

The Italian League of The North Since 1979: Genesis And Prerequisites For Creation Of A Regionalist Actor

By

Lilia E. Ilikova,

Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University,

Email: Lilia.Ilikova@gmail.com

Vitale Alessandro

Assistant Professor, Dipartimento di Studi Internazionali, Giuridici e Storico-Politici,

Università degli Studi di Milano Statale

alessandro.vitale@unimi.it

Abstract:

The paper examines the political life of contemporary Italy. The origins, political background, and political activities of the League of the North are examined by the author. The League of the North is a political party founded in 1979 by Umberto Bossi; the original aims of the League were stated as a regionalist aspiration to make the Italian north autonomy in order to develop it as an advanced region. The very name of the new political organisation carries a clear meaning, referring back to the times of the Italian Middle Ages: Umberto Bossi pointed to the symbolic link between the movement he led and the historical 'League', which began in April 1167, when the communes of northern Italy (Milan, Lodi, Cremona, Brescia, Bergamo, Piacenza, Parma, Bologna, Modena, Verona, Venice, Padua, Treviso, Vicenza, Mantua, and Ferrara) decided not to submit to the "despot" Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa and united in the "Lombard League", taking an alliance oath in the monastery of Pontida, where the historic meetings of the political movement are still held.

Keywords: Italy, politics, League of the North, Bossi, autonomisation, regionalism, Padania, Lombard League, Bossi, Salvini,

Introduction

The centre-right movement has been gaining popularity in the Italian political field over the last few years and one of the most popular is the political movement called League (formerly the League of the North). The League of the North is an Italian regionalist political movement founded in the late 1970s. The founder of the League was Umberto Bossi, a student and young social activist. As stated in the chronicles of the League, the impetus for the founding of the new movement came from his meeting with another young social activist, Bruno Salvadori, who at that time was already the leader of the autonomist party of Val d'Aosta "Partito autonomista Union Valdostain" (author's note: Val d'Aosta is a region of Val d'Aosta in Northern Italy which historically was closer to French and Swiss culture and still retains its special flavour today). Umberto Bossi and Bruno Salvadori met in 1979 and it is from this moment that the existence of the "League of the North" as a political unit can be traced. Bruno Salvadori is thought to have influenced Bossi's views, in the sense that Bossi began to shape the autonomist movement. A year later, after Salvadori's untimely death in 1980, Bossi began to form his own political movement, not only and not so much focused on the Val d'Aosta region, as Salvadori had done, as this would have limited the potential participants of the movement, but with the aim of uniting other northern Italian regions as

well. Bossi uses the historical context here and so the newly formed political movement takes the name 'Lega Autonoma Lombarda' - 'League of Lombardy autonomy'. Thus, the first stage in the movement's formation was in the 1980s. The very name of the new political organisation carries a clear connotation, referring back to the Italian Middle Ages: Umberto Bossi indicated a symbolic link between the movement he led and the historical "League", which began in April 1167, when the communes of northern Italy (Milan, Lodi, Cremona, Brescia, Bergamo, Piacenza, Parma, Bologna, Modena, Verona, Venice, Padua, Treviso, Vicenza, Mantua, and Ferrara) decided not to submit to the "despot" Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa and united in the "Lombard League" by taking an alliance oath in the monastery of Pontida - the "The Oath of Pontida" [Chronistoria della Lega Nord, 1].

Methods

This study employs a number of scientific methods: historical (to examine the formation of the League of the North as a political movement), document analysis (using digitised documents from the archives of the political movement), content analysis to analyse the political achievements of the League of the North in elections, static data to illustrate electoral involvement in the various communes of Northern Italy, and discourse analysis to study the speeches and performances of the League of the North leaders during this period.

Results And Discussion

In its formation, the League of the North used historical references to the 12th/13th century, when the so-called Lombard League existed, representing an association of northern Italian cities to fight for their sovereignty and independence from the Holy Roman Empire. The historical link with the Lombard League of the 12th-13th centuries is not accidental and serves as a good mythological basis for the programme of the newly formed modern political party. It is well known that political movements "for sovereignty" tend to take their ideas back to the time of the mythological "Golden Age". In the case of the League, this "golden age" was obviously the time of the Lombard League. The Lombard League existed from 1167 to 1250 and had three main objectives.

