Belgium: Belgian Communist Party's New Exploration of the Socialist Path in the 21st Century

**October 2024**

**Author Guo Taiying is from the Institute of Contemporary Socialism, Shandong University.**

**The 21st century is a century of change and development. The survival and development environment of the Communist Party in capitalist countries has undergone tremendous and profound changes. After a century of vicissitudes, the Communist Party of Belgium decided to regroup after experiencing the heavy blow of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: adhere to the theoretical reform of the socialist direction, based on the world situation, national conditions, and party conditions, seek socialist alternatives on the basis of criticizing the capitalist system, and re-interpret the basic connotation of socialism; strive to expand the party's political influence, social influence and international influence through political participation, mass line and inter-party cooperation, and strive to explore a socialist road suitable for the party and the country's national conditions. From the actual situation, the reform exploration of the Communist Party of Belgium has achieved little results, and its marginalization trend in the Belgian political arena cannot be reversed for the time being. Future development still faces severe challenges.**

**[Keywords] Belgian Communist Party, capitalism, socialism, international communist movement**

Founded in 1921, the Communist Party of Belgium has a history of more than 100 years. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the Communist Party of Belgium has held several congresses, actively explored a socialist path that suits the country's reality, achieved new developments, and presented new characteristics. The Communist Party of Belgium is an important part of the Belgian workers' movement and the international communist movement. Exploring its theoretical characteristics and practical models is of great reference significance for analyzing the development, evolution, rise and fall of the Communist parties in Western capitalist countries.

According to the struggle goals and characteristics of the Belgian Communist Party in different periods, its development process can be roughly divided into the following three stages.

**1. 1921 to the end of World War II: Initial Exploration, Establishment and Growth in Revolutionary Struggle**

The establishment of the Communist Party of Belgium is the product of the development of the international communist movement. Similar to most communist parties in Western Europe, the October Revolution in Russia and the establishment of the Soviet socialist system created important external conditions for the birth of the party. From a historical perspective, the establishment of the Communist Party of Belgium is the product of internal conflicts and struggles within the Belgian left-wing political parties.

From 1916, left-wing groups of the Belgian Labor Party emerged and became active in the Young Socialist Guard in Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, Liège, and Charleroi. With the October Revolution as a beacon, they gradually identified with the Marxist position and regrouped. In 1920, the Belgian Communist Party, which defended the position of the Second Congress of the Communist International, was established. There were a few hesitant people within the Belgian Labor Party, namely the "few socialists", who were called "friends of the exploited". During the war, they insisted on holding a "peace conference" with the German Social Democrats in Stockholm and were not enthusiastic about the October Revolution. They actually wanted to return to the pre-war program of the Belgian Labor Party and were typical centrists, that is, radical criticism of the leaders, always using the excuse of "not losing touch with the masses" to try to fill the gap of social democracy, but failed to come up with any viable solutions. In 1921, they finally broke with the Belgian Labor Party. However, they believed that the Belgian Communist Party at that time was not a party of mass action, but a sectarian political group composed of four or five propaganda groups, which was more anarchist than communist. In the first years after the end of World War I, the differences between the leadership of Belgian socialism and its left opposition and the majority of the left opposition focused on the issue of government cooperation and the ministerial system. The left minority, led by Joseph Jacquemotte, the national secretary of the Employees' Union, strongly opposed the participation of socialists in the coalition government to guide the affairs of the country. As the internal differences between the majority and the minority intensified, on September 3, 1921, the left wing of the Workers' Party, led by Jospeh Jacquemotte, merged with other communist groups led by [War Van Overstraeten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_Van_Overstraeten) to form the new Belgian Communist Party.

The Communist Party of Belgium is a typical political party composed of young radicals. As a marginal small party with less than 1,000 members, it has been struggling to survive in the cracks since its establishment, affected by domestic and international situations. There are three main forms of its early struggle: First, actively participate in the country's parliamentary elections and win votes. The Communist Party of Belgium only won 1.64% of the votes (34,149 votes) in the 1925 legislative elections, but in the 1926 municipal elections, it achieved outstanding results in Brussels, Liege, Charleroi and other places.

