

Italian national leadership paralyzed by secession threat

by Claudio Celani

Italy's ruling class finds itself in the position of Hamlet, facing a choice on how to handle a threat to national unity which is growing by the day. The threat is represented by the secessionist Northern League (*Lega Nord*) party, whose *duce*, Umberto Bossi, has opened a new phase of the offensive against the state, toward the creation of what he calls the secessionist state of "Padania." The only serious reaction against Bossi and his puppetmasters is coming from forces rallying around the political movement of Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR*, which have exposed the secession threat as a joint product of oligarchical circles around Britain's Prince Philip of Edinburgh and the faction around former U.S. President George Bush. These revelations, taken from *EIR*, were carried on Aug. 30 by three national newspapers, Milan's *Il Giorno*, Bologna's *Il Resto del Carlino*, and Florence's *La Nazione*, and are expected to provide orientation for pro-national forces which, otherwise, have shown a total lack of leadership.

Contrary to some illusions, support for the Northern League has increased in parallel with the radicalization of its political line, especially among the most illiterate layers among the northern Italian population, including the young generation. Political observers have started to warn that, when this generation comes of age to vote in a year or two, the League could take power "democratically," as Mussolini did in the 1920s. But, the incoming global financial collapse could accelerate that process, or, undermine it, depending on the strategic choices taken by Italy's political leaders.

Bossi announces his outlaw strategy

In mid-August, Bossi announced that on Oct. 26, the League will hold "political elections" in northern Italy, and form a secessionist parliament. "Padania," explained Bossi in an interview with *Corriere della Sera* on Aug. 13, "will elect its own Parliament. At the elections, there will be right-wing parties and democratic center-left parties which will hold conventions in Milan and Brescia. There will even be a communist party of Padania." Of course, the idea of establishing a parliament of a secessionist state is totally illegal; furthermore, voters will consist only of League supporters. But, it will be a show of force, and a step further toward a situation of total lawlessness which so far has been tolerated by the state. For instance, following the dictates of an appeasement policy, the Italian Parliament has so far accepted the fact that

the League group sitting in the Legislative branch is calling itself the "Northern League for the Independence of Padania." At a "referendum" on secession called last spring, Bossi mobilized more than 4 million people.

Bossi explained his strategy: The League will remain "within the Italian system. The Padania parliament shall approve a federalist constitution and organize a referendum in the spring. Parallel to that, the League will try to reach, by spring, an agreement with Rome on a confederation [with Padania]. . . . Otherwise, end of the dialogue." Bossi added, "The League . . . has bred Padania, which will soon be an aversive reality against Rome. The coming year will be a hot one."

In the following days, Bossi escalated his campaign, even embroiling the Catholic Church. He accused the Pope, whom he derogatorily called "The Pole," of meddling in Italian political affairs. Imitating a modern-day Martin Luther, Bossi accused the church hierarchy of "corruption," and called on priests to ignore directives from Rome and to stay "on the side of the Padanian people."

As the next step, he announced a demonstration against national trade unions on Sept. 6 in Venice, where union cards will be publicly burned. Bossi is driving a wedge between active workers and pensioners, profiting from five years of free-market policies and International Monetary Fund pressures, which have brainwashed the population into believing that, because of the Italian national pension system, active workers (whose number is decreasing due to deindustrialization) are financing fat checks for pensioners (whose number is increasing due to the demographic collapse). According to recent figures, the League's union, the SIP (Sindacato Padano), already has more active workers than the national trade unions, whose membership is mostly pensioners.

A debate over options

Bossi's offensive has unleashed a debate among pro-national forces on how to react. The debate has taken the form of two alternatives: Either the state reacts with the use of force, forbidding the "elections" called by Bossi, and ultimately outlawing the Northern League; or, it plays down the League initiative as a clownish one which has no legal value. In reality, the latter has been the policy followed so far, with the result that the League threat has not disappeared, but, to the contrary, has grown bigger.

The first option, a legal crackdown, is also dictated by security considerations. The League is in fact developing into a sort of “legal arm” of a proto-terrorist operation which made its debut last May 8, when an armed commando unit calling itself *Veneto Serenissima Armata*, occupied the belltower in St. Mark’s Square, in Venice. The *Serenissimi* have been arrested and sentenced, but public opinion was shocked in discovering the dimension of popular support they received in the Veneto region.

