto della crostata" (the pact of the tart), which consists in a semi-presidential system and a majoritarian double-round electoral law.<sup>405</sup> On that occasion, they also acknowledge the will on the part of the opponents, especially Berlusconi, not to disband the committee until the end of the work. However, the electoral law is not something to be included in constitutional measures, which instead is expected to follow the *procedura*

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<sup>403</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., p. 327.

<sup>404</sup> M. Polese, *La delega legislativa nella crisi economica e le trasformazioni delle forme di governo*, in "Gruppo di Pisa", 3, 2017, pp. 3-7.

<sup>405</sup> B. Vespa, *Storia d'Italia da Mussolini a Berlusconi*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005, pp. 199-200.

*aggravata*, which consists in a series of strict clauses to respect and is typical of rigid constitutions.<sup>406</sup> Although the subject pertains to the Constitution, because it is related to the composition of the legislative body, the Constitution implies that the subject is treated with ordinary law. Basically, the electoral law has to be approved just like any other law, therefore it is not part of the constitutional reforms suggested by the Bicameral committee. In this respect, some declarations that support the text will be presented during the assembly and will demand the Parliament to adopt a law in compliance with what has been discussed by the group of the 70. The agreement on the legislation implies an election according to the double-round coalition system and with a majority bonus in order to guard also minor parties. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, after around six months of work, the text is approved with the overwhelming majority of votes in favour and then sent to the Chambers in order to follow the approval regulation; therefore, the leaders of the parties are satisfied with their joint. Berlusconi himself affirms "It was great to be here".<sup>407</sup> The Cavaliere, Fini and D'Alema want to be considered as the fathers of the nation, or as statesmen for the voters, but a part of the press does not agree with their operation. Some critiques towards D'Alema appear on the newspapers that support his coalition. At the same time, commentators are afraid that the agreement for the Bicameral committee might give more power to the Cavaliere, who is in clear trouble.<sup>408</sup> Indeed, the right wing is not unified, and Berlusconi's leadership is challenged. Forza Italia is called to change in order to survive, by devolving the organization in the hands of Beppe Pisanu and Claudio Scajola, two former Christian Democrats whose task is to reduce the number of men belonging to Fininvest and to pull the party towards the European popular party.<sup>409</sup> Silvio Berlusconi looks for legitimization from the national and European sides, and the Bicameral

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<sup>406</sup> T. Martines, *Diritto costituzionale*, cit., pp. 286-291.

<sup>407</sup> S. Buzzanca, *La Bicamerale ce l'ha fatta*, in "la Repubblica", July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1997.

<sup>408</sup> Dalemoni. *D'Alema e Berlusconi: nuovo compromesso. Origini, retroscena, pericoli*, in "L'Espresso", October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

<sup>409</sup> E. Poli, *Forza Italia. Strutture, leadership e radicamento territoriale*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2001, pp. 116 and on.

committee has a restorative effect on the right wing, especially on Gianfranco Fini, who had been trying to constitutionalize his area for a long time. However, Berlusconi has also other interests: since some collaborators of his and he himself have had some troubles with justice, he does not hide the unscrupulous will to constitutionally modify the judicial system.<sup>410</sup>

A possible arrangement between the majority and the opposition, according to which a broad agreement is said to have been adopted to avoid a law on the conflict of interest from the Bicameral committee, has been highly criticised. However, the law in question has never been object of any discussion of the committee. It is instead a parallel initiative of the Parliament, who has to follow a completely different procedure that should have not been tied to constitutional affairs. Different topic which has instead been object of discussion within the 70 is the problem of incompatibility.<sup>411</sup> According to the legislation of the time, the incompatibility between the deputy appointment and other roles that are important for the public life has to be established by the Parliament with majority voting. On the contrary, the series of reforms suggested by the Bicameral committee implies that the Constitutional Court is the one who decides. Obviously, whether this measure survives or not depends on the success of the committee itself.

The reform, put forward as it is, presents many difficulties, especially because of the possibility to have a President of the Republic, who is elected directly by citizens and belonging to a political wing, and a Prime Minister as a reinforced role and belonging to another political wing. This may be defined as a kind of Italian *cohabitation*.<sup>412</sup> Despite the doubts, both D'Alema and Fini have a quite similar objective that this reform can let them to reach. The former dreams to be the leader of a strong reformist party that is tied to European socialism and represents the centre-left bloc, while the latter dreams to be the leader of the Italian right wing. With the new system, both might have the means to win the elections in a competition that, when using the

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<sup>410</sup> A. Minzolini, *Il Cavaliere sotto assedio*, in "La Stampa", October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>411</sup> M. D'Alema, *Io, Berlusconi e la Bicamerale*, in "l'Unità", November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001.

<sup>412</sup> G. Pasquino, *Autopsia della bicamerale*, in *Politica in Italia. Edizione 1999*, edited by D. Hine, S. Vassallo, pp. 117-138.



double-round system, would leave only two participants. But both the centrist parties and Berlusconi do not appreciate the alliance between the two leaders, and the latter tries to find a way to be ahead in polls. The party that has increased its consensus but that objected throughout the entire legislature was that of the League, with which the Cavaliere tries to repair the relations. The members of Forza Italia know well that, in order to remain at the top, an agreement with the “Senatur” risks to become necessary and can be useful also inside that legislature. Furthermore, Berlusconi may increase his consensus independently from the League, by trying to carry on the anticommunist propaganda and opposition fight (“battaglia di opposizione”). In this way, he can also detach himself from the left bloc, since this agreement might turn out to be counterproductive. Indeed, a few months after the pact for the majoritarian system of coalition, the double-round system and the semi-presidential system, he declares to prefer the proportional representation, considering the plurality of groups.<sup>413</sup> Furthermore, on January, a warrant for the arrest of the former Minister of Defence of Berlusconi's government, the Honourable Cesare Previti arrives in the Parliament. Thereafter, the League votes with Forza Italia to reject the warrant.<sup>414</sup> These are the first strategies of a renewed green shirts-light blue axis that from that moment on will be strongly opposed to the agreements drawn up by the Bicameral committee. The discussion gets sharp but goes on until June 1998 when the President of the committee, becoming conscious of the failure of the project, announces to the President of the Chamber of Deputies that the discussion has come to an end because of the absence of the necessary political conditions.<sup>415</sup>

With the end of the Bicameral committee, one of the pillars of the project supported by the Ulivo falls. As a consequence, the reform of the State remains unrealized and the main centre-left rivals regain strength and

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<sup>413</sup> V. Testa, *Berlusconi avverte Fini*, in “la Repubblica”, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1998.

<sup>414</sup> *Previti: così ha votato ogni deputato*, in “la Repubblica”, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1998.

<sup>415</sup> Atti parlamentari, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, n.368, Camera dei Deputati, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, p. VI.

legitimacy. Some intellectuals criticize sharply the Pds leader, accusing him to have got it all wrong,<sup>416</sup> or to have transformed the Cavaliere from a "victim" to a "referee".<sup>417</sup> However, apart from the mistakes, the constitutional reforms cannot be elaborated while locked in one's own political margins; therefore, the majority and the opposition have to converge in a common ground. The program for which the Ulivo had been voted implies a new *pactum societatis*, therefore they have to make an attempt. The Italian ruling class has not managed to cross the finish line of the reform, in so showing all its limits. However, for over a year the debate has been intense and focused on the creation of a proposal that would be shared by all the political forces. The Parliament of the XIII legislature has missed an opportunity, but before falling, it has given the idea to be unified and go towards the same direction for a few months. In the following years, the Constitution will be subject to many attempts of changing, but the idea of unity will not even be an illusion, in so highlighting that the country is not still mature to change its Fundamental Chart.

## ***V.2 Between the centre and the left***

On February 1998, the post-communist left wing goes towards the umpteenth transformation. With the "States-General" assembly that takes place in Florence between February 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, the Pds prepares itself to change its name and symbol again, only nine years after the fall of the Italian communist party. Since the left wing aims at definitely becoming part of the large European social democratic family, the topic of the event is to reinforce the party by making it able to represent the non-antagonist leftist network, governmental force, that is active but dispersed in the country.<sup>418</sup> It is the left that wants to control globalization, but not of struggle, that promotes

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<sup>416</sup> P. Flores D'Arcais, *La sinistra masochista*, in "Micromega", 3, 1997, pp.13-21.

<sup>417</sup> P. Flores D'Arcais, *Politici senza realismo*, in "Micromega", 4, 1998, pp. 7-24.

<sup>418</sup> M. D'Alema, *Idee per la sinistra del 2000*, in "l'Unità", January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

privatizations and the semi-presidential system, that achieves the centre to win the elections.<sup>419</sup> This left wing becomes more *liberal* but, at the same time, wants to strengthen its internal structures and include external subjects that may recognize themselves in the same idea. At the base there is the will to fulfil the 1989 "Turn", by trying to improve the relationship with the old socialist world that had deteriorated since 1921, without pretending to have the same historical impact. The political groups that are ready to take this route with the Pds are five: the Republican left, the Unitarian communists, the Social christians, the Labour federation and the Europe reformists.<sup>420</sup> Taking numbers into account, these parties are minor compared to others, but they bring around 50,000 members to the Pds so much so that they are named as "bushes", which accompany the oak. Actually, during the creation of the party, a series of problems, destined to survive for decades with a significant part of the left bloc, arouses, apart from the loose ends expressed at the congress the year before. Going on to find a new idea seems to underline an increasing separation from the legacy left by the old Pci, without reflecting enough on what should be preserved from that crucial experience for the Italian democracy.

The same could be said for the socialist tradition, because its history has never been truly settled; the issue was often reduced to moral arguments tied to the latest Psi, or to the *leaderism* of Craxi, who was hostile towards the communist world.<sup>421</sup> The analyses of the contribution of the socialists to the construction of Italian history from the congress in Livorno on, as well as of the difficult relationship with Communism, and the eighties political mistakes are all missed evaluations not only on the part of those who want to enter this world, but also of those who inherit what is left of Pietro Nenni's party. Not even the socialists have settled themselves, probably because of the disempowering, the diaspora, and the *berlusconism* that bewitched a huge part

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<sup>419</sup> A. Tortorella, *La riduzione della democrazia e la sinistra neoliberale*, in "Critica Marxista", 4, 1998, pp. 2-15.

<sup>420</sup> I. Ariemma, *La casa brucia*, cit., p. 194.

<sup>421</sup> L. Granelli, *Dove va la "Cosa 2"?*, in "Nuova Fase. Quaderni di storia e politica sociale", 1, 1998, pp. 19-30.

of them. Nevertheless, giving a definitive social democratic soul to the Italian left bloc without putting together the pieces of the history of the two conditioning cultures is impossible. The risk is that of creating a party that loses progressively its legacy to look for something that is continuously indefinite.<sup>422</sup>

At the congress, the synthesis between different cultures of the left is recalled, and the name and the symbol of the party change: the Democrats of the Left (“Democratici di Sinistra”) have a flower as a symbol of the party to recall the European socialist party. Symbols are important and the will to move rapidly towards a new profile is absolutely understandable. According to the dalemian culture, the party is the centre of mediation among the interests of the citizens, the community and the institutions. As a consequence, providing the country with a social democratic bloc, especially according to the alternation logics, means to begin a process of accomplished democracy. Furthermore, in the West the social democracy applied to the “third way” seems to be chosen everywhere; for example, that is what happens in the USA with Clinton, in Great Britain with Blair, in France with Jospin, or in Germany with Schröder. D'Alema is also the vice-President of the Socialist International (“Internazionale Socialista”), therefore his role goes beyond the national dimension, and brings him to strengthen the unity process of the left. However, this process is not likely to form a large mass party that is rooted in society with a strong identity and a future perspective, unless it is preceded by a profound reflexion on itself, the power relations and the developing world. Iginio Ariemma will write about a change that consisted only in removing hammer and sickle from the symbol,<sup>423</sup> while Pietro Ignazi will talk about a transformation that took place in the general indifference, as a sign that the DS are far from being perceived as the fulfilment of a historical process.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> G. Ruffolo, *La Cosa 2 non tollera rimozioni storiche*, in “l'Unità”, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>423</sup> I. Ariemma, *La casa brucia*, cit., pp. 193-195.

<sup>424</sup> P. Ignazi, *Il potere dei partiti*, cit., pp. 203-205.

The attempt to make the party of the new left stronger presents two problems: the relationship with the more radical wing and that with the centre. If on one hand Rifondazione comunista, with which it is necessary to come to terms with, may be relegated to a representative role; on the other hand, the democratic centre is the pillar that supports the Ulivo alliance. Undoubtedly, the Ds creation detaches even more the creation of a Ulivo party since the choice to form a social democratic group goes to the opposite direction, in so increasing the contrasts with those hoping in a unified subject with the catholic democrats.<sup>425</sup> At the same time, there is the doubt that this new group might undermine the executive and its leadership.<sup>426</sup> For example, during a meeting that takes place in January 1998, Scoppola suggests the post-communist universe not to lose the value that came from the Turn of some years before, and looks positively at the Ds as long as they might strengthen the Ulivo as a coalition. If they mined the harmony of the majority, they would lose the historical opportunity that the popular vote gave them.<sup>427</sup> The idea to directly express the premiership seems to be interesting at first glance, especially taking into account the novelty of the undergoing transformation process, the international context increasingly favourable to the left in government, and the *conventio ad excludendum* that is by now worn-out and outdated. However, it is important to remember that one political bloc that considers the problem of legitimization and representation of the left following the logics of the alternation, will have some difficulties in reaching the government without passing through the elections, because the price to pay in terms of consensus and credibility would be very high.<sup>428</sup> This is well-known by the Ds, especially by their leader.

At the same time, a new political group starts to take their first steps in the centre: it is the Democratic union for the Republic ("Unione democratica per

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<sup>425</sup> M. Fotia, *Il consociativismo infinito: dal centro-sinistra al Partito democratico*, Dedalo, Bari, 2011, pp. 219 and on.

<sup>426</sup> S. Fabbrini, *Tra passioni e veti. Il cambiamento politico in Italia*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2000, pp. 129 and on.

<sup>427</sup> P. Scoppola, *Tra Cosa 2 e Ulivo*, Roma, Radio Radicale, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>428</sup> P. Ignazi, *Il Pds, l'Ulivo, il governo*, in "il Mulino", 2, 1997, pp. 252-260.

la Repubblica”- Udr).<sup>429</sup> This political party is not born from the ground, but in the rooms of *Montecitorio* thanks to a parliamentary group led by the former President Francesco Cossiga, who assembled many people coming from Forza Italia and other parties of the centrist bloc in order to take the place that had been occupied by the Christian democracy. Cossiga's goal is to form another party that may sometimes collaborate with the left wing, but that will then place itself in the conservative pole during the electoral alternation. Trying to reach this objective, Cossiga is supported by Clemente Mastella, Roberto Formigoni (who then goes back to Fi), and other personalities. Basically, he wants to revitalize the centre and make it part of the European popular party, in order to marginalize the right blocs, contraposing the party to the Progressives and looking for the harmony that recalls that of the First Republic.<sup>430</sup> It is a completely different project compared to the idea pushed forward by the Ulivo about how to develop democracy in Italy. Therefore, the two projects are destined to clash.

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<sup>429</sup> B. Jerkov, *E l'Udr diventa partito: ultimo arrivo Titti Parenti*, in “la Repubblica”, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>430</sup> F. Cossiga, *Per carità di patria*, Mondadori, Milano, 2003, pp. 60 and on.