1. To fight against the Holy Roman Emperors (a major medieval European supra-state formation dominated by Germanic kings, when one of the emperors' titles was "Germanic King") in defence of their rights and freedoms (often commercial) of the northern Italian cities. This struggle against Germanic domination was waged in order to protect their privileges and existing preferences. The creation of the "League" and unified policy and diplomacy enabled the defeat of the troops of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa and then in 1249 of the forces of Emperor Frederick II Staufen.

2. The second task of the historical "Lombard League" was to assert intra-Italian sovereignty from the Papal See and from the "Papal Region". The power of the papacy extended over the whole of present-day Italy and was at times limited by the power and ambitions of the major feudal lords. Victory over Frederick I Barbarossa led to a weakening of imperial power and, in keeping with the famous saying "the holy place is never empty", the Catholic Church, represented by the Pope, was already claiming the seat. The historical League had also managed to retain sovereignty from the Pope, which was a great achievement for the time.

(3) The League's third task was to protect the economic and commercial interests of the communal cities of northern Italy. As a result of the declining influence and power of the Holy Roman Empire and Rome, as well as local feudal lords, the period of the historical League was characterized by the growing prosperity of the League's member cities. The development of trade and crafts in the region also led to an increase in income, not only for the feudal lords of the region.

If we draw a parallel with the objectives of the historical League, these same objectives are reflected in modern times:

1. An analogy with the assertion of the political and economic sovereignty of contemporary Italy, partly delegated to the European Union (a large supranational entity politically and economically dominated by Germany).

2. Federalization as one of the points of the League's programme, as the League proclaimed the need to seek independence from official Rome and autonomy in governing the region by Lombardy.

The third objective was also transformed into a declaration of the need to preserve the revenues of the industrial North, for Lombardy to independently control its tax and pension system in line with its financial system, and to direct its revenues towards the development of the Northern regions.

The symbolism, that is, the name and even the logo of the new movement, was inspired by the same "historic League", and the symbol as such is the stylised Alpine sun.

The main declared aim of the "Lombardy "League" was already in 1980 to fight for the autonomy of the northern regions of Italy (historically part of Padania)¹. It was in this vein that Bossi developed this political movement. One of the main characteristics of the League was a kind of opposition to the Italian North to official Rome, as well as to the Italian South, which the League accused of plundering the North, without any benefit to the South. The League declared a desire for the federalisation of Italy, no longer taking into account autonomy, and for greater autonomy. Bossi planned to develop a new political movement in opposition to the "centralist state". Opposition to the South was expressed, among other things, in rather harsh rhetoric towards Southerners. Here again we see a reference to the historical "League", which fought against Roman domination in the person of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa.

As the chronicles of the "League" point out, in the late 1970s both the class struggle and the ideological confrontation between the "left" and the "right" in politics had already lost their virulence/involvement and relevance. In general, Italian politics of those years is described by the representatives of the "League" as "consociationalism", involving state governance based on a compromise of different parties, a division of "political revenues", the involvement of intermediaries and representatives of different forces and groups. This system was initiated by two blocs of left- and right-wing parties because, in a sense, the country was divided ideologically. In fact, the socio-political situation in Italy at the beginning of the 1980s was far from the most stable: terrorism, the Red Brigades, corruption, the ever-growing national debt, all undermined the status quo and the credibility of the political establishment, and created a space for the emergence of new parties and movements that met the demands of the population.

