

ROL

UNDER THE AXE OF ITALIAN FASCISM

By

DR. EDUARD REUT-NICOLUSSI

Translated by

K. L. MONTGOMERY

Fascism is one of the most extraordinary phenomena of present-day Europe. This book, which deals primarily with the tragedy of the Tyrol, gives us a vivid glimpse of Fascism at work, shows us Fascism deliberately stamping out native tradition and culture in South Tyrol; German schools were closed, priests forbidden to pray or hear confession in German, shop signs were translated, names—even on old gravestones!—were Italianized, murders and assaults on the German population went unpunished. Dr. Reut-Nicolussi was a member of the Bozen bar and of the Tyrol Parliament, and leader of the People's Party in Tyrol. He tells the story of his country after a secret war, over the new frontiers, and draws a picture of the most deplorable conditions in the once

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**TYROL UNDER THE AXE
OF ITALIAN FASCISM**



DR. E. REUT-NICOLUSSI

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FOREWORD

I remember it as if it were to-day.

A slender young fellow from the Lower Inn Valley, blue-eyed and fair-haired, stood beside me in the half-destroyed trench. The dark shadows of a dark night, filled with the Shadow of Death, retreated before the morning light flooding the Dolomite crags, behind our position, as with molten gold; speechless and rapt, we stood in the unwonted pause of the fight before the ethereal scene. Insensibly a cry broke from me, "This land is worth shielding with our bodies!" That same evening, after renewed fighting, was I, myself with a shattered arm, borne past the corpse of my young comrade.

Now, as I begin this book on Good Friday, 1928, my thoughts linger on that fallen lad and the life sacrificed by him in the Tyrol mountains. I think also of those other dead on the Tyrol Front, over whose bodies the foe did not succeed in pressing onwards into their country, until in the armistice we had had orders to stop hostilities.

Those thousands of dead stark on the borders of Tyrol had not been filled with dreams of conquest; rather had their souls been dedicated to the defence of the Homeland, such dedication as later misfortune did nothing to shake. A Viennese who himself has stood with us in those Tyrol trenches recently wrote to me from America: "I have had the good fortune to take part in the War for the one undoubtedly righteous cause in the whole European turmoil, that unspoilt part of Europe, the German Alps, unspoilt, and as I believe, the noblest."

The lofty cause for which we wagered our lives in the trenches lies in the dust. Not alone the freedom of the Tyrolese Motherland has been lost, but the human dignity of her people has been made the plaything of alien wantonness and malice, her patriots go in mourning and bitterness. Yet underneath the ashes is a smouldering glow. Despite

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the oppression meted out to the Tyrolese, not a man among them in the last ten years of foreign domination has for an instant thought of surrendering the country. Belief in the Homeland—in the sense of a Tyrol one and undivided—is as it were a heritage of History, innate in the soul of a people. This is why the Innsbruck provincial Government has still preserved the name of Tyrol for the truncated remnant on the Inn and the Drave still left to Austria, and has chiselled on the walls beside the grave of the “Sand” innkeeper, Andreas Hofer, the certainty of our birthright. No less immovably is rooted that certainty in the hearts of the South Tyrolese; the heavier the blows of the Italian rain down on us, the more intensely burn our longings and the firmer grows our conviction—“The hour of our freedom will strike at last.” All that we have gone through—subjugation and spiritual deprivation on the one hand, growth of indignation and bitterest estrangement on the other—well deserve to be described after the lapse of these ten long years by a Tyrolese. Paul Herre has written an excellent book on the subject, indispensable for the student of facts, but none the less a voice from the battlefield—the voice of the persecuted Tyrol Homeland—is not superfluous.

May it, then, speak to my own people, the people of South Tyrol, as also to the whole Teutonic nation, who may well take pride in this mountain race. To him also with instinctive love for liberty and hatred for the “Might is Right” policy, may this illustration through facts—of which its reliability is its only merit—bring vividly before his eyes that frightful caricature made by the “World Peace” of those ideals for which all that was best in youth offered itself up in the World War.

If, then, one honourable man or one spirited woman, stirred by the knowledge that a brave and loyal people are enduring, guiltless though they be, all shameful indignities, should enrol themselves on the side of the Tyrol struggle, these pages will not have been written in vain.

E. R-N.

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NOTE.—In the following pages the word *Deutsch* is necessarily translated as "German", there being no precise English equivalent to express the peculiar racial development of the 'German' peoples. It has therefore been thought better to use "German" in various passages, though as Dr. Reut-Nicolussi himself has pointed out in a footnote, in his pages the expression has a totally non-political and wider sense than what is usually ascribed to the word 'German'.

TYROL UNDER THE AXE OF ITALIAN FASCISM

PART ONE OCCUPATION

I. MEIN LAND TIROL!

When the poet Mosen composed our National Song, *Zu Mantua in Banden*, his musical genius prompted him to send the name of his country reverberating through each of the verses—*Ade, mein Land Tirol*. This phrase, quick with memories of the past, sends a wealth of sensations through me whenever I hear it. It rings out like a proud yet mournful melody; the rustle of mountain forests and the thunder of avalanches, the sullen tumult below in green glacier crevices and the gay shout of herd-boys mingle in the words, conjuring up for me the whole incomparable panorama of the Alps from Karwendel to Latemar. Often, as I stood on the Talfer bridge at Bozen, it would seem to me as if the softly swelling mountain ranges of Attica could claim no pre-eminence over the blue ridges of the Mendel or the highlands of Eppan. The splendour of the Rosengarten in its moments of flame finds its most striking expression in the words of a peasant of Gries, "As a bride on the marriage morning".

