

Leibniz's originality consisted exactly in the combination of what today is divided up into numerous disconnected disciplines, said Frau Hidé Ishiguro of Tokyo, who refreshingly brought together Leibniz's discovery of the infinitesimal calculus and his philosophy of language. His *Ars inveniendi*, his spirit of discovery, was at once a method of speaking, and of discovery. Hans Wussing of Leipzig gave an insight into the learned man's art of invention with the example of mining, to which Leibniz turned again and again. With the aid of wind power he succeeded in siphoning up the seepage of groundwater out from the mining pits, which he then additionally utilized to produce power for the drainage. Naturally, such developments also were accompanied by setbacks, and sometimes hit considerable resistance among some of his sillier contemporaries. For example, the Harz mine management protested against the water drainage equipment, because they had "a considerable loathing for the constant repairs."

Leibniz's ingenuity as an inventor was presented to the symposium by Professor Lehmann of Leipzig. Many years ago, Lehmann had begun to study Leibniz's calculating machine and became convinced that this design really would work. Within the conference he was able to demonstrate a fully functional replica of the "*calculator perpetuum*" to the delighted audience. It worked out every desired problem quickly and correctly, in each of the four basic operations of calculation. Leibniz only lacked a first-class technician who would have been able to carry out his ingenious invention, in Lehmann's estimation. In the original prototype, it was only that the prongs of the ratchet wheels which had to carry over the digits to the next decimal places had been spaced too narrowly, so that the transition to the next order of magnitude often failed to work properly. A good technician would have immediately noticed this in the process of building the machine, as Lehmann demonstrated. With this machine, he was directly able to show just how far into the future Leibniz's ideas continue to operate, because all mechanical calculators until well into our own century have been based upon his idea of the calculating bank.

Scarcely any attention was given at this symposium to Leibniz's economics, even though he had also erected the essential pillars of the field of national economy. In the public question and answer period, the illustrious panel admitted that they were not familiar with his writings on economics. Even the presentations on philosophy were somewhat disappointing, because they were cut off from the real world. The speakers remained imprisoned within the accumulated dust of their learning and treated the subject purely historically. Despite this, we can state that the integrity of scholarship has been maintained to the extent that Leibniz's opposition to Locke, Hobbes, and Descartes was prominently brought out. A wreath-laying at the Leibniz Monument and an expert tour through the small but attractive exhibition on the young Leibniz and the academies in Leipzig and Jena in his time, organized by Detlef Doerin, rounded out this symposium.

Italy

Northern League seeks 'right to secession'

by Claudio Celani

The sensational electoral success of the separatist Northern League in the April 21 Italian general election has opened a turbulent new phase in national political life. Umberto Bossi, the party's leader, has used the protest vote of almost 4 million people to escalate his attack against the nation-state, calling for the "right to secession" of northern Italy from the rest of the country. Bossi made his call at a May 4 meeting of the so-called Northern Parliament, the congress of all the Northern League's elected representatives, which has met regularly in the city of Mantua for the last year. He announced that the Northern Parliament is to be renamed the Parliament of Padania (the Po Valley), giving that name to the region from the Piedmontese Alps to the Adriatic Sea, along which flows Italy's longest river, the Po.

Bossi declared: "The time has come to sit around a table to divide the country. There is no possibility of getting out of the crisis if not through a choice that brings separation from a centralist, colonialist, and racist state. Today . . . we demand the right to secession." Such a right, Bossi said, will be exerted by a Committee for the Liberation of the Po Valley and by a shadow cabinet which he characterized as a "Sun cabinet," implying that it will be highly visible. Bossi compared his project to the split of former Czechoslovakia into two countries: the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Bossi carefully added that he wants to achieve secession of northern Italy through "democratic means," through a referendum and "international recognition." However, guests at the Mantua meeting noticed the appearance of a militia-type organization, a few dozen members of which were dressed in green shirts—like Mussolini's Fascists. Mario Borghesio, a member of Parliament and leader of the "radical" faction of the League, explained to the daily *Corriere della Sera* May 6: "Perspectives [for the Green Shirts] are manifold and still to be explored. One could start with protecting forests, which today are threatened, and progressively give vent to the militants' commitment."