### ***V.3 Until the last vote***

The attempt to place the parties in a more central position, the continuous protests by Rifondazione, the failure of the Bicameral committee, the new adjustment of the centre right wing, and the formation of the Udr are all the elements that mine to the executive power. However, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi announces to the President of the Council of Ministers that the public account has been balanced and the long-awaited moment is coming. In March of that year, the Council of European financial ministers recognizes the work of Prodi's government and announces that Italy meets four out of the five requirements of Maastricht Treaty. In the spring of 1998, inflation rates turn out to have decreased by two percentage points in the last two years, going towards a stable 2%; the deficit/GDP ratio goes from 6.6% in 1996 to 2.7% in 1998; the long-term interest rate goes from 11.8% to 6.7% over two years, placing itself well below the threshold of 7.8% that has been imposed to enter Euro. Italy is growing by more than one point as compared with the moment when Prodi took its office. Indeed, in 1996 Italy grew by 0.6%, but two years later the International Monetary Fund estimated an increase of 2.0%.<sup>431</sup> These results are outstanding, because they go beyond expectations and arrive after two years of structural economic reforms that have been coordinated by the Minister Ciampi. This "journey through the desert" allows Italy to be one of the eleven countries to give birth to the Currency Union, which was celebrated with a speech that Prodi delivered to all channels the same day of the news. The only bundle is the state debt that cannot go below 60%. Two years before it corresponded to 124%, and managed to decrease to 118%, but is still too far from the criterion established by Europe. The tough policies adopted by the Ulivo aim at shaking employment, which has registered a small increase by 0.5%, that is 110,000 units after the adoption of the law known as "pacchetto Treu". However,

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<sup>431</sup> C. Abbate, F. Ghirlandini, *Italia e UEM*, Direzione generale degli studi, Divisione Affari Economici, Parlamento Europeo, Lussemburgo, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, pp. 5-14.

unemployment is still spread, because in 1996 it corresponded to 12.1% and only in the South to 22%.<sup>432</sup> As a consequence, the Ulivo has to concentrate on the relaunch of the South and promote new labour policies.<sup>433</sup>

The switch to Euro, together with the consolidation of public finances, are the most important moments for the government, since it manages to reach two out of the three objectives that had been established in the pact with the Parliament. The third one is related to the institutional reform, then failed because of the collapse of the Bicameral committee. When something reaches the peak, sooner or later, it has to deal with the following climb-down; from that moment on, the executive begins to crumble.

In the aftermath of the news about the currency Union, one of the founders of the Ulivo and future Minister for the implementation of the government's program Giulio Santagata says to Prodi: "Romano, the hunting season is coming, and you are the hare!"<sup>434</sup> Indeed, after having reached that important objective, the ulivists are afraid of the attacks from their same allies and know that they need to find a way to hold the government.

On June 1998, the Document of Economic-Financial Program (Dpef) is presented and obtains the vote in favour even by the Udr.<sup>435</sup> For Rifondazione, which has been doubtful about its role in the majority for a long time, that is the crucial alarm bell about the policies presented by the Ulivo, and it seems clear that something is changing in the Parliament.

During the following weeks, Prodi and the Ulivo ruling group attempt to structure the majority, by trying to launch the action of the government aiming at operating in the South and fighting against unemployment.<sup>436</sup> It is

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<sup>432</sup> Ministero del Tesoro, del Bilancio e della Programmazione Economica, *Relazioni sull'andamento dell'economia nel 1998 e aggiornamento delle previsioni per il 1999*, Roma, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, pp. 19-40.

<sup>433</sup> S. Vozza, *Il Mezzogiorno nell'Europa della moneta unica*, in "Critica Marxista", 4, 1998, pp. 49-54.

<sup>434</sup> R. Prodi, M. Damilano, *Missione Incompiuta*, cit., pp. 121-139

<sup>435</sup> M. D'Alema, *Controcorrente*, cit., p. 49

<sup>436</sup> R. Prodi, *Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri, Romano Prodi, sulla politica economica del Governo dopo l'avvio della terza fase dell'Unione economica e monetaria*, in "Commissioni V riunite", Roma, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1998, pp. 57-62.



not easy to face these particularly complex issues, which are now part of the main actions of the government.

At the political level moreover, the idea is to present a single wide list at the 1999 European elections in order to highlight that the coalition is unified also from the electoral point of view<sup>437</sup>. However, this idea goes against the strong will of the parties that continue to be firm in their identity and want to go alone to the elections, since each of them looks for its own legitimization. The internal discussion about the future of the majority involves also Rifondazione, which lives with sufferance its role of, simultaneously, struggle and majority party; especially after the agreement of the previous year. Being conscious of the difficulties related to the employment plan, Bertinotti would like to bring the party back to the ideas of struggles that have always characterised it. Behind this setting, there is the "culture of political movements" that belongs to the neo-communist leader, who thinks that his party is closer to those movements that have been marginalized by globalization and that want to contrast it unconditionally.

On the other hand, the President of Rifondazione, Armando Cossutta does not agree with what has been suggested by Bertinotti and is closer to the rigid tradition of the party and of institutions in general. Indeed, he promotes the idea of a radical and governmental left that takes its responsibility with the whole coalition.<sup>438</sup> It is clear that the contrast is not only related to the role of the neo-communists in Parliament, but also to the place of the party in the international scenario, where it finds itself in contrast with Blair, Schröder, Jospin, etc., as to affirming its eternal opposition to capitalism.<sup>439</sup> However, the struggle is also related to the control of the party. Cossutta is followed by many leaders, so much so that he can count on the loyalty of around a half of the Parliamentary group; however, his influence risks becoming an obstacle for Bertinotti, who is determined to follow the rebellion wave. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998, Ciampi presents the financial law for 1999 to the Chambers,

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<sup>437</sup> G. Fragonara, *Prodi: l'Italia avrà solo due partiti*, in "Corriere della Sera", May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>438</sup> S. Bertolino, *Rifondazione comunista*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2004, pp. 112-128.

<sup>439</sup> F. Bertinotti, M. D'Alema, *Le due sinistre*, in "Critica Marxista", 5, 1996, pp. 33-39.

approved by the Council of Ministers and object of study for the Parliamentary groups.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 1998, in the occasion of the national political Committee of Rc, Bertinotti asks his colleagues to adopt his idea not to vote in favour of the financial law, which is considered far from the requests of the party. At the moment of the vote, the secretary obtains only the 58% majority, showing how much Rc is divided.<sup>440</sup> This is a bitter defeat for Cossutta and the prelude of an inevitable break, the second after that of 1991, which had in fact generated Rifondazione.<sup>441</sup>

Being conscious of the internal contrast between the government allies, the Ulivo ruling group decides to verify the majority in the parliamentary chamber. There is no other attempt to find any alternative majorities and discussion about the financial law begins, being sure that it will be approved. On the contrary, a will to defend the coalition that came out from the elections is manifested; if that coalition was to end, it would be ratified by the Parliament in the respect of its prerogatives. This view, which is opposed to the usual negotiations of parliamentary democracy, incorporates the bipolar and majoritarian idea of Prodi's political system. Instead of risking to distort the coalition voted in 1996 with shifting alliances' operations, sending a parliamentary group away and inserting a new one, they prefer to directly check the conditions in front of the Chambers, being responsible for all the possible risks.

On Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, at around 9.30, the President of the Chamber of Deputies Violante asks the Prime Minister to expose his communications about the financial law. Romano Prodi delivers a long and passionate speech in which he claims the actions of the government, the executive stability, the international credibility, and launches the idea of a measure that might carry on the European dream and the need to neatly recover unemployment:

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<sup>440</sup> U. Rosso, *La conta dice Bertinotti*, in "la Repubblica", October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>441</sup> G. Valentini, *Un voto secondo coscienza*, in "la Repubblica", October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

*"This financial law is at the same time the landmark of a new phase of the initiative of the Government, and the coherent prosecution of the work that has been made so far. Therefore, it is part of the pact with the voters and of the program for which the Government had asked for your confidence (...). The revival of the South and the fight against unemployment are our new Maastricht."*<sup>442</sup>

If Maastricht had given to Italy a horizon for two years, in that moment the same is asked for the revival of the South, which still suffers from centuries-old problems.

After having exposed the objectives of the measure and clarified the dynamics of what seems to be an imminent crisis, Prodi addresses directly Bertinotti, hoping to convince him to change his opinion:

*"Finally, I cannot believe that you really want to give the country in the hands of those who we have fought and won against. Honourable Bertinotti, this Government has been and still is, and I say it proudly, the Government chosen also by the voters of Rifondazione comunista."*

Besides, in the following passage, Prodi betrays the reason why the discussion is taking place in the Chambers, in so respecting constitutional regulations, and not in other places where to find possible alternatives. For him, his concepts of bipolarization, that is the democracy of the alternation between the centre-right and the centre-left blocs that he really wants to consolidate, is at stake:

*"Honourable colleagues, I said what was my duty to tell. I said it calmly but also strongly. I said it passionately, with the passion of a person that knows that today something more than the balance of Government is at stake."*

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<sup>442</sup> R. Prodi, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 1-9.

The last appeal is toward the sense of institutional responsibility of parliamentarians, especially those belonging to the majority, in order to save the Ulivo project in its original version, the one that the voters wanted on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1996:

*"On behalf of the Government, I ask you to make your choices with responsibility and wisdom. The country needs, today more than ever, your sense of responsibility as well as mine."*

The Parliament stands at a crossroads, and the country is waiting for the declarations of the representatives of parliamentary groups, especially those of Rc. Meanwhile, many parliamentarians, such as the honourable Natale D'Amico (from Ri), asks the Government to enlarge the majority in order not to risk ending their experience, even though they know that it would mean changing the results of the elections.<sup>443</sup>

D'Alema as well wishes to make the centre-left majority stronger, which seems to be a clear invitation to open a new political scenario to save the government and the legislature.<sup>444</sup> More specifically, the discussion is about a possible move towards the centre on the part of the majority, with the participation of the supporters of Cossiga, who, according to the future Minister of Communications, the honourable Cardinale, admit having been born in opposition to the perfect bicameralism.<sup>445</sup> Being far from the logics of the two poles, in order to "decompose to recompose", they say "no" to Prodi's government.

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<sup>443</sup> N. D'Amico, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 14-20.

<sup>444</sup> M. D'Alema, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 23-35.

<sup>445</sup> S. Cardinale, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 12-18.

Immediately after, President Diliberto takes the floor, headgroup of the communists of Rifondazione:

*"It is a decision that binds each of us, but that the majority of the parliamentary group that I have the honour to head, does not share (...). I pray you to trust me: it is not an easy role, especially for those who, like me, have an idea of the communist party that for some of you might be antique, but to which I have been educated to firmly believe in inside the communist party."*<sup>446</sup>

The party officialises its break, which is a dramatic event for the communist culture, being always faithful to the motto "free in thoughts, united in actions". Then, he definitely takes the distance by saying:

*"I therefore declare, as headgroup of Rifondazione, that the Party withdraws the vote of confidence to the Government in office. However, I do not give up as a communist. We do not give up to the idea that the possibility to unify the left, democratic and labour groups should be abandoned today and for a long political time. Thank you."*

This is the announcement of the division. The number of deputies that will remain with Bertinotti and that of those who will follow Cossutta is still unknown. However, the scission of the party is official, and the Government does not know the numbers on which it can stand.

During the following hours, an intense work in order to find the right strategies to adopt is carried on. Those who follow Cossutta are ready to become part of the Ulivo, but there is no guarantee that their number is enough.

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<sup>446</sup> O. Diliberto, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 20-29.

In the coalition there are those who wish for a public declaration in favour of Cossiga, but the principle for which the Ulivo majority does not want to be transformed or "blackmailed" by the new centre group convinces Prodi to go straight on his way and to count the deputies of the Parliament.<sup>447</sup> It seems like an arm wrestling with far from granted results. Indeed, if the Government did not have the majority and everybody agreed that any alternative majority would be found, anticipated elections might be held. However, this time it is not possible to go to vote, because the Italian situation is at a pre-conflict stage. Indeed, during the assembly of the day after, the President has to reply to the interventions of parliamentarians, and also announces that the Government has to take a stand in relation to the Balkans issue, since the war between Serbia and Kosovo troops has already caused 300,000 victims. The US want to intervene militarily and insist that Italy keeps its end up. Prodi insists on a pacifist choice, but also says that the country would be ready to act if the Un asked for it.<sup>448</sup> A few days later he will sign the *Activation Order*, through which a member of the Atlantic Alliance puts its army at the disposal of Nato. This pre-conflict situation prevents the country from holding anticipated elections; on the contrary, it requests more stability and government unity. At the end of his second speech at the Chamber of Deputies, the Prime Minister holds the vote of confidence to n°6-00065 resolution, which had been presented by the honourables Mussi, Mattarella, Manca, Paissan, Crema, Piscitiello and La Malfa. Then, the Chamber is convened for the day after, which falls on Friday, for the declaration of vote. The following hours are characterized by one telephone call after the other, with the aim to convince any doubtful deputy to vote for the government. Even a single vote can make the difference and save or destroy the Ulivo experience. Prodi's men try to do whatever it takes, especially with the Ri centrists, because it is unknown whether they will hold the vote of confidence or not. For example, Irene Pivetti lets it know that she is not sure to appear to

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<sup>447</sup> A. Caporale, *La fase 2 non piace a palazzo Chigi*, in "la Repubblica", October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>448</sup> R. Prodi, *Resoconto stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 5-6.

the Chamber for the confidence vote.<sup>449</sup> The brother-in-law of Antonio Di Pietro and former Minister of Infrastructure and Transport in Prodi's government, Gabriele Cimadoro, Udr member, is thinking to support the executive. Then Salvo Liotta, a former DC member in line with the current of Salvo Lima, enrolled in the group of Lamberto Dini and elected with Forza Italia: the Ulivo counts on his support.<sup>450</sup>

On the morning of October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, President Violante initiates the explanations of vote. Giorgio La Malfa, while casting his vote of confidence, underlines two points on behalf of the Italian Republican Party: he completely shares the choices related to the issue in Kosovo, but he opposes to the 35-hour-hypothesis, about which he says that he "does not see the reasons".<sup>451</sup> On this part, Fausto Bertinotti highlights his opposing position:

*"After more than two years of sacrifices, we have asked a "social" compensation for the country and for its people, an act of social justice, the beginning of a reform policy. We have asked for an important change that has been refused. This financial law is not going to last."*<sup>452</sup>

Sergio Mattarella, on behalf of the Italian Popular Party, underlines again how important it is to discuss in the parliamentary chamber, despite all the possible risks:

*"We have even chosen the risk to be defeated in this Chamber to seek clarity stability and the confidence for this Government. I believe that today the vote of confidence will side with this choice and we will be confirmed to work hard to lead this country."*<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Alla Camera l'ora della "conta", con Prodi due deputati in più, in "la Repubblica", October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>450</sup> A. Colasio, *Il tempo dell'Ulivo*, cit., pp. 370-373.

<sup>451</sup> G. La Malfa, *Resoconto stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, p. 7.

<sup>452</sup> F. Bertinotti, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei deputati, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 11-12.

<sup>453</sup> S. Mattarella, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei deputati, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 16-17.

Then, it is Giuliano Pisapia's turn, who casts his vote of confidence to the Government as opposed to Rifondazione, even though with reserve, and he criticizes his allies:

*"I will therefore vote for the resolution of the majority, but my vote does not mean, cannot mean, and will never mean that I support those who want to divide the left, those who think and hope to isolate the ones who intend to represent the requests and the needs of the outcasts, the poorest and the society. Dear colleagues, we could and should have done more; as for me, I do not want to give up."*<sup>454</sup>

There is also Salvatore Liotta, who seems to be an additional unity supporting for the majority, but sides against his parliamentary group and resigns:

*"I think that now the bases for a vote that consolidates the current order do not exist anymore. As a consequence, I announce that, being in disagreement with the Italian Renewal (Ri) group, from which I resign, I will not cast my vote of confidence to the President Prodi."*<sup>455</sup>

At around 12.00, the explanations of vote end, and the moment to cast the vote by roll call, to then vote concretely, arrives. Until the end, President Prodi is asked to propose to the other parties to enlarge the majority, but he refuses, protecting the Ulivo project until the end.<sup>456</sup> Making an exception to the rule, President Violante publicly asks the President Prodi if he intends to talk. That is the last occasion for Prodi to enlarge the majority. But he gives a sign of denial, and they go on voting.

One of the many doubts is related to the deputy of Rifondazione Tiziana Volpiana, who has always been faithful to Armando Cossutta, but about whom no certain news are known in terms of the vote of confidence. She is the last one to vote, and it seems that she in the end prefers to follow the

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<sup>454</sup> G. Pisapia, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei deputati, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, p. 25.

<sup>455</sup> S. Liotta, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei deputati, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, p. 29.

<sup>456</sup> B. Jerkov, *Cossiga rilancia le larghe intese*, in "la Repubblica", October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998.



guidelines of the secretary Bertinotti. As reported by the minutes, applause break out from the seats of Forza Italia and National alliance.

The moment of the results arrives. 625 were present and voted; majority: 313; votes *in favour*: 312; votes *against*: 313. It is only one vote that determines the collapse of Prodi's government.<sup>457</sup>

For the first time in the history of the Republic, the government resigns after one vote of no confidence. The will to underline the bipolarization determined by the voters until the end generates a test of power that hits the whole coalition. With only one action, Fausto Bertinotti obtains three results<sup>458</sup>: he damages the government, the Ulivo as a coalition, and his own party, which, taking into account the result of the following elections (4.3%), pays a very high price for the separation. The deputies of Rifondazione almost engaged in a physical confrontation after the vote to Prodi, and even the two female secretaries divide up, the one of Bertinotti with Cossutta and vice versa.<sup>459</sup> Then, Diliberto and the other deputies found the Party of Italian communists ("Il partito dei comunisti italiani") and are ready to continue the government experience.

