

# BEYOND THE HEDGE, AN EVER DARKER NIGHT.

## *Six passages on the government crisis and the new political season*

*Draghi's fall was unpredictable, but not unexpected. His presidential government had already worn out in February: it was the failure of a weak Bonapartism, cornered by the social contrasts developed by the war in Ukraine, and the worsening of the crisis. The elections of September 25 will most likely determine a victory for the reactionary camp: a solid block (with significant consensus), without hegemony (a comprehensive political strategy, a capitalist management of the crisis, the ability to persuade the big capital owners) and therefore disjointed (with faults not only between the different forces, but also transversal to the main parties). The campo largo [the progressive rassemblement] has been divided by Draghi's government and Agenda: The Democratic Party was pushed once again into a liberal-democratic track (but always in an unfinished way), the reformist left is inane and subordinate, the centre claims Draghian and hopes sooner or later to disrupt the Right, the 5 Star Movement pursues its transformative and ultimately reactionary nature. The opposition left is (partially) reassembled under the banner of De Magistris and a popular union: a Mélenchon's caricature, overcoming any reference to labour (any reference to the contradictions and conflicts of this mode of production) and to the Left itself (see colours and symbols of this force) Thus, it cages its aspirations in a constitutional perimeter and in the experience of the De Magistris's administration of Naples. The working-class Left, then, evaporates: the reformists submerged by the liberal democratic policy of the Democratic Party, most of the oppositions engulfed in an Laclau's antagonistic pluralism, the Stalinists drowned in novax (and basically nationalistic) populism. The anti-capitalist forces are instead dispersed on various projects, often self-referential. The decade of political instability after the Great Recession, marked by a Great Crisis and a persistent stagnation of the country, ends in the sign of a reactionary and conflictual stabilization: a parliamentary majority that could impose itself in conflict with the other parts of society. A profound retreat in relations between classes, a further involution of political mass consciousness. Beyond the hedge of September 25, then, it will be necessary to start again. Avoid any temptation to re-propose great democratic alliances against the right. Organize our discontent: that is, express working-class sake and demands, making them emerge in the next resistances. Re-launch mobilization paths capable of involving the multitude of work: that is, united fronts of the working class that also involve the reformist sectors. Above all, however, in the context of the war in Ukraine, it will be necessary to develop anti-imperialist oppositions, conflicting the processes of mass nationalization and trying again to weave a working class rassemblement. A start point could be a defeatist and anti-militarist policy. All this tells us of a complicated autumn, on an increasingly dark night. How to get up from these ten years of defeat becomes in fact more and more the crucial question and we all must have to answer it.*

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**The final act of the Draghi's executive was unpredictable, surprising, but not unexpected.** The political and parliamentary game (the opening move of the *5 Star Movement*, the closing hand of Berlusconi and Salvini, the surreal vote in the Senate) has certainly displaced most observers and perhaps even several participants. In a few days a sudden summer crisis has precipitated, and early elections have been scheduled for September 25 (never seen in the autumn in the history of the Republic, the only example in my memory is November 16, 1919). This vote is marked by a rapid recompositing of the reactionary front and an equally quick breakdown of the progressive one, after the opposite situation in the recent local elections. Almost all (media, employers, trade unions, social parties, political areas) were preparing to deploy multiple initiatives in the autumn to obtain resources for their priorities (recessive risks, inflation on wages or production costs, bonuses and super bonuses, etc). They wanted to affect the latest measures under discussion in the legislature (budget law, Nex Generation EU measures, differentiated autonomy for the administrative Regions, minimum wage). Many, inside and outside the political buildings, hoped to shape the terrain and thus address the outcome of next spring election that, apparently, seemed uncertain. The election call therefore took almost everyone off guard. Yet the crisis was so rapid because, somehow, pressure had been building up for some time along already drawn fault lines.

## 1. The departure of a weak Bonapartism

**The political conditions of the crisis came about several months ago.** The deadline of [Sergio Mattarella's](#) [first] seven-year term at the beginning of 2022 was in fact the inevitable junction of a presidential government. The Draghi's executive was born a year earlier, with a premier and a programmatic perimeter exceptionally indicated directly by the *Quirinale* (the Italian president's palace), not by a parliamentary majority. This situation was due to the sanitary emergency and the importance of urgent political choices (pandemic and *Nex Generation EU*), in an alleged inability to vote. Thus, an executive composed by the Prime Minister rather than parliamentary Groups has formed an unnatural *national unity*, from [Lega](#) (Salvini) to [Art.1](#) (the social democratic *Left* who left [Democratic Party](#)), with an opposition limited to [Fratelli di Italia](#) (*Brothers of Italy*, Meloni), the sparse patrol remained in the [Sinistra Italiana](#) (*Italian Left*, Fratoianni and the former 5-stars Fattori), [Alternativa](#) and other 5stelle releases (including the left caucus of [Manifesta](#)). It was obvious that a *presidential* government would have had a verification and possible questioning with a new President: he in fact could have been elected by a parliamentary majority different from the Draghi's one. Also, the exceptional nature of the government could have been crowned by the election of Draghi himself: this possible passage would have fully brought about national unity in a new presidential executive (a premier identified by Draghi himself), but it would probably have transformed the institutional profile of the Presidency.

**These two perspectives had determined the re-election of Mattarella.** Both the election of Draghi and the configuration of a new *political* majority were avoided: that is, it was prevented both a long shadow on the structure of the country and the denial of the request [explicitly set by Draghi himself](#). So, somehow, a political crisis was swept away in February. However, a part of the protagonists and observers had the illusion of being able to freeze these assets until next spring, perhaps casting their shadow even on the new legislature. For example, re-proposing Draghi's candidacy for the succession to Mattarella after the political elections, allowing him to free himself from the heavy burden of the Presidency once the reasons for his re-election had ceased. At that point, however, the possible Draghi presidency would have taken on a different meaning: the expression of a new Parliament, not a mandate over the different parties that is autonomous from the political dialectic. There are those who say that some plans were cultivated in some circuits of the establishment, perhaps even institutional ones such as around the Presidential Palace: hypothesis to compose a centre *Draghian rassemblement*, using for this purpose autumn and winter, the modulation of government action and the definition of a new electoral law. This *rassemblement*, even with limited numbers, would be perhaps able to disrupt the possibility of political majorities in the next legislature (even just in one of the Houses of the Parliament), set the conditions of a continuity of the outgoing government and then, once the winds of crisis have been overcome and the Next generation UE ensured, to allow the presidential crowning of Draghi. *Will-o'-the-wisps*: abstract drawings, unrelated with the masses and the *blood and shit* in the reality [a famous way of saying in the Italian politics]. Rumors perhaps not inessential in the crisis. In any case, the government eroded in February, worn down by the presidential failure of Draghi and the legislature's closing. Inevitably, this new situation gave to political parts, destined to oppose each other at the polls, a much leading role.

**A difficult spring stabilized the executive but increased the pressure on the government.** Various events relaunched after February the emergency reasons of a *presidential* government: the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the weaving of opposing international alignments, the energy crisis, inflation, restrictive monetary policies ([first of the FED](#) and then inevitably [also of the ECB](#)) and new winds of recession. Not only the executive hold, but its legitimacy and therefore its influence on parliamentary dynamics was renewed. It is no coincidence that in the spring the government acted multiple forcing on conflicting measures (from the reform of the *Superior Council of the Judiciary* to the *Competition Law*). Illusion of strength, rather than a real consolidation: several problems were growing due to the rising social tensions. The sudden precipitation of the economic situation re-launched the divergences in the country: the fault lines of the Great Crisis (debt and expansion of liquidity, inflation in the USA and Europe, inequalities in world markets, productive fragmentation) were sharpened and therefore generalized by the Ukrainian conflict. Thus, political parties and movements were pushed to support intervention policies on their different priorities, in relation to their different social roots: the fragility of a production system based on exports, the cost-keeping in some productive sectors, the development of poverty and marginalization, the wage, etc. The electoral agenda and the economic crisis were therefore intertwined, consuming the national unity.

**Draghi still had margins, but a time of contrasts was imposing itself.** The [post-pandemic rebound](#) and an expansive policy drove a very significant recovery (supported by the *Next Generation UE* and the Budget's Laws, the tail of the 170 billion interventions in the last two years): +6.6% of GDP in 2021, higher than the EU (5.4%), the USA (5.7%) and even the World (6.1%). This drive continues today, [in the second quarter of 2022](#) (4.7% per annum), push by internal demand (i.e. super bonuses for construction) and [employment rate](#). This recovery was however marked by contradictions and conflicts: it is no coincidence that even the [CGIL](#) proclaimed a general strike last December. These tensions, however, remained fragmented, also due to the real action of the CGIL which did not develop the struggle, while the unitary strike of the leftist trade unions [*grassroot* or *confrontational* unions, in the Italian political language] remained very limited. The *convergence* [a large and united front, in the current Italian political language] was substantially limited to a [national demonstration, promoted by the GKN factory collective in March, the 26th](#). In any case, various factor progressively increased the pressures on government: the gas emergency, an annual inflation of 8% (10% for the lowest incomes), the [prospects of a global recession](#), the probably run of these dynamics in the planned 2023 electoral campaign. Beyond the capabilities of the Prime Minister [*If Draghi eventually decides to leave it will be because he has neither the culture nor the tools to face the social crisis affecting the country*, [Andrea Ranieri, il manifesto, 20 July](#)], actually he did not take charge of these social questions, and he did not mediate the different requests. Thus, he avoided a political re-foundation of his majority, as emerges from the [same speech to the Senate](#) and [from the reply of 20 July](#). In fact, Draghi has always interpreted itself as an *exceptional* government [in the real meaning of a [state of exception](#)]: the parties should have simply entrusted him with the leadership of the country.