The founders of the League argued that Rome's current public policy was to the detriment of the Italian North. But at the time, there was no analysis of the plundering of the country's resources (and especially of the difference in payments for public services between the North and the South). Also rarely highlighted was the important fact that over 90% of the Italian bureaucracy comes from the centre and the south of the country. Bossi, as the founder and ideologue of the movement, therefore proposed to change the current situation of a 'compromise division of power' between the 'left' and the 'right'. Moreover, he claimed that there were essentially no longer*** both "left" and "right" in the Italian establishment (he also did not call the League left or right, defining the League as a political movement rather than as a party, an idea that was also used later by the popular political Five Star Movement, which also rejected the "right/left" dichotomy in defining its political affiliation [Ilikova, 2019]). Umberto Bossi believed that such policies would lead to the deepest crisis in the Italian economy, even without the possibility of joining the European Union, and instead proposed the project of an Italian "Confederation". Almost immediately this idea was rejected and replaced by the idea of a Federation "as a peaceful coexistence of peoples". The idea of a federative structure has been voiced by the "League" up to the present day, despite the fact that it has not been realised. In fact, no one in the League knew what a federal system was, also because the subject of federalism was excluded for 150 years by Italian libraries and universities, as it contradicted the centralised unitarianism of the dominant culture. Speaking of the "League" and the ideas of federalism in the ideology of the "League", it should be noted that the idea of Italian federalism had long been promoted in the sphere of Italian politics at the time. The Italian politician and senator Gianfranco Miglio was rightly called the main ideologist of Italian federalism. Gianfranco Miglio advocated constitutional reform in Italy, reform in favour of federalism and granting greater rights to the Italian North. Miglio was an Italian senator elected as an independent expert in the Northern League, a political scientist, a fairly well-known politician, and a professor at the Catholic University in Milan. He was Dean of the Faculty of Political Science for 30 years. G. Miglio was very sympathetic to the new young political movement, which, in fact, supported the same ideas that he had promoted throughout his life. After a decade of all kinds of obstruction (from 1980 to 1990), during which the political class opposed his proposals for constitutional reform, and despite the broad support of the masses, already tired of a corrupt and inefficient political system at the time, it seemed to Miglio that there was finally a political movement capable of supporting his reforms. For Miglio, it was also an opportunity for revenge. As an influential politician and public figure, it was he who actively supported the young movement, which seemed to him promising and budding. Miglio's support had a significant impact on the development of the League. It is also important that Miglio gave it a presentable and cultured appearance. In 1990/1991, in order to support a promising political movement that agreed - even if only in words - with federalism and a policy of economic liberalism, Gianfranco Miglio established the Bruno Salvadori Foundation (the same person who tragically died at a young age in the 1980s, an associate of Bossi and co-founder of the Lombard League with Umberto Bossi). It was a private foundation, and some influential Italian businessmen were involved in its creation and funding. For example, it was supported by the founder of Esselunga (the famous and third largest Italian supermarket chain), billionaire Bernardo Caprotti, who was a liberalist, tired of the state policy of promoting cooperatives. The foundation carried out scientific research on federalism, was located in the centre of Milan and collected the richest library of books in America and other federal countries (as it was impossible to collect them in Italy); the books were subsequently divided among the members of the foundation and the researchers. The foundation was named after Bruno Salvadori for 2 years, then it was renamed "Foundation for Federal Italy " (Fondazione per un'Italia Federale). At the Foundation, Miglio and his collaborators developed the Model of

Federal Constitution for Italians. However, after 1994, Miglio was cut from the League because of numerous attacks against him which appeared in interviews that Bossi gave to the main Italian newspapers (because of the popularity that Miglio had among the people: Bossi and his assistants envied him because the media listened to Miglio much more than to them). In fact, he only stayed within the political movement for four years. In 1993, Bossi had already presented the main points of the federal reform proposed by Miglio at the Assago Congress as a "provocation" rather than a serious academic project. In 1994, the Ministry of Institutional Reforms was assigned to a member of the League (Speroni) who was completely ignorant of constitutional problems, instead of an expert on constitutional problems like Miglio. Detachment was inevitable. (Miglio 1994; Facco 2010).