In the following days, D'Alema and the other leaders, who had worked a lot in those hours to avoid that dramatic result for the coalition, try to solve the problem. On Saturday, a manifestation is organized in Bologna by the supporters of Prodi, and Veltroni is there.<sup>460</sup> They underline that they do not accept any kind of transformism proper of the First Republic. Scalfaro hypothesizes Ciampi as Premier, but they do not manage to find an agreement. A second attempt with Prodi is proposed, hoping that the majority may be enlarged, relying on the support of Cossiga.

In order to give his support, the former President of Republic demands three conditions: the support of his party has to be asked explicitly, the alliance of April 21<sup>st</sup> has to be declared dead, and a new executive has to be created with

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<sup>457</sup> S. Messina, *E Prodi scopre di aver perso soltanto all'ultimo voto*, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>458</sup> A. Tortorella, *Il paradosso italiano*, in "Critica Marxista", 5, 1998, pp. 2-9.

<sup>459</sup> B. Vespa, *Storia d'Italia da Mussolini a Berlusconi*, cit., p. 205.

<sup>460</sup> <sup>460</sup> M. Marozzi, *La coerenza del Professore. Noi non abbiamo tradito*, in "la Repubblica", October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

a reorganization (“rimpasto”). After having thought about it for a long time, Prodi accepts and convenes the whole Ulivo group, composed of the leaders and the presidents of the parliamentary groups; but for Udr it represents an outrage. An assembly organized without Cossiga's group is considered as a sign that the coalition is still alive, therefore Mastella, on behalf of Cossiga, retreats his will to support Prodi.<sup>461</sup>

In the end, the agreement is taken. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, Massimo D'Alema will be appointed by President Scalfaro of the following exploratory mandate to establish a new majority that includes people from Cossiga to Cossutta and what is left of the Ulivo.<sup>462</sup> The coalition of April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1996, that had won over the right bloc and opened the reform period of the Second Republic, dies on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998 to give space to a new and more heterogeneous coalition, supported by some members of the centre-right wing.

Romano Prodi has not managed to form a new executive, since he was trying to defend the principle of bipolarism based on popular will and a single executive throughout the legislature. In his vision, anticipated elections are to be preferred over creating a new post-electoral majority. He refused to denaturalize the Ulivo, leaving it as he had imagined at the end of 1994. He has been capable of fighting on more fronts until the end and imagining a country tied to Europe, to which he has given a dream for more than two years. Now, Italy has a new government without that original Ulivo and without him, who will be the deputy at the Chamber of district 12 in Bologna, waiting to come back as the protagonist of the European political scene.

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<sup>461</sup> B. Vespa, *Storia d'Italia da Mussolini a Berlusconi*, cit., p. 205.

<sup>462</sup> E. Mauro, *La strada obbligata della sinistra*, in “la Repubblica”, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998.

## Conclusion

The '96 Ulivo is not a mere accord among parties allying in a bipolar system, it is something more, much more. It is the encounter, that never became synthesis, among diverse interests, sensitivities and political views.

The end of ideologies, the communism collapse, the catholic diaspora, the emergence of international phenomena such as globalization, force the political actors of the nineties to raise questions that are different from the past. The center-left, more than analyzing the possible convergence between marxism and catholicism, wants to go further, to break down the barriers between the two worlds. More courageously than their predecessors, the actors in question try to elaborate a new critical culture capable of synthesizing what is left of two of the cornerstones of democracy, communism and catholicism, to face the urgent problems of the society. That society offers a completely new face, due to the undergoing international transformation and the unprecedented framework of the Second Republic. In this scenario, some catholic and leftist movements begin contaminating each other on the basis of a shared program, although committed to the idea of preserving and respecting their own identity. Convinced by the idea of reaffirming morality within politics, the two forces are not only interested in merging to confront the common adversary, but they want to provide for a long-lasting valid alternative for the country. New energies coming from the civil society and the institutions, together with the parties, aim at reducing fragmentation and reinforce the extremely fragile Italian system in the midst of transition.

Born and raised as a catholic, Romano Prodi however had never wanted to create a hegemonic centrist party capable of contrasting the ex-christian democrats' diaspora. Neither the left ever thought of exploiting the alliance with the centre to achieve their historic objectives. They aspired at creating a new political framework also looking at some regional dynamics, such as in Emilia Romagna. There, the social democratic laic world embraces the same principles of a part of the social catholicism and the two realms work together

to ensure public policies at the municipal, provincial and regional level. The intent was to give emphasis to the solidaristic roots of both catholicism and communism, to give to the country an alternative that is progressist, democratic and especially reformist. The reformist culture finds its origins both in the big families of the Popular Front (“Fronte Popolare”) and in a part of the democratic catholic world. The Ulivo confronted the Italian social question and tried to give his own solution to spur development and to govern the ongoing major transformations. In an era marked by the mainstream logic of the free market, the Prodi proposal tried to be a balanced compromise between capitalism, democracy and reforms proper of the Welfare State, and to confer to Italy a primary role in the European integration process. Unsurprisingly, the country is cohesive in aspiring to the monetary Union and it has accepted, almost unprotestingly, to pay a progressive tax (whose 60% will be successively returned), demonstrating that also the most unpopular choices can be sustained by the citizenry if intended to achieve important goals. The Prodi-Ciampi axis committed to the rebalancing of the public budget to meet the Maastricht criteria without asphyxiating the national economy. Their action has managed to combine rigorism with policies finalized to liberalization capable of fostering industrial competitiveness. The parliamentary majority has for two years supported the impetus of the executive and the assembly has proved to be active and effective, able to sustain the pace of reformism.

In 1998, however, the April 21<sup>st</sup> majority crumbles and a new one emerges that will last for the rest of the legislative term. The main reason for the collapse was the vote of no confidence proposed by Rifondazione comunista, whose votes and support had proved essential during the biennium. At the same time, it is undeniable that the coalition reveals his political weaknesses already before October 9<sup>th</sup> vote. The internal debate between the Ulivo integralist and the partitism creates opposing interpretations of the future of the coalition. On one hand, a part of the coalition saw the initiative as the first step toward a unique block, capable of combining the diverse cultures to create a new single party that is modern, softer, closer to the bipartisan model.

On the other hand, someone else in the coalition wanted to reinforce the role of parties as mediators between the citizen and the institutions, filter of the ruling class and essential element for the development of democracy. Partitism has tried to defend its own story, its own evolution and considered the Ulivo as a set of different parties, combined with a component of the civil society. "Ulivism" instead saw the parties as the means to win the bipolar competition, waiting for a further evolution capable of creating a single group reorganizing all the center-left hearts: the future Democratic Party. Such difference was so striking to contrapose also the leaders within a single party, as was the case within the Pds. Massimo D'Alema has embraced the idea of a party moved towards the left and the European socialism, a party that could have legitimized the premiership with a direct popular vote in the future. Walter Veltroni instead has defended the "ulivist" principle and, already in '96, he envisioned the creation of a party aiming at the entrustment by the majority ("vocazione maggioritaria") that more than ten years later will materialize in the formation of the Pd. Also in the Ppi, led by Franco Marini, the mainstream conviction was to preserve the history and interests of the post-Christian democrats, without aspiring to a unitary project that may have deprived the party of its independence. While the parties gathered in congresses to reinforce their position, the "ulivists" hoped for a unitary direction, without the deep understanding of what the Ulivo was. The coalition, more valuable than the mere assemblage of its components, could not exist without those parties as main bricks. At the same time, the parties themselves could not represent the innovative element. The added value for the coalition was the involvement of the civil society and the combination of forces made the real difference for the victory. These are elements to protect also in absence of the synthesis towards a single unitary entity.

There is no doubt that the absence of a "Prodi party" was a shortage of the center-left. Its creation could have put into practice organically and systematically the "prodian" vision of Italy. This was indeed a weakness of his leadership: believing that the "public democracy" (direct popular vote) was enough to legitimize his premiership. The popular vote in parliamentary

democracies, without a ruling class supported by a distributed power, runs the risk of being easily subjected to changes. Despite the bipolarism provided in the Mattarella law, in fact, the Italian political pluralism made it difficult to guarantee an entire legislative term-lasting government, based only on the election results. Between 1994 and 2001 Italy had five different Prime Ministers, demonstrating that fragmentation (also cultural) is more influential of the electoral law in a political system. Doubts arise over whether the approval of the electoral law in the XI legislature represented a suitable step towards a bipolarism, prefigured by the ruling class, yet still absent in the country's political vision. Probably, it was necessary to fully evaluate the diverse sensibilities within Italian politics.

The hypothesis of the involvement of Massimo D'Alema in the fall of the government seems unrealistic. Some observers support the idea that the secretary longed for the premiership and accordingly plotted behind his colleague. In reality, the Ds tried in vain to recompose the majority around the outgoing President. The alleged idea of overcoming the *convention ad excludendum* to become the Prime Minister could have fueled the instability of the coalition, but it was not decisive for the end of that political experience. The ambiguity of a political force, simultaneously anti- and within the establishment, can be overcome through popular legitimation, hence the elections. The arrival of Massimo D'Alema at Palazzo Chigi through an exclusively parliamentary maneuver was a fragility of his government, something he will always be reproached for.

It is reasonable to claim that the reasons for the fall of the government were deeper than this. Albeit the vast political program of the Ulivo, the equilibrium of the parliamentary majority stood on three cornerstones: the entrance in the monetary Union, the rebalancing of the public account and the institutional reform. Once the first two were accomplished with general astonishment, the failure of the third seemed to declare the end of that executive. Prodi has tried to revitalize the majority by proposing significant actions such as the development of the South or the fight to unemployment, but his efforts did not pay. The end of the enthusiasm for the monetary Union

was not followed by a new perspective for the country, and a support for the majority based on something else than the pro-European stance lacked. The absence of such a perspective for the Ulivo provided an obstacle for the professor to continue to govern over the following three years.

Nevertheless, the entrance in the euro, despite being a decisive moment in Italian history, it did not represent the major leap forward for the national economy. The country has not been able to fully exploit the advantages of globalization and the common currency, and the country often recorded a zero-growth increase. The consequences of the big change due to the mundialization of the market seem to be underestimated and left the nation confronting with a passive revolution, since it was uncontrolled and coming from the outside. The fierce international competition, the IT innovations arrived late, and the offshoring aspiration have all conditioned the industrial productivity rate. Industries, often family-run, were not able to adapt to the global market, nor they chose to invest in innovation, thereby having serious problem in facing the 2000s. In this scenario, it is important to consider the national de-industrialization process caused by the significant activity of foreign acquisition of many large industries in the early 2000. The scenario is complete when privatizations are taken into account. In the late nineties, in fact, privatizations carried out by the center-left government were numerous, not always leading to the hoped-for outcomes. The result is a general doubt on whether it had been appropriate to significantly reduce the State intervention in the industrial sector. The long-theorized passage from the entrepreneurial State to the regulating one would have needed a larger evaluation on the Italian industrial sector (in crisis since the eighties), also considering that privatization does not always coincide with liberalization. Even when the State decides to privatize, the national normative structure to which the companies have to comply has to be added to the European normative structure. Sometimes, a contrast emerges between those international and national requirements and the liberalization goal<sup>463</sup>.

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<sup>463</sup> P. Craveri, *L'arte del non governo. L'inesorabile declino della Repubblica italiana*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2016, pp. 490- 512.

Some of the failed measures of the period '96-'98 were successively included in series of financial measures enacted by the Minister Paolo Schioppa in the biennium 2006-2008, at the beginning of a significant financial crisis. The Minister approved a fifty-billion euro investment for growth and infrastructure, stimulated a five-point reduction of the tax wedge, carried out a spending review, updated the pension expenditure procedures and rearranged the system of university financing. Also that government lasted only two years, so it was not possible to fully implement the political agenda. In foreign politics, Italy is committed to reinforce its stance in the international bodies. Nonetheless, apart from its involvement in the creation of the Union, Italy seemed to be influenced by the American political choices, in order to create a strategic alliance capable of giving to Italy a prominent role in the important global decisions. Someone dares to affirm that more than foreign politics, one should point out to the concept of foreign “sub-politics”, to underline the striking difference between the role of the of single states and that of the super-powers. That difference not only suggests the importance of establishing a common European foreign politics, but it also suggest that this “sub-politics” is not an Italian prerogative, but it involves all those states that count on the support of supranational, regional and global mechanisms in order to defend their own interests<sup>464</sup>.

However, the value of the Ulivo as political subject bringing a huge novelty is indisputable. The desire to combine all the post-marxist and catholic legacies in a single dimension represents a unique experiment that found a fertile ground in Italy. Politically and culturally, the coalition might be defined as an attempt to give to the Country a new historical compromise eighteen years after the assassination of Aldo Moro, despite the evident differences between the two periods. In a strictly political sense, the coalition enjoyed significantly less support with respect to the mass parties of the Dc or the Pci. At the cultural-political level, instead, that alliance has walked in

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<sup>464</sup> S. Romano, *Guida alla politica estera italiana. Da Badoglio ai giorni nostri*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2016, pp. 266-279, 289-290.



the footsteps of Enrico Berlinguer and Aldo Moro, until reaching the government.

The Ulivo represented a lot and it surely was the dream of millions of citizens that hoped for the unity of the left on the notes of the “Canzone popolare”. Since that moment a new generation of politicians and activists has born: the “ulivist generation” that has always walked towards a united left intended to serve a modern country. The Ulivo has probably left an unaccomplished mission, mission from which one shall restart today.

## Interview to Giulio Santagata

Giulio Santagata, economist and among the main collaborators of Romano Prodi in the construction of the Ulivo and the creation of its programme, sided to Prodi himself since 1996 as economic counsellor at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Elected to the Chamber of Deputies from 2001 to 2013, he participated to the redaction of the “Unione” programme and he was Minister for the implementation of the Programme in the second Prodi government from 2006 and 2008.

Hon. Giulio Santagata kindly accepted to answer to the present questions in Bologna on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

*1) Q. Professor Romano Prodi is not a new figure in politics. His name was already attached to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Italian Republic in 1993, to then give away to the Ciampi government. The Ppi wants him as premier candidate in 1996, convincing other parties of the leftist alliance to accept his figure. If on one hand the historical importance of the moment is acknowledged, intended as the fulfilment of that attempt to combine the catholic progressive left with the one of marxist inspiration, the visions at the basis of the coalition are different. President Prodi imagines, already the previous year, a soft state, with a compatible welfare and a thin party system, still inexistent, capable of following the new rapid tendencies of the decision-making process. Diverse is the conception of the traditional parties that see the coalition as a container of many different acronyms, each with its own identity and with heavy parties, rooted in their history and on the national territory. The idea of “concession of sovereignty” by Italian partitocracy collides with the ulivist vision of Prodi and undermines the hypothesis of his durable leadership, forcing him to a complex activity of mediation.*

*Is it possible to affirm that, in this complex parties’ mechanism, a Prodi party could have been able in traducing the prodian interpretation of the country in capillary and daily activity, as well as capable of supporting the governmental activity and his leadership?*

A. Yes, in hindsight we can probably say that, at a specific moment of history, we should have formed a Ulivo party, even if the destination point we had in mind was that of the Democratic party, a passage that testified the fact that bipolarism was structured in a bi-partisan system. The theme of parties has been since the beginning the central theme of the internal debate, even within the group closest to Romano Prodi. At the beginning, the Ulivo originates as a party that accompanies the Pds and structures a dispersed area that had been hit by Tangentopoli, heir of the beginning of the catholic vote dispersion. Many believed “there is the oak and the Olive tree and we go to elections with these two”. In our debates, at the end, prevailed the thesis that the Ulivo should have not been the additional party, but the added value to the coalition. It should be clear that Romano Prodi and the Ulivo were something that went beyond the mere sum of parties, since the beginning. We thought that, once in government, it would have been further solidified and then we would arrive at bipartisanship with the appropriate means and times. At a certain point in history, after the fall of the first Prodi government, it was necessary to revise this approach. It is not coincidence that a part of the Ulivo founders, like the group headed by Parisi, with Prodi assent, created the “Democrats”, an operation that demonstrated the fact that some forces have been united around that idea. Once given the signal, Prodi himself and Parisi went beyond, they did not stop at a Prodi party but, in the optics of not leaving the ground to the Ds with his bushes, we made what according to me was a sacrifice, but it was necessary: the Margherita was created.