Nationwide, the Communist Party of Belgium won a total of 66,000 votes and 25 city council seats. Second, actively carry out social movements through the Communist Youth League. The Communist Youth League (hereinafter referred to as the "Communist Youth League") played a considerable role in the strike in 1932, enabling the Communist Party of Belgium to establish its first fortress. Young militants acted as liaisons between pickets to coordinate actions. In 1932, the Communist Youth League organized a bicycle parade in Brussels, and even received support from the French Communist Party in the north. The Communist Youth also successfully carried out a pioneering experiment with "red" pickets with the Socialists, when there was no connection between the Belgian Communist Party and the Socialist Party. This movement tripled the membership of the Belgian Communist Party.

Unfortunately, the good times did not last long. Due to the mistakes of the Communist Youth and especially the harsh repression of the police and company management, the Communists were unable to consolidate their gains. Their publications were confiscated in many raids and as many as 187 activists were arrested, including many leaders. The third was to actively carry out the underground struggle against fascism. From 1934, it was the reorientation towards anti-fascism and the unified line of the People's Front that enabled it to rise again by achieving large-scale successes.

During World War II, the first and central task of the Communist Party of Belgium was to support the united front of all patriotic peoples and promote the liberation of the country. Belgian Communists were the main force in the strike wave of the 1930s, the anti-Nazi resistance movement in World War II, the fight against the Belgian monarchy and the repression of the workers' movement. During the German invasion, the Communist Party of Belgium was the only party in Belgium that never stopped its activities from the day of occupation to the liberation of the country and maintained its organizational structure intact. During this period, communist ideology was defined as a crime by Germany, and under German oppression, the Communist Party of Belgium went underground. In 1936, the Communist Party of Belgium led workers in a strike to fight for the right to paid vacations. In the same year, with the military support of the German and Italian fascists, Franco in Spain launched a civil war against the Popular Front government (Communist, Socialist and Republican). Many members of the Communist Party of Belgium joined the International Brigades and even held leadership positions in them. Based on these experiences, during the Nazi German occupation of Belgium in 1940, the Communist Party of Belgium seized the opportunity to organize the first resistance movement. In May 1941, the leader of the Belgian Communist Party, Julien Lahout, organized an anti-occupation strike of 100,000 workers, disrupting Nazi Germany's armament production. During the war, the Communists formulated a political line to defeat fascism and Nazism, but did not formulate a political line on how to gain power in Belgium after expelling Nazi Germany, and failed to seize the opportunity to rise up. At the time of liberation in September 1944, the resistance organization led by the Belgian Communist Party had as many as 40,000 people, while the government gendarmes returning to Belgium from London had only more than 7,000 people.

The resistance fighters opposed the government's order to disarm the guerrillas, refusing to disarm and demonstrating in the streets of Brussels, but the party leadership did not oppose the order. This period of struggle was particularly difficult and the losses were heavy, with about 5,500 militants sent to concentration camps and more than 2,000 killed.

**2. 1950s-1980s: A period of twists and turns, and survival in the Cold War**

The early period after the end of World War II was the heyday of the development of the Communist Party of Belgium. Before World War II, the Communist Party of Belgium was just an insignificant small party. Thanks to its heroic performance during the war, the party had a brief prosperity in the 1950s, not only gaining the trust of the proletariat, but also gaining a certain reputation among the middle class and intellectual groups. The number of party members grew to more than 100,000, and the party newspaper became one of the most widely circulated newspapers in the country. After the national liberation, the central task of the Communist Party of Belgium began to shift from striving for national independence to resolutely defending the interests of the working class, that is, striving to promote industrial development and fighting to improve the daily life of the working class that was completely destroyed by the war, and played an important role in the post-war national reconstruction. In the five elections before the war (1925-1939), the Belgian Communist Party's popular votes ranged from 34,435 to 143,223, accounting for 1.6% to 6.0% of the total votes in the Chamber of Deputies (1925-1936), and the party's seats in the Chamber of Deputies varied between 1 (1929) and 9 (1936, 1939). On February 17, 1946, the Belgian Communist Party won 12.68% of the total valid votes in the Chamber of Deputies, winning 23 of the 202 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. In the 1946 national elections, the Belgian Communist Party won 1.3% of the votes (5.5% in Flemish, 17% in Brussels, and 22% in Wallonia). In the Senate elections of 1946 and 1947, the Communist Party of Belgium received more than 300,000 votes and 17 members were elected as senators. The Communist Party of Belgium formed a coalition government with the Socialist Party and the Liberal Party twice. Two Communist Party members held important positions in Van Acker's cabinet - Albert Marteaux was appointed Minister of Public Health and Secretary-General Edgar Laarman was appointed Minister of Food and Supply.