**A Bonapartist aspiration.** In a general crisis, when the ruling classes are divided between different fractions, interests and accumulation strategies, an autonomous subject can try to impose itself in the political arena. An independent protagonist, over these fractions and its different parts (political movements and parties), he does not respond to immediate need of social consensus and therefore does not need to compose a [social block](#). His aims are to identify solutions and impose them in the name of the so-called *general interest*: eventually, in the name of the general reproduction of the current production mode and related social relations. That is, in these situations there is a drive to use the state resources and power to restructure the productive system: this authoritarian policy shapes also a different composition between the fractions of the capital. Therefore, this independent subject can build a stabilization, through the reconfiguration of the balances in the ruling classes. A Bonapartist government, then, is not a direct expression of the so-called *strong powers* (big capitals or, more generally, the *bosses*). On the contrary, it is an autonomous power, without direct political and social references, to reorganize production and social assets as a function of minority and non-hegemonic sectors of the ruling classes themselves.

**A decade of crisis and Caesarist attempts.** The [Great Recession](#) and his [decade of stagnation](#) (with a drop of almost 10% of GDP) reduced Italy's production capacity by more than 20%. The so-called "[salon of Italian capitalism](#)" was thus definitely broken down and big capital fragmented: some large companies grew ([Poste](#), [Ferrero](#), [Fincantieri](#)), several reduced revenue and employee ([Eni](#), [Enel](#), [TIM](#)), some transformed into multinational corporations ([Luxottica](#), [Atlantia](#)), others were acquired (Fiat/FCA, [Pirelli](#), [Italcementi](#)) or disappeared (from Alitalia to Parmalat). Alongside, a so-called *fourth capitalism* grew, companies between 1 and 3 billion in turnover, projected onto international markets ([Mapei](#), [Brembo](#), [Calzedonia](#), [Lavazza](#)).



At the same time, also the social block of the middle classes came undone (the social base of Berlusconi's [descent into the field](#), conservative and liberal, pro tax exemptions and federalism): a large part of the small industrial business was overwhelmed (impossibility to devalue the currency, credit restriction, collapse of consumption), such as small commercial businesses (due to large-scale distribution and the internet) and professional sectors (subsumed by new service companies). However, other professional, technical, and managerial sectors improved their conditions: according to ISTAT some millions with a good education and a good standard of living. These disjunctions in the central bloc of Italian society and politics developed anti-political and reactionary movements (5 Stars, Lega, Fratelli di Italia), in the face of a parallel breakdown of the working class. Thus, it has become increasingly difficult to compose parliamentary majorities, in a decade dominated by technical governments, broad parliamentary majority, *national units* marked by personal protagonists and authoritarian propensities (Monti, Renzi, Conte). These *Bonapartism* have tried to force the balances: they failed one after the other (Monti in the 2013 general elections; Renzi in the 2016 constitutional referendum; Conte and his governments in the last few years).

**Draghi played the most insidious attempt.** In fact, he was entrusted with a real emergency mandate and he had a power that distinguished him from his predecessors (as [Monti has repeatedly emphasized](#)): ample resources (*Next Generation UE*) and an expansive policy (low interest rates and deficit). Indeed, his government was born with the *European* mandate to manage these tools to accompany the recovery after the pandemic recession. This situation could then be used to fully interpret a Bonapartist role, directing the productive restructuring of the country, and building a new social block. So, Draghi could have had a further perspective, capable of ensuring him a role for several years: the Presidency of the Republic. In that institutional position he would have acquired the possibility of shaping the policies on the different factions. In fact, he could have supervised the composition of the government: Mattarella in 2018 demonstrated how to do it [[Savona case](#)], forcing a constitutional prerogative against the very large [yellow-green parliamentary majority](#). Besides, he might as well have had direct involvement in government decisions, acting the same interpretative forcing *in a more general sense*, using the presidential prerogatives in the [Italian Constitution](#) about the promulgation of laws and international relations (Article 87, somehow reversing the sense and spirit of article 89).

**His Bonapartism was weak, contained and ultimately defeated.** We [reported it immediately](#): despite Draghi could have represented the most structured attempt, despite the strength of the economic situation and the Next Generation UE, his profile remained *lower*. The Bonapartist turning points usually are led by strong state apparatuses (often the army): in a relative autonomy from the different fractions of the ruling classes, they use their structural force to affect social organization and then also guarantee a consensus (even through clientelist policies). Draghi, like previous Italian *caesarist* attempts, lacked some crucial factors supporting this aspiration.

- **Missing a solid apparatus:** Draghi comes from the technocratic financial establishment. This international circle supported him. However, this establishment does not have its own autonomous and rooted structure, capable of taking sides and shifting social balances. It is pervasive only in some ministerial's offices or in some salons of Rome, where there is the influence of the European apparatus, Bankitalia, and MEF, the Ministry of Economy and Finance.
- **Lack social reorganization:** Draghi imposed choices and measures but did not outline a new dominant bloc. For example, the Nex Generation UE was marked above all by territorial, sectorial or partial interests, without a real structural breath, despite its [ordoliberal](#) structure (infrastructures, services, schools, universities) [*The absence of its analysis and criticism reveals the current disarray of the Italian Left, unable to read what is happening in the capital organization*].
- **No consensus:** despite the broad appreciation (perhaps for this reason, confusing image with reality), Draghi never sought mass support. The most surreal sentence in the [July 20 speech](#) is when he stress that the mobilization of citizens and associations is *impossible to ignore*. Eventually, there were only small demonstrations, the appeal of a few hundred mayors, a few statements from the institutional underworld (such as CRUI, the national association of university dean).

Without a full Bonapartist turn, even the Presidency of the Republic faded. A root of this weakness is in the contradictions in the European Union and in the [production fault that crosses the country](#) (some northern territories substantially integrated into the Central European core, some southern territories firmly in the periphery). The different fractions of the Italian ruling classes rely on the opposing European trends: centripetal, federalist, driven by international competition; centrifugal, nationalist, driven by the multiplicity of European imperialisms. They find in these conflicts the strength to structure themselves and therefore erode the *caesarist* attempts that repeat themselves.

## 2. A solid, without hegemony and disjointed reactionary camp.

**Early elections are an occasion for the Reaction.** [Meloni](#), [Salvini](#), and [Berlusconi](#) brought down Draghi when *campo largo* (the progressive alliance) was dismantled. Then, in a few days they defined a shared procedure to choose its coalition leader (the prime minister candidate), possible assets and a first programmatic core. The division between Democratic Party, [Azione](#) and 5 Star Movement has in fact already outlined the [parliamentary result](#), from which it will be difficult to substantially deviate in the end. In any case, the *Centre-right* will not win. Because the reactionary camp that has been formed can no longer be defined as centre right. The leave of historical exponents from *Forza Italia* ([Brunetta](#), [Gelmini](#) and [Carfagna](#)) are not only personal stories, however symbolic: they underline the difficulty of liberal and conservative sectors in the prevailing of the nationalist right ([Fratelli di Italia-Brothers of Italy](#) and [Lega per Salvini-League for Salvini](#)). Despite the history, the iconography and the social bases, these organizations are not fascist, as they do not take charge of violence (*militias* and violent clash with working-class organizations), as they do not take on strategies to subvert democratic institutions (to cancel the political expression of the working-class). Ultimately, this political action is useless, due to the current political and social disorganization of the working-class. These parties are however reactionary, since they organize the middle and intermediate classes threatened by the crisis, and they envisage a communitarian solution (nationalist and identitarian). That is, they deny the conflict between different social interests (starting from those of the working class), and they affect the State of an authoritarian role to manage the crisis. These parties in recent years have developed and stabilized a reactionary consensus around 40% of the electorate. At the [2013 general election](#) the Lega took 4.09%, Fratelli di Italia (Fdi) 1.96%, [the Right](#) 0.65%, [Forza Nuova](#) 0.26%, the [Fiamma Tricolore](#) 0.13%, [Casapound](#) 0.14%, for a total of 2.5 million votes. At the [2014 European election](#), the Lega won 6.15% and Fdi 3.67% (there were no other lists), for a total of almost 2.7 million votes. At the [2018 general election](#) the Lega reached 17.35% (surpassing *Forza Italia*), Fdi 4.35%, Casapound 0.95%, [Italy to the Italians](#) 0.39%, for a total of 7.5 million votes. At the [2019 European election](#), the Lega excelled with 34.26%, Fdi 6.44%, Casapound and Forza Nuova only 0.5% overall, for a total of over 11 million votes. Between 2018 and 2019 a breakthrough took place and absorbed the political space of the extreme right (in last years it has mostly withdrawn from the electoral ground, often run into the reactionary forces, sometimes disguising themselves as nationalistic and novax movements). The *Lega* has certainly experienced a significant decline since then (halving its votes in the last European election), but *Fratelli di Italia* has expanded at the same time. Overall, the reactionary consensus has remained stable: in the current surveys *Fratelli di Italia* it is given at 23/25%, the Lega at 12/14% and [Italexit](#) at 2/3%.

**A popular breakthrough.** As different studies point out (in Italian language, [on the Lega](#), the [2018 vote](#), the votes in [peripheral areas](#), the [historical red area of Emilia Romagna](#)), *Lega* and *Fratelli di Italia* have maintained their traditional social references (middle classes, small entrepreneurs, professionals, traders, white collar bourgeoisie). But they have also had the ability to penetrate peripheral and marginal areas (the “deep province”, pensioners, housewives, unemployed and not employed), subordinate classes and employees, even the organized working class. The reactionary breakthrough was based on its ability to make itself *popular*, in the face of a marginalized left and with [centre-left limited to the city-centres](#). This ability was evident in the conquest of historically *red* neighbourhoods, towns, and cities (by tradition and social composition): Piombino, Terni, Pistoia, Sesto San Giovanni, Pisa, Siena, Imola. It can also be seen [in the map of safe seat, including the one that unites](#) Democratic Party and *liberal alliance* ([Azione/Italia Viva](#)): outside the *reactionary wave* (dominant in the north, around Lazio, in Sicily, Puglia and southern Calabria), the centre-left strongholds remain only in Florence, in the *widespread Emilian city* (in particular Bologna), in *Livorno*, and in the metropolitan areas (Turin, Milan, Rome). But the Roman *borgata* (the periphery of the Capital), the Turin popular northern neighbourhoods, the Milan belt are instead under discussion. Unlike other contexts (i.e., Peronist Argentina), the reactionary movements do not have yet an organized roots in the working class, even if in last years they developed a new ability to interact with sectors of labour (for example in the school, with the self-organized committees of precarious teachers, in a category that had not looked to the Right for at least fifty years). In this breakthrough, as shown by the studies indicated above, the 5 Star Movement had a transitory role: his [common's man](#) soul overturned historical identities (see the vote among CGIL members or sectors of leftist unionism). In the two-year period 2018/19, this reactionary consensus was consolidated around the yellow-green government, racist policies and its social issues (pensions revisions and [citizen's income](#)).