A secret service report which was transmitted by the government to Parliament on July 13, indicated that the May 8 episode was not an isolated one, but was followed by several threats issued to prosecutors and police, demonstrating “a dangerous parceling out of radical secessionist circles.” “Such a phenomenon,” the report warns, “if further fed by

aggressive tones and intolerant attitudes [by Bossi], could produce emulations . . . especially if coinciding with significant events or political deadlines.” The report warns against chain-reaction processes in other parts of Italy, where some factions have long “pushed for separatist demands.” The implicit reference is to Sicily, and the warning has acquired renewed importance, because on Sept. 4, Liga Veneta leader Fabrizio Comencini made public statements in support of the Mafia. In defiance of historical reality, Comencini declared that the Mafia was “born after 1860 . . . as a just reaction of defense against the national state, an invader and a repressive one.” Comencini is a former neo-fascist, who turned to the League in 1992.

Despite the threat of a Northern Ireland-like scenario, adversaries of the crackdown claim that such an option would

Italian media follow EIR in exposing secession plot

On Aug. 30, several prominent Italian dailies, including La Nazione, Il Giorno, and Il Resto del Carlino, quoted EIR’s exposé of Britain’s Prince Philip, former U.S. President George Bush, and Alfred H. Heineken’s involvement in inspiring Umberto Bossi and his Northern League, and the plot to create a secessionist state of “Padania.” The article, based on EIR material, was entitled “Who Created a Europe of Many Padanias?” and was written by Giorgio Zicari.

Florence’s La Nazione headlined its coverage, “Bossi Is a Cheater, His State Belongs to Bush,” and added the kicker: “Secession, Padania . . . Bossi May Have ‘Stolen’ the Idea from a Friend of the Former President.” Bologna’s Il Resto del Carlino headlined its coverage: “Revelations—in 1992 Bush ‘Invented’ Padania. What If Bossi Just Copied Everything?” Milan’s Il Giorno, which also ran the story, is owned by the national oil company, ENI. These three dailies sell around 700,000 copies; approximately 1-2% of the population of Italy bought a paper with the EIR story. The article by Zicari follows:

The split-up of the country with the political and administrative division between North and South, the creation of Padania . . . are not ideas springing from the head of Umberto Bossi, but rather it is a much broader project, born outside Italian borders and involving the whole of Europe. This is what has been reported by the *EIR Strategic Alert*, a weekly newsletter published by *Executive Intelligence Review*, an international news agency, often quoted by U.S. media.

This source says that Bossi’s ideas are nothing but a “recipe” earlier prepared by a study group around Alfred H. Heineken, head of the Anglo-Dutch multinational, a friend and adviser of former President George Bush.

Heineken, according to the same source, “belongs to the most exclusive circles of the international oligarchy, being a member of the 1001 Club of Prince Philip and advocates publicly the necessity for substituting for today’s nations, small entities dominated by a world imperial government.”

In the 1960s, according to the news agency, one of the employees of Heineken was Maj. Louis Mortimer Bloomfield, head of a company whose name popped out in the context of the investigations on the assassination of John Kennedy.

The newsletter states that already in 1992—the year in which “Operation Clean Hands” started in Italy—Heineken published a project called “Eurotopia” in which he proposed to divide Europe into 72 mini-states, according to ethnic and demographic criteria. These are exactly the same criteria on which the political projects and the propaganda of the leader of the Northern League, are based. Each state should have, according to Heineken, a population no greater than to 5-10 million inhabitants.

The agency [*EIR*] says that in 1992, then-U.S. President George Bush “approved the project, thinking that it was innovative and interesting.” Two years later, the Italian part of the Heineken plan—which included the creation of an independent state in Northern Italy—“was taken up, almost as a xerox copy by the League leader, Francesco Speroni. . . .”

The main inspirer of the Heineken plan was the late British historian Cyril Northcote Parkinson, who was a “British intelligence agent.” . . .

backfire, turning Bossi into a folk hero. State repression against the League, insist those critics, although constitutionally demanded, would be seen as another example of a state seen as an oppressive power, whose only function is to raise taxes.