Somehow, we were again at the starting point: we chose to aggregate a non-communist area, to say it as Berlusconi would, that should have a force sufficient to affect the coalition’ choices. If we had left that fragmented scenario, we would have had seven, eight small parties and the Ds would have done what they wanted.

In reality, we played a game that provided for the change of the rules of the game. Our match envisaged not only that bipolarism held, but that it was structured better, that the coalition was such at the beginning and then it would have developed, that the coalition had an added value *per se*. It envisaged a stronger level of citizens’ participation, that is also why we decided not to put the Ulivo next to the Ds, but at

the disposal of the coalition. When we were in the middle of a debate between party and coalition, thousands of committees originated spontaneously. Thousands. It was a physical evidence of the demand for participation that surely represented a strong request of a new relationship between the citizen and politics, not an evidence of a model of direct democracy, as it is usually said today.

*2) Q. Within this debate, that since the beginning involved the restricted prodian leading group, which where the exponents supporting the creation of a party according to the traditional model and who, instead, oriented in favour of the coalition hypothesis?*

A. In the very first moves, a group that we could identify with Gianclaudio Bressa, Andrea Papini and Arturo Parisi, believed that the coalition question was still immature, while I represented the opposing opinion. Also because I was on the territory, so I felt this push more than others. Bressa was in Rome doing negotiations, according to the old model, totally within the parties' system. I was outside and I was influenced by this new wave. At the end Parisi took a memo board and wrote "Prodi party" and "coalition", pros and cons. Romano Prodi said: "Arturo, stop making a lesson! Tell us what you think!" and he replied: "I vote against myself, Santagata is right".

However, it was Parisi himself the one who then, rightly, guided us towards the other mechanism. One tries, if there is a failure, then you go in the other direction.

*3) Q. Following the fragmentation of the catholic galaxy, the italian community in the version represented by the Cei cannot relate to a single political subject, the Italian popular party, since its '94 electoral result. Therefore, the Church starts detaching itself from the role of constructing and consolidating the italian democracy, identifying directly the Cei (and no longer a ley political party of christian matrix) as the reference point of the catholic electorate. The defense of christian values, much more than the human promotion, becomes the center of the clerical analysis that, in a conservative optics, inevitably sees in berlusconism the*

*main interlocutor, opposing the catholic left to the point of breaking even some personal relationship.*

*How much has it weighted, for the left, to no longer have a valid interlocutor in the Cei? After having acknowledged this fracture, did a complete analysis of the new interests that the Church manifested in italian society lack?*

A. This fracture weighted a lot on us and within the Church. The hierarchy and the vertex structure have espoused that line, that however was not the line of all the parishes. The idea that we could bring the communist party to power scared the vertex of the italian episcopate and moved it, as a reaction, towards the right, also out of the fear that social politics would have been in the hand of the left. I mean, the communists had their ideas and their strongholds but, until that moment, the model of society that we used to structure with the reforms was the one according to which the Church directed, and the Dc constructed. In the moment in which we made an operation where the catholic component was not prominent, neither numerically within the government, instead of using this new capacity of direct impact on the society, they chose the easiest way. Today we are assisting to the same problem at global level, with a Pope that moves the Church on the social issues, more on the left than any other organization, and a relevant part of that same Church that wants to maintain conservatism. According to me, as a man of catholic formation although being the “communist” of the prodian group, this extremely evident fracture of the Church has rendered less credible the fundamental idea, that of being able of converging clearly on the reformisms. We had difficulties in saying that the Church was conservation. We could not say that, at least. Those who had said this for decades, however, had a hard time saying otherwise at the time of Ruini. If the Pope had been Francesco, we probably would have not made a cold fusion and not only with the elitist parts, but the Church’s people would have directly entered in this. I repeat, the catholic part of the alliance would have wanted a stronger role also with reference to the coalition. It had a role thanks to the merits of his leading class, but not according to numbers. The populars for Prodi did not exist, they had a powerful leading class, but they did not have a vote.

In the scenario of the Church-society relationship, a problem has emerged that we still carry today and it concerns less the Church, paradoxically, than the left. These were years in which we lost the focus on social rights and centralized the theme of personal rights. In the moment in which you put the individual rights in the center and only in second place the social ones, almost obligatorily you have to confront with the Church, not necessarily a fight, but surely a confrontation. Choosing that ground as the identity ground for the left was, in my opinion, a clamorous error. We all agree that personal rights are an issue and that being in the West means to face them, but we abdicated too much on the social rights. Then we see the League and the Five-Star movement that win. We should have focused more on the problems that we were born to face. We were not born to deal with the theme of the *de facto* couple - indisputable- but on that we could only measure the level of division. There were other problems. Until we spoke about staying in Europe and how Europe could have changed the education system and the labour market, we had grounds on which social-democracy and democratic catholicism were united. Talking about other problems, up to arriving at the “end of life”, means discussing of topics that are divisive by nature. I am not saying that a democratic State shall not face them, but that became the center of the leftist action. All this hindered us and that part of conservatism that is proper of the Italian society made the rest.

*4) Q. The '96 Prodi government presents in front of the Chambers with the mission, impossible according to someone, to join the monetary Union with balanced public accounts, an objective that all the Country recognizes to the point of positively accepting also the payment of a new tax in order to join Europe. The objective is reached. But those, from the left, that move specific critiques claim that some reforms to concretize the new structure of Italy in the monetary Union missed: fiscal structure, labor market, first effects of globalization, nodes that are present still today. A complex set of essential reforms that seems to lack, together with the retards that the country had already accumulated.*

*What happened? Were you unable to see or perceive the necessity to intervene against the new social inequalities, or was your job severely hampered?*

A. The obsession to enter Europe derives from the clear perception of the fact that everything that happens in the world can be faced only being within a functioning European system. Just like we had faith in euro, absolutely convinced that the euro would have obligatorily generated unified political, social and economic policies, we were also convinced that those themes, until that moment faced fragmentarily and with the heavy of an unsustainable public debt, would have been elaborated with Europe. We were convinced that Europe should have been not only the story telling that unifies all the Italians, but also the fundamental tool to do what we had said to do. A real fiscal harmonization cannot be done without a European fiscal harmonization. In that period, only France discussed about the 35 hours. It was difficult to think of shedding light on the productivity gap of the country, hidden through devaluations, and dealing with it through the 35 hours. If all Europe goes towards the 35 hours then it is ok, otherwise we cannot go alone. We had a path that was focused, in its first phase, on the objective of a fundamental tool for the reforms and when we began saying that we were enacting them, the path was interrupted. If the question is why it was interrupted, I could answer that it was never repealed, neither in the second Prodi government. Because nobody has had the strength to deal with those problems that shall be faced, for two reasons: we are increasingly burdened with a debt so when I see financial laws for income redistribution with three billion, is it not even worth the time lost in Parliament; secondly, having not structured Europe yet, the national policies are increasingly incapable of intervening on the problems. Politics no longer affect things: Renzi, Salvini, all the same. National politics lacks the sufficient tools to deal with the problems, the true ones, those that should change societies. Maybe a unitary politics may still have those tools. For example, immigration is a phenomenon that doesn't disappear tomorrow, we can change all the governments we want. In order to deal with the phenomenon, it is necessary to have a common policy that is capable of using the right tools. We did not have the time and, contemporarily, we did not manage to have Europe. When Prodi went to Bruxelles after the first government,

Andreatta told him to stay in Italy and Prodi answered: “Nino, we made the currency. The currency strength will be such that it will impose unified policies and I want to be there”. Afterwards, Europe moved the attention of the unique policies on the enlargement. We can talk positively or negatively about the enlargement. It was difficult not to see that after the fall of the Berlin wall, Europe should have been established with a certain logic, but nothing was done on the real issues. That represents the lost gamble. The European obsession that you find in all the documents of the first Ulivo, is fruit of the fact that Europe constituted the answer. We had a clear idea of what we needed, and it was equally clear that we could not have achieved it without Europe.

*5) Q. The necessity of giving a big boost to the italian research and the university systems by tying it to the productive system of the country has always been a discussed issue. The true hypotheses of reform in this sense however date back to many years before, touching ideas such as full-time work for university professors, or the spin-off of investment for the right to study from the normal budget law. The reforms of the Ulivo governments in this sector appear instead partial and disputable, without organically modifying the education system in favor of the right to study or its general development.*

*What lacked?*

A. We are still there: half-made reforms and a theme that continues to burden us. When we talk about schools and universities, we refer to the entities, the organization, we do not refer to what school and society need, to whom invests in school and how. We talked about precarious workers, seismic security and all our resources ended there. A real plan has always lacked, since when the reforms were reforms. Today, in Italy, reforms are cuts. They are a way to talk about how to do the shopping, not about how to organize and do things. The only thing that had its own reasoning - then its translation and practice are arguable - was the “three-plus-two”. The idea was, once again in a European perspective, to uniform, in the long run at least, the training of our youngsters with that of the European youngsters. We've always been chasing each other on the school. Prodi has reiterated in a thousand



ways the insistence on technical school, on the link between school and territory, between school and business, but then in the end we always had thousands of precarious workers and everything was limited to this. There was no opposition of the vision we had of schools, it would have been even noble to have a rightist opinion on the education system and a leftist one.

None of this. We were focused in trying to solve the structural problems of the school instrument and we are still here today, with the "Good School" for example. We didn't have the strength and time to do anything else. If you talked about school with the trade union, the first thing you had to talk about was how to stabilize the precarious, and we couldn't even talk about how to reduce drop-out rates. The theme is not the student and his family, but the teacher and his school structure.

Politics was already shorth of breath and there was never going to be a measure like the NHS during the Ulivo government, because we were already in the period in which politics was shortening his path. When I hear people saying that there is no longer a party that does not have tax cuts as main objective, what do we want to talk about? It is not with tax reduction that we change the education system. You can agree with Prodi or not, but he has the german model in mind. One can think about a school system that trains the man, the citizen in general terms and then there are specializations, but nothing of this goes on and it didn't go even then.

*6) Q. A foreign policy providing for a prominent italian role seemed to lack. Italy has always had the ambition of having a role in foreign politics, also in the after-war period from which the Country took a beating; through the so-called "neatlanticism" policy, for example, the country shows a specific desire of autonomy, albeit within a framework of atlantic alliances. Successively, instead, the perception is that this project fades. The political thinking about foreign affairs seems extremely weak, flattened on the choices of international organization de facto led by anglo-saxons.*

*Why a clear project of foreign affairs stopped being central to the political debate also in the ulivist period?*

A. Romano, who had traveled a lot, had always wanted to be the foreign minister. For two reasons: first of all, to maintain Italy in the international organizations and to have a role within the organs. We could not stay in Europe and act like the French. We, as well as the following governments, never acted like the French. While you hope for a supranational foreign policy to be formulated- we keep saying “hope” because there still isn’t one- you do some regional operations. We were in Albania to halt a civil war; we wanted and led the mission in Lebanon. We recognized in the Mediterranean our area of direct responsibility. Our relationship with Gheddafi, extremely criticized and negatively seen by those that successively did billionaire business with gheddafi as well as the war, was set up and held with difficulty. At that time, Italy took charge of its role in the Mediterranean area. Our design was a policy intended to reinforce the supranational level and that saw the game changing (we had already noticed China and the fact that Africa was explosive). Contrary to those who claimed that history had ended together with the Berlin wall, we affirmed the opposite and that it was necessary to strengthen a global governance system with supranational structures, in which governments had to take the responsibilities that history had attributed them. Nato, European Union, Wto, Un, strengthening that never took place. You cannot set up a globalization government on your own, but only if there is a series of tools that helps you in controlling globalization: american imperialism neither can. Contemporarily you have a series of duties and interests in the areas near home that you have to protect. That we became interventionist is a concrete fact: Italy had never taken the responsibility in first person to lead a military intervention, as was instead in Albania. The French put 3000 men at our disposal but thanks to a direct action of Prodi towards Chirac. We have risked the neck bone as a government thousands of times, always on a single topic: refinancing for the foreign mission. We were under pressure for what concerns the budget, but we continued to spend some billions for the missions. Rifondazione and the most pacifist catholic group threatened us to make the government fall every time and we continued on that path. Why Italy should be a part of the foreign mission? For a misunderstood desire to count individually? No. Because if we were not inclined to give our big or small contribution, we could not pretend to have a global governance on those topics.

7) *Q. Is the same logic applicable to Kosovo?*

A. That Kosovo was a stretch, looking with hindsight, it is true. It could have been solved differently. We were in a mechanism for which, once that model was established, it was difficult to stop. It was also difficult not to identify a problem near home. Apart from Kosovo, in general, that participation that we felt mandatory, was part of a logic of foreign politics, of *tout court* politics: do not leave to the initiatives of the single (states) the solution of the crises, but trying to find it together. I think that the main opposer to the Gulf war in Europe was Romano Prodi who, as much as possible, devoted to the opposition to that military intervention in all the possible ways. Just like he was one of the few trying to mediate in the Yugoslav civil war. War has to be avoided, but when it is inevitable, war has to be legitimized, guaranteeing that its end can coincide with the construction of democracy, not necessarily on the American model. In substance, there is an “after-war” that allows for an equilibrium to be found in those zones under international auspices.

8) *Q. The Prodi government is born with a specific mandate: to balance the public accounts, to enter into the monetary Union and to set up a new pactum societatis. However, since the beginning some extraordinary programmes are established that necessitate a meticulous political, difficult but courageous action for their realization. Surprisingly, the Country positively answers to that commitment and Romano Prodi, with his ruling class, leads Italy into Europe as a virtuous nation with a balanced account, apart from the public debt parameter. But equally surprising is the failure of the institutional question, since the Bicameral commission blows up. In 1998 Prodi tests the ground of the majority, trying to establish a new agreement to hold the government. One of the main points he stresses is the relaunch of the South, old issue of our Country. However, parties, having terminated their first mandate, believe that the executive had run its course and that it is necessary to move forward with a different governmental page.*

*In that case, can it be affirmed that, in absence of a party that defended the Prodi leadership, it was a new long-term vision of the country capable of converging the*

*ulivist majority through the continuance of the prodian experience that lacked? Or, as many others claimed, it can be banally referred to as a “conspiracy” between the Pds aspiring for the premiership and a part of the centre-right related to Cossiga?*

A. There is no doubt that we, just like we used Europe as unifying element in the Italian society that followed us towards this objective, held the government together with that same unifying element. The Prodi government was born in a way that was no longer repeated and I do not know whether it is repeatable.

With the least grip on the parties on the governing side, Prodi had the opportunity to choose ministers and it is no coincidence that he chose high-level personalities who do not responded to parties such as Ciampi, Flick, Andreatta, people who have always been in politics, but who were not the expression of party secretaries. After the entry in Europe the protection provided for by the common objective ended, we were no longer untouchable since the objective for which we fought had been achieved; then the couple Prodi-Ciampi had such an enormous grip on the public opinion that it was too significant. It was becoming too difficult to handle; it is a grip that still lasts. Prodi turns 80 and persons stop him in the streets because he represented such a true leadership that today is still uncommon. At this point the parties had to take advantage of everything to cut him out, because the risk was letting the Ciampi-Prodi axis to strengthen and becoming too difficult to cut out; at that point it would have been inevitable to go to elections only at the end of the legislature. I do not know why it would have been so tragic. At the time someone wrote “change of pace”. We did not see a change of pace, but simply we should have continued to apply the policy line we had delineated. Prodi was accused of not abandoning the meeting with Clinton in order to go to Sarno after the flood. Something was evident: there was the opportunity to change leadership without going to anticipated elections. We are in the middle of a duel that, since then, governs this country, that is a continuous play of interdiction between pieces of political forces.

9) *Q. So there still was a wide perspective of government.*

A. If someone took the famous Ulivo green cards today and went to government with that, there would be enough job to do for two legislatures. Maybe they are right, they are coherent on the fact that politics is not able to affect the processes and if politics is like a football match, where the objective is to score a point, then you can win the single match, but no one cares about what happens to the country. All this had already started many years ago to the point that the parties' economic interests led to Tangentopoli, then there was the Ulivo parenthesis e then we came back to a model of interpretation of politics that has little to do with a model of governing the Country. Here nobody is doing anything, people tell stories and that's it. Salvini, Renzi, the present government.

