Italian Communist Party

Communism was a popular ideology in Italy after World War II, however after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War Communism has had to adjust to maintain its role in Italian parliament. The role of communism has fluctuated over the past several decades in reaction to Italy’s frequently changing political landscape. After WWII the Italian communist political party’s popularity lasted until the fall of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. As international attitudes towards communism became increasingly negative (especially the Soviet Model), the Italian Communist Party changed its name, changed meaning and framework in order to maintain a place in Italian parliament. As a result of the constant change, communism in Italy has evolved into an ideology seeming very different from the original values and beliefs it was formed around.

**Initial party identity.**

Italian Communist Party was founded in 1921 with the diversion from Socialist Party of Italy after the later differed on reforms that the II congress required. This split took place at Livono and was led by Antonio Gramsi and Amadeo Bordiga who were the main communists and royalists in the communism principles (Ball 125-126). Though it was allowed to elect 18 deputies to the Italian Government, the party was outlawed by Mussolini where the fascists managed to imprison Gzamsci who was one of the party founders and an ideological principled communist. Palmiero Togliatti was the effective party leader and lived in Paris and Moscow. Togliatti was committed to the total destruction of capitalism and Fascism via revolutionary methods. However, even as the socialists in Italy resisted and strongly opposed Mussolini, Communist Party of Italy did not form a strong common emphasis in the fight against his Fascist regime (Drake 116-117).

**Italian Communism Party and the second world war.**

Euro-communism strategy that was pioneered by the Italy Communism Party sharply differed with Leninist perspective which conceptualized that revolution crisis would galvanize the masses. Stalin and Hitler having joined hands Communist Party of Italy obeyed Moscow and collaborated in a no-opposition stand to Mussolini before retreating to the prior hard line position after Germany invaded Russia (LaPalombara 26-28). By 1945 they had therefore managed to be stronger through organization, record great struggle against Mussolini and vast membership through out the the country. Togliatti, the party leader by then adopted a collaboration approach acting as the minister for justice in the Christian Democratic Government under Alcide de Gasperi (Mistry 301-305).
According to Thomas (21), like other communist parties, the structure of Communist Party of Italy had been throughout organized along the Leninist theories of democratic centralism but changes to the demand of the western alliances to reflect new financing leadership and membership by the citizens. Highly flexibility though rigorous approach was therefore adopted where more meetings would be held and external members occasionally invited to the governing table for suggestions (Del Pero, 540-542).

**Democratic elections of 1948 and the cold war**

In order to remain in the governmental Communist Party of Italy leader Palmiro Togliatti played a great role in 1944 and 1947 with an aim of making the socialists remain in the every government. In 1948, Christian Democracy with strong funding from the American managed to defeat the Italian Communist Party funded by the Soviet Union. Christian Democrats formed the government excluding all the the communists that had been in the previous governments of 1944 to 1947. The cold war against the Italy Communist Party was thus clear as the as the Christian Democrats reorganized themselves and guaranteed US of their support at a time when the fight against communism was very intense (Drake 118-119).

As US prepared the European recovery, it declared that it would cut all it's aid to Italy would Communists win the general elections. $ 150 million was also given as a boost to bring to the knees the communists in the country. During this period, so popular had the Italy Communist party become such that all other parties shaped themselves in preparedness of fighting communism (LaPalombara 29).

This era being the major one in defining the international politics and cooperation and that shaped later Italy political realignment, all the political parties struggled to readjust themselves in order to conquer and therefore remain relevant in the political dynamics of the country. New alliances and external links with reevaluation of the political parties structures that had shaped them so far were established (Thomas 39). External influences believed that the communist forces of Italy were anchored in the economic basis and were mainly pointing to social backwardness and reflecting on the people's poverty (Mistry 315-316). US particularly believed that with development and improvement of industrial and economic sustenance to the people parties like th Communist Party of Italy would soon be brought down.

**PCI after the democratic elections**

Having lost to the Christian Democrats, Maurice Thorez forcefully removed from communist French government and their inclusion in the Christian government denied, Communist Party of Italy reorganized itself greatly making it the second in popularity form the ruling party but the
largest in the communist category of non ruling party in Europe. This led to their ability under the leadership of Togliatti, to ran many municipalities and possesses great power both locally and regionally. As a result, this strength prompted a paradigm shift in the US approach towards humiliating the party by adoption of Negative containment method. There was an international call to create a healthy international community which was directly targeted at the anomalies like those created by the Italian communists (Del Pero 551-553).

External influence continued to be felt even more making the Communist Party of Italy to open channels of communication with the catholic organizations and some Christian Democrats. However, De Gasperi maintained a strong skepticism about USA foreign policies towards Italy. To add to that, Communist Party of Italy managed to position itself as a large political force through defending bulk of the local constitutional rights that were menaced by the American widely advocated warfare projects through Italy and targeting Communists.

Unlike the previous hard stand with bloody effects and support for war at all times, the party managed to insist for the creation of a civil defense that conferred power to the minister in order to deal with the security against the prior ideology of the centrality of all the powers. It also stressed on the changes of different penal codes regarding the military and sabotage of workers in the occupational industries of the country. This made it to start winning the people's support amidst the immediate prior experiences. The American influence and cold war dynamics, were actually shaping the Communist Party of Italy into a more constitutional party and thereby creating a possible reformed comeback (Drake 119).

**Transition indicators**

Italian democracy was functioning on identity cleavages where the fractured identity in terms of religion, class, ideology and territorial affiliation fostered fragmented multi party democracy with the cold war acting slowly to transform the larger outlook of Communist Party of Italy. Therefore, by 1950s and later, Italy was defined by ideological division of anticommunism and communism ideologies with great mimics from France and Belgium. Polarization continued to be thus drawn from social political macro-legislations through parliamentary democracy that allowed the Communist Party of Italy though not in the government to take part in legislative decision making (Romano 604-605).