In reality, such arguments betray the decision not to fight against the secessionist threat. Even worse, a fifth column in both the government and opposition hope that they can strike a deal with Bossi and get some electoral gains — as has been attempted in the case of the upcoming elections in major cities at the end of November. Negotiations took place between League leaders and the two largest opposition parties, Silvio Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* ("Go! Italy") and the National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale*). Bossi had proposed to form a coalition to win mayoral elections in Venice, where the League votes are indispensable if the conservative bloc is to defeat the incumbent center-left coalition. On his side, Bossi would make a sensational political comeback after more than a year of total political isolation, with the bonus of having taken over the alleged future capital of his secessionist Padania state.

The deal failed because of strong opposition inside Berlusconi's party, but it revealed the existence of a pro-League faction in almost every party. These factions, further developing the appeasement line, insist that if one steals the League's program, it will steal its votes as well. It is not difficult to see, behind such thought, the same oligarchical power which has promoted the League in the first place.

Following this line of thinking, a section of the Venetian political and financial elite has promoted the idea of a "catalan model" for the three northeastern regions, Veneto, Trentino, and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Calling itself the "Northeastern Party," this group pushes a "soft" secession line, demanding ample economic and political autonomy from Rome. Leading figures of this party are: Count Pietro Marzotto, a financier whose father at the end of the war insisted that Italy develop no large industry; New Age businessman Benetton; Giorgio Lago, former editor of the Venice paper *Il Gazzettino*, who promoted the League in the 1980s; Venice Mayor Massimo Cacciari, a follower of Friedrich Nietzsche (Cacciari has recently denied the trade unions the use of St. Mark's Square for an anti-League demonstration). The Northeastern Party is expected to run its candidate for mayor in Venice, too.

Destroy the tentacles of the British Empire

Facing "hard" and "soft" separatists, the government is bound in a Hamlet-like dilemma, to which there is no solution unless pro-national forces abandon completely the underlying parameter of the wrong policy so far followed, that is, free market economy. In Europe, this is called Maastricht, or the single currency project. The budget control policy enforced to fulfill the parameters and the schedule dictated by the Maastricht Treaty makes it virtually impossible to cut the ground out from under the feet of the League. Simple police measures

A 'Southern League' rears its head

Separatist groups in southern Italy will proclaim the "free state of the South," or "Ausonia," at an upcoming meeting organized by the "Independentist Movement-Southern League." According to its spokesmen, it will gather all separatist groups from southern Italy. With utter lack of historical insight, the separatist meeting will take place in the throne room of Friedrich II's castle in Melzi, Basilicata. There, in 1231, Friedrich, the last great humanist leader of the Hohenstaufen, issued the "Constitutiones," i.e., the basic law of his kingdom. Now, separatists are planning to use his premises to launch an entity, which defies the very idea of a nation. The name "Ausonia," as distinguished from Bossi's "Padania," comes from the populations of Greek extraction who inhabited the Magna Grecia colonies in southern Italy.

In a Wagnerian, pagan ceremony parallel to that performed by Bossi last year (when he collected a "holy bottle" of water coming from the source of the Po River), the Southern League will plant a tree using soil "from all the regions of southern Italy." The Southern League is known, by the police and intelligence authorities in Italy, for its connections to Serb war criminal Arkan, who has also travelled to southern Italy distributing large amounts of money to support the project.

alone, albeit necessary at this point, are not going to solve the problem. However, nobody today in Rome has the guts to make the necessary break with such wrong policies, because this would mean a break with "Europe."

Essential to resolving this tangled situation is the attitude of the U.S. administration. Italy-watchers in Washington must realize that the country is being assailed by a foreign power, as the three major newspapers mentioned at the beginning explicitly reported (see box). Stressing the "Unholy League" among Prince Philip, his Dutch accomplices, and former U.S. President George Bush, these media point to an enemy of the Italian nation which is also an enemy of the United States and the Clinton Presidency itself. In the spirit of the postwar alliance between Italy and the United States, and of the historical common heritage of the two nations (Italy is where the modern nation-state was invented; the United States where it was first realized), the Clinton administration must add yet one more reason to the motivations for using its executive power to destroy the British Empire and its worldwide tentacles.