**A probable victory.** The Right's triumph is almost granted, because of current electoral law and the reduction of the constituencies (wanted by the 5 Stars Movements and voted by the Democratic Party). *Almost*: it is always a mistake to take the electoral results for granted in a fragmented framework, with widespread abstentionist temptations and fluid political behaviours. In any case, the planned elections in the spring would still have had the reactionary camp as a favoured subject, even holding the *campo largo* and with a possible revision of the electoral law. Of course, the parliamentary outcomes would have been more uncertain, especially with proportional rules (precisely for this reason unlikely without some rebalancing), but the consensus of the two reactionary forces would still have to be dealt with. The expectations triggered by the last 2021 and 2022 local elections (the easy Roman victory for the centre-left; its reconquest of Piacenza, Alessandria, and Lodi; the defeats of the Right in Verona, Catanzaro, and Monza) were based on specific weaknesses, as emerged from the same reactionary confirmations in Genoa, Palermo, Pistoia, La Spezia, Sesto San Giovanni. A victory of the right on September 25 would mark a political *tipping point*. For a decade there has been no majority in Parliament expressed by an electoral coalition: its realization would allow solutions that today may not seem credible to many sectors of the ruling classes. The parliamentary numbers would impose them in fact. We'll probably see Berlusconi in the Senate with a prominent role, Meloni at [Palazzo Chigi](#) (the Prime minister's palace) and Salvini at [Viminale](#) (Palace of Ministry of Interior).

**A solid Reaction.** The victory of the Right, however, would not be limited to the conquest of these positions. This coalition have a hypothesis of institutional revision, consistent with the Bonapartist aspirations in the establishment and with the articulated needs of the various territorial capitalisms in the country (*presidentialism* and an almost federal autonomy of the Regions). The Right has also a policy that responds to the demands of its social base (pensions reform, tax exemptions, revision of citizen's income, security and racist measures) and a conservative action on civil rights that reflects the values and feelings of their electorate (LGTBQ+, civil marriages, euthanasia, prohibitionism, perhaps abortion). So, the government action could trigger divisions in the country, a popular response, and perhaps even significant dissensions, but on the one hand it could welcome some questions from the ruling classes, on the other hand it could consolidate the same reactionary consensus in its own social base. That is, the possibility of a *conflictual stabilization* is emerging, marked by a reactionary prevalence. A prevalence that, through the control of the government and Parliament, could impose itself with authoritarian choices defeating the other political and social parties.

**The reactionary bloc is not prevalent, but it could be dominant.** If on September 25 it confirmed 40% of the votes, it would not be in the majority. At the latest general elections only the 72.9% of population votes (2018), at the last European ones (2019) 56.1%, at the last local ones (2020) 57.9%. 40% of 70% is 28%: we can therefore assume that the reactionary consensus, in the end, approaches but does not even reach a third of the population. However, it is a mass not without consequences. In social processes, when a component reaches a certain size, it can develop a *common sense*: when an equally significant counterpart is not revealed, its expressions can become a landmark for others, even who do not fell alike. They may then be able to shape collective representations: albeit a minority, become a social norm. Which is the size to impose a social norm? Some studies have proposed the [golden section](#). In any case, *a third* of the population is a significant mass: it makes people aware of their strength, it allows them not to underestimate their influence, it develops the idea of being a dominant component. Besides, the Power (government, parliament, institutions) allows to influence and control the agenda of the media and public debate. This combination has prevailing effects: we have already experienced with the yellow-green government. After all, we have already seen the strength of a reactionary government with Modi, Orban, Kaczyński and Trump (despite his defeat, indeed with his defeat, in the pervasiveness of his influence).

**A liberal and worn-out capitalist crisis management.** However, this reactionary camp lacks hegemony and comprehensive strategy, despite the probable victory. The capitalist *Great crisis* management in the last fifteen years has in fact remained neoliberal, not upsetting either the dominant models of accumulation or the global financial dimension that governs them. Indeed, in this decade the global debt has multiplied, with unprecedented liquidity made available by central banks and monetary policies, reaching over 300 thousand billion dollars (more than three times the world GDP). This management was showing signs of wear and tear even before the pandemic. For several decades the capitalist dynamic has known a gap between profit rates, accumulation and productivity ([Husson, 2013](#)), with countertendencies compressing the global wage, directing public spending in support of capital (a sort of entrepreneurial Keynesianism, without the ability to revive aggregate demand), expanding financialization and developing a growing role of private debt (a sort of real subsumption of labour to



finance within [a money manager capitalism](#), according to [Bellofiore and Vertova, 2014](#)). The Great Recession imploded this precarious attempt to avoid the crisis (see [Adam Tooze, Crashed, 2018](#)). At the [lower point of a long wave](#), it's impossible to trigger a revival of the cycle without a massive destruction of capital ([more or less creative](#)). Therefore, in the last fifteen years we have had a management of the crisis marked by a continuous relaunch of same policies that underlie it: an *unstable coherence* ([Husson, 2012](#)) with increased exploitation (wage reduction, work intensification, increase in working hours), financialization and over-indebtedness, and the increasingly public spending with mercantilist policy (public funds transferred directly to the Companies). In any case, this crisis management is unstable, unable to overcome depressive tendencies and challenged by imperialist competition, the slowdown in world trade and the partial retreat of globalization. The clouds of a new recession were in fact [visible on the horizon before 2020](#).

**The further sharpening of the contradictions.** The pandemic and the consequent [deep global recession](#) have upset this dynamic in an emergency context. In some ways it has reproduced some of its trends, in other ways it has developed a new public intervention on the economy. In the last two years we saw [a massive relaunch of monetary investments](#), which led to a re-composition of the [same assets of central banks](#). We also saw the raise of public spending, including social expenditure, with an extraordinary intervention that exceeded 17 thousand billion euros overall (a [leap in GDP](#)). Italian public spending exceeded one thousand billion euros, against a GDP of around 1,880 billion. The massive post-pandemic rebound exacerbated the contradictions, leading to evident imbalances on the markets and a recovery in inflation, very significant in the US (according to some due to the revival of demand). The war in Ukraine has further pushed trends and countertendencies: on the one hand raising the costs of raw materials (in particular energy) and therefore general inflation (triggering restrictive monetary policies and an imminent probable recession), on the other hand encouraging a new State intervention in strategic sectors (see [EDF in France](#)), and in the weaving of the imperialist blocs.

**We have not yet a new unstable coherence.** The inequalities, contradictions and ineffectiveness of this capitalist management have long posed the need for a different policy, mostly in the social classes that suffered most (including middle and intermediate classes who measured the precariousness of their condition). We experienced the absence of a working-class alternative, due to the disorganization and backwardness of labour, the marginalization of the Left, the capitulation of the only apparent governmental resistance ([SYRIZA between 2012 and 2016](#)). So, the international conflicts and the new role of public policies are raising expectations of a popular, nationalist, and reactionary turn. In other words, a *new unstable coherence* is plausible: an alternative management of the crisis, with a closure of the economies in their continental blocs, a resumption of Keynesian demand policies (in competition with each other), a renewed State protagonism with a totalitarian profile, a further compression of the global wage framed in policies of working-class divisions and communitarian mobilization (social protection on a professional, territorial or ethnic basis). A policy that does not overcome the structural contradictions of the crisis, but simply configures their different capitalist management. The growing imperialist contrasts makes such a credible response, which in some way already seems to address important realities (India or China). Eventually, this different management is not unfolding. After the massive emergency expansion, [many countries are returning to austerity](#). Military spending (a central element of this possible new unstable coherence) reached its [highest value in history in 2021](#) (over 2 thousand billion dollars), with a growth of 12% since 2012. The war in Ukraine represents a further important passage (see Germany's rearm, 100 billion euro). Overall, however, military spending [still remains at 2% of GDP](#) (4% for the USA and Russia): a constant value since the 90s and above all much lower than 50s and 60s (10% in the USA, 8% in the UK, over 5% in France: the season dominated by the military-industrial complex and by Keynesian policies on aggregate demand).

**A Reaction without hegemony.** Trump's rise in the United States has not triggered a real change in economic policies, despite the propaganda ([Make America Great Again](#)). When reactionary and nationalist forces came to power, even in important, advanced, and imperialistic countries (Trump in USA, Xi in China, Abe in Japan, Johnson in Great Britain, Modi in India, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Orban in Hungary, PIS in Poland), they carried out right-wing policies (security, compression of civil liberties, authoritarian turns, anti-immigrant policy), and aggressive initiatives ([Belt and Road Initiative](#), [containment towards China](#), [Japanese rearmament](#), Brexit, [AUKUS](#)), but they were unable to develop a different management of the crisis. In fact, a large part of the Big Capital is not convinced of such a turnaround: not only its *financial* fraction (banks and insurance companies), but also a significant part of the *commercial* one (Large Distribution, e-commerce platforms), as well as relevant sectors of *logistics* (global operators) and *manufacturing* (IT, energy, automotive and services corporations). These

corporates dominate the world rankings. These capitals thrive in this neoliberal crisis management, exploiting the integration of markets, the international division of labour and the financial investments (framed in their accumulation strategies, as revealed by an [enlightening book on FIAT in the 1980s](#)). Despite the current contradictions, these fractions avoid revisions of their profitability strategies, and they have no interest in sustaining new ways. Thus, the reactionary forces are viewed with distrust: only if necessary, they are used to carry out current policies. Against the central part of the ruling classes, it is difficult to govern, if you frame the social hierarchies of the current mode of production in a nationalist and authoritarian perspective. A new recession and the imperialistic conflicts probably will open the horizon for a change. However, in a central country of the European Union, with fragile and divided capitalist structures, it is hard to impose new policy in the short term.