However, with the changes in the domestic situation, the Belgian Communist Party was gradually squeezed out of the government since 1947, and its influence has declined sharply since then. At the Vilvoorde Congress in 1954, the Belgian Communist Party gave up the pursuit of "dictatorship of the proletariat" and hoped to form an alliance with the Social Democratic Party. In 1957, the 12th Congress of the Belgian Communist Party first proposed the hope of a peaceful transition to socialism based on the specific conditions of Belgium. At the end of February 1961, André Renard, the leader of the socialist trade union Belgian General Confederation of Labor, founded the "Walloon People's Movement", whose purpose was to replace the struggle against capitalism and revolution with "anti-capitalist structural reforms" and "federalism". After the general strike in 1961, the conflict between the Flemish and Walloon people became increasingly acute, and the "language war" in Belgium reached its peak. Influenced by this, the leadership of the Belgian Communist Party also split into Walloon and Flemish factions. In 1963, Jacques Grippa, a prominent leader of the Belgian Communist Party who had been active in the party since the 1930s and had led the Brussels Federal Council, was expelled from the party for "opposing revisionism", indicating that the struggle and conflict within the party had further intensified. In March 1982, the Belgian Communist Party held its 24th Congress and adopted a new party constitution. After the failure of the 1985 general election, the Belgian Communist Party lost its only two seats in parliament. Since then, the Belgian Communist Party has not won any seats in parliamentary elections. In 1987, the Belgian Communist Party declared itself to be part of the ranks of European communism.

**3. 1990s to present: adjustment and transformation phase, seeking development in the low tide of the international communist movement**

The Communist Party of Belgium, which was born in the booming international communist movement, has also been deeply affected by the changes in the world situation. In 1989, the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of Belgium split into the Communist Party of Wallonia-Brussels and the Communist Party of Flemish according to the principle of federalization of the party, which marked the complete decline of the Communist Party of Belgium. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the upheaval in Eastern Europe caused a strong shock within the Communist Party of Belgium. The Communist Party of Brussels and the Communist Party of Flemish believed that the historical mission of the party had been completed and were ready to transform into a left-wing political organization such as the "Red-Green Forum" or the "Red-Green Movement". The Communist Party of Wallonia-French insisted on the name of the Communist Party and the theory of class struggle and continued to fight.

Since the 21st century, the Communist Party of Belgium has always adhered to theoretical reforms in the direction of socialism. In order to meet political challenges, the party has continuously improved its theoretical program and political strategy in order to play a role in the social and political movements in Belgium. Since the congress on October 18, 2008, the social environment in Belgium has changed significantly. In order to restore the party's ideological cohesion and unity, the congresses held on January 28 and March 24, 2012 reviewed the party's historical role, formulated a new constitution, and determined an organizational structure suitable for its own development. In June 2018, the Communist Party of Belgium held its 36th Congress. The congress decided to abandon the name of the Wallonia-Brussels Communist Party and regain the name and identity of the Communist Party of Belgium, and use this as a starting point to restart action and unswervingly explore a socialist path suitable for the party and the country's national conditions. The congress reviewed the nearly 100-year struggle of the Communist Party of Belgium, introduced the party's changes in its route, decided to adopt a new political program and constitution, and elected a new Central Committee and party leaders. In addition, the party actively participated in the international communist movement and advocated the establishment of a worldwide alliance against US imperialism and NATO to stop the war and bury colonialism. Overall, despite the decline of the Belgian Communist Party, it has never withdrawn from the historical stage.

**New**

Since the beginning of the 21st century, in the face of changes in the external environment, in order to seek a place in Belgian politics, the Communist Party of Belgium has always adhered to theoretical reforms in the direction of socialism and actively explored the path of socialist construction.