In addition, the League chronicles point that bribery was widespread in the existing Italian socio-political and economic order of the 1980s, which forced many businessmen to stop working if they were not going to indulge the "bribery", so the fight against bribery as a manifestation of the governance crisis also becomes one of the priorities of the "League". The action of the Milan judges (1992-1993) against rampant corruption, through numerous arrests, brought great support to the League and allowed it to develop.

Summary

The formation of the "League" as a political movement went through a number of stages. As mentioned above, the first stage in the formation of the movement was in the 1980s. In 1981, work began on the formation of the first regional organisational cell in Bossi's home town of Varese in northern Italy. Initially small in number, it quickly became very active, recruiting new supporters and launching an advocacy newspaper, explaining the terms and concepts of the new "League". This work gradually achieves its purpose, the ideas of northern federalism attract more and more new supporters and new League party cells emerge in the main towns of the province of Lombardy.

At the time, the League is not defined as a party but "a political movement, since it is neither left-wing nor right-wing" [Chronica della Lega]. This is an important observation, since traditionally the "League of the North" has been perceived as a right-wing party, and the party itself is part of a coalition of "centre-right". "For the 'League', the initial period is characterised as expansive, aimed at attracting supporters, in words involving 'the whole people of Lombardy in the political struggle against the insatiable and intolerable Roman domination'" [Chronica della Lega]. The following year, 1982, the first 12-point programme of the "League" (then the "Lombardy Autonomy League") also appears (author's translation).

So, according to its political programme, the young "League" stands:

1. For the self-government of Lombardy, for the transition from a centralised state to a federal state that respects all the peoples that make it up.

2. For the affirmation of our (Lombardy - author's note) culture, history, language of Lombardy, our social and moral values. The League is against any kind of impingement on the national identity in Lombardy. Because next to the tricolour is always the flag of the historical nation - Lombardy (red cross on white background).

3. For the advantage of Lombardy in the distribution of work, housing, social assistance, financial contributions. For tax equality for all regions, so that no more schemes

like "Amnesty" and "Ticket to Drugs" arise*¹, which cost half as much in the South as in Lombardy.

4. For the results of labour and taxes of Lombardy to be controlled and administered by Lombardians, using a financial system as operates in Trentino and South Tyrol.

5. For the protection of the proportional development of industry, crafts and agriculture: the inalienable heritage of the labour and civilization of the people of Lombardy.

6. For a Lombardy pension system that would guarantee the inviolability of our workers' pensions, (whose integrity) is threatened by the numerous disability pensions prevalent in the south.

7. For the administration and schools to come back under Lombardian management, as most teachers come from the South, where job-hunting in public structures is the norm.

8. For our boys (young men from Lombardy - author's note) to be able to do their military service in Lombardy, as they do in South Tyrol.

9. For the justice system in Lombardy to efficiently and with adequate instruments, to combat crime, the mafia and racketeering.

10. Against the destruction and the sale of our territory, collected and protected by previous generations, our ancestors. This is the legacy that we must give holistically to our next generations.

11. Against the opportunistic mentality of the Roman parties, against the further degradation of Lombardy.

12. For a Europe based on autonomy, federalism, respect and solidarity between peoples, and between Lombardy and any other nationⁱⁱ (note - author's translation).

Taking into account the fact that the "people of Lombardy" is a collective concept, it is not united into a single nation, moreover, the League of the North member regions are not a single national group either and they cannot be called ethnically one group either, the above 12 points of the League's programme are the manifesto of a nationalist movement whose aim is to acquire national sovereignty. In the case of the League, however, we are talking about a phenomenon called "regionalism", which applies as much as possible to Italy, where the division into regions is traditionally significant and has an impact on the political field.

This is when Bossi realises that the emphasis on ethnicity alone cannot unite northerners and achieve concrete political results, so he turns to socio-economic themes and the distance between the North and the South. The North is defined in his rhetoric as 'rich' and the South as 'needy'. Umberto Bossi, a brilliant orator and charismatic leader, adopts this rhetoric and, without resorting to complex constructions, explains to potential voters in the North the causes of the economic distress by appealing to the thesis of Roman pressure, unbalanced economic policies and the need to "liberate the Lombard people, who are born free but chained together". In this way Bossi explains to voters that official Rome is pursuing a policy of "dispersal of resources", redistributing the income of the "rich" Italian North in favour of the "needy and subsidised" South. Moreover, reference is made to the rescue of the

¹ Social assistance schemes designed to help the poor in the southern regions (author's note).