**A disjointed Reaction.** This political camp is then solid, but at the same time it is decomposed. First, for the competition between the main parties: *Fratelli di Italia* and *Lega*. We can see it in the last local elections, about the different positions on the Draghi government, and in the contrasts in this electoral campaign. It is not just a competition between Meloni and Salvini for the leadership and the premiership. These parties are two different *interpretations* of the Right, and they clash each other for the conquest of the same political area. *Fratelli di Italia* historically grown in the *National Right* and [Movimento Sociale Italiano](#), in a fascist legacy (the flame that emanates from Mussolini's coffin in his party symbol). *Lega* developed by cultivating the autonomist hypotheses of the entrepreneurial classes in the Po Valley, structurally inserted in the European core, and today this party try to expand itself in the country with a racist declination. And there are some liberal and conservative forces (organized in *Forza Italia* and in the [Union of the Centre](#)), weak and subordinate, but politically important because of their marginality (to ensure constituency and to connect European establishment, see [Tajani](#) and the [EPP](#)). We can see other fractures, internal to the various parties. *Forza Italia* knew in the summer the leave of a significant part of its moderate soul, but not all of it (the ever-present shadow of [Gianni Letta](#)). In recent years, the *Lega* saw a public dialectic between its most nationalist sectors (gathered around Salvini) and the liberal/entrepreneurial ones (which expressed themselves through [Giorgetti](#), Minister of Economic Development, and [Zaia](#), President of Veneto with almost 77 % of votes). Even *Fratelli di Italia* has a similar internal fault, although less evident in its opposition to the ruling governments. Various cues, however, highlight the presence in its ranks of sectors attentive to capitalistic interests: the limelight turned on [Crosetto](#), and [La Russa](#) (although he was a *fascist* and he is still connected to that political world), the hypotheses on the government with several *establishment* figure ([Marcello Pera](#), Matteo [Zoppas](#), [Giulio Tremonti](#), [Fabio Panetta](#), [Franco Frattini](#), [Elisabetta Belloni](#)). In the event of a victory, beyond an immediate phase marked by identity policies (the fateful first 100 days), the new government will have to face direct choices: the inflation, the energy crisis, the probable recession, the possible continuation and deepening of the war, the lines of fragility of the European Union (governance and fiscal policy; continental choice on energy and defence). The 2023 budget law will then be only the first test of an inevitably complex season. The opposing pressures to a nationalist crisis management and to governing with current ruling classes could diverge the fault lines in the reactionary camp, even before then in its electoral bloc (such as it was for the yellow-green government, which faded for the divisions of its political framework than for the erosion of a consensus that remained massive until its sunset).

### 3. The division of the *campo largo* and its general political confusion.

**A theatrical summer of real disputes.** The events have taken on melodramatic tones in recent months, with uncertain outcomes and repeated twists: the fall of the government; the division between Democratic Party and 5 Stars Movement; the agreement sought, missed, signed and then broken [between Democratic party and Azione](#). The volatility of the current political framework played a role, often linked to personal backgrounds and a *sometimes-improvised* political class, individual protagonists and personal stories (from Di Maio to Conte, from Calenda to Renzi). A real [commedia all'italiana](#). All of this is true, but *it is form*. Beyond the dust of the declarations and the turning points of these weeks, solid political reasons can be identified: on the one hand, some questions of merit, economic measures and social guidelines that have dug the furrows where fractures ran; on the other hand, the same electoral perspective, which in some way forced to bring back a function of representation, inevitably rooted in social alignments (responding to collective interests, requests and imaginaries, not exclusively politicians 'one). The split in the government majority was not caused by specious, incomprehensible, or instrumental elements, but by the new [incinerator](#) in Rome (the guidelines on the environmental issue and the energy crisis). Draghi did not want to mediate, but he imposed it by decree. In the background, there was similar disputes on citizen's income



and minimum wage, and possible identical solutions. The *passion days* in the Democratic Party with [Calenda](#) and [Fratoianni](#) were a competition to give a social and political axis to the coalition: *liberal-democratic* (aimed at recomposing the middle classes and the different fractions of capital) or *progressive* (aimed at recomposing a larger social bloc, with the labour and the left). This volatility, these dramas, and these twists are only the expression of the distance that today marks the relationship between politics and social classes, in a phase of Great Crisis and social fluidity. The general disorganization and breakdown of social classes makes it difficult to build structured forms and channels of representation: in Italy this is true for big capital, middle classes, and labour. The representation of social interests, however, imposes itself in the crucial passages, forcing sudden rejections, unthinkable turns, complicated choices. We have seen it several times in this legislature, with the succession of three different majorities (yellow-green, yellow-red, national unity), we saw it yesterday for the Right on the local election, today for the *large camp* on general election.

**Draghi divided the *campo largo*.** The national unity government and its agenda drew and then spread the fracture lines in the progressive coalition. This alliance was made up with the yellow-red government. It was the end of a long trip. Some years ago, Matteo Renzi developed a liberal democratic and anti-labour track in the Democratic Party (Jobsact, clash with the CGIL, constitutional revision). This policy divided the party: a significant part of the historical leadership left the PD and founded a new force, [Articolo 1](#) (from [D'Alema](#) to [Bersani](#)). The clear defeat at 2016 referendum and 2018 general election imposed a turn: [Nicola Zingaretti](#) led the party, outlining [an explicitly reformist profile](#), re-proposing social democratic elements ([first the people](#), a program focused on minimum wage, environmental protection, labour rights, revitalization of expenditure for school, health and research). But in the Democratic party there was a consensus mostly in the middle-upper social classes and an attention to the needs of the big Europeanist capital. Zingaretti tried to balance this situation opening up to the so-called *popolo di sinistra* (people of the left): that is, he turned to a [large square](#) (the title of his book), a *large camp* against the right. In fact, he built a progressive area beyond the perimeter of the party, even though independent committees, clubs and circles. With the fall of the yellow-green government in the summer of 2019, this project fully expanded to a logic of alliances. The hypothesis was to bend the reactionary parable of the 5 Stars Movement on the progressive front: that is, it tried to incorporate the movement into a new coalition, despite the [hesitations of Zingaretti himself](#). The fall of Conte's new government, a year later, messed things up. Draghi's presidential executive objectively used another political agenda: not the public social spending, but an ordoliberal bending of the state to corporate interests; not the building of a large social bloc with the labour and the middle classes (a reformist and pro-European perspective), but the restructuring of the ruling classes within the framework of an *Atlanticist* and federal Europe. Beyond the specific contingencies, the resignation of Zingaretti two weeks after Draghi rise was indicative. His replacement with [Enrico Letta](#) was exemplary: an historic exponent of the [Italian Communist Party](#) and [Democratic Party of the Left](#) (former president of the [International Union of the Socialist Youth](#)) was replaced by a [Cristian Democrat](#) politician, former President of the [Youth of the European People's Party](#), former deputy secretary of the [Partito Popolare Italiano](#). Letta tried to reshape the *campo largo* in a liberal logic, correspondent to the new phase of national unity. He succeeded in the local's elections [where the government wasn't involved] and failed in the general one. After all, only a widespread habit of *political transforming* could play along to keep together what is opposed in practices and consciences. The choices on energy policies, inflation and the minimum wage spread the fault line and determined the break, in reaction to the growing unease of 5 Star's social base, most in the South. Paraphs Letta hoped to consider the national unity government just as a parenthesis, resuming the *campo largo* in the general election as if nothing were happening. This has proved to be an illusion.

**The unfinished drift of the Democratic Party.** The Draghi government gave a curvature to the Democratic Party's path: this executive reversed the direction of Zingaretti's leadership, once again pushing the party into the track of a liberal democratic program. Although Renzi and Letta are opposing personalities, despite the current hatred between *Democratic Party* and [Italia Viva](#), despite the upcoming competition between these forces, the current leadership of the party has rewoven the thread of Renzi's strategy. The Democratic Party, the force that most supported the executive and tried to avoid the fall of Draghi, today qualifies on that experience, making it a cornerstone to weave alliances for the next legislature. The choice was not mandatory, and it was clear-cut. The PD in fact rejected any hypothesis of a *democratic* front, any attempt to rebuild an electoral alliance against the Right, despite [broad and influential appeals](#). The *confidence* vote in the Parliament, the Draghi's fall, marked a change of paradigm (despite some hesitation by [Andrea Orlando](#) on the social agenda). The PD broke with 5 Star Movement and it sought a government alliance with [Azione/+Europa](#). This alliance would have led the PD to

assume a definitive liberal-democratic profile, at that point real heir to the [Cristian Democracy \(DC\)](#) and to progressive European liberalism ([Craxi](#), [Gonzales](#) and [Blair](#)). The Democratic Party, however, was based on a majority vocation: the aspiration to compose a large social block, and therefore to be the pivot of large coalitions ([ma anche](#), *but also*, in [Veltroni's](#) words). So, just when the PD fully resumed a liberal democratic suit, it did not want to give up on pursuing large alliances. So, the PD distinguished between government and electoral alliances. Letta looked for agreements with [Italian Left/Greens](#) and [Civic Commitment](#) (the minor protagonists of the *campo largo*). That is, after rejecting any hypothesis of *Great Democratic Alliance* with the 5 Stars Movement (potentially competitive even if probably a loser), he still tried to build an uneven front with the reformist left and those who had motivated Calenda's break in 2019. In the end, *the mayonnaise has curdled* [an Italian way of saying that complicated things went wrong]. The alliance with Calenda broke (but not with +Europa). Eventually, this was a very confused line. The Democratic party's electoral program has therefore tried to re-propose a social agenda (contrasting poverty and precariousness), as well as on civil rights, but without changing his track (as the economist Marco [Pianta underlines on this radio program](#), here in Italian). In the past, the Italian Communist Party drift has been *in the middle of the ford* for decades (a way of saying in Italy to underline the slowly reformist path of a Stalinian party): in a similar way, the Democratic Party is always in transition towards an increasingly moderate landing. The current *restricted camp* (without 5 Star Movement and liberal democratic forces) risks weakening its electoral results: in fact, some consensus will be probably dispersed since there is no direct call to win disputed constituencies (they are very few). In any case, the Draghi government and these weeks will weigh on the future configuration of the party, despite the [calls to develop labour roots](#): indeed, the electoral result could become the occasion for the adoption of a fully [liberal democratic profile](#).