**1. Adapting to the changes of the times and seeking alternative solutions to socialism by criticizing capitalism**

1. On the systemic crisis of capitalism

The Communist Party of Belgium pointed out that "the objective and inherent irreversible contradictions of the capitalist mode of production ultimately lead to increasingly frequent, more persistent and more destructive cyclical crises" and "the multiple crises under the capitalist system have become very acute." The first is the economic development crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has directly led to the collapse of the capitalist system based on trade globalization - the flow of people and goods has been blocked, fiscal deficits in various countries have increased, inflation has risen sharply, extreme nationalism and right-wing forces have risen, and the capitalist system is facing unprecedented challenges. The second is the social crisis caused by the alienation of science and technology. In a world dominated by the capitalist economy, science and technology have been alienated as a means of increasing profits and controlling the survival system, and have become a tool for enslaving mankind. The third is the ecological and environmental crisis. Capitalism has destroyed the relationship between humans and nature and triggered an ecological crisis. For more than a century, the earth's population has grown rapidly. In order to meet the energy needs required for industrialization, capitalist countries have produced and exploited without restraint, resulting in increasingly barren land, soil degradation, a sharp decline in biodiversity, and global warming. The fourth is the political crisis caused by the prevalence of militarism and imperialism. The Communist Party of Belgium believes that: "Capitalism carries wars like clouds carry storms." In order to maintain their economic and political hegemony, Western countries led by the United States have spent billions of dollars to wage "proxy wars" on various continents through war machines such as NATO, ignoring the needs of the people and further exacerbating geopolitical conflicts.

2. About NATO and the EU

Western countries often intervene in other countries' internal affairs in the name of defending democracy or peaceful humanitarianism, which has led to increasingly tense international relations. The Communist Party of Belgium emphasizes that the realization of peace is inseparable from the struggle for socialism and strongly demands that Belgium withdraw from NATO and the European Union. The Communist Party of Belgium believes that the European Union is an unelected supranational institution and an alliance between imperialist countries. Through its institutions, as well as economic, political and cultural policies, it serves the bourgeois monopoly groups, continuously increases the exploitation of European workers, and defends the capitalist system. The European Union is wrongly described as a tool for promoting peace, stability and progress. In fact, the European Union has always played a leading role in anti-communism, and anti-communism has become its official ideology. It distorts history, denigrates the great contribution of socialism to social progress and workers' liberation, and even covers up the decisive role of the Soviet Union in defeating fascism in World War II. The European Union has been very irresponsible in European affairs, is powerless to deal with European debt, and the unemployment rate in its member states is getting higher and higher, which runs counter to its declared goal of "guaranteeing peace, stability and well-being for all people on the European continent." On the issue of leaving the European Union, the Communist Party of Belgium stressed that it can draw on the experience of the British Brexit referendum and link withdrawal from the European Union and NATO with the struggle for socialism, which is a necessary condition for collectivization and people's access to means of production and land ownership, an inevitable prerequisite for meeting the people's contemporary needs, and the basis for abolishing the capitalist exploitation system.

3. On religion

The Communist Party of Belgium believes that religious issues must be viewed dialectically. On the one hand, for communists, the world is made up of two opposing classes: the owners of the means of production and the exploited or proletarians who make a living by selling their labor. "Proletarians of the world, unite!" means that regardless of nationality, culture and possible religious affiliation, Christian, Jewish and Muslim workers, first of all workers, belong to the international proletariat. Belgium is a country with a large religious population, and 700,000 Muslims have contributed to Belgium's economic development and cultural enrichment. On the other hand, the Communist Party of Belgium believes that religion under capitalist society has become a tool for the bourgeoisie to divide workers, while the religious field in the socialist system is strictly distinguished from the political, economic and social fields. The party opposes religious obscurantism and believes that any practice in the religious field cannot be above the law. The party condemns Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia, and condemns the use of the "threat of terrorism" as a political tool to develop a repressive state machine and cover up the impact of anti-social policies on workers. At the same time, it pointed out that the struggle against religious obscurantism must be achieved through the development of working-class consciousness, that priority should be given to integration with education and society, separation from the church, the development of scientific culture and critical thinking in teaching, and the establishment of a single, democratic, secular public education institution.