"disastrous South"², and the Southerners themselves are described as less industrious than the Northerners. In addition, he points to the embezzlement of funds by the "local rulers" in Rome and calls it robbery. At the same time, the first programme article published by the newspaper Autonomous Lombardy defines that "the people of Lombardy are a mass deprived of political identity, in crisis, a people deprived of hope. Lombardy is no longer Lombardy and Padania is no longer Padania" (the newspaper defines Padania in the first article as consisting of Lombardy, Piedmont, Liguria, Val D'Aosta, Veneto, Trentino, Alto Adige, Trieste, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche') (author's translation).

Gradually Bossi's efforts begin to bear fruit: "The League formed more and more local party cells, recruited new members, and northerners began to take notice of Rome's ineffective policies and began to support ideas for the autonomy of northern Italy. "The League contested the elections and its first results in 1987 were modest: the League obtained only 2.7% of the vote but Bossi was elected to the Senate. The next elections were held in 1992 before which the movement was transformed into a political party and the League obtained 8.7% of the vote in the elections for the Chamber of Deputies; the role of the party on the Italian political scene has been growing ever since. Then, in 1994 (after the Clean Hands operation), against the background of a deep political crisis, a new coalition is formed called "Casa Libre" which the Italian millionaire Silvio Berlusconi, leader of the "Forward, Italy" party, invites the "League of the North". The new coalition wins the elections and the "League" of the North enters government. This success is largely due to Italian fatigue and disillusionment with the political establishment, where the names of many politicians are associated with corruption. So when young and ambitious politicians come in, voicing the rhetoric of anti-corruption and the need for economic reform and social change, voters cast their votes with them. However, a year later in 1995 the governing coalition collapses due to the withdrawal of the League and early elections are called in 1996. The reasons for the League's resignation are not entirely clear, but it can be assumed that the leaders of the ruling coalition, Silvio Berlusconi and Umberto Bossi, disagreed on the federal structure of Italy. While for Bossi this was a key and fundamental issue, for Berlusconi federalism may have seemed dubious, besides, the pragmatic Berlusconi may not have been ready to make such radical changes. The rhetoric of the League of the North, on the other hand, continues to be popular among voters, becoming the Party for the secession of Padania, and in the early elections of 1996 the League won 10% of the vote, nevertheless remaining in opposition until the 2001 elections.

The modern for phase of the League's development begins in the 2010s, when the League underwent significant changes. In 2011, party leader Umberto Bossi left his post in the Italian government, which is partly attributed to the discovery of eavesdropping equipment in his office in Rome. According to another version, health problems (since 2004) prevented Bossi from continuing as secretary of the movement. Moreover, for several years now, the League's ideology has been increasingly oriented towards the traditionalism of the New European Right, nationalist and neo-fascist, anti-liberal positions, completely forgetting federalism or separatism, in an attempt to win political support in the South. Bossi himself allowed his fellow party members to persuade him to make this ideological turn. Later, a scandal erupted within the League itself over the disappearance of the party coffers (Tizian, Vergine 2019), amidst this scandal, Bossi also resigned as secretary. Bossi was replaced by his young deputy Matteo Salvini, whose nomination in the intra-party primaries was supported by the majority of the Legists.

² «Terremotato» - catastrophic - affected by natural disasters, floods, fires, earthquakes.