**The eagerness for Draghi's agenda: the alliance between *Italia Viva* and *Azione*.** [Matteo Renzi](#) and [Carlo Calenda](#) have proposed themselves for several years as a reference for the pro-European sectors of the ruling classes. Matteo Renzi hoped assuming control of the Democratic Party during the *Great Recession* against the ex-PCI leadership, to ride the new capitalist structures and organize them through the *caesarist* administration of the state (Constitutional reform). So, he in-formed a mass liberal democratic party. The project seemed to materialize with the aggressive policies of his government (industry 4.0, tax exemptions, Jobsact) and the [2014 European election](#) (40% and 11 million of votes, 5 Stars Movement about 20% and the centre-right below 30%). The economic recovery, however, remained mired in the long stagnation, the ruling classes remained fragmented, the referendum coup failed in 2016: Renzi was therefore also marginalized in the Democratic Party. His parliamentary influence (first in the PD then in *Italia Viva*), however, allowed him to lead the legislature: he prevented a PD-5star government in 2018 (the [popcorn strategy](#): we know how it ended up on reactionary consensus), he built in 2019 the [yellow-red government](#), he determined [in 2020 the fall of Conte and the Draghi government](#). His aim was to contain the Right from the bosses' side: the Draghi government was his masterpiece, even at the price of great unpopularity. Today, faced with a probable reactionary victory, he has two difficult goals: to survive and rebuild a Draghian government. Here he meets Carlo Calenda. Ten years ago Calenda was the right-hand man of [Cordero di Montezemolo](#) and his [Italia Futura movement](#), quickly subsumed by Monti's political attempt ([Scelta civica](#)). He was involved by Renzi in his government, then reached the Democratic Party but comes out of it because of the relationship with the 5 Stars Movement and the yellow-red government. In recent years, outside the Parliament, he then weaves the strings of a third pole (out centre-right and centre-left), liberal democratic, together with a part of the [Italian radicals](#) (+Europe), obtaining significative results at the municipal election of Rome (about 18%). On this basis he, and not Renzi, has become the attraction pole of the liberalists leaving the centre-right. An exclusive alliance with the Democratic Party and its definitive liberal democratic configuration could have been his political masterpiece. This failure and the break with +Europe, however, was also determined by his fear of leaving a political space for Renzi himself. At this point, the agreement between *Azione* and *Italia Viva* represents the aspiration to a *draghian* block becoming a game changer. Some observers credit it with 2-digit results (those of [Monti for Italy](#) in 2013), perhaps exchanging a *potential space* for the actual one. The result will probably be more contained. In any case, even with a limited weight, this force will be able to act on the PD to make it assume an accomplished liberal democratic profile, and to press on the contradictions of the reactionary camp to make it implode. The hope, unlikely but not to be excluded, has been made [explicit in these days](#): *we aim for a balance* [avoiding a majority in the Senate], *to be the pivot of a rebalancing towards the centre and make a large majority that allows Draghi to stay*.

**The *inane* subordination of the reformist left.** The Left allied to the PD has been overturned by this dynamic. Marginalized by the Draghi government, the breaking of the *campo largo*, the liberal democratic curvature of the PD, the new independent

and progressive profile of the 5 Stars Movement. Of course, the inglorious end of the alliance between PD e Azione makes them breathe, avoiding the mass perception of [useful idiots](#) and opportunists. Their situation, however, is not much better. They barely survived in the past 14 years and are on the ropes today. The [Left Rainbow](#), in 2008, had to guarantee a reformist configuration to the [PRC](#) from an opposition side, uniting it with the brothers of the [PdCI](#), the Greens and the [Democratic Left](#). Potentially he should have conquered much more than simple double digits (at the 2006 policies the PRC reached 5.8%, PdCI 2.3%, Greens 2%, with the then [Democrats of Left](#) at 16.6%): eventually, the list had just 3% and no parliamentarians. This defeat cancelled the political presence of the Greens, divided the PRC, gave birth to [Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà](#) and then to the [Italian Left](#). The reformist Left regained a representation in general election 2013 (3.2% of SeL, allied to the PD, plus its presence in the majority of the party led by [Bersani](#)) and 2018 (3.4%, with [Article 1](#) and very few spaces in the PD, still with Renzi's leadership). An electoral space always on the edge, about 1.1 million votes. Today, [Article 1](#) has returned to the Democratic list together with [Elly Schlein](#) or [Susanna Camusso](#) (after all, it had a central role in the Draghi government, with [Speranza](#)). [Italian left](#) and [Greens](#) (the so-called [watermelons](#)) have made an alliance with the PD, despite in the opposition of Draghi, displaced by the break with the 5 Stars. Their aim is a parliamentary representation and therefore survival. The choice, however, was even contested in the Italian Left leadership: the national assembly (before the alliance of PD with Azione/+Europe) approved the hypothesis with only 89 votes, 41 against and 6 abstentions (thanks to an explicit call by [Castellina](#) and [Vendola](#)); after the Letta/Calenda alliance and the dissent of 300 member of the party, the national assembly confirm the choice with 61% of the votes, but forcing the statutory rules (without the vote of all the members of the party, for fear of losing it). Today this choice appears meaningless even to a large part of the militants of these formations themselves.

**The reactionary parable of the quick-change 5 Stars Movement.** The Movement has always had a reactionary substance. It is a political expression of the middle classes affected by the Great Crisis (new professionals, small entrepreneurs, precarious workers with high qualifications), and a disorganized metropolitan underclass (especially in the south). We can see it in its leadership and parliamentary representatives. They are bearer of an anti-political push, furrowed by indifference and anti-parliamentarism ([the idea of "open" the Parliament like a tuna can](#)). Above all, they are focused on a *communitarian setting (the citizens of the web)*, in which they believed to resolve social conflicts obliterating any particular interest, starting with those of the working class. It is no coincidence that they assumed nationalist and identity positions, [against migrations](#), *anti-union* and for small businesses. However, this reactionary movement has also incorporated progressive traits, histories, and practices. As at other times of *great crisis*, the Reaction does not run on a *conservative* profile, but against the established order. These contradictions are typical of the rise of any mass reactionary movement. The movement was crossed by participatory, ecological, anti-institutional tendencies and currents, in contrast to big capital. They declined these contradictions in an unexpected political unscrupulousness, with a *transforming* capacity to occupy power. Thus, the 5 Stars Movement first supported an uncompromising autonomy of action (*we govern alone*), then they gave life to a right-wing executive (the yellow-green government), then a progressive bloc (the yellow-red government and the *campo largo*), finally they supported for a year the presidential government of national unity. In this legislature, they basically ruled with all possible formations. Today, they are in opposition to the Draghi's agenda (which they shared), against the PD and against the Right. To regain a political space, now they decline their political transformism on a progressive side. To place themselves on the left of the PD, they rediscover their autonomous roots and try to interpret themselves as an environmentalist *pole*, trying to dialogue with [Santoro](#) (who has obviously changed his mind compared to a few years ago) and [watermelons](#). All this with [Giuseppe Conte](#) confirmed as frontrunner: an exponent of the administrative undergrowth, prime minister with the Lega and with the PD. This declination is then just a conjunctural form, not very credible and probably short-lived.

## 4. Unione Popolare, beyond the left.

**The Great Crisis and the retreat of the Left.** In the spring of 2006, the [Communist Refoundation Party](#) entered fully into the parliamentary majority of the [Union](#), after having been one of the founders of that alliance, first by electing the Speaker of [the Chamber of Deputies \(Fausto Bertinotti\)](#), then a minister in the Prodi's government ([Paolo Ferrero](#)). The complete involvement in an inter-class government dissolved the contradictory nature of this formation. His majority always looked to this perspective ([Progressisti](#) in 1994, [Ulivo](#) in 1996, Regional and Municipal governments such as Turin, Genoa, Venice, Padua, Bologna, Florence, Perugia, Rome, Pescara, Naples, Bari, Palermo, Piedmont, Emilia Romagna, Umbria, Lazio, Abruzzo, Puglia,



Basilicata, Sardinia). But the party maintained an opposition role and somehow confusedly anticapitalistic programme in crucial moments of the class struggle: the splitting of the PCI and the unification with new left's, ['92 and the workers demonstration](#) (the so-called *autunno dei bulloni*), '94/'95 and the pension reform, the war in Kosovo, the no global movement in 2001. So, the disastrous failure of [La Sinistra - L'arcobaleno](#) created a new field. Not a good one. At the [2001 general election](#) the [PRC](#) took 5.03%, the Greens 2.17%, the [PdCI](#) 1.67%; for a total of about 3.3 million votes (1.8 outside the *Ulivo* perimeter), with the [Democrats of the Left](#) (a liberal-socialist party, but still reformist) at 16.6% (6,1 million votes). At the [2004 European elections](#), the PRC 6.06%, Greens 2.46%, PdCI 2.42%, for a total of 3.5 million votes (the DS were no longer down as an independent list, presenting themselves with [Uniti nell'Ulivo](#), 31.1%). At the [2006 general election](#) the PRC took 5.84%, PdCI 2.32%, Greens 2.06%, for a total of 3.9 million votes ([Ulivo](#) 31.2%): we could therefore add some currents that maintained reformist track into the *Democrats of the Left*. At the [2008 general election](#) *The La Sinistra-L'arcobaleno* took 3.08%, [PCL](#) 0.57%, [Sinistra Critica](#) 0.46%, [For the common good](#) 0.33%, for a total of 1.6 million votes (PD 33.18%). The leftist consensus, about 3/4 millions of votes, had more than halved, despite the new moderate political profile of the Democratic Party. Then, various things happened: the [great recession](#) (2009-12), the relaunch of the [concertative](#) policy of the CGIL and the divisions of the leftist unions, the defeat in the [Marchionne's offensive \(FIAT 2012\)](#), the working class disorganization, the retreat of the mass movements. These dynamics keep the left camp in a narrow perimeter in the following years. At the [2009 European election](#) the PRC-PdCI list got 3.39%, [SeL](#) 3.12%, PCL 0.54%, for a total of 2.1 million votes. At the [2013 general election](#) SeL got 3.2%, [Civil Revolution](#) 2.25%, PCL 0.26%, for a total of 1.9 million votes. At the [2014 European election AltraEuropa](#) won 4.03% and Greens 0.9%, for a total of 1.3 million votes. At the [2018 general election Free and Equals](#) took 3.39%; [Power to the People!](#) 1.13%; [PC](#) 0.33%; [For a revolutionary left](#) 0.09%, for a total of 1.6 million votes. At the [2019 european election](#), Greens 2.29%, [Left](#) 1.74%, PC 0.88%, for a total of 1.3 million votes. The *Democratic Party* has increasingly developed a liberal democratic profile, with reformist exponents and sectors that leaved it ([SD](#), [Article1](#)). The Left as a whole has therefore shrunk dramatically: the reformists allied to the PD as much as the opposition ones.