10) *Q. So, did you expect the government to be halted?*

A. We knew they would have buried us. The good Fassino, that in the end makes the sacrifice of resigning as Ds secretary to found the Pd, and I recognize him a level of personal disinterest above the average, is pushed to do the dirty work of asking in public for a change of pace. The question is: Why don't you ask to Veltroni, vice-premier, or to your seven ministers? Why no one of them presents in the Council of Ministers with a proposal of change? Because of personalisms. D'Alema, apart from personalism, objectively had a different vision of politics. When D'Alema comes in Gargonza and says to us that politics is made for professionals, he claims something that, in his point of view, is sacred. He grew up with the idea of the primacy of the party and he cannot tolerate a ruling class that has never done politics and pretends to govern. The thinking was: "We had to do this alliance, patience. It worked and now it's enough. Politics has to be made by parties and we are the parties". Afterwards we found ourselves with the five-star movements, exaggeration in the opposite sense. If you claim, in an anti-historical way, the primacy of the parties when politics has already lost its primacy, I answer that politics is rubbish, that politicians are all corrupted and that politics in general has become useless.

*11) Q. The analysis of the alliances' system that characterized the first Ulivo, the catholics' diaspora, the traditional italian pluralism, may suggest that Italy was forced towards bipolarism in the period '93-94 and that maybe the ruling class of that moment had not manifested a comprehensive project for Second Republic's Italy.*

*Is it reasonable to affirm that the Parliament has moved too rapidly towards bipolarism, without paying much attention to the historical context, remote and forthcoming, italian and international?*

A. We went too fast toward bipartisanship and too slowly toward bipolarism. Italy needed a governing democracy, as Parisi used to say, we could not continue to change government every six months, it was not possible also because of our international alliances. We were mature enough for a governing democracy that guaranteed a 25% of representability, or little more, but the real error was that of creating the Democratic party in a moment of difficulty and believing of absorbing everything with the Pd. We were not ready, neither we nor the Country, to change a majoritarian system among coalitions into a strict bipolar system. Berlusconi, in fact, has never done this, but he has always mocked. He created specific alliances in the North, and others in the South, he changed acronyms to have the one able to put everyone together: he tried everything. We answer by saying that we are a party aiming at the entrustment of the majority (“a vocazione maggioritaria”). Moreover, if we really were that party, since the day after having brilliantly won an election we would have soon started to work within the legislature for a specific objective. Instead we lost all the administrative elections and we said: “From now, we do the party aimed at the entrustment of the majority!”. We were not ready, there were still too many persons related to their roots and their identities, so it was a mistake. That acceleration was an error that we are still paying, because everyone asks, legitimately, what is the identity of the Pd.

*12) Q. But the big coalitions with many different acronyms, do they run the risk of increasing the fragility of a majority supporting the government?*

A. It is necessary to establish some norms in order for the alliance to be linked to a programme, so I was the responsible for a programme that was the fruit of months of work, in the end difficult to be implemented, but still present. That programme has to be embodied by the premier candidate: if we win the elections, he is the premier and that is the programme. These two elements give meaning to the coalition (even if they can be dismantled, like everything else); but if we say that we do the same thing under the acronym of a single party, even if we are not mature enough to have majorities and minorities within the party itself (on the contrary, whenever we have an excess of diversity someone leaves) things get increasingly complicated for everyone and a solution is not reached.

*13) Q. What about the Democratic Party?*

A. The Democratic party, for me, remains the objective to be pursued with the appropriate means and times in which it has to mature. Probably today, on the account of all the defeats it was subjected to, it could also be considered mature, but you cannot pull it out from the hat in Spello, Umbria, and announce it in television. In order to set up the Ulivo, I attended 175 assemblies throughout Italy, Prodi made something like 400 public interventions in the couch phase, I mean you have to be among the people. In constructing the programme we heard the entire universe, piles of proposals arrived, through the fax at that time, and people felt involved. You cannot go in television and, out of the blue, say that we are the majority party, otherwise the door opens, Mastella comes and say: "If that's the case, I am out".

## Interview to Massimo D'Alema

Among the leaders of the Italian communist party, in which he covered many roles, from the secretary of the youth federation to the directing of “l'Unità”, he followed Achille Occhetto as national secretary of the Democratic party of the left. Being one of the protagonists of the Ulivo creation and supporter of the Prodi premiership candidacy, he was elected President of the Parliamentary Commission for the institutional reforms and in 1998, with the fall of the Prodi government, he became President of the Council heading a new centre-left government.

After the berlusconian five years, re-elected deputy in 2001 and european parliamentarian in 2004, he joins the second Prodi government as foreign affairs Minister and vice-President of the Council. Political manager with various offices before the Ds and then in the Pd, elected among the vice-Presidents of the socialist international in 2003, he is the director of “Italianieuropei”, a magazine of political culture of reformist matrix and organ of the homonym foundation of which he is President.

President D'Alema kindly accepted to answer to the following questions at the “Italianieuropei” foundation in Rome on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

- 1) *Q. The crisis of the Italian industrial sector, in a national and international perspective, was already visible in the Ulivo period, as explained by Luciano Gallino in “La scomparsa dell'Italia industriale”, Einaudi 2003. The first evidences of the crisis can be traced back to the sixties with the sale of the Olivetti's electric sector and the concentration on the chemical sector. The latter being already overinflated by the revenues of the nationalization of the electric industry. The absence of medium- and long-term alternatives as well as the relaxation of State intervention prefigure the weakening of the industrial sector. Is there internal debate on the question within the Ulivo? Which are the sectors towards which eventual proposals are directed?*



A. It is true that the large-scale Italian industry was undergoing a crisis, albeit Italy being the second European manufacturing country. However, it is not exclusively an Italian problem. Most of the European manufacturing production has been moved towards Asia in the last twenty-five years and the entire European industry has been progressively downsized. In some countries the process had enormous consequences: United Kingdom, for example, has completely lost this type of industry. The large-scale Italian production is subjected to a severe crisis, despite the presence of powerful public examples such as Leonardo or Fincantieri. The small- and medium-enterprise continues to be powerful instead, even if almost entirely dependent on the German economy. Many of them in fact work for the big German industries.

The Ulivo did not have an industrial policy programme. Italy has been lacking a proper industrial policy for years. Some support schemes have been set up and we also established a support scheme for the South, by establishing a tax credit and incentivizing investments. If we consider the statistics on employment, the data show a sustained increase until 2001, also in the industries of the South. However, an efficient strategy for the Italian industry was lacking. To be honest, privatizations of national industries in some sectors, that may have represented an opportunity, had to face a form of private capitalism that was excessively speculative. We did not privatize everything: Eni, Enel, Finmeccanica e Fincantieri continue to be semi-public. There were however some missed opportunities, especially in the telecommunication sector.

*Q. What are the reasons, in your opinion, of this absence? Why the “unaccomplished mission”?*

A. The prevailing stance in the nineties was a liberal and liberist one. The main idea was the State had to have a promotion or regulative role. Direct State intervention in the industry was not in those years’ political agenda. The main role attached to the State was that of privatizing, opening to the free

market and let the market operate. Undoubtedly, also the Ulivo political agenda was influenced by the prevailing liberist culture.

*Q. Was it a mistake?*

A. Clinton himself has admitted that underestimating the role of the State was one of the miscalculations of the progressive politics of those years. It was also a reaction to the partial failure of statism. We had just experienced the end of Soviet statism as well as the end of the European social-democratic season. State intervention had caused debts and corruption also in Italy. In the nineties we were reacting to that statism. As often happens, the reaction was beyond the limit and it generated opposite deficiencies.

*2)Q. The problematic affiliation with the catholics. The integralist and conservative nature of the CL organization was affirming itself to the detriment of the democratic-catholic activism already before the Ulivo period, during John Paul II's pontificate and Cardinal Ruini's leadership of the CEI (cfr. Paola Gaiotti de Biase, Il potere logorato. La lunga fine della DC. Cattolici e Sinistra, Roma, Edizioni Associate, 1994). The institutional collocation under berlusconism will however be completed only after 2001. The question is whether and how the Prodi government and the following ones dealt with the problem. In La democrazia dei cristiani, Laterza 2005, Pietro Scoppola has criticized the absence of an appropriate cultural re-elaboration of the historical roots proper of the different political traditions (the catholic and communist and the secular and socialist). In his opinion, this cultural re-elaboration in the name of a larger European project were sacrificed for the immediate electoral winning. Is it a well-founded critique?*

A. The end of the First Republic undoubtedly coincides with the end of the Christian Democracy. It also coincides with the end of the political unity of the Catholics that had managed to keep together the democratic and reformist components with the integralist and conservative ones. The consequence is a

political diaspora of the Catholics. In reality, the larger part of the catholic electorate find itself on conservative positions, opposite to the Left. The CD had been able of maintaining that conservative electorate on a democratic ground. After the withdrawal of the CD, Berlusconi managed to attract most of that electorate. Only a smaller portion, composed of a part of the élite and another part active in the ecclesial world, decided to rely on the center-left. Those Catholics that were committed to charitable activities used to vote for the center-left, while the so-called “sunday Catholics” would vote for the center-right. The novelty is a divided catholic world. The Church showed a prevailing conservative tendency in those years and disregarded the militancy towards the left of a part of the Catholics. There were in fact some tense moments, as for example when Prodi claimed to be part of that catholic world that was able to think autonomously. A part of them openly ally with the left, like the Social Christians that decided to merge with the DS. Catholics, however, were not accustomed to bipolarism, to that kind of contraposition. I repeat: some of them sided with the center-left while others saw traditionalism as the common ground with the right.

*Q. Can we associate traditionalism with anti-communism?*

A. Anti-communism persisted and outlasted communism itself. The Church reacted to the ongoing secularization and to the civil rights. Pope John Paul II was the embodiment of that integralist position. The current pope has instead made a different choice. He espoused a version of Christianity which is much more radical, solidaristic and somehow critical of the injustices of capitalism.

*Q. What about the critique by Pietro Scoppola?*

A. He is right. But I think it regards a subsequent period. I have opposed the idea of limiting the different traditions to a single one for a long time, as was the case with the Democratic Party. That fusion was driven by the desire to

eradicate the old traditions and to create new ones (“nuovismo”), rather than being an effective valorization of the diverse cultural beliefs. All the Ulivo experience had a similar component: the idea that it was necessary to go beyond those outdated ideologies of the XX century. This necessity has prevailed over an appropriate cultural evaluation on those traditions, an evaluation of what is alive and what is dead, as Croce would say.

We had for long resisted this idea of a generic left, deprived of its historical identity.

*Q. The leftist component of the PDS did not believe in a consistent alliance with the center, considering the Ulivo as an attempt to approve those long-aspired reforms. You had bigger aspirations for the coalition instead.*

A. Well, the '94 defeat made us all understand that, in a bipolar world, the Left had to ally with the democratic center in order to win. The problem was faced in different ways, even if necessity was acknowledged by almost everyone. Even *Rifondazione Comunista* arrived at accepting the idea. In the end, all of us did.

*Q. Yes, but with different motivations*

A. Yes. I believe that the difference is between those who wanted to maintain their organizational and ideological autonomy also within an alliance (among different forces), the famous “dash”; and those who considered such a distinction outdated and urged the creation of a single progressive force in which the cultural border between the Center and the Left could disappear. The latter was undoubtedly the idea of Veltroni and others, among which “Repubblica”. The mediatic pressure towards the annulment of the autonomous identity of the Left was indeed strong.

*Q. Therefore, that cultural analysis lacked because the direction was another one: maintaining a strong alliance, something more than a coalition that, however, did not eliminate the distinctive traits of the cultural traditions.*

A. Exactly

*3)Q. The legacy of Tangentopoli heavily conditioned successive politics. The “judges’ revolt” influenced mediations and compromises and undermined the actual basis of the First Republic. Not only the ruling classes of the traditional parties were decimated, but the public opinion’s resentment invested the entire political world, fostering increasing skepticism about any attempts of renovation and progressivism. Had this legacy been fully assessed?*

A. We were under attack by the judiciary investigation, unfoundedly. This furious attack eventually failed, but we were one of the targets. The salvific idea of the judges was to sweep the Italian political system away. They tried with every means, comprising the creation of fictional evidences. This was the case of an episode emerged during the Cusani process: someone claimed of having accompanied Gardini in the PCI’s headquarter with a suitcase. Allegedly, I would have received and escorted them to Occhetto. It was false. Infact, I immediately asked to be heard by the judges. I didn’t even work at Botteghe Oscure because I was the director of “l’Unità”. The Public Prosecutor of Milan understood the falseness of the deposition and did not even investigate. We were the target of a judiciary attack that resulted vain, since there was nothing against us.

Tangentopoli caused different reactions. A faction of our party acritically supported the judges, believing that the investigation could have paved the way for us. I was more skeptical. The enquiries shed light on real episodes of corruption. I was never convinced by the ideology behind Tangentopoli, the entire investigation was founded on an ideal: it was the parties’ fault. That system was instead based on the synergy between economy and politics. The

private entrepreneurs emerged as the victims of the political system, except for the public ones. The public entrepreneurs and the politicians were indeed targeted.

The liberist and anti-public ideology marked the entire enquiry. Concussion was the preferred tool. The corruptors that had benefited from that system were considered the victims during the processes. The entrepreneurs went testifying, named the politicians and came back home, regardless of the huge benefit they had had from that same politicians. This was an ideological choice against the parties that profoundly marked the investigation that, in fact, developed unidirectionally. The large enterprises glorified this “cleanup operation” through the newspapers they controlled. I am not saying it was a conspiracy. The evidences were real, but the magistracy was looking at them ideologically. This anti-political reading had distortive effects.

*Q. So it fueled the anti-progressist inclination of the public opinion?*

A. It paved the way for Berlusconi. He was the symbol of the entrepreneurship that had benefited from that system and he managed to ride on that anti-party ideology, the idea that politicians are worthless. He emerged as the real beneficiary.

*4) Q. At the international level, is the pro-European stance the only foreign policy within the Ulivo political agenda or is it accompanied by other policies? For example, a new articulation of the relationship with U.S., the Italian presence in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, the aspiration towards a new international equilibrium. In particular, an equilibrium in which Russia should have found an adequate collocation, without being relegated to the marginal role of the “defeated” country as was auspicated by many western political-intellectual scholars.*

A. The Ulivo was characterized by the will of reinforcing the Italian role in the process of European integration, fundamental choice. The idea was also that of fortifying a political European integration that seemed the strongest

response to the challenges of globalization. A shared sovereignty, a politics that needs to go beyond national borders in order to become strong and global. Parallely to this, the re-emergence of those ideologies that had traditionally inspired the Italian foreign politics: the relationship with the United States; the relationship with Russia, towards which we wanted to avoid humiliating policies that, as indeed happened, made Russia feel besieged by the NATO policies ( the assertive and nationalist pushes embodied in Putin are a product of this); politics directed towards the Mediterranean area and the Arab world. This politics based on dialogue that was proper of Moro, Craxi and Andreotti, refused the logic of conflict between the Christian west and Islamism, and it has characterized the Ulivo. That same politics was instead contrasted by the right that, on the contrary, increasingly appeared anti-Arabic and anti-Islamic, characterized by the anti-Muslim racism that found space in the “Lega” dialectics.

*Q. Were there any shortages? Or an excessive dependence on the Anglo-Saxon positions?*

A. No, definitely not. We pursued our politics, assuming an important role either in the Balkans or in the Middle East. It is true that we intervened in the Balkans after the pressure for a military intervention by Clinton, but I believe that war was inevitable. After ten years of Balkan civil war, it was necessary to put an end.

*Q. You declared you were not able to sleep the night following the bombings on Belgrade.*

A. It is true, but we need to face reality: the Balkan civil war caused 300.000 casualties; the military intervention in Kosovo managed to end the conflict. We did not go there to wage war, we aimed at putting an end to it. It was an inevitable action in my opinion. I had tried to avoid it and I was indeed the last to surrender to that necessity, but we had a leading political role. We

planned a solution based on the compromise with Rugova, keeping an open dialogue with the Serbs even during the conflict. Our role was not only to join the American army, but we also developed our own solution maintaining an important role and constant dialogue with U.S. Italy continues to have an important role in the Balkans even today. We are recognized as main interlocutor by the Serbs, the Albanians and the others. In the Lebanese question too, we had a fundamental role in building up a pacific solution. Italy had indisputably a wider foreign politics with either collaborative or tense instances with the Americans. The Ulivo withdrew the Italian troop from Iraq, matter of principle. We challenged the Americans and the Chinese with the Resolution supporting the moratorium on the death penalty. I could give many other examples.

*Q. But these are decisions taken ten years after the first Ulivo experience.*

A. Yes, we can say that all the center-left government, since the Ulivo, have experienced significant moments of foreign policy.