**2. Based on social, national and party conditions, we should reinterpret the theoretical connotation of socialism and persist in independently exploring the socialist path.**

The Communist Party of Belgium still adheres to the guidance of Marxism and Leninism, and the revolutionary nature of its thoughts and political actions is its primary characteristic. The basic goal of the party has always been to overthrow capitalism, build socialism, and strive for the realization of communism; the ultimate goal is to end the exploitation of man by man, end economic, social, political and cultural alienation, and realize the free and comprehensive development of everyone. In recent years, the Communist Party of Belgium has passed a series of new political resolutions, re-interpreting the party's basic understanding of the connotation of socialism in the new era, and determining the party's ideological and political lines in the new era.

1**. On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

Replace "dictatorship of the proletariat" with the concept of "workers' power". The theory of dictatorship of the proletariat is the essence of Marxism. Since the 20th century, with the emergence of fascism and Nazism, coupled with the demonization of the Soviet Union, the right wing and its media have distorted the meaning of "dictatorship of the proletariat" in Marxism, interpreting the term "dictatorship" as the power of a few or "tyranny". In the Cold War and anti-communist atmosphere, the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Belgium in 1954 decided to abandon the guideline of "dictatorship of the proletariat". Today, right-wing forces are once again trying to confuse communism and fascism, calling them "populism" or "totalitarianism", equating "dictatorship of the proletariat" and communism with "dictatorship" itself. Anti-communist propaganda based on the concept of totalitarianism has had a certain influence in mainstream society and even among a considerable number of workers with its powerful media propaganda channels. In the view of the Communist Party of Belgium, the essence of "power" is a qualification collectively granted to the leadership subject to control the share of public value resources. Although the Communist Party of Belgium recognizes the Marxist connotation of "dictatorship of the proletariat" - originally referring to the absolute power of the working class over the owners of the means of production (the bourgeoisie), and believes that it is inseparable from the history of the organized workers' movement, applicable to the stage of transition from capitalism to socialism, and is an inevitable requirement of socialism, in the current struggle environment, the connotation and extension of "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie" have changed. In a sense, the two words "dictatorship" and "dictatorship of the proletariat" have negative and outdated meanings respectively. The indiscriminate use of these words will put the party in a more isolated dilemma politically. The Communist Party of Belgium believes that the concept of "workers' power" reflects the importance of the political power and social status of the working class, has the characteristics of keeping pace with the times, and is more easily accepted by workers. Therefore, the use of the concept of "workers' power" has become the focus of the Communist Party of Belgium to adjust its future political line.

2. On class struggle

Replace "class struggle" with the slogan of "class unity". The Communist Party of Belgium emphasizes that the slogan of "class struggle" indiscriminately sets the working class and the bourgeoisie against each other. It was applicable to Russia, which was devastated by war in the 20th century and had just gotten rid of the serfdom system, but it is obviously untenable in an industrial country like Belgium. In addition, this slogan regards social democracy as "the enemy of the class", which conceals the historical origins and friendship between the Communist Party of Belgium and social democrats, and ignores the achievements made by the Communist Party of Belgium in the history of united struggle against fascism and the workers' movement. The Communist Party of Belgium explicitly rejects the view within the party that "breaking with the rule of monopoly capital in a crude way" and believes that Belgium's socialist transformation is a "process" and that "only by deeply implementing democratization in all areas of Belgium's political, social, economic and cultural life" can "open up a socialist road for Belgium that conforms to its fine traditions and actual needs", that is, "a democratic, multi-party, federal and self-governing socialist road". To this end, the Belgian Communist Party must unite with workers, youth, women, grassroots democratic movements, and progressive figures in the scientific, technological and cultural circles to "realize a broad alliance of progressive forces around the working class."