**The divisions and alliances in the Opposition Left.** The VII congress of the PRC, in July 2008, marked the defeat of the Bertinotti's area of the party (in that years led by [Nicki Vendola](#)): an alliance of various centrist and leftist currents achieved on the PRC's permanence (against hypothesis of new Left party), a social opposition, the autonomy from the Democratic Party (342 delegates out of 646). *Rifondazione*, while remaining a reformist party with centrist traits, has therefore detached itself from the *centre-left coalitions* and presenting itself as an alternative, even if maintaining on some occasional participation in local governments, even in relevant areas (Tuscany, Milan, Cagliari, Padua). The Bertinotti's component, as we have seen, split the party and founded the [Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà](#), grouping the reformist governmental Left around it. The *opposition Left* therefore shrunk to 1-2% in the general election, between three and four hundred thousand votes, not electing anyone. This situation has paradoxically multiplied Left political organizations in the electoral arena. In Italy, eventually, there is a relatively large political vanguards (overall some tens of thousands of activists), unfortunately now mostly isolated, poorly rooted in a disorganized working class and exhausted social movements. Thus, in addition to the [PRC](#) and the [PdCI \(now renamed PCI\)](#), we can today find [Power to the People](#) (PaP, based on two political formations: [Rete dei Comunisti/USB](#) and [Clash City Workers/jesopazzo](#)), the [PCL](#) (split by the PRC in 2006), [Sinistra anticapitalista](#) (split by the PRC in 2008 like [Sinistra Critica](#)), [Sinistra Classe e Rivoluzione/TMI](#) (split by the PRC in 2014), the [Communist Party](#) (split by the PdCI in 2009) and then the Communist Front/[Front of Communist Youth](#) (split by the PC in 2020), as well as other various very little organizations ([PMLI](#), [Carc](#), [La Comune](#)-ex [LSR/SR](#), [Risorgimento socialista](#), etc.) and local fronts, bunches and formations, often born from national electoral and political alliances (remained alive beyond the sunset of those experiences, as capable of aggregating multiple realities in their territories). Almost all these subjects are tempted by electoral protagonism because they are looking for a relationship with the masses and this relationship is now hard in the exhausted social conflicts. In the local elections, then, this political space was often confusedly crowded by multiple lists, sometimes alliances with new symbols. On the national level the situation is different, because of collecting signatures (in Italy an important obstacle to present an electoral list) or hoping to elect someone. So, in the last decade, a plethora of joint lists has been created: [Federation of the Left](#), [Civil Revolution](#), [AltraEuropa](#), [Power to the People](#), [The Left](#). They have had different dynamics and different outcomes (*AltraEuropa*, for example, has elected 3 euro-MP), but all have faded or become something other than the initial project (such as PaP).

**The last local elections** (2021 and 2022) experimented different hypotheses, also intertwined (only PCL always presents itself alone): coalitions ([Parma](#), 2 lists: PCI-PRC and PaP; [Turin](#), 3 lists: the *Sinistra in Comune* joined list of PRC [DEMA SA](#), *Power to the people* and PCI; there were 2 other independent lists, PCL and Lambertists; [Calabria](#), with De Magistris, a good overall result of many lists), joined lists ([Genoa](#), a PRC-PCI-SA list, and then the independent PCL list; [Puglia](#), a PRC-PCI-RS list), joint lists and competitions ([Bologna](#), with the [Sinistra Unita](#), *Power to the people* and the PCL; Tuscany with the Left [PRC-SI-PaP] and two others independent list, PCI and PC; [Campania](#) with Earth! [a joint list of SI-PRC-PCI-Sud and others forces] and a independent list of *Power to the People*), all-round competitions ([Milan](#), a *Milano commune/PRC list*, PCI, PaP, PCI and PCL; [Emilia Romagna](#) with AltraER, PC and PaP). A complex picture, in which even the largest coalitions failed to elect representatives (Parma e Torino), except in Calabria (where, however, only De Magistris's list pass the quorum). Where the overall result was significant (Bologna, Tuscany), the competition between different lists prevented the election of candidates. In the last winter, some member of Parliaments formed the caucus of [Manifesta](#) (they left the 5 Stars Movement in the previous years). This occasion created a connection between PRC and PaP (the two most significant forces). They have found in [Luigi De Magistris](#) a convergence point: a third-party, above the (two) parties, with own personal consensus (in Naples and Calabria). The building of a joint list had therefore started during the spring, with the prospect of developing it in the autumn (paraphs in a national demonstration on minimum wages), to the general election expected in 2023.

**Towards the People's Union.** On 9 July, in a hotel in Rome, this path [took shape](#). It started from an appeal against the war and the war economy, for the environment, social justice, and common goods ([here in Italian](#)). The long list of signatures gathered various exponents of movements and struggles. In the text, however, we note the absence of any reference to the contradictions of this mode of production, the exploitation of labour and the working-class struggle. It is no coincidence that in the colours of the hall, in [the symbol of this alliance](#), there is no reference to the workers' movement, the left-wing symbolism or a socialist perspective (even if only reformist). The same name, although assonant with [Unitad popular](#), in other countries indicates centre or right-wing formations ([Belgium](#), [Estonia](#), [Germany](#), [Ukraine](#), [Slovakia](#), [pre](#) and [post-revolutionary Russia](#), [Argentina](#), [Perù](#), [Canada](#)). Of course, the reference is to Mélenchon's *Union Populaire*, created for the recent French presidential elections, and to the subsequent [Nouvelle Union Populaire Ecologique et Sociale](#). A name, for Mélenchon, indicative of the nationalist and populist dimension of his project, in the meaning proposed by [Ernesto Laclau](#) (we can find it in [Podemos](#), [Sanders](#), [Correa](#) and la [révolution citoyenne](#), and in [France Insoumise](#)): that is, the project to develop a radical democratization, animated by a pluralistic antagonist movement beyond the class alignments. Therefore, in some way, it also prescind from the aim to change this mode of production.

**Mélenchon and De Magistris.** So, De Magistris has been labelled *the Italian Mélenchon*. This nickname is a wish for the electoral results, as in France. However, the two personages cannot be compared with each other. Mélenchon and the NUPES, in fact, are forces in a Left that still has roots in the working-class conflict, as well as a significant political space. In the last years we saw some mass movements in France, not only the *gilets jaunes* (2018/19), but also *Nuit Debout* against the Loi du Travail (2016); the long strike of railway workers on the revision of the SNCF (2018); the CGT and *Solidaires* mobilization during the *gilets jaunes*; the general strike and then the movement against pension reform (2019); the day of mobilization on social policies (2021); the massive school strike (2022); the general strike on wages (2022). [Jan Luc Mélenchon](#) has a long career in the Left, [first in the OCI](#) and then in the reformist Socialist Party: for over twenty years a senator, member of the Jospin government, even in Freemasonry (the Grand Orient suspended him only in 2018).

**The Left, in France, has a significant political space**, despite the *lepenist* right and the Macron's liberal-democratic movement. In the [2002 presidential election](#) the PS candidate took 16.2%, [Citizens' Movement](#) 5.3%, Verdi 5.2%, the [PCF](#) 3.4%, but also [Lotte Ouvriere](#) 5.7%, [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire](#) 4.2%, the [Workers' Party](#) 0.5%, for a total of 8.5 million votes to the reformist and radical left, almost 3 million to the *revolutionary left* (a unique case, a revolutionary left with this consensus). This result did not translate into general election: in the first round of the [2002 legislative election](#), the PS took 24.1%, PCF 4.8%, Verdi 4.5%, for about 8.7 million votes; LCR 1.3% and LO 1.2, other candidates 0.3%, for about 700 thousand votes. Eventually, at the [1999 European election](#) the LO-LCR list took 5.2%, 914 thousand votes, electing 5 deputies, but [in 2004](#) it took only 2.5% (440 thousand votes), losing those elected. Five years later, at the [2007 presidential election](#) the PS candidate took 25.9%, PCF 1.9%, Greens 1.6% (10.7 million votes), the LCR 4%, LO 1.3%, PT 0.3% (2 million votes). At the [2007 legislative election](#) the PS took 24.7%, PCF 4.3%, Greens 3.2%, other leftists 2% (8.9 million