Realising the need to move forward, Salvini is betting on attracting votes not only from the North but also from the South of Italy, so the "League of the North" is transformed into the "Salvini Premier League", already a national movement, while Salvini himself focuses on migration rhetoric, combating illegal migration, Euro-scepticism and prioritising national interests over those of Italy over pan-European interests. It is this rhetoric that allows the League to win votes and, as part of a centre-right coalition, to succeed in the 2018 elections, in which the League re-enters government, forming a coalition "government of change" together with the Five Star Movement, and League leader Matteo Salvini becomes deputy prime minister of Italy. In 2018, internal disharmony between the M5S and the League is brewing as a result of disagreements and the ongoing, so-called post-electoral campaign during Salvini's tenure as Italy's deputy prime minister and interior minister. These tensions were particularly acute in the summer of 2019 following the M5S's disappointing results in the European Parliament elections and the lack of agreement on the construction of the Franco-Italian railway in northern Italy. Having gained an advantage in the European Parliament elections and feeling more support from the electorate, Salvini escalates tensions with the M5S, effectively leading the coalition to collapse, in order to hold snap elections in which he was confident of success. However, this manoeuvre failed, as the M5S, far from confident about its chances in the snap elections, opted for a new coalition agreement with its long-standing antagonist, the Democratic Party. As a result, the League withdrew from the governing coalition and is now actively building up its popularity among the electorate, still promoting ideas of all-Italian nationalism and anti-migrant rhetoric completely opposed to those that the League espoused before 2000. At the same time, it would be wrong to describe the League as heir to a unique and unbroken history, as some analysts do, even in Italy. In fact, since 1999 its external representation, composition, and objectives have changed dramatically, becoming the opposite of what it originally was. For example, Gianfranco Miglio was radically against the expansion of the League of the North/Lega Nord to the south, and this was even the reason for the break with Bossi. Furthermore, Miglio's ideas were totally incompatible with the nationalist and Unitarian concepts of the forces that had entered the League since the 2000s and would have been on radically opposite positions to the League of Salvini, the bearer of 'sovereignty', which is the new face of Italian nationalism as opposed to Italian federalism.

Conclusions

The League's success is also likely in the next Italian elections, given that anti-migrant and Eurosceptic sentiments alternately produce a significant consensus in a state of permanent political and economic crisis, with an ageing population and youth unemployment at 50%. Moreover, Euroscepticism towards Brussels-based Europe, on which all the disadvantages of Italy's disastrous structural crisis are being blamed, resonates with the most socially disadvantaged sections of the population. League leader Salvini, now a symbol of sovereignty in Europe, has relied on social networks as a propaganda tool. He very quickly understands from social media the needs, the complaints, the moods of the public and adapts his policies to them. This is also the reason for his popularity and the popularity of the whole League.

Salvini's League rhetoric always has "guilt" to use: from-immigrants with their "invasion" to gypsies. They can be turned into enemies, when necessary. Salvini also continues to use Christianity for propaganda purposes. Aid to poor Italians (as Golden Dawn did in Greece) has recently emerged, thanks to an increasingly deep economic crisis. The political discourse of the League then increasingly uses 'conspiracy' (the constant search for

conspiracies) to easily explain international problems and to spread propaganda without taking the facts into account. However, despite this repetitive rhetoric, since 2000 the League's movement programme has no longer had fixed points. It has thus been able to adapt to political circumstances by changing and supporting even talking points that contradict those inherent in the original, but this is the secret of the League's current success.

This paper has been supported by the Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program.