*5) Q. With regard to the contents of the political agenda, are there elements of continuity between the Ciampi government and the Ulivo one? Bearing in mind the different historical period and the common element represented by pro-European stance.*

A. Well, that of Ciampi was a transitional government but the pro-European stance was very strong. It was also the government that allowed the enactment of the best electoral law we ever had.

*Q. Yet, in the scenario characterized by the brand-new institutional asset termed in the Bicameral commission and the new electoral law, it was necessary to go beyond the Mattarellum.*



A. We could go beyond it. The main hypothesis was a majoritarian based on coalition, instead that uninominal but with the advantage of a double-round. I have always believed that the double-round is able to guarantee Italian pluralism and the creation of the government; the electoral law of the municipalities is indeed the one that works better and that has helped the creation of a healthy bipolarism. That said, we were not able to overcome it for a number of reasons. Nevertheless, the Mattarella Law is the one allowing for a better relationship between the electorate and the elected, relationship that will be completely annulled.

*6)Q. The hierarchical tendency of the '96 electoral campaign; the idea of some Ulivo leaders according to which new elections, rather than a parliamentary agreement, shall have followed the vote of no confidence; the decision not to elect a member of the opposition as president of one of the two chambers, as Berlusconi had done two years before; are all these examples of a sort of "Berlusconization" of the center-left? Are there common traits between the Berlusconi approach to the politics and the Ulivo?*

A. Some of those events are linked to the undergoing transformation of the politics on a global level. The personification of politics was not an exclusively Italian phenomenon, but it had a world-wide dimension. Even in Germany the alternative has for years been between the Merkel and someone else, despite the proportional system. Undoubtedly, the presence of Berlusconi accentuated such process (somehow based on presidentialism) and changed the terms of the conflict, from which we could not escape. In the eyes of the public opinion, trying to avoid that competition would have meant to lose. It was vital to oppose someone to Berlusconi at the election. Presenting the coalition as a sum of parties would have been a non-starter. The custom of giving the presidency of an assembly to the opposition was established in Italy with the "national solidarity", even if the PCI was not at the opposition then, because it had abstained from the vote of confidence. The custom resisted for a certain period after "national solidarity". It has not been

a rule during the First Republic, it never was. The custom was abolished with the Second Republic and, in my opinion, it was a mistake. The center-left could have restored the practice, but we were not able of establishing a system of shared practice with that Right. Berlusconi conferred an element of reciprocal demonization to the right-left conflict that represented a burden. The only attempt at breaking that deadlock was the Bicameral, that Berlusconi himself jeopardized, exactly for this reason. The event is quite peculiar, since he had voted favorably in the commission.

*Q. He claimed to be proud of being a member.*

A. Exactly! Afterwards, he was convinced to continue along the demonization route that had guaranteed him the anti-communist votes, since supporting the cause would have sent a message of reciprocal eulogy.

*Q. Have you ever known who suggested this choice?*

A. I do not know. Someone told me Baget Bozzo.

*Q. By the way, the idea of reciprocal recognition was respected and pursued both by the post-communist and the right, especially the faction led by Fini.*

A. Yes. In the Second Republic, the idea was to give a more robust basis to bipolarism, thereby establishing and accepting a set of shared rules. The bicameral commission was an objective proposed by the Ulivo, even if this element was then neglected during the demonization of D'Alema. It was instead a specific goal of the Ulivo program.

*7) Q. In your activity as Party Secretary, great importance was given to the creation of a social democratic force, capable of reinforcing the Party, going beyond itself. The goal was to provide for a reformist element in the perspective of being a "Normal Country" ("Un Paese Normale"). To this end, it seemed necessary to separate from the most radical wing, to the point*

*of envisioning “two lefts” rather than a solid convergence between the two. Could we consider the desertion by RC as the fruit of a lacking reciprocal recognition? The commitment to understand the “nucleus of truth” and go beyond one’s limits.*

A. I believe that the fracture with the Prodi government was a choice nurtured in the deep convictions of Rifondazione’s ruling class, especially in Bertinotti, whose idea could barely be changed. The latter was convinced that his party had contributed to the entrance in Europe and that their governing experience had to be ended in order to go back to their antagonist position. There wasn’t even a conflict. Well, there was one, but his idea of being different than us was too strong. We were the reformist left and they had to be something different. The choice was so dramatic that it led to a fraction in his own party. There were actually two lefts in that period, but it was not a phenomenon limited to Italy.

*Q. Was it impossible to look for other convergences?*

A. There was the possibility, so much so that we continued to rule with Cossutta, but Bertinotti’s choice was extremely convinced and radical. His choice had nothing to do with the PCI tradition, from which he was extremely far.

*Q. He embodied a more activist tradition.*

A. Yes, a choice led by activism and antagonism, which had no big alternatives or opportunities. Moreover, we found ourselves in a deadlock, in a pre-conflict situation in which we could not allow other elections, and Bertinotti had considered this element. He did not want to be held accountable for the anticipated elections and he was aware of the inherent risk he would have paid. After all, he had faced a crisis a year before and he had been discouraged by the public opinion. His choice was a really determined one,

but it was not motivated by a specific reason. They could not keep a ruling position anymore, they had to find their antagonist position in the society.

*8) Q. Socialism, the red perspective of freedom and equality, had for years been the utopia of the Italian left. Was this utopia replaced by the idea of a liberal left, heading towards a more liberal society, in the nineties?*

A. I do not believe that those years were marked by a liberal ideal. The underlying idea was a positive evaluation of globalization, up to that moment seen as a phenomenon that had managed to create wealth and that could potentially reduce poverty. Politics had to accompany that development towards opportunity policies. We were not completely wrong, since the eighties globalization had quadrupled human wealth. Famine had been reduced and millions of individuals were dragged out of the absolute poverty condition. If we look at globalization at the international level, we cannot refer to it as a tragedy. If you told that to the Chinese, they would run after you. Undoubtedly, a valid critique lacked. The transformation process has generated two serious problems that were unnoticed: the conflict between economic growth and environmental health, and inequality.

Even the left displayed no ability in crazing capitalism. The communist myth had been fueled by the aspiration towards “another society”, a non-capitalistic one, but the ideal was left behind after ’89. Much the same happened with the social democrats, whose main aspiration was not “the other society” but the capacity of trapping capitalism. However, the liberal influence weakened those ideals and represented the limit of the nineties.

*9) Q. Is it conceivable to have a left incapable or unwilling to criticize capitalism and reality?*

A. Today’s re-emergence of the Left is based on the capitalist critique. The Left has to be the power capable of dealing simultaneously with inequality and environmental destruction. Even this second element, that is not proper

of our tradition, has today assumed a pivotal role in the critique to the current capitalism.

*10)Q. Notwithstanding the distinct historical moments and the structural differences, can the Ulivo experience be looked as the second phase of the historical compromise? Made by the heirs of the two political families that wrote the Italian political history, might the Ulivo represent the cohabitation phase aimed at creating an alternance bringing the post-communists and their values to the government in the future?*

A. The historical compromise established a relationship between two parties that, cumulatively, represented 80% of the country. The Ulivo arrived at more or less 40% in its best moments. This renders the idea of the impossibility for the alliance to be a preparatory phase for the alternance between the Catholics and the left. It was however the reconfiguration of the progressive and democratic forces in the Italian bipolar asset, in a moment when most part of the former Cristian democrats were going towards the right. That said, the Ulivo was one of the two poles of the “democracy of alternance” in a completely new historical phase.

From a cultural point of view, the relationship between Moro and Berlinguer did provide the basis for the Ulivo. The actors of the alliance themselves recognized the importance of that relationship between the progressive-democratic tradition and the communist one, forerunner of the Ulivo.

The historical compromise model failed with Moro assassination. It was defeated. The idea of an evolving Italian democracy, albeit interpreted differently by the Catholics and the communist, failed in the middle of the seventies. It was opposed by parts of the Italian society, coming both from left and right, and by the United States. Therefore, the attempt by Moro and Berlinguer vanished and the former paid with his own life. A tragedy for the country. After many years, the historical legacy of that collaboration was one of the inspiring sources of the Ulivo. Ideally and culturally rather than factually, since different were the facts and the historical context.

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- 14) Rai Teche, “*Porta a Porta*” *compie 20 anni*, January 22<sup>th</sup>, 2016, [www.teche.rai.it](http://www.teche.rai.it)
- 15) Veltroni W., *Intervento del vicepresidente del Consiglio*, in “Dieci idee per l'Ulivo”, Gargonza, March 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 1997, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it).

## Summary

### First chapter

In 1996 Romano Prodi did not represent a new man in Italian politics. In 1993 he had in fact been indicated as possible President of the Council, in substitution of Giuliano Amato. The crisis of the First Republic, the end of ideologies, the “Mani Pulite” judicial scandal that hit the parties<sup>465</sup> and the referendum supporting a majoritarian system, force the Christian democracy to try for a new governmental path. The hypothesis of forming a government with the post-communist of the Democratic party of the left (Pds), led by Achille Occhetto, is formulated and Romano Prodi seems to be the right man to combine two diverse cultures that had been fighting each other up to that moment. The idea of a new historical compromise between the two big reformist parties of the Italian history seems to be close, but the agreement could not be found<sup>466</sup>. Ciampi becomes the new President of the Council and takes the oath without the support of the left, that remains at the opposition.

<sup>467</sup> The possibility of combining, even if through a parliamentary maneuver, the Catholic solidaristic nature with the social-democratic one wanes, giving to Italy a foretaste of the principle inspiring the creation of the Ulivo.

In 1994 the Country prepares to go to elections with a new electoral law, the Mattarella law, providing for 75% of the seats to be assigned with the majoritarian system and the remaining 25% with the proportional one<sup>468</sup>. The law allows for the transformation of the Italian system from a purely proportional to a bipolar one, where left and right clash by limiting the ground for the centre. This passage inaugurates the Second Republic and coincides with the end of the Dc that, hit by the judicial scandal and convinced in renovating its political message, changes name and becomes the Italian

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<sup>465</sup> C. Guarnieri, *Giustizia e politica*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2003, pp. 156-189.

<sup>466</sup> C. Baccetti, *I postdemocristiani*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2007, pp. 189-195.

<sup>467</sup> U. G. Silveri, *Tra vincolo esterno e coesione nazionale. La parabola del governo Ciampi nelle riflessioni e nelle carte del presidente*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, Carocci, Roma, 2014, pp. 389-397.

<sup>468</sup> M. Palazzotto, *Come funziona il Mattarellum*, in “il Post”, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

popular party<sup>469</sup>. The catholic party tries to keep up but it does not choose with which formation to align, remaining anchored to a centrist position that reduces its consensus.

Capable of perfectly seizing the moment, riding the anti-political wave and the dissolution of the traditional parties, is a new subject: Forza Italia.<sup>470</sup> The italian entrepreneur Silvio Berlusconi creates a conservative and liberal party, that aspires at the hegemony of the centre-right formation, with the objective of governing the country and being the first Premier in the majoritarian era. Berlusconi represents an absolute novelty in the italian scenario and even the leaders of his party are almost unknown faces for politics, chosen in the ranks of his enterprises. He also attracts politicians that, disappointed by the end of their reference points, see in the liberal revolution promised by the Cavaliere a political renaissance.

Berlusconi introduces a completely innovative way of setting the political conflict. His party follows the model of his enterprises of which he is the maximum leader that promotes the idea of disintermediation with the public. He personalizes the conflict, to the point that his political programme is identified with his own face, eliminating the typical bureaucracy of the parties to which he opposes himself as antidote. Convinced of having the possibility to approach to the public machine as he was managing a company, he proposes development policies aimed at the reduction of State participation in the economy and at the rescue of the private over the public. Institutional bureaucracy, often intricate, becomes the emblem of the “legal Country” opposed to the “real Country” represented by the common citizens. The latter are called to defend themselves from the excessive fiscal burden and the slowness of the public machine that Berlusconi offers to overturn. In this contest, his rhetorical tones against communism assume more the feature of anti-statism collecting the votes of those who want less state economic planning and more freedom of movement.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> G. Maestri, *I simboli della discordia. Normativa e decisioni sui contrassegni di partito*, Giuffrè editore, Roma, 2012, pp. 137-138.

<sup>470</sup> M. Tarchi, *L'Italia populista. Dal qualunquismo a Beppe Grillo*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2003, pp. 279-304.

<sup>471</sup> A. Giovagnoli, *La Repubblica degli italiani (1946-2016)*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2016, pp.213-216.

The Cavaliere inherits the vote of the conservative catholics, to which the anti-fascist add, those citizens that never recognized in the proposals of the First Republic's parties and that see in Fi the representation of what they had always looked for<sup>472</sup>.

The mediatic power of Berlusconi, his capacity of taking advantage of the transformations of the system and the perspective of anti-communist liberal revolution are questions that combine with alliances' strategy that unifies all the Italian right<sup>473</sup>. Forza Italia agrees with the secessionists of the Northern league in the Northern constituencies and with the post-fascist of the Italian social movement in the South.<sup>474</sup> He legitimizes all the right but he creates a political-social bloc that, albeit heterogeneous, changes the political perspective of the Second Republic forever.

Berlusconi in 1994 wins the elections and becomes President of the Republic, surprising all the left that is forced to re-think about itself to face the new adversary. The Pds secretariat undergoes a conflict for the substitution of Achille Occhetto, who resigned after the electoral defeat. The leadership is contended between two leaders: Massimo D'Alema and Walter Veltroni. The first wants to reinforce his leftist party, completing the identity transformation started in 1991 towards the social-democratic culture. The second instead, inspired by American kennedianism,<sup>475</sup> imagines a thin party, closer to the idea of electoral committee that detaches from the European socialist tradition.<sup>476</sup> Both approaches want to open the party to the catholic formation of the democratic centre, but with different perspectives. D'Alema aims at an alternation democracy in which the main party is the social-democratic one,<sup>477</sup> as it shall be in a "Normal Country" in Western Europe, thereby he imagines an alliance of parties in which there is also a centrist formation.

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<sup>472</sup> G. Orsina, *L'antipolitica dei moderati: dal qualunqueismo al berlusconismo*, in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta ad oggi* edited by S. Colarizi, A. Giovagnoli, P. Pombeni, Carocci, Roma, 2014, pp. 403-321.

<sup>473</sup> A. Gibelli, *Berlusconi passato alla storia*, Donzelli Editore, Pomezia (Roma), 2010, pp. 29-33.

<sup>474</sup> G. D'Agostino, R. Vigilante, *Le elezioni politiche del marzo 1994. Prime approssimazioni*, in "Italia Contemporanea", 195, June 1994, pp. 221-227.

<sup>475</sup> W. Veltroni, *La bella politica. Un'intervista di Stefano Del Re*, Rizzoli, Milano, 1995, p. 132.

<sup>476</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., pp. 59-60.

<sup>477</sup> M. D'Alema, *Un Paese Normale*, Mondadori, Milano, 1995, pp. 74-86.



Veltroni imagines instead the center-left formation as a deeper mixture with the centre, political-cultural union that, sooner or later, might give to Italy a big reformist party on the U.S. model. At the end of the important debate, the dalemian conception wins but the problems on the shape of the party will soon involve the entire center-left for the following decades.

## Second chapter

In 1994 the Berlusconi government begins, the first of the Second Republic. The majority is extremely heterogeneous, since the League and the Msi are very diverse parties. The League is anti-fascist while the Msi members are the heirs of the fascist period; the Msi is patriotic, while the League is secessionist. Berlusconi is the unifying element that allows everyone to stay in the same majority, but the difficulties in governing soon emerge. The main problems are of economic nature, since the executive has to deal with an attack to the retirement system that not only risks touching an essential element for the League's consent, but it manages to reunite the trade unions<sup>478</sup> that organize a general strike on October 14<sup>th</sup> when around 3 million people take to the street<sup>479</sup>. The situation aggravates when the Cavaliere receives the OECD's warnings on the country's public accounts<sup>480</sup>, apart from a guarantee notice from the judges that sift all his companies. After only eight months of government, Berlusconi is forced to resign, showing all the fragility of his coalition and paving the way for a new transitional government. Also then, Prodi is believed to have a role, but in the end Lamberto Dini is chosen to guide an executive that already knows to have a short life.

After the electoral victory of Berlusconi, Romano Prodi decides to officially enter politics and wants to give his contribution in the unification of a centre-left formation<sup>481</sup>. In 1995 some Ppi leaders propose him as head of a possible

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<sup>478</sup> *Avete rotto il patto sociale*, in "Corriere della Sera", October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

<sup>479</sup> P. Ignazi, *Il potere dei partiti*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2002, p.179.