votes), the revolutionary left (LCR and LO) 3.4 % (800 thousand votes). At the [2009 European election](#), where the [NPA](#) appeared for the first time, he got 4.9% and LO 1.2% (1 million votes). With the Great Recession, however, also in France the left reduced, in particular the revolutionary one, even if it has not been marginalized: the PS (and partly the PCF) collapsed, but overall, the Left has maintained a consensus between 6 and 10 million votes. At the [2012 presidential election](#) the PS candidate took 26.6%, [Left Front](#) (Mélénchon) 11.1% (14 million votes), NPA 1.1% and LO 0.6% (610 thousand votes). At the [2012 legislative election](#) the PS had 29.5%, [Left Front](#) 6.9%, Ecologists 5.46%, others on the left 3.4%, LO and NPA 0.98%, for a total of over 11.8 million of votes. At the [2014 European election](#), PS and other 14%, [Europe Ecologie](#) 8,9%, [Left Front](#) 6,6%, [New Deal](#) 2,9% (overall 6,4 million of votes), LO 1,2 (220 thousand votes). At the [2017 presidential election](#) Mélénchon ([France Insoumise](#)) 19.6% and the PS candidate 6.4% (9.2 million votes), NPA 1.1% and LO 0.6% (620 thousand votes). At the [2017 legislative election](#) PS had 7.4%, France Insoumise 11%, Ecologists 4%, the PCF 2.7%, others on the left 1.6%, LO and NPA 0.8%, for over 6.3 million votes. At the [2019 European election](#) Europe Ecologies took 13,5%, France Insoumise 6,3%, PS and others 6,2%, PCF 2,5% (overall 6,5 millions of vote), LO 0,78% (176 thousand votes). At [the 2022 presidential election](#) Mélénchon (UP) 21.2%, the candidate of the Greens 4.6%, PCF 2.3%, PS 1.7% (in total 10.7 million votes), NPA 0.8% and LO 0.6% (465 thousand votes). At [the 2022 legislative election](#), NUPES took 25.7%, others left 3.14%, Ecologists 2.7%, LO and some NPAs 1.2%, for over 6 million votes. That is, Mélénchon represent a persistent class struggle, trying to unify the reformist and radical left on a popular nationalist system: an answer that we believe to be wrong (for this reason we positively saw alternatives candidates to presidential and legislative election, and we would have considered useful a working-class alliance of LO/NPA). In any case, this alliance has its own political basis.

**The constitutional and aclassist profile of Unione Popolare.** In Italy, the *Unione popolare* is just a caricature of all this. In this country, we have disjointed and decomposed social struggles, and a marginalized Left. So, we have an interpreter like Luigi De Magistris: a prosecutor for several years, without any roots in the Left, then MEP with [Italia dei Valori](#) and therefore mayor of Naples. As we can see in the [meeting in July](#), or in [interviews with De Magistris](#), there are two main features of this alliance: the defence of the Constitution and De Magistris himself (*a proposal ... constitutionally oriented, for social justice, substantiated by credible people*). As in the initial call, without reference to working-class struggle. This alliance has a democratic and social track, without questions this exploitative mode of production. The horizon of transformation is caged in a *constitutional* perimeter (at best in the [programmatic Calamandrei's sense](#)): that is, it compels on a compromise between capital and labour realized after the war and now extinct, which today tries to be brought back to life without questioning the dynamics that overturned it (in the practices and in the Constitution itself, from the [balanced budget](#) to the [new Title V](#)). The credibility of this project is linked to the Neapolitan experience of De Magistris, marked by confused and inter-class alliances, twists and turns, a caesarist leadership, a muddled policy, as [also recognized by sectors that have supported it](#). *Unione Popolare* is therefore a clear step back from the anti-capitalist profile of *Potere al popolo* in 2018 (a joint list due to the failure of [Falcone and Montanari's attempt](#) to create a *constitutionalist* rassemblement). We can see this political profile when De Magistris is aimed not only at employees and workers, but also to the professionals, practitioners, free-lance professions, self-employed workers: *less bureaucracy and more incentives if they create jobs and urban regeneration*. As in some [winks to the novax vulgata](#). After all, this is the political profile of his Naples administration. In this context, it is not surprising the appeal for an alliance to *the 5 stars movements*, first by De Magistris, then even by the PRC. This is not a surprise, because the shift towards the progressive side of a reactionary movement naturally meets the national populist approach of *Unità popolare*. Beyond the fact that that project did not go (Conte was mor interested to the reformist left and then underline its autonomy), beyond the *politician* profile of this proposal (a parliamentarian area about 15% of the votes, without political homogeneity), beyond the ridiculous transformism of Conte (prime minister with Di Maio and Salvini, then with the PD and today *assumptive frontrunner* of a Leftist alternative), this is a passage that says it all about the nature of *Unione popolare*. In any case, its concentrated leadership (De Magistris-PRC-PaP) raised doubts in others participant. At the end, the PCI to present itself autonomously (a party with a surreal contradiction between its historical reference and its actual reality).

**Just as a side note: Rizzo's story.** In 2008/2009 [Marco Rizzo](#) was marginalized in the [PdCI](#) leadership. He took an increasingly critical position on Prodi and the centre left. At the end, he was expelled from the party. He founded [a new PC](#), drew on the historical Italian left-wing Stalinism and references to [Pietro Secchia](#) (one of the most important leaders of PCI in the post-war period). The aim was to polarize on an ideological ground the different bunches of Italian Stalinism ([Marx21](#), [Ernesto](#), [Città futura](#), [Centro studi Marchesi](#), etc). Eventually, Rizzo grew up in the moderate [Armando Cossutta's](#) approach,



but in this new situation he was pushed towards increasingly radical and sectarian positions, closely linking himself to the [KKE and its international grouping](#), the [Front of Communist Youth](#) joined in 2016, with a similar political axis. In last years it has gained visibility (European 2019, PC 0.88%; [Marche 2020](#), communist list 1.41%; [Tuscany 2020](#), PC 1.05%; [Umbria 2020](#), PC 1.05%) on its Stalinist identity, as well as for anti-European and nationalistic positions, against immigration and civil rights (even with interview by [Provita & Famiglia](#), a catholic and anti-abortion magazine). These positions, during the Covid-19 pandemic, have further polarized towards novax right circles. So, the PC supported nationalistic lists in 2022 local elections ([Parma](#) and [Palermo](#)), and in this general election concluded its parable into the [Sovereign and Popular Italy](#), a joint list with *Ancora Italia* (among its founders, [Diego Fusaro](#)), *Reconquer Italy*, [Civil Action](#) of Ingroia, the *Committees no Draghi* (an invention of PC and *Reconquer Italy*), *Rebirth of the Republican* (a group split from Lega for Salvini, with radical novax positions) and *Italia Unita* (a nationalist movement on traders and small businesses). A list that also found the support of Claudio Messori (former 5-star *communication manager* at the European Parliament, founder of Byoblu, a youtube channel and then a conspiracy and novax platform) and Bianca Granato (the ex-5stelle novax senator). A nationalist bunch, without any working class or leftist reference, in a narrow political space indeed dominated by [Italexit](#).

## 5. The lack of existence of a working-class camp.

**In this framework, the working class Left evaporated.** Centre-left cancelled each political references to the labour, relaunching its liberal democratic curvature in the Draghi government, in competition with Calenda and Renzi. *Italian Left* do not affect this track, and in fact concerns raise in activists and advocates. Part of them (unfortunately) will direct their vote on the *5 Stars Movement*, prisoners of a general political drift. The main reformist and centrist forces of the *opposition Left* have instead assumed a logic of people's union, the construction of an antagonistic multitude, taking over from reformism the perimeter of this mode of production without maintaining its reference to the working class. The forces that maintain a classist, anti-capitalist and internationalist approach are dispersed. The *Communist Party of Workers* (PCL) is focused on the prospect of regrouping the vanguards and working-class sectors in the demarcation from other parties, using its own propagandist and electoral action. *Anticapitalist Left* (SA) pursues the goal of grouping with the opposition left, starting with the PRC, to perform a *movementist* and radical polarization. *Left Class and Revolution* (SCR, TMI Italian organization) is committed in its project to take root in the working class (his current in CGIL, *Giornate di marzo*) and in young people (students and *Friday For Future*), to become "The" reference in the Left. The *SiCobas leadership* and TIR carry on an anticapitalistic front, to bring together the vanguard of social struggles, grouped by a supposed inevitable radicalization of the conflict around the most advanced sector of logistics in the Po Valley (the stores on Via Emilia). The *Front of the Communist Youth* is committed for an anti-capitalist revolutionary bloc of social forces, in a progressive social movement development, in an insurrectionalist perspective (assonant with the typical *third-periodism* of the left-wing Stalinist traditions). Several small subjects (including ours), also local (sometimes still included in other organizations), have not clear strategies.

**Dispersion and limits of the anti-capitalist left.** However, my impression is that the main organizations of the anticapitalistic Left propose their strategies in a paroxysmal way. Indeed, this season of working class retreat and fragmentation seems to me to highlight the limits and problems of their different strategies: the failure of the grouping, the weakening of the party and the limits of the propagandist strategy of demarcation in the current times (PCL); the irreducibility of the reformist axis of the PRC and the development of *popular* tendencies, so the inability to trace a furrow and open a different path (SA); the illusion of an upcoming social explosion and the translation into the class struggle of the sectarian strategies developed in the mass parties (SCR); the conviction of an inevitable radicalization and of being the subject around which it will polarize, without reading the multiplicity of working class conflicts and subjectivity (SiCobas); the focus on social struggles, without addressing the issue of a transition strategy and program (FC/FGC). In 2018 there was an attempt to develop a working-class landmark on the electoral ground: [For a revolutionary left](#). SCR (before its current political track) tried to group different forces against reformist or populist tendencies. The proposal was addressed to all working-class opposition, the appeal was received by the forces with a Trotskyist matrix, in the end only the PCL and SCR were in the alliance, because SA remained entangled in *Potere al Popolo*. The attempt failed: the *Revolutionary Left* had a non-existent result (0.09%, 30 thousand votes). Above all, this electoral alliance was marked by the demarcation and competition between its two constituent forces, without any real

development of a common path (as someone [pointed out](#)). Now that path is forsaken. So, the 2022 general election lack any list that proposes a working-class reference or a transitory perspective.