Bibliography

- Biorcio Roberto (2010), *LarivincitadelNord. La Lega dalla contestazione al governo*. Laterza, Roma-Bari.
- Bordon Frida (1997), *Lega Nord im politischen System Italiens: Produkt und Profiteur der Krise*. Deutscher Universitäts Verlag, Wiesbaden.
- Cento Bull Anna, Gilbert Mark (2001), *The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- De Lucia Michele (2010), *Dossier Bossi-Lega Nord*. Kaos Edizioni, Milano.
- Diamanti Ilvo (1996), *Il male del Nord. Lega, localismo, secessione*. Donzelli, Roma.
- Di Sotto Nicoletta (2014), *Tra protesta e governo. Successi, trasformazioni e crisi della Lega Nord*. Editoriale Scientifica, Milano.
- Facco Leonardo (2010), *Umberto Magno. La vera storia dell'Imperatore della Padania*. Aliberti Editore, Reggio Emilia.
- Gatti Claudio (2019), *I demoni di Salvini*, Chiarelettere, Milano.
- Gohr Antonia (2001), *Die Lega Nord. Eine Herausforderung für Italien: Zwischen Föderalismus und Separatismus*. Lang, Peter International Academic Publishers, Bern.
- Gold Thomas W. (2016), *The Lega Nord and the Contemporary Politics in Italy*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Huyseune Michel (2006), *Modernity and Secession: The Social Sciences and the Political Discourse of the Lega Nord in Italy*. Berghahn Books, Oxford.
- Knoglf Franziska (2010), *Die Lega Nord. Eine rechts extreme Partei?* Grin Verlag, München.
- Miglio Gianfranco (1994) *Io, Bossi e la Lega. Diario segreto dei miei quattro anni sul Carroccio*. Mondadori, Milano.
- Milani Marco (2013), *Lega Nord. Gli imprenditori della paura*. Smart Edizioni, Verona.
- Passarelli Gianluca, Tuorto Dario (2018), *La Lega di Salvini. Estrema destra di governo*. Il Mulino, Bologna.
- Prosch Stefan (2007), *Die Föderalismusdebatte der Lega Nord in den 90er Jahren*. Grin Verlag, München.
- Tarditi Valeria (2013), *Tra europeismo e euroscetticismo. I casi dello Scottish National Party, del Bloque Nacionalista Galego e della Lega Nord*. Editoriale Scientifica, Milano.
- Tizian Giovanni, Vergine Stefano (2019), *Il libro nero della Lega*, Laterza, Bari-Roma.
- Weißflog Anita (2007), *Die Forderung der Lega Nord. Der Aufschrei Norditaliens zur Neuordnung des Zentralstaates oder nur ein Deckmantel für faschistische Propaganda?* Grin Verlag, München.
- Zaslove Andrej (2011), *The Re-invention of the European Radical Right: Populism, Regionalism, and the Italian Lega Nord*. McGill-Queens University Press.
- Cronistoria della Lega Nord 2017 leganord.org
"Quaderni Padani" (<https://archivio.associazionegilbertooneto.org/>)

ⁱ Bossi himself wrote of the League in *Il vento del Nord* (The North Wind) that it is a political movement "like a child of love, which is the result of the work of thousands of men and women who love each other, who love the city in which they live, who feel a sense of belonging to their nation. The child has grown up and learned to walk on its own feet, but it will take more work to make it an adult and realise its aspirations". [Croniche 1979-1984].

^{ii**1} Vocabolario Garzanti

2 Federazione: unione politica di stati che mantengono in diversi settori le proprie leggi particolari, ma hanno una costituzione comune e un unico governo - Vocabolario Garzanti

3 Reato del pubblico ufficiale che abusando del suo ufficio, fa dare o promettere denaro o altra utilità a sé o ad altri.

4 La Lega non è un partito perché non rappresenta una parte politica (destra o sinistra), bensì un Movimento politico.

Authors:

Lilia E. Ilikova,

Ph.D. of Sociology, Associate Professor of the Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University, Head of the Center of European Studies. She graduated as specialist in Sociology at Kazan University and then continued her postgraduate study in Kazan State University and Milan Catholic University. She later received her Ph.D. in Sociology in Kazan University with the Ph.D. thesis on Nationalism studies that is the main research interests. She has research experience with other research institute such as Algarve University (Portugal), Giessen University (Germany), Milan Catholic University (Italy). She is author of 1 book, 3 monographs, number of articles and conference papers.

Alessandro Vitale

PhD, Professor at the Department of International, Legal and Historical-Political Studies, University of Milan Italy, Milan.

Research interests: international and regional politics, history of Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltic states, as well as post-Soviet Russia; ethnology and international relations. He is a visiting professor at a number of universities, including the University of Hawaii, Jagiellonian University and the University of Vilnius. Author of more than 50 monographs and several scholarly papers.