The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics

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The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics

Anna Cento Bull
Professor of Italian Studies
University of Bath

and

Mark Gilbert
Lecturer in Italian Politics
University of Bath

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Preface

This book originated in conversations between colleagues who had each worked on the Lega Nord in the past and had adopted different perspectives. Talking the subject over, however, we discovered that our understanding of the Lega phenomenon was essentially complementary, in so far as it enabled us to cover its political, economic and social dimensions. We were determined from the outset to study the Lega as a political force which emerged in a specific socio-economic context and at a particular time in the evolution of Italian politics. By working together we could aspire to do this with a thoroughness that neither of us would have achieved without the other.

The book develops themes on which the authors have in some cases previously worked and published. Some sections of Chapter 3 previously appeared in an article by Anna Bull entitled 'The Politics of Industrial Districts in Lombardy: Replacing Christian Democracy with the Northern League', *The Italianist*, 3, 1993. The bibliography contains all our relevant publications on the Northern Question and Italian politics.

We have had the benefit of much insightful criticism from colleagues and friends in both Britain and Italy and wish especially to thank Gino Bedani, Roger Eatwell, Sergio Fabbrini, Salvatore Vassallo and Dwayne Woods. Palgrave's external reader made a number of constructive and pertinent criticisms to our original manuscript that had the effect of causing us to rewrite many things and to rethink our position even when we disagreed with his/her comments. The book is unquestionably better because of this.

The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation provided us with funds to carry out interviews with business and political leaders in northern Italy in June–October 2000. We wish to thank all the people we interviewed and others who made such interviews possible. In particular, we are very grateful to Maurizio Amenduni, Angelo Bendotti, Giuseppe Benigni, Franco Benincasa, Oliviero Bergamini, Giuliana Bertacchi, Massimo Bianconi, Emilia Borghi, Ermenegildo Borghi, Massimo Cacciari, Maurizio Fistarol, Marco Formentini, Eugenio Lapenna, Mario Moretti Polegato, Elio Mosele, Barbara Pezzini, Alberto Sciumè, Carlo Veronesi and Gianni Zonin. Anna Bull also wishes to thank the British Academy for an earlier research grant which enabled her to carry out a series of interviews with

Lombard small-businesspeople and Lega activists and representatives in Lombardy.

Finally, we would both like to thank Jill O'Brien and Chris Williams in the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages for their practical support. Our efforts were also greatly helped by the understanding of our respective spouses, David Bull and Luciana Gottardi. The arrival of Mark Gilbert's son, Francisco, came in 1999, in the middle of our project. He is an Italian and European citizen – but will never be a citizen of Padania.

ANNA BULL
MARK GILBERT
Bath