Communist Party of Italy rejecting support of domestic terrorism was evident with the refusal to support the soviet Afghanistan invasion that widened the gap between the party and Moscow. Communist in its ideological setup had developed an independent decision making organ strong enough to repel and support their like and dislikes, taking into consideration the impact it would
have in their shaky political home base. This independence amidst the cold war after the first 1947 democratic elections, had started to cement the internalization of the party through the understanding that their future lied more with the Italian people than with international affiliations. As a result, the party refused to participate in the Paris international conference of the communist parties. It had gathered enough support to warrant their special consideration at the international matters and their absence was a major blow to the communist ideologies in the soviet union (Del Pero 549).

Besides, the Communist Party of Italy having ended the war with the main governing party in majority of municipalities, it assumed the governing of some of the richest areas and regions in the country. Country's governing style changed from confrontation to reason and participation was full at all levels of governance though with care due to the immediate history especially of the Communist Party of Italy. Consensus therefore developed well before 1970s as the Communist Party of Italy though not in government was fully associated with the majority in the parliament. Consensus democracy in Italy as a result, enshrined decision making well across institutional arena with each having substantial power that influenced the organ (Romano 608-609). Communist Party of Italy came back, unlike during their rule reformed it's ideological basement and redesigned it's approaches towards governance. Inclusion of others complements and their overall consideration to shape a new idea for better Italy went down the heart of the party as it fully changed the communist approaches.

Besides, the consensus democracy involved all the political actors from the leaders in the government parties, those in the opposition, presidents in parliamentary commissions, ministers and individual members of parliament. Communist Party of Italy through participation managed to influence major decision making in the institutionally ploycentric setting. It effected all the decision making positively advancing it's own proposals as well as rejecting the undesired ones according to its demands (Thomas 41-42). Bicamel parliament ensured that Communist Party of Italy remained intact in that different doors were open therefore they could exert pressure on the law making process to gain with the majority in the parliament.

The consensus post war dominated Italy was however put into question by the international factors as they were not for it from the beginning. Conflicts between west and east, USSR and USA mainly seen as the interplay between state communism and free world, mounted too high in the anticommunism fight that climaxed with dissolution of the Communist party of the USSR thereby depriving the domestic anchor for the PCI (Abse 59). Five days after the Berlin wall collapsed, dissolution of Communist Party of Italy was proposed by the then leader Achille Ochetto who proposed formation of (PDS) Non-Communist Democratic Party of the left. This indicated a pointer of major reforms in the Communist Party of Italy, with the main agenda being to renovate the old ideologies and fully transforming the party systems. Previously, this idea remained sealed and blocked during post war era because of the party's rigidity (Del Pero...
Major reforms and end of old politics

Understanding that the Christian democrats proffered to work with the socialist allies and had fully meant to remain in power and push Communist Party of Italy in opposition, change was therefore inevitable to give PCI a new outlook and taste to the Italians. However, with the old people in the party leadership was greatly indoctrinated in the communism ideologies, the idea was rejected with strong struggle to retain the heritage of the party. With change being inevitable, after 15 months of struggle PDS and Communist Re-foundation (CR) parties were formed in 1991 as break away factors of the Communist Party of Italy. With PDS denouncing the heritage, organizational structure and ideologies of PCI, the old politics were fast being buried (Thomas 51-52).

Individual influences at this point played greater roles in the transformation as the major break ups from Communist Party of Italy were insinuated by individuals (Romano 601-611). Immediate decline in Communist Party of Italy and emergence of PDS was not unique and continued to operated as a major deep undercurrent in the 1990s Italian politics.

After the 1992 and 1994 elections PCI continued to shrink with smaller organizations and movements threatening to fully wipe the party away (Daniels & Martin 21-25). PCI systems were changed through combination of collapsing old ideologies and achievement of the electoral reforms in the country. Internal institutions therefore came out very strongly to define the political parties in the country which gave the PDS golden opportunity in the left and gaining more support to access power. PCI noting the slimming chances of ascending to power, it joined the progressive alliance that consisted of the many PCIs break away factor parties which portrayed a new image for the country. This alliance advocated for increased political democracy in the country a complete change and transformation through the Christian Democrats style of leadership. All the parties including the Communist Party of Italy in the alliance coming to their senses of the people's dislike for dictatorship, the alliance advocated for decentralization of power in the governing system through out the governing systems (Mascitelli et al 206-207).

Greater changes in the management system of the new alliance was also projected and it promised to enhance economic growth through improvement in the finance sector and efforts to reduce unemployment in the country. Understanding the structures and the requirements of the then Italy, the alliance focused more on the privatization and combating welfare abuse in the country (Drake 118). High moderation in the approach therefore, had changed from previous
management approaches where the decisions were established from the party and then projected outwards to the new method where the people's requirements were the key factors in defining the alliance priorities.

**Conclusion**

Communist as a popular ideology and a major force that defined the Italian politics after the World War II, had to reform greatly after the fall of the soviet union and the end of cold war. Italy dynamic political landscape reformed strongly the role of communism by instilling democratic ideologies through individual and corporate influences to the Italian communism Party. Realignment of the political front that called for alliances as the only way to survive in the Italian politics, fully changed the approaches and the main ideologies for the Communist party that lost control of the government but maintained its participation through out it's political existence (Mascitelli et al 211-212).

Contrary to the previous party approaches towards the people where the all decisions were made with regard to the centralized control of power and all the resources by the governing government and the main party, the Communist Party of Italy maintained a strong shift where they controlled different rich constituencies in the north as well as participating in the government's major decision making front on major issues for the country through induced alliances.

**Works Cited page.**