**The PCL and its ridiculous drift.** A final note on the PCL and its proposal of [a class, anti-capitalist and internationalist joint list](#) [July 26]. A year ago, its *Anticapitalism and Revolution* tendency had underlined the [electoral impasse of this party](#), in the Central Committee and in the tendency bulletin, proposing a working-class electoral *rassemblement* (*polo di classe*). A proposal that took up reflections advanced in the [path of the Revolutionary left](#) and in the [5th congress of the party](#). Today we should then be happy that the facts (notoriously hard-headed) have led the PCL leadership to take charge this proposal. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Not only because, *otherwise, the PCL will naturally activate its party presentation in the Senate colleges wherever possible*, making immediately explicit the effective point of this initiative. Not only because the proposal remained marked by the priority of gaining a national visibility for the party [the television presence], making it clear that no balance has been drawn from the 2018 experience (the alliance's credibility and its path). Above all, it is not true that *better late than never*: in politics, time is important. Advancing the proposal of an electoral alliance on July 26 makes no sense. Such a proposal must in fact deal with differences, opposition, and resistance. A year ago, the difficulty and complexity of the path would not have been reduced: however, the determination to pursue it, possible experimentations in local coalitions, opportunities for initiatives would have made it credible. Four weeks before the submission of the lists is a simply instrumental appeal. And now there is a new problem about this alliance: the war in Ukraine (on the one hand PCL and SA, with substantial support for the resistance, on the other the other forces with a coherent bilateral defeatism, we with them). Thus, the PCL has only confirmed the attempt to present in some constituencies (very few), only to report their existence in life to their exhausted militants. Unfortunately, this is an attestation of the PCL's drift, not a real turning point which would still represent a novelty.

## 6. Beyond the hedge, hold on.

**A decade after the Great Recession, a reactionary stabilization.** The new government will be tested, in its composition and its faults, by the depth of the crisis, the different trends in the EU, the inter-imperialist conflicts. Its reactionary action could, however, consolidate the identity and belonging of its popular electoral bloc, using for this aim the civil and social issues, conflicting against metropolitan bourgeoisie and sectors of the ruling classes. In any case, the essential step to achieve a solid political stabilization is a new constitutional revision: Georgia Meloni proposed something like French presidentialism (which could give vent to the Bonapartist tendencies of the decade) and a *reinforced federalism* ([autonomia differenziata](#), which could take note of the territorial disarticulation in the ruling classes and productive apparatus). A step not granted, which will have to pass not only for a parliamentary test, but probably also for a referendum (as [Renzi's one in 2016](#)). However it ends, the election will close a decade without parliamentary majorities, marked by political fluidity, the rise and fall of the 5 Stars Movements, the liberal democratic drift of the progressive camp, the construction of the reactionary camp. This decade ends in the worst way, in line with social dynamics: a substantial retreat of mass political consciousness, in which class conflict fades and disappears from collective representations and political identities.

**The election could therefore be considered irrelevant** to reconstruct any prospect of transformation. That is, the social conflict in the squares and in production relations might seem the only priority. I don't really think so. Yes, the working-class struggle is fundamental, and the social conflict is a priority. But the elections are in fact one of the grounds of the class struggle. Of course, for us ([Social reforms or revolution?](#)) they are not the instrument of containment and progressive transformation of the bestial instincts of capital (as for [Millerand](#), [Vollmar](#), [Bernstein](#), the reformist current that was born with them). But reformist tendencies do not arise in electoral competitions: on the contrary, they develop precisely in the working class and its struggle: in its social and technical composition, in the mutualist action and in the bureaucratic tendencies in the unions. Furthermore, the program of a reorganization of the relations of production through political power is based not only on the development of conflict and class self-organization [[Class, party and councils](#), *in Italian*], but also on the definition of a transitory project [the anti-capitalist use of the State to reorganize new social relations]. That is, it is also built through a political project, and the conquest of a mass consensus. The development of a political project of social transformation therefore takes place on all the different terrains of the class conflict: the daily struggles in the relations of production (the ability to connect them to the more general conditions of the whole labour and to the prospects of a transitory transformation),

the development of social movements against anti-people measures and offensives (revealing the general relationships between classes and forming collective identities), the construction of ideologies (beliefs, values, attitudes through which the dominant classes frame and justify current social relations), the collective elaboration of a mass political consciousness (the formation of expectations, imaginaries, claims, and aims of their social action). Class warfare, therefore, intertwines the formation of collective representations, perspectives, attitudes, and social identities. Elections are one of the grounds where these processes run. On these occasions, workers are called to deal with the expression of their collective interests and the identification of a party. The electoral campaign, the public discourse on the media, the molecular discussions that cross society, become in fact a moment of composition of collective representations and demands. Of course, this is not the only moment forming mass consciousness. It is not even the one with the greatest impact: just think life experiences, daily exploitation and partial conflicts that arise against this exploitation. But the elections involve the whole of society. In some way they record the balance of power and at the same time shape social trends. In a season of class disorganization, in which the division of struggles and identities prevail, the absence of a list, a proposal, aimed at affirming class independence amplifies the retreat of mass consciousness. It means not only not being on this ground of class conflict, but having it used against, affecting mass representations.

**Beyond the hedge, a working-class resistance.** The probable balance of forces that will come out of the polls will then mark a further retreat in the class struggle. We have striven not to laugh at human action, not to weep, nor to hate, but to understand and try to change them. With the Right's victory, there will be inevitable pushes to a democratic front, in a *National Liberation Committee* style, like [the 1994, April 25](#): a fundamental step in the development of a mass anti-Berlusconism, the main glue of the *great democratic alliances*. Moreover, such a spirit already animated trade unions and several left associations not so long ago. The possible conflicts on social and civil rights in the first months of government, such as the liberal democratic imprint of the parliamentary opposition, can only strengthen these tendencies. So, beyond the hedge of 25 September, the priority will be resuming a working-class perspective against the government and its policies. That is, the main aim of this new season will be to root the opposition in the struggles in the relations of production, gaining a new visibility and centrality of working-class against the right.

**An autumn of our visible discontent.** Before the electoral call, autumn was unfolding along various lines of fight: a national CGIL demonstration and a possible strike on the budget law (probably with the UIL); the initiatives for a new national employment contract in the school and university (by the five main unions), now reinforced by the new laws in the summer (about bonus salary only for a few teachers); the public appeal for a new national demonstration by the *GKN Factory Collective* ([an exemplary workers fight in Florence](#)), which will deal with the FFF global strike of 23 September and other convergence appointments in the autumn; the general strike of leftist unionism on wages, inflation and incomes; a national demonstration on minimum wages (promoted by the *people's union*); a national conference on the crisis and imperialism promoted by the anti-capitalist front around Sicobas. We will see if and how these different threads will be re-woven in the post-electoral reality. In any case, others partial struggles will be added: student movements, fight against repression, the renewal of employment contracts, industrial crises or environmental emergencies (such as the regasification plant near Livorno). In this framework, it will be fundamental to bring out our discontent: working class, not simply civil or democratic. A first partial step could be the one decided by the CGIL at the end of July: the double day of demonstrations on October, 8 and 9. This could be a first opportunity to bring out the interests of labour in the crisis, against the right, well beyond a new democratic April 25. That is, it would be useful for the masses' perception to contain the tendency to use that opportunity to forge in the streets a *great democratic alliance*, present in the reformist CGIL leadership. For this reason it would be important to enhance the social and labour claims, amplifying and radicalizing them beyond the compatibilist approach proposed by the majority of the CGIL, trying to bring to those squares a real defence of wages, a new [sliding pay scale](#), the reduction of working hours, the taxation of extra-profits and assets, the nationalization of companies in crisis.

**A united front of working-class.** The second, and most important, step is the autumn struggles: the demonstrations and strikes against the Budget Law, the first opportunity to verify the new government. The problem will be to avoid too many divisions, the multiplication of paths (as was emerging before the electoral call). The main task of this season will be to a real convergence of trade union and movements, a confluence of the different resistances, first of all those that start from labour. That is, the priority should be to arrive at a united front general strike, built in the progressive mobilization of the different



working class and popular sectors, in relation to the masses' perceptions rather than the dynamics of the vanguards. In other words, it would be necessary to avoid the multiplication of strike dates, aimed substantially at marking the position of one's own organization (or one's own set of organizations). These *programmatic* initiatives are useful to demarcate themselves, rather than to affect reality. The CGIL also followed this path in recent years. This task, however, lies also and perhaps above all in the ability of each force to grasp and use any date, appointment, or path to construct real mass demonstrations and strikes. Starting from leftist unions, using even the same day of CGIL's strike (probably orphan of increasingly governmental and conservative CISL). A responsibility, of course, that lies first in the CGIL: its will and ability to build strikes, without getting stuck as in 2018 in the contradictions of its reformist line. In other words, it is necessary to reconstruct a united working-class front and general movements, to mark a working-class furrow in the perception and mass consciousness. The interests of labour against those of capital, involving on the one hand the multitude of work (the widest possible span of all the different fractions and subjectivities of the class) and on the other hand the different trade union and leftist political forces (with their diversity of identities, perspectives, and programs), including reformist ones.

**Weaving a working-class *rassemblement*.** All this will not be enough. The difficult but possible development of new struggles would also need of a working-class landmark: a subject capable of intervene among the masses and supporting the organization of the political and social vanguard. The war in Ukraine in fact will hover over the next events. We will risk greatest imperialist conflicts and we will see tendencies to frame reformist and popular strategies within the framework of these global conflicts, in an imperialistic perspective. So, these international clashes will drive mass nationalization processes, marked by the acceleration of the economic and environmental crisis, the increase in exploitation and mass migrations. None in the anticapitalistic left is today a landmark. For their size and limitations. In this context, they all risk being overwhelmed: in the reactionary tide and even in a resumption of social conflict. We will have to try again to weave a anticapitalistic and internationalistic class *rassemblement*: starting from a balance sheet on September 25<sup>th</sup>, and on the last ten years. A joint force to cope this season: the Ukrainian war and the competition between imperialistic blocs, the Right's victory and the possible mass nationalization. The first ground could be the development of a defeatist and anti-militarist policy.

*All this tells us of a complicated autumn, moving into an increasingly dark night. How to get up from these ten years of defeat becomes more and more the crucial question.*

**Aosta, August 15, 2022**

**Luca Scacchi**