The Communist Party of Belgium realizes that to achieve socialist goals and change society requires more than just reformist policies. It must also integrate into social movements and be able to work with other left-wing political and trade union forces, starting from the daily problems of the working class, in order to unite all those who desire change and create a more just, more democratic, more united socialist society without exploitation and alienation. The Communist Party of Belgium points out that the party's attitude towards trade unions must take into account the development of the working class, which has lost its strongest bastion in the mining, steel and metallurgical sectors. This evolution has completely ended the reformist fantasy of "Walloon federalism" and "anti-capitalist structural reforms"; it must also take into account that a large number of small companies have weakened the effectiveness of the presence of trade unions in companies by reducing the number of workers, which has made the relationship between workers more complicated and the competition between them has become increasingly fierce, further weakening the role of joint committees. The role of trade unions in organizing workers' unity conflicts with the strong individualism advocated by the right wing and its media. On the basis of self-criticism, the Communist Party of Belgium has rethought the relationship between the party and trade unions, stating that it must not damage its relationship with trade unions, and believes that trade unions are still essential for organizing struggles and inter-departmental solidarity to limit corporatist tendencies. The Communist Party must understand the situation of trade union organizations and the entire proletariat. Workers need a strong trade union. The Communist Party of Belgium believes that it should provide political guidance to trade unions when necessary and work for the unity of workers. In view of the fact that trade unions have been weakened by internal reasons and external attacks, the Communist Party of Belgium considers establishing a "class struggle workers' movement" affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions without causing any damage to existing organizations. The Communist Party of Belgium demands that trade unions be given legal status and that all enterprises have trade union representatives. It strongly opposes the intervention of judicial institutions in labor disputes, strongly condemns the harassment of trade unions and their activists by the media, reaffirms class solidarity with trade union organizations, and advocates that trade unions join the World Federation of Trade Unions.

3. On federalism

Reject "Belgian federalism", oppose "confederalism", and advocate the establishment of a socialist society. The Belgian Communist Party believes that federalism defines a political system in which several independent entities cede part of their sovereignty to a higher authority. However, Belgian federalism is an illusion that has led Belgium to separatism and to a federal system consisting of two independent countries, Flanders and Wallonia. The Belgian Communist Party claims that confederation must be categorically rejected and condemns the so-called language border because it has the potential to evolve into a political border. The main result of this language border is the intensification of competition and increasing division between regions. More importantly, it limits the possibility of unity and struggle between workers in the north and the south, and the resulting complex and multiplying regional institutions have greatly alienated the relationship between politics and the people. Therefore, the Belgian Communist Party advocates making every effort to maintain unity between regions and communities, advocating that the economy, finance, social security, health, foreign trade and diplomatic affairs, as well as public services such as education, transportation and defense belong to the purview of the central government, advocating compulsory learning of the two main national languages ​​in schools, and advocating bilingualism in federal service departments (railways, police, etc.).

4. On Proletarian Internationalism and the International Communist Movement

Marx pointed out: "United action, at least the united action of civilized countries, is one of the first conditions for the liberation of the proletariat." Throughout the history of the development of the Communist Party of Belgium, its distinctive feature is the spirit of internationalism. The strategy of attaching importance to alliance cooperation can be said to be its important way of survival. The Communist Party of Belgium has had a tradition of alliance cooperation since its founding, and in the process of revolutionary struggle, it also highly advocated the political strategy of "vertical and horizontal alliances" in order to obtain as much support as possible.

Since the 21st century, the Communist Party of Belgium believes that the slogans of "proletarian internationalism" and "proletarians of all countries unite" still have great practical significance. Therefore, it proposes that the first priority of the people of the world and the international proletariat is to establish a global alliance, calling on the people of all countries to unite and actively participate in domestic and international peace movements, develop broad front organizations in their own countries, and carry out concrete and practical mass movements against the United States, imperialism and NATO, and jointly resist the imperialist war led by the United States through the establishment of an anti-imperialist front, and overthrow the colonial system that brings instability, poverty and human rights violations to the masses through political repression, economic plunder and military coercion. The Communist Party of Belgium believes that it is working hard to establish an anti-fascist, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperialist socialist and peace front.

Since the 21st century, the Communist Party of Belgium has made timely adjustments to the party's political practice path in light of the development and changes in the situation inside and outside the party, and has pointed out the direction for achieving the goal of socialism.

1. Political participation: Continue to adhere to the path of a peaceful parliament and expand the party’s political influence

In terms of the way to seize power, the formulation of political strategies requires all political parties to sort out two common issues: First, what path to take to seize power. All political parties have the social and political responsibility to thoroughly transform the state apparatus, but how to seize power is the key. Second, who should be united with. In the current political situation, no Communist Party in a capitalist country has enough power to govern alone. So, should it fight alone or seek an alliance? On these two issues, the position of the Belgian Communist Party is "consistent from beginning to end."