Bossi's statements were preceded by an interview with Roberto Maroni, the League's number two man and a former interior minister in the 1994 cabinet of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Maroni said: "We want the Europe of the re-

gions. . . . We want the dissolution of the national states, in order to regroup them under the protective net of the European Union.” In another interview, given to *Corriere della Sera* on May 8, Maroni said: “There will be strong pressure from the other European peoples. For this reason, we will give birth, next fall, to the Federalist International, with all those in Europe who are fighting to achieve more autonomy or independence.” Maroni made it explicit that the League is counting on austerity to increase popular discontent against the central government: “The referendum phase should start after the summer, when the new government will be seen in action and the burden of the next budget law and of the economic situation will really be felt.”

Bossi’s radical shift has drawn support from his friend Gianfranco Miglio, a political sociologist who first supported the League and then split from it in 1993, when the League seemed to be going in a “moderate” direction. Miglio met Bossi and reported to the press: “I told him: Umberto, go, this is the moment.” “I agree with the Czechoslovakian model proposed by Bossi,” Miglio said. “The First Italian Republic must be swept away. The Constitution must be changed.” He added that if the other forces reject the negotiating table, “there is one way left: the formal request of secession.”

Widespread opposition

Bossi’s announcement has provoked a general chorus of rejection by all political forces, and warnings from many institutional and moral authorities. The head of the Italian Catholic bishops, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, spoke at a meeting of the Italian Bishops Conference on May 6. The unity of the nation, Ruini said, “cannot be denied or compromised.” The Catholic Church, he said, is dedicated to national unity, because it is “rooted in the Christian and Catholic faith.” Without mentioning either Bossi or the League by name, Ruini characterized them as “degenerate expressions” of the “Northern Question”—referring to the discontent of the middle class in the most industrially developed part of Italy, because of the fiscal austerity being imposed by the government. “One must take its authentic aspects and contents seriously,” Ruini said, “without surrendering to its degenerate expressions, which unfortunately are not lacking.” Violating national unity, he added, “would mean going against the possibilities of development and the economic interests of our peoples, both in the North and in the South.”

Indicating Bossi’s apparent political isolation, was a reaction from Antonio Maccanico, a former president of Mediobanca, a merchant bank connected to the City of London. He declared that Bossi should be arrested.

However, that reaction should not delude the reader. Although the general consensus is to reject secession, Bossi has succeeded in achieving one goal: Almost everybody is now in favor of a quick reform that gives more fiscal power to local authorities. This is called “fiscal federalism,” and the issue

discussed is whether the regional governments should be given 30% or 50% of the tax money collected in the region. Even the Catholic Church has accepted this idea, as Cardinal Ruini referred to the necessity of “accepting and making the most of the legitimate demands for recognition” of the role of “local autonomies,” and “more direct and effective responsibility on the part of local management.”

The incoming government, led by Romano Prodi, a friend of international speculator George Soros, is going to move in that direction, as we reported last week. Already, a proposal to reorganize several taxes paid by certain categories of people into one single tax, and to give the money to the regions, has been announced by a special committee. The chairman of the committee is Finance Minister Augusto Fantozzi, but the proposal was inspired by Vincenzo Visco, a member of Prodi’s “Olive Tree” coalition and probable successor to Fantozzi.

Contrary to what some political analysts have written, although Bossi’s call for secession sought to achieve such a political result as the “federalist reform,” the monster he has put into motion is not going to be stopped easily. Instead, one can be sure that the Northern League’s jacobin movement will wait for the weakening effects of decentralization on the central government, to launch yet another attack on the nation-state.

Is the Bush League financing separatists?

by Claudio Celani

In the course of investigating one of the largest money-laundering schemes ever, Italian prosecutors have found evidence linking the criminals to “Bush-Baker associates” in Houston, Texas: specifically, to the law firm of former Bush administration Secretary of State James Baker III. Among those profiting from the \$14 billion money-laundering scheme, was Italian separatist Gianmario Ferramonti, manager of the Northern League’s financial holdings until 1993, and presently in jail on charges of “racketeering” for the purpose of “recycling money.” One of Ferramonti’s accomplices is a banker, Alvaro Robelo, now a Nicaraguan Presidential candidate, with high-level connections to George Bush and Oliver North’s “Contra” networks.

Code-named “Operation Phony Money,” the investigation has been led by Italian prosecutor Davide Monti, based in the city of Aosta, and was carried out with the cooperation of American authorities. Praising the active engagement of the Clinton administration in fighting international organized crime, Dr. Monti told *EIR* that his investigation began after