<sup>480</sup> G. Mammarella, P. Cacace, *Il Quirinale*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2011, pp. 244-247.

<sup>481</sup> F. Prodi, R. Prodi, *Insieme*, Edizioni San Paolo, Milano, 2005, pp. 126-130.

coalition, raising different reactions also within the same party<sup>482</sup>. Some months later, the popular secretary Rocco Buttiglione, followed to Mino Martinazzoli, leaves the party exactly because of contrasting visions: he founds the United democratic centre (Cdu) and gets closer to the Berlusconi's Polo, while the rest of the formations definitely align with the center left.

In March 1995 also the Pds recognizes in Prodi's operation the possibility of unifying all the center-left and confirms him as a coalition leader that also comprises the Pds.<sup>483</sup>

Prodi embarks on his path towards Palazzo Chigi, creating a structure that might be the skeleton of his consensus. He founds in Bologna the "Comitato per l'Italia che vogliamo" (The Committee for Italy that we want), a movement with the aim of gathering catholic, liberal, social-democrat, progressive and reformist citizens that want to commit in politics to the support of his candidacy. The committees are similar to parties and originate spontaneously on the entire national territory like cells, discussing on the major themes regarding the nation.

At the end of 1995, around 60.000 are formed that discuss about the institutional reform, the fiscal one, the North-South difference, Europe, but especially about growth and development of democracy, economy and civil society in Europe and Italy<sup>484</sup>, without being a party. Although similar in their structure, even with local and regional coordinators chosen by the organizational centers, among which Valerio Onida (future President of the Constitutional Court) for Lombardy and Enrico Letta (future President of the Council) for Tuscany, the professor decides not to create a proper party.<sup>485</sup>

Convinced supporter of the majoritarian bipolarism, he believes that his legitimization derives directly from the people at the moment of the vote and that the creation of an official "Prodi party" is not necessary to defend his own leadership. He is also convinced that his committees constitute the

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<sup>482</sup> G. Luzi, *Arriva Prodi l'anti-Berlusconi*, in "la Repubblica", February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995.

<sup>483</sup> V. Monti, *D'Alema abbraccia Prodi: nostro premier*, in "Corriere della Sera", March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>484</sup> Comitato per l'Italia che Vogliamo, *Statuto – Articolo 2*, Bologna, 10 febbraio 1995. [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it)

<sup>485</sup> *I coordinatori regione per regione*, in "l'Unità", May 1<sup>st</sup> 1995.

“added value” to the coalition of the traditional political parties that can really lead to the victory on the centre-right<sup>486</sup>. His vision is profound and aims at involving, even through his committees gathering the civil society, different cultures up to solidifying them with political action at the government. The hope is that of giving to Italy, in perspective, a healthy democracy based on the perfect bipolar and bipartisan alternation, without feeling the need to set up a new party to be added to the copious Italian pluralism.

### Third Chapter

The end of ideologies and the general transformation that society is subjected to, hit the parties but also institutions in general. In particular, the political movement of the Catholics is downsized, since it is no longer gathered into a single subject called Dc. On the contrary, it ends up divided in two formations, modifying the relationship between Catholics and politics. In general, due to the importance of the Catholic world in Italian politics, it is necessary to look at the mutations that the Catholic Church undergoes in the nineties, especially for what concerns its relationship with society and politics.

In the late seventies, the Church solicits a series of cultural initiatives finalized at evangelization and human promotion. Participation to political life is stimulated in a solidaristic optics and also mediation with the other political cultures of that moment<sup>487</sup>. In the eighties, instead, a new vision starts prevailing that is more integralist, of faith as social force and of bulwark against the evils threatening it. With the fall of communism, the secularization process becomes the main target maturing the propension towards the affirmation of the self and of personal principles<sup>488</sup>. It is believed that “the faith shall have a guiding role and a leading efficiency in the journey of the

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<sup>486</sup> L. Ricolfi, S. Testa, *Il mito del valore aggiunto dell'Ulivo*, in “il Mulino”, 2, 2002, pp. 232-242.

<sup>487</sup> S. Magister, *La Chiesa di vetro*, in “L'Espresso”, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1976.

<sup>488</sup> C. Ruini, *Nuovi segni dei tempi. Le sorti della fede nell'età del mutamento*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005, pp. 7-13

nation towards the future”<sup>489</sup>, strongly affirming the contrast to secularization as an irreversible process, that cannot be neither accompanied nor evangelized<sup>490</sup>. The Italian episcopal conference assumes greater weight by receiving full title in Italian affairs and, in 1991, Cardinal Ruini becomes the President. He proposes his cultural project oriented in Christian sense<sup>491</sup>, aware that faith can be the principle of unification of the Country and the Church itself has to fully perform his function as public institution. The religious community aims at deepening the ethical and cultural transformations of those years, with the various anthropological derivatives, linked also to the ongoing globalization process. It means to analyze the passage from the mass society to that of individuals, with evident political outcomes. Acknowledging the political disintegration of the Catholic world, the Church espouses the principle of disintermediation with the believers, becoming the first interlocutor over the themes it considers important, without the filter of a party constituted by laymen, intellectuals or politicians. In 1995 it affirms the principle of equidistance from the two political blocs and commits to the defense of the non-negotiable principles of the man, among which the inviolable nature of life in every moment of the existence and the sacredness of marriage between man and woman.<sup>492</sup>

Even if not “taking the field”, many of the leaders of the Church intended as social force see in the conservative forces the natural interlocutors, ready to defend the non-negotiable principles, detaching from the many reformist Catholics, curious in front of a large progressive centre-left coalition. In general, those who did not support the Ruinian line, positively looked at the experiment of a new-centre left.

The centre-left formation chooses the olive tree as symbol and name of the coalition, in order to convey the values of peace and unity that the plant

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<sup>489</sup> CEI, *Riconciliazione cristiana e comunità degli uomini. Atti del II Convegno ecclesiale. Loreto 9-13 aprile 1985*, AVE, Roma, 1985, pp. 45-62.

<sup>490</sup> C. Ruini, *L'impatto di Giovanni Paolo II sull'Italia e sulla Chiesa italiana*, in *Shock Wojtyła*, edited by M. Impagliazzo, p. 449.

<sup>491</sup> C. Ruini, *Verità e libertà. Il ruolo della Chiesa in una società aperta*, Mondadori, Milano, 2008, pp. 29-44.

<sup>492</sup> CEI, *Il vangelo della carità per una nuova società in Italia. Atti del III Convegno ecclesiale*, Palermo, November 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, 1995, AVE, Roma, 1997, pp. 60 and on.

represents. Unity and concreteness are also the demands put forward by a new spontaneous movement of reformist mayors that soon will aggregate to the Ulivo, sponsoring the principle of federalism. By virtue of the personal legitimation they enjoyed in their cities thanks to the direct vote mechanism for the mayor introduced in '93, they ask for a stronger executive in order to have the same legitimacy they have on their territory, but also to have more power for themselves. They are convinced that the phenomena of economic expansion coming from globalization could be handled with additional competences attributed to the local realities. It means to decentralize the power towards peripheries and regions, distinguishing the competences on each subject without undermining the principle of national unity. The Ulivo immediately recognizes federalism as a point of its programme, opening to the possibility of changing the form of State of Italy, and the movement of the mayors led by personalities such as Massimo Cacciari, Francesco Rutelli and Leoluca Orlando, announces its support to Romano Prodi as the possible "Mayor of Italy".<sup>493</sup>

The consensus network around the centre-left coalition grows and the Committees push for the vote to be held soon. The Dini government, in consensus and legitimacy crisis, is increasingly in difficulty and the leader resigns in December, after the approval of the financial law. The political forces in Parliament, however, do not choose immediately to go to the vote but they try to create a new broad-based government ("governo di larghe intese") capable of promoting shared institutional reforms, under the leadership of Antonio Maccanico.<sup>494</sup> The attempt fails and the President of the Republic announces the elections.

The Ulivo prepares to the electoral campaign by proposing a programme to the electorate: the 88 Theses.<sup>495</sup> Redacted by a group of intellectuals, first composed of seven persons<sup>496</sup>, then enlarged to many other contributions, it is distributed to the members of the Committees and to the parties of the

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<sup>493</sup> S. Marroni, *I sindaci in campo: "Prodi leader delle cento città"*, in "la Repubblica", March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

<sup>494</sup> Rai Teche, *"Porta a Porta" compie 20 anni*, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, [www.teche.rai.it](http://www.teche.rai.it)

<sup>495</sup> Movimento per l'Ulivo, *Il programma de L'Ulivo, Tesi n. 1-88*, [www.perlulivo.it](http://www.perlulivo.it)

<sup>496</sup> G. Battistini, *Prodi e i magnifici 7. Corriamo per vincere*, in "la Repubblica", August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

coalition, with the scope of discussing and approving it “from the bottom”. The political offer is large and has as main objective the balancing of the public account and the entrance in the monetary Union, real ideology of the entire Ulivo project. The second essential point is the institutional reform that might provide for a change of the form of State, move towards federalism, but also of the form of government. It is deemed necessary in fact to reinforce the powers of the President of the Council to guarantee more stability to the executive and favor governability, cementing the structure of the Second Republic in the bipolar framework. Ample space is also given to the relaunch of employment in the South, as well as to globalization seen as an opportunity. The late nineties’ left in fact sees in liberalism the possibility to enlarge the resources for the citizenship, therefore the Ulivo also theorizes the passage from an entrepreneurial State to the regulating one, proposing a massive action of privatizations.<sup>497</sup>

The programme is discussed by the basis but it is not substantially modified. A single huge event, held in Milan in March ’96 in the presence of politicians and intellectuals such as Umberto Eco, praises the 88 Theses as the gluing element of the coalition and compass of an eventual government, binding all the involved parties.<sup>498</sup> For Romano Prodi, the programme means something more. Lacking a party that supports him in the daily battles, the elements of the 88 Theses are considered as the real mortgage on his leadership: in his opinion, as long as the objectives of the programme have to be achieved, his premiership will be defended by the entire majority.

#### **Fourth chapter**

In order to contrast the berlusconian Polo, the centre-left studies an alliance network capable of increasing their hopes of victory as much as possible. The liberal turn through privatizations and a marked pro-european stance of the electoral programme consent to immediately find some convergence with the

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<sup>497</sup> R. Prodi, *Governare per cambiare*, in “Micromega”, 4, 1994, pp. 7-22.

<sup>498</sup> R. Armeni, *L’Ulivo chiama tutti a Milano*, in “l’Unità”, March 23<sup>th</sup>, 1996

outgoing president Lamberto Dini, to whom it is asked to create a list, Rinnovamento italiano, with the task of gathering all the liberal votes disappointed by the centre-right. For what concerns the leftist side, the idea is an agreement with Rifondazione comunista, nostalgic party of the red flag that continues to maintain a significant radical consensus useful in electoral terms. Rc opposes capitalism, hence the Maastricht treaty and does not approve the Ulivo programme, on the contrary, the party contests it. The centre-left ruling class therefore promotes the “desistence pact” that consists in selecting some majoritarian constituencies in which not to present their own candidates in order to make the votes converge on the Rc ones<sup>499</sup>. In other constituencies Rc is asked to do the same, in order to create a non-programmatic alliance, but a purely electoral one. The coalition, that moves on the notes of the “Canzone popolare”, the leftist reaction to the Forza Italia jingle, is extremely heterogenous. It is constituted by fifteen acronyms, from the social-christians to the liberals going through the labor federation, many of which may not have hopes even at the proportional. By presenting their candidates in the certain constituencies of the centre-left, they are instead sure of going to Parliament and represent their party within the institutions. The majoritarian has forced bipolarism in the system, but it did not impede the affirmation of the typical italian pluralism.

Also the choice of the appropriate candidates for the constituencies is fruit of an attentive study of the ruling class, considering that on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1996, the challenge is played on thin ice. On the election day, the centre-left wins but with different data between the majoritarian and the proportional. In the proportional system, the parties opposed to the centre-left obtain 16.481.785 votes against 16.270.935 of the Ulivo and Rc, a bit more than 40% which seems to attribute the victory to the Berlusconi Polo. Actually, in the majoritarian system things are different because the Ulivo obtains 16.729.360 votes against 15.028.986 for the Pole. This victory certifies the half million-votes difference for the left formation between the proportional and the

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<sup>499</sup> G. Chiarante, *Alleanze e identità della sinistra*, in “Critica Marxista”, 1, 1996, pp. 6-9.

majoritarian systems. The first party of the Parliament is Pds with 21,1% consensus, that it is followed by FI with 20,6%, An with 15,7%, League with 10%, Rc with 8,6%, Ppi with 6,8%, Casini and Buttiglione with their formations Ccd-Cdu takes 5,8% and Dini's Rinovamento Italiano obtains 4,3%<sup>500</sup>. The very first evidence is the missed victory of the berlusconian pole that is defeated because of its internal division. Italians reward the Ulivo coalition at the voting ballot. The "added value", the ulivist horizon for a European Italy with a balanced account and a reformist ambition is considered more efficient than the single parties in the proportional system. This unity of the left manages to convince and becomes decisive to influence even the confused voters. Therefore, the choice falls on Romano Prodi, whose Ulivo formation is not strong enough to govern on its own. Rifondazione comunista obtains 8,6% of the votes and proves essential for the majority that, without the "red help", obtains only 35% in the proportional constituencies.

<sup>501</sup> The elected in the coalition are obviously all ulivists but those strictly supporting Prodi, members of no other parties, seem to be 16, Prodi included, since he is elected in the majoritarian constituency of Bologna. An important element that goes unnoticed in that moment is relative to the League's results. The men of Umberto Bossi are well rooted in the Northern provincial territory, where they represent an industrial organizational model that recognizes in the post-fordism. They increase their consensus and convey a message to all the national politics about the industrial condition of the Country.<sup>502</sup>

Prodi conceives his own leadership as something that has to deal with the government and its strengthening, not with strictly parties' issues, therefore he reserves the possibility of choosing a group of ministers of high-institutional profile, that do not always represent the direct expression of

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<sup>500</sup> A. Chiamante, *Le elezioni politiche del 21 aprile*, cit., pp. 43-63.

<sup>501</sup> L. Mattina, A. Tonarelli, *I candidati. Visioni politiche e carriere*, in "Italian political science review", XXVI, December 1996, pp. 483-517.

<sup>502</sup> I. Diamanti, *L'importanza di Zermeghedo. Perché la Lega ha vinto senza che nessuno se ne accorgesse. Alcuni modesti consigli per affrontare la sindrome leghista*, in "Micromega", 2, May-June, 1996, pp. 55-66.



secretaries. Among them there are Giorgio Napolitano, Pds member and future President of the Republic, chosen to become the Interior Minister, Giovanni Maria Flick, future president of the Constitutional Court and Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, also close to becoming President of the Republic, that becomes Minister of Treasure and Balance<sup>503</sup>. The President and his executive present in front of the Chamber on May 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, obtaining 173 votes in favour in the Senate and 322 in the Chamber of Deputies, after having attended a discussion that renders the idea of the problems within the majority. In his speech, the professor recalls the electoral program, binding it to the entire legislature and lingering on three pillars: the historical goal of the monetary Union, the rebalancing of the public account and the achievement of a new constitutional pact to be stipulated also with the oppositions<sup>504</sup>. Bertinotti, just entered in his own parliamentary majority, reacts to this by expressing a clear opposition to the Maastricht criteria; he contraposes the reduction of the working hours at equal pay to the rebalancing of the public account, defined as the “new totem”; to privatizations he contraposes State economic participation; to the hypotheses of the “round tables” he reacts saying that they are failed, either in discussing over prices or over salaries; moreover, Prodi himself is accused of “continuity” in relation to the previous administrations<sup>505</sup>. The majority already shows his whole fragility.

In the following months, the Parliament approves a sixty-billion financial manoeuvre, with an impressive cut of the public expense and the addition of the euro tax in order to meet the 3% criterion. These are measures that prove decisive in the first months of ‘97 when the data reveal that the lira can meet the parameter of the Ems, due to an exchange rate fixed at 985,11 on the deutsche mark; the inflation decreases to 1,7%; the growth rate of the Country

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<sup>503</sup> Camera dei deputati, *Formazione del governo Prodi*, in “Rapporto con il Governo”, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1996, [www.legislature.camera.it](http://www.legislature.camera.it)

<sup>504</sup> R. Prodi, *Dichiarazioni programmatiche del governo*, in “Atti Parlamentari”, Camera dei deputati, Roma, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1996 pp. 71-83.