Since its founding, the Communist Party of Belgium has always attached importance to and actively participated in various electoral activities. In 2012, the party put forward candidates in Charleroi and Serran through the electoral lists of left-wing parties, supporting municipal and provincial electoral alliances to win seats for local elected officials.

 In 2014, the Communist Party of Belgium continued this electoral strategy and participated in an electoral alliance composed of the Belgian Workers' Party, the Communist Party of Belgium, the anti-capitalist left and independent political groups. With the support of the electoral alliance, the Belgian Workers' Party was allowed to participate in representative elections at all levels and restored the representation of the radical left in parliament after more than 20 years of absence. The presence of candidates from the Communist Party of Belgium, the anti-capitalist left and independents contributed to the success of the Belgian Workers' Party in the elections. In 2018, the Communist Party of Belgium participated in the municipal elections in Liège and Brussels by supporting the candidate list of the Belgian Workers' Party and put forward two candidates in the Soignies district, winning more than 3,000 votes. Obviously, these results respond to the "geometric variable" strategy used at the traditional municipal level. In the future, these different strategies and their impact need to be analyzed and seriously discussed. The 36th Congress of the Communist Party of Belgium reaffirmed the party's unified approach to participating in elections, namely to establish a consistent political line at all levels of party organizations and reaffirm that democratic centralism is the way party organizations at all levels operate. In the federal, regional and European elections in May 2019, the Communist Party of Belgium won more than 10,000 votes in the south of the country. The 36th Congress of the Communist Party of Belgium decided to rebuild party branches in the north of the country in an attempt to become a national party again. The Communist Party of Belgium believes that it is imperative to link the struggle for peace with the struggle to defend workers and make it the main issue of the 2024 campaign. To this end, the Communist Party of Belgium continues to work in solidarity with the Belgian Workers' Party and jointly participate in parliamentary elections, proposing campaign slogans such as "achieving peace by ending the so-called humanitarian war, withdrawing from and disbanding NATO", "public services as non-negotiable social assets", and "refusing to criminalize social struggles".

**2. Mass Line: Actively Leading and Organizing the Workers' Movement and Expanding the Party's Social Influence**

The Communist Party of Belgium has always regarded the organization and leadership of the workers' movement and trade union struggle as its important tasks. In recent years, the Communist Party of Belgium has carried out a series of commemorative activities and strike movements. These movements have obvious tendencies and immediacy, and the themes are generally hot issues that the masses are closely concerned about. Through these movements, the Communist Party of Belgium attempts to publicize its political ideas and positions, closely connect with the masses, and seek benefits for the people. For example, on March 29, 2021, Belgian workers organized a nationwide strike to demand higher wages, fairer contracts, and fight for workers' rights and dignity. Workers from all walks of life, including manufacturing, metallurgy, transportation, education, and health care, joined the strike. Major trade unions such as the Belgian General Confederation of Labor and the Christian Trade Union Confederation mobilized workers. Progressive political parties such as the Belgian Workers' Party and the Communist Party of Belgium also expressed solidarity with the strike and participated in national mobilization activities.

**(III) Inter-Party Exchanges: Attach importance to alliances and cooperation, affirm the principles of proletarian internationalism, advocate the establishment of a broad united front, and expand the Party’s international** **influence**

