

Belgium kowtows to 'Europe '92' schemes

by Mark Burdman

While most of the European continent was entering its August holiday season and attention was turned to mountain and sea resorts, the Belgian Parliament on Aug. 5 made a surprising decision. The Parliament voted, by a comfortable number over the needed two-thirds majority, to make a basic change in the Constitution, transforming Belgium from its status of a centrally governed nation, into a decentralized, federal state, made up of three relatively self-dependent regions: Flemish-speaking Flanders with 5.6 million inhabitants, French-speaking Wallonia with 3.2 million, and the bilingual capital city of Brussels, with 1 million.

Never before has a nation simply changed itself from a united state into a federation. The decision is a big step toward the "Project Europe 1992" transformation of Europe into a balkanized "Europe of the regions" ruled by supranational financial and reinsurance cartels, replacing the "Europe of the Fatherlands" favored by such great European leaders as Charles de Gaulle.

Belgian Premier Wilfried Martens called this the most important reform since the nation was created in 1830. A Belgian radio newscaster stated: "Belgium is no longer what it was before. From today, we live in a new Belgium."

Beginning in 1989, the governments of the "regions" will make the decisions on a large part of economic policy, schools, traffic (outside of air traffic and expressways), environment, and health. Combined, these add up to at least one-third of the total national budget. The central government will keep control over what are referred to as the "classical tasks of the state," such as foreign and defense policy, internal security, justice, monetary and fiscal policy, and social security. But, for example, there will no longer be a national education minister.

The Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* observed Aug. 7, that the fact that Brussels now has decreased importance as the capital of a centralized Belgium, means that it is more likely to become the capital of a united and federated Europe. In the past months, "Euro-1992" financier and wheeler-dealer Carlo De Benedetti has repeatedly insisted that one of his chief goals in his frantic attempt to buy up Belgium's Société Générale giant, is that he wants to be well-positioned in Brussels, as the future capital city of a "united Europe."

Brussels was the headquarters of the late Paul-Henri

Spaak, one of the masterminds of the "European unification" movement now known as "Project Europe 1992." One of his daughters is today married to Britain's Sir Michael Palliser, a chief figure among that renegade group in Britain which supports "Project Europe 1992," despite the strongly worded objections to the project by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

A senior figure in the Union of European Federalists—a 50,000-member organization which supports the creation of a "United States of Europe"—stated in an Aug. 9 discussion: "What happened in Belgium was very good. . . . For the future, Belgium can't hang together. Flanders and Wallonia will become separate states, and Brussels will be the Washington, D.C. of a United States of Europe. This will happen peacefully, but the point is simple: The federal system in Belgium can't hold for long."

Spain, he stressed, had in recent years adopted certain federalist features in its governing system for the Catalan, Basque, Andalusian, and other provinces, and could now be motivated to make further moves in the federalist direction.

More provocatively, this individual insisted that a "federal" solution could and should be adopted by the United Kingdom: "Sometime in the not-distant future, you will see Scotland representing itself separately in the European Parliament. It will be done in an entirely friendly way. I am very encouraged that Mrs. Thatcher is worried by the 'Europe 1992' process. She's narrowly focused, and believes that the Westminster Parliament will someday be replaced by seven regional parliaments. That doesn't have to happen, but history will mandate that the Scots will represent themselves. . . . The Scots are a nation, so are the Welsh." He added, "It is in this context of European federalism and regionalism, that the situation in Northern Ireland can be solved."

Forced impoverishment

Over the weekend after the Aug. 5 Belgian Parliament decision, Lothar Späth, the prime minister of the West German state of Baden-Württemberg, announced he will host a conference on Sept. 9, of the four regions that would be the most prosperous on the European continent, in the "1992 reorganization." These include Baden-Württemberg itself, Catalonia in Spain, Lombardy in Italy, and the Rhone-Alps of France. These four, acting as a special unit, said Späth, should be ready to "sponsor" the prospective "poorer regions" of the emerging Europe. The latter, in Späth's view, included Portugal—and Belgium, which he labeled "regions."

Newest unemployment figures for Europe show a drop in such places as the district of Barcelona (Catalonia), Baden-Württemberg, and parts of northern Italy, but a rise in southern Italy and Denmark. Individuals involved in "Europe 1992" planning admit in private, that the projected reforms will mean the effective end of Denmark as a producing nation.