<sup>505</sup> F. Bertinotti, *Resoconto stenografico e sommario*, in “Atti parlamentari”, Camera dei deputati, Roma, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996, pp. 295-300.

is 1.5%; there is the decrease of the debt interest and a 4% reduction in public deficit in eight months, arriving at 2,7%. These are record data, in spite of the increase of fiscal pressure which arrives at 43%. However, they prove to be insufficient: structural reforms are needed<sup>506</sup>.

The government reformism takes off and within a short time the “pacchetto Treu” is approved, a series of market labour reforms introducing the first flexibility measures; together with the enactment of the Bersani decrees for liberalization, as in the case of electricity where privates are allowed to set up new power plants, favouring competitiveness in the sector<sup>507</sup>; the Minister Bassanini provisions open the administrative federalism season, aimed at simplifying bureaucratic procedures and at decentralizing as much as possible the administrative functions in the relationship among the State, the regions and the local autonomies<sup>508</sup>; with the Turco-Napolitano law, proposed by the Ministers of interior affairs and social solidarity, the theme of immigration is faced with containment policy, favouring of regular migration, integration and contrast to clandestinity; at the cultural level, a 70% increase in the investments is recorded, also thanks to the political role of Veltroni in the Ulivo project; while the health system sees the enactment of an innovative measure: Minister Rosy Bindi promotes the transformation of the hospital structures into public enterprises with the introduction of the general director figure and the shifting of competences from the municipalities to the regions, strengthening them in the NHS. If in foreign politics the Country tries to assume a primary role in the construction of the new Europe, remaining in the framework of the atlantic alliances, there are no particular initiatives in the field of university, schools and research. Apart from the arguable “three-plus-two” reform, the will of favouring a professional training within schools, the principle of autonomy of the single school units, parity with the non-public schools, without committing to an institutional model in its entirety, to

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<sup>506</sup> S. Colarizi, M. Gervasoni, *La tela di Penelope*, cit., p. 92.

<sup>507</sup> S. Benedettini, C. Stagnaro, *Quando l'Italia era capace di aprirsi al mercato e di correre insieme all'Europa*, in “il Foglio”, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

<sup>508</sup> F. Bassanini, *La riforma della pubblica amministrazione in Italia*, in “Slides sspa”, [www.bassanini.it](http://www.bassanini.it).

redefine the cultural and organizational aspects, give the idea an important missed opportunity for the centre-left.<sup>509</sup>

Simultaneously to these governmental results, the main political parties concentrate on the operation of internal strengthening. The Pds promotes its social-democratic strategy and the Ppi changes the national secretary, electing Franco Marini<sup>510</sup>. The two formations are increasingly convinced to defend their own identity and consider the Ulivo as a good alliance, although the coalition alone is more valuable than the mere sum of its components. The divergences over the party shape to be given to the Ulivo intensifies in these months. In Garganza a seminar is held where many ulivists, among which Prodi, Veltroni and other intellectuals, express the need to work hard in order to converge toward a unitary subject, that might summarize Italian reformism and fulfil bipartisanship. The secretaries of the principal parties, on the contrary, defend their own realities and ambitions, showing those deep differences within the Ulivo about the coalition identity and its perspectives.

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At the end of 1997, moreover, the government crumbles in front of the attacks of Rifondazione comunista. Despite the successes on the economic balance, Rc wants a relaunch of employment and a reform that reduces to 35 the weekly working hours.<sup>512</sup> After days of negotiations the President of the Council seems ready to resign, but the public opinion that is favourable to the leftist unity convinces Bertinotti to loosen the grip. Ulivo and Rc find an agreement and the government breathes a sigh of relief.

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<sup>509</sup> A. Sasso, *Scuola: una questione nazionale*, in "Critica Marxista", 4, 1997, pp. 9-16.

<sup>510</sup> G. Luzi, C. Malaparte, *Ppi, Marini segretario e il partito si divide*, in "la Repubblica", January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>511</sup> M. D'Alema, *Controcorrente*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2013, p. 43.

<sup>512</sup> V. Sivo, Trentin: "Niente di più assurdo che ridurre l'orario per legge.", in "la Repubblica", October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

## Fifth chapter

In February 1997 the Parliament establishes the Bicameral commission, a parliamentary commission composed of 35 deputies and 35 senators with the task of redrafting the form of State, of Government and to reorganize the judicial system of the Country. Massimo D'Alema is elected President of the organ and almost all the leaders of the parties participate.<sup>513</sup> Having as main objective that of re-writing part of the Constitution together with the opposition, the possibility that post-communist left and post-fascist right set up a new *pactum societatis* together, legitimizing each other, concretizes. After some months, the commission finds an agreement on the semi-presidential system, but everything seems to blow up for the absence of an electoral law capable of guaranteeing the full functioning of the proposal. The agreement is found on June 18<sup>th</sup>, at night, with an accord defined as the “*patto della crostata*” (pact of the tart), according to which the Parliament is called to approve a majoritarian double-round electoral law with the direct election of the Premier and the Head of State.<sup>514</sup> While the text of the constitutional reform is being discussed at the Chambers to follow the aggravated approval *iter*, the political scenarios change. After having supported the accord with the left, Berlusconi changes mind and comes back in sponsoring the pure proportional system. A year after the agreement in commission, there are no longer the numbers to definitely approve the text, therefore the Bicameral committee will dissolve in the summer 1998.

The failure of the Bicameral, despite the effort of the Ulivo in working either on the executive provisions or the constitutional reform in Parliament (“two-track approach”), it is a serious blow for the majority, that loses one of the three pillars upon which President Prodi had focused his confidence speech in '96. In addition, internal fragilities continue to be fuelled by the diverse interpretations on the coalition future and on the party shape, that still remains the protagonist of an intense debate.

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<sup>513</sup> S. Buzzanca, *A D'Alema anche i voti di Forza Italia*, in “la Repubblica”, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>514</sup> B. Vespa, *Storia d'Italia da Mussolini a Berlusconi*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005, pp. 199-200.

In February 1998 the Pds tries to fulfil the objective of strengthening its social-democratic identity. The Florence congress serves to open the doors of the party to new souls of the progressive left, with particular attention to what remains of the socialist family. The Pds changes name and symbol: it becomes Ds (Democratici di sinistra) and assumes a rose as a symbol, expression of the European socialism. The objective is always clearer: wanting to become the modern leftist force capable of guiding the centre-left bloc in the bipolar system, as it usually happens in the Western European states. The congress does not obtain a positive outcome, because a deep critical elaboration of its own story and of the socialist tradition lacks. It could not be defined as an epochal transformation, nor even a stitching up of the ancient wounds that separated the communists from the socialists since the split of Livorno. The will to defend and strengthen partitocracy by the leftist ruling class appears evident, contrary to the radical ultralivists that continue to try cementing the coalition through governmental action in the hope, sooner or later, to create a unique subject for the entire center-left.

Contemporarily, a new party is created in Parliament: the Union of the Republic led by Cossiga. The ex-President of the Republic creates a new centrist formation that openly aligns against national bipolarism, trying to marginalize radical rights and becoming the expression of the European popular party in Italy.

In the spring of 1998, inflation rates turn out to have decreased by two percentage points in the last two years, going towards a stable 2%; the deficit/GDP ratio goes from 6.6% in 1996 to 2.7% in 1998; the long-term interest rate goes from 11.8% to 6.7% over two years, placing itself well below the threshold of 7.8% that has been imposed to enter Euro. A "journey through the desert" that allows Italy to be one of the eleven countries to give birth to the Currency Union, which was celebrated with a speech that Prodi delivered to all channels the same day of the news. The only bundle is the

state debt that cannot go below 60%.<sup>515</sup> Unemployment rate is still in double digits, being at 12,1% in '96 and 22% rate only in the South.<sup>516</sup> The Ulivo needs a boost towards the relaunch of the South and new labor market policies<sup>517</sup>. Meanwhile, Rc lives with increasing sufferance its role of, simultaneously, struggle and majority party. Bertinotti himself, aware of the difficulties on the employment sector, would like to cut the rope and bring the party back to the ideas of struggles that have always characterised it. Behind that conception there is the "culture of political movements" that belongs to the neo-communist leader, who thinks that his party is closer to those movements that have been marginalized by globalization and that want to contrast it unconditionally. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998, Ciampi presents to the Chamber the '99 financial law and Bertinotti convokes the National Council of his party to impose to the members not to vote the law. The choice of the secretary only obtains 58% of the consent, demonstrating the division of the party. Cossutta, Rc President and historical leader coming from the Pci, wants to confirm his support for the government and prepares the scission against Bertinotti. Having understood the problems within the majority, it is preferred to verify the conditions of support in front of the Chambers, with all the related risk. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday, around 9:30, the President of the Council delivers a long and passionate speech in which he claims the actions of the government, the executive stability, international credibility and relaunches with a manoeuvre in continuity with the European dream and with the exigence of a neat recovery of employment. Then, referring to Bertinotti, he declares: *"Finally, I cannot believe that you really want to give the country in the hands of those who we have fought and won against. Honourable Bertinotti, this Government has been and still is, and I say it proudly, the Government chosen also by the voters of Rifondazione comunista."*<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> C. Abbate, F. Ghirlandini, *Italia e UEM*, Direzione generale degli studi, Divisione Affari Economici, Parlamento Europeo, Lussemburgo, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, pp. 5-14.

<sup>516</sup> Ministero del Tesoro, del Bilancio e della Programmazione Economica, *Relazioni sull'andamento dell'economia nel 1998 e aggiornamento delle previsioni per il 1999*, Roma, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, pp. 19-40.

<sup>517</sup> S. Voza, *Il Mezzogiorno nell'Europa della moneta unica*, in "Critica Marxista", 4, 1998, pp. 49-54.

<sup>518</sup> R. Prodi, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in "Atti parlamentari", Camera dei Deputati, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 1-9.

The majority leaders speak in turn and they all confirm the support to the executive, while they wait for the declaration by Oliviero Diliberto, Rc headgroup and man close to the President Cossutta. He declares: “*So, I declare, as Rc headgroup, that the party of the communist refoundation withdraws the confidence to the Government in charge but, as a communist, I do not give up*”<sup>519</sup>. These are the words that testify the scission by the Rc, with the men of Cossutta supporting the government, but it is still unclear whether the government has the numbers to continue.

In the morning of October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998 President Violante initiates the explanations of vote. Bertinotti declares “*We asked for a turn. That has been refused and this financial law is a sandcastle*”<sup>520</sup>. Rc does not change its mind and confirms the will to go to the opposition. In those hours, there was a strenuous attempt at convincing every confused deputy to support the government, in the awareness that a single vote can make a difference. Around 12:00 the explanations of vote end and the moment to proceed with the nominal roll call for the concrete votes starts. Until the end, President Prodi is asked to make a political gesture towards the other forces to widen the majority but, remaining faithful to the defence of the ulivist project, he continuously refuses<sup>521</sup>.

The moment of the results arrives. 625 were present and voted; majority: 313; votes *in favour*: 312; votes *against*: 313. It is only one vote that determines the collapse of Prodi's government<sup>522</sup>.

For the first time in the history of the Republic, the government resigns after one vote of no confidence. The will to underline the bipolarization determined by the voters until the end generates a test of power that hits the whole coalition. With only one action, Fausto Bertinotti obtains three results<sup>523</sup>: he

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<sup>519</sup> O. Diliberto, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in “Atti parlamentari”, Camera dei Deputati, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 20-29.

<sup>520</sup> F. Bertinotti, *Resoconto sommario e stenografico*, in “Atti parlamentari”, Camera dei deputati, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998, pp. 11-12.

<sup>521</sup> B. Jerkov, *Cossiga rilancia le larghe intese*, in “la Repubblica”, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>522</sup> S. Messina, *E Prodi scopre di aver perso soltanto all'ultimo voto*, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

<sup>523</sup> A. Tortorella, *Il paradosso italiano*, in “Critica Marxista”, 5, 1998, pp. 2-9.

damages the government, the Ulivo as a coalition, and his own party, which, taking into account the result of the following elections (4.3%), pays a very high price for the separation. Throughout the following days, there was the attempt at reassembling the pieces trying to build a new majority with the Udr, but the latter did not confirm the willingness in supporting the name of Prodi<sup>524</sup>.

In the end, an accord is reached that entrusts to Massimo D'Alema the presidency of the Council of Ministers with the task of reconstructing a new majority going from Cossiga to Cossutta, maintaining in the center the remaining pieces of the Ulivo.<sup>525</sup>

## Conclusion

The '96 Ulivo is not a mere accord among parties allying in a bipolar system, it is something more, much more. Starting from a new elaboration of the society, a series of catholic and leftist movement begin contaminating each other on the basis of a shared program, although committed to the idea of preserving and respecting their own identity. New energies coming from the civil society and the institutions, together with the parties, aim at reducing fragmentation and reinforce the extremely fragile italian system in the midst of transition. The Ulivo confronted the Italian social question and tried to give his own solution to spur development and to govern the ongoing major transformations. In an era marked by the mainstream logic of the free market, the Prodi proposal tried to be a balanced compromise between capitalism, democracy and reforms proper of the Welfare State, and to confer to Italy a primary role in the European integration process. The Prodi-Ciampi axis committed to the rebalancing of the public budget to meet the Maastricht criteria without asphyxiating the national economy. Their action has managed to combine rigorism with policies finalized to liberalization capable of fostering industrial competitiveness.

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<sup>524</sup> B. Vespa, *Storia d'Italia da Mussolini a Berlusconi*, cit., p. 205.

<sup>525</sup> E. Mauro, *La strada obbligata della sinistra*, in "la Repubblica", October 22<sup>th</sup>, 1998.



At the same time, if within the parliamentary scenario Rc leads the political crisis, it is undeniable that the coalition reveals his political weaknesses already before October 9<sup>th</sup> vote. The internal debate between the Ulivo integralist and the partitism creates opposing interpretations of the future of the coalition. Partitism has tried to defend its own story, its own evolution and considered the Ulivo as a set of different parties, combined with a component of the civil society. “Ulivism” instead saw the parties as the means to win the bipolar competition, waiting for a further evolution capable of creating a single group reorganizing all the center-left hearts: the future Democratic Party.

There is no doubt that the absence of a “Prodi party” was a shortage of the center-left. Its creation could have put into practice organically and systematically the “prodian” vision of Italy. This was indeed a weakness of his leadership: believing that the “public democracy” (direct popular vote) was enough to legitimize his premiership. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to claim that the reasons for the fall of the government were deeper than this. The end of the enthusiasm for the monetary Union was not followed by a new perspective for the country, and a support for the majority based on something else than the pro-European stance lacked. The absence of such a perspective for the Ulivo provided an obstacle for the professor to continue to govern over the following three years.

If it is true that the ulivist period has been rich in reforms, it is also true that some important initiatives seemed to lack. The consequences of the enormous change due to the globalization of the market and the country de-industrialization process caused by the offshoring of many large industries seemed to be undervalued. Privatizations have been preferred over a comprehensive industrial planning, believing that the market was enough to sustain the economy. The long-theorized passage from the entrepreneurial State to the regulating one would have needed a larger evaluation on the Italian industrial sector and the result is a general doubt on whether it had

been appropriate to significantly reduce the State intervention in the industrial system<sup>526</sup>.

Also in foreign politics, a totally autonomous initiative lacked. Italy seemed to focus on his own role within international organizations, often too close to the position of the hegemonic states, thereby reflecting the concept of “foreign sub-politics”, to underline the difference between the role of the single national states and the large superpowers.<sup>527</sup>

However, the value of the Ulivo as political subject bringing a huge novelty is indisputable. The desire to combine all the post-marxist and catholic legacies in a single dimension represents a unique experiment that found a fertile ground in Italy. Politically and culturally, the coalition might be defined as an attempt to give to the Country a new historical compromise eighteen years after the assassination of Aldo Moro, despite the evident differences with respect to the “national solidarity” period.

The Ulivo represented a lot and it surely was the dream of millions of citizens that hoped for the unity of the left on the notes of the “Canzone popolare”. Since that moment a new generation of politicians and activists has born: the “ulivist generation” that has always walked towards a united left intended to serve a modern country. The Ulivo has probably left an unaccomplished mission, mission from which one shall restart today.

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<sup>526</sup> P. Craveri, *L'arte del non governo. L'inesorabile declino della Repubblica italiana*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2016, pp. 490- 512.

<sup>527</sup> S. Romano, *Guida alla politica estera italiana. Da Badoglio ai giorni nostri*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2016, pp. 266-279, 289-290.