First, actively deepen exchanges and contacts with international conferences and international organizations such as the World International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties and the World Anti-Imperialist Platform. The World International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties is an international exchange platform with communist parties and organizations as the main body and Marxism as the common ideological foundation. In addition to the formal meeting once a year, special meetings are held from time to time. In December 2009, the Communist and Workers' Parties of various countries decided to establish the annual "International Communist Review" published in English and Spanish, and also decided to establish a website. As of 2024, the World International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties has more than 120 Communist and Workers' Parties from 85 countries in the world participating, and 23 sessions have been held. The Communist Party of Belgium sends representatives to attend the conference every year. At its 36th Congress, the Communist Party of Belgium fully affirmed the positive role of the World International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in uniting the European left, criticizing capitalism, and promoting socialism, and expressed that it will continue to participate in the conference in the future, using this platform to connect with the people of the world, establish an international anti-imperialist front, support the anti-imperialist struggle, and strive for peace and socialism. The World Anti-Imperialist Platform is an international organization that advocates anti-imperialism. Its main founding members all came from the "Joint Initiative of European Communist and Workers' Parties", which was disbanded due to ideological and political differences caused by the Ukrainian crisis. On October 14, 2022, the first international conference of the World Anti-Imperialist Platform was held in Paris. The Communist Party of Belgium, the Communist Party of the United States, the Communist Party of Italy, the Irish Workers' Party, the Communist Party of Lebanon, the Communist Party of Congo and 54 other political parties jointly signed the "Paris Declaration", which became the symbol of the formal establishment of the organization. In the following two years, the World Anti-Imperialist Platform held several international conferences, all of which were attended by the Communist Party of Belgium. For example, the Second Belgrade International Conference held on December 17, 2022 was attended by representatives from 26 countries, 29 contracting parties, political organizations and embassies from Asia, Europe and South America, including the Communist Party of Belgium.

In the face of the dire situation of the ongoing Ukrainian crisis and the imminent crisis on the Korean Peninsula, the participants discussed and signed the Belgrade Declaration on the theme of "The Rising Tide of Global War" on issues such as the aggressive nature of imperialism, the danger of opportunism in the anti-imperialist camp, and the tasks of the world's anti-imperialist forces. The organization believes that the most important theoretical task facing anti-imperialists is to correctly describe the ongoing Ukrainian crisis and the imminent war in East Asia. If the nature of the war cannot be correctly assessed, it is impossible to formulate the correct response policy and guide the masses to defeat imperialism locally or globally. Using these international platforms as a medium, the Communist Party of Belgium continues to strengthen its ties with other communist parties and organizations, strengthen inter-party exchanges, and practice the spirit of internationalism.

**Second, actively support all kinds of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles and protest against violations of national sovereignty and people's interests.**

In today's world, the global crisis has further intensified. From Africa to the Middle East, from East Asia to Eastern Europe, regional or local wars threaten geopolitical relations and undermine the principles of equality and justice. The Communist Party of Belgium pays close attention to the international situation and has repeatedly issued statements and speeches on the Ukrainian crisis, the Palestinian-Israeli issue, the Syrian issue, the North Korean issue, etc., expressing its position, opposing the imperialist countries and organizations led by the United States, NATO, and the European Union to interfere in the human rights and sovereignty of other countries, and opposing the aggressive acts of imperialism and militarism. For example, on January 10, 2022, the Communist Party of Belgium issued a statement on the Solidarity Network, condemning the suppression of the people's workers' movement in Kazakhstan, supporting the struggle of the people's movement in Kazakhstan, and demanding the legalization of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, the Kazakh Socialist Movement, and the status of trade unions.

On October 16, 2023, the Communist Party of Belgium issued a statement reaffirming its support for the Palestine Liberation Organization and its position as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, condemning the Israeli government's contempt for UN resolutions, attempting to completely annex the West Bank, and illegally occupying and colonizing Palestine. It believes that Israel's bombing of the Gaza Strip is genocidal in nature and may further expand the conflict to the entire Middle East. The Communist Party of Belgium emphasized that Palestine was recognized by 70.5% of UN member states in 2017, and the intensification of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is inseparable from the support of the EU and the United States for Israel, which proves their contempt for international law and the Palestinian people.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the international community has been experiencing rare multiple risks and challenges, and the world is once again at a crossroads of history. For European communist parties facing similar strategic choices, the Belgian Communist Party's exploration of the theoretical and practical path of socialism undoubtedly has certain practical implications. Overall, the Belgian Communist Party has tried to seek socialist goals that meet the requirements of the times, promote the development of the socialist movement through its own transformation, adhere to the path of parliamentary struggle, adhere to the mass line and inter-party exchanges, which has improved the party's living environment to a certain extent, but the results are not significant, and its development prospects are not optimistic. Whether it can seize the opportunities of the times and strengthen its own construction is the key to determining the future development of the Belgian Communist Party.