Yet mightier than all beauty is the spell of the Homeland in its Teutonic past: the sagas of the war with the Goths and of Dietrich the hero, the loyalty for Duke Friedrich and the love bestowed upon the Last of the Knights, as also the story of those bloody conflicts waged with Napoleon and his allies, likewise once and again with Italy, that the Tyrol might remain as she ever was and desired to be—the rocky eyrie of Freedom.

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Tyrol, that proud yet saddest melody; although in the Great War every tenth man was offered up by her—forty thousand fallen—yet the Fates swept us into misfortune.

Tyrol, the land and folk they please me well . . .

sang Ernst Moritz Arndt. More than among other nations the free peasant farmers, who in the early Middle Ages were reckoned on a level with the nobility, rank as the backbone and the best representatives of the country. It is impossible to imagine Tyrol without its peasantry. Tradesmen or manufacturers, merchants or clerks have no cause to dispute this, since these themselves spring from the soil and may well hope that Tyrol towns and markets may ever continue to find the source of their strength in mother-earth. Life is by no means easy for the Tyrolese peasant. In the grey of morning he opens his doors, to see after the cattle or to begin harvesting; in bitter January he drives over icy cart-tracks with heavy pine-trees to the valley; in burning July must he tend the vineyards. The cliffs of Tyrol develop muscles of steel in the edelweiss-seeker, as the eagle keenness of sight with which the marksman pursues the lost game. Ah, so long as faithful peasant mothers are suffered to rear each her flock of children, sound in body and limb, on milk and barley bread, untouched in spirit with the rosary in their fingers, it is God's truth that the Land Tyrol cannot be false to itself, a lost cause.

The last letter of Andreas Hofer, written some hours before his death, is to my mind the best illustration of such a type of life. Addressing his friend Pühler in Neumarkt, the hero writes:

DEAREST COMRADE,

It is God's will that here in Mantua I am to exchange the temporal for the eternal. But, God be thanked for His Divine Mercy, to me it seems as though I were being conducted to something else, farther on. God will continue His Grace to me down to the last moment, that through it I may come thither where my soul with all His elect shall everlastingly rejoice and where in God's

Presence I may pray for all—especially those for whom I am bound so to pray, as for yourself and your dear wife. May all good friends pray also for me, thus aiding me out of the flames of fire if I yet must atone in Purgatory.

Let my dear one arrange the Mass for the Dead in St. Martin's, where all relatives shall receive soup and meat together with a measure of wine at the inn. The goodwife must make out her reckoning with all honesty, that I may have no cause to regret; the money which I had upon me I have already distributed to the poor.

Farewell all, until we meet in Heaven, there to live without end.

May all those of Passeier and all of my acquaintance be mindful of me in prayer, and may the hostess of the *Sand* not grieve overmuch. I will pray for all before God.

Ade, vile world; death to me seems so light a thing that I shed no single tear.

Written at five o'clock in the morning. At nine I journey with the help of all the Saints to God.

MANTUA, February 20, 1810.

ANDRE HOFER, who loved thee in life of Sand in Passeier,

In the Name of the Lord will I undertake the journey.

With greater calm or assurance has no philosopher ever given up his life. In his prime, soon after he had attained the heights of honour and success, the innkeeper of Sand hails death on the scaffold as a friend. It is a proof the more of the marvellous strength latent in Tyrolese faith!

The Tyrol with the tradition and type of life here depicted is the German-speaking Tyrol. It will soon be the turn of the Italian-speaking Tyrol in these pages, and here only one thing need be said on that subject—the country south of Salurn (or Salorno) was one and undivided from the rest, so long as the Pragmatic Sanction prevailed throughout the kingdom of the Hapsburgs. To-day, the bond of union having been rent asunder, Italian Tyrol must find out its own path; we can no longer guide it. Our present subject is that region which in 1790 was termed "Tyrol proper", which by every right of the law of nations includes for us the soil from the bastions of the defile of Salurn. It was peacefully won by

the axe and plough of German settlers, and, before the enemy grasped it, all in it was German—castles and convents, churches and yeomen's holdings, customs and speech. "For centuries the *Salurner Klause* has formed the language boundary."

Even the four valleys of the Ostladin lived in such wise; and, had not countless students of the Past (more especially Otto Stolz) made as much visibly apparent, the mania in Italy of to-day for the undoing and transformation of this South Tyrol would in itself be a sufficient proof that here is the question of a national rape, of which the aggressors desire as speedily as may be to wipe out all tell-tale traces.

How such a thing came to pass, and what to-day is happening there, shall now be related.

2. "AND COMES THE FOE WITHIN THE LAND"

Under the clear November heavens lay the Etschtal (Adige valley) at midnight, yet far more awake than even in broadest daylight when vine-dressers' carts and horses teem among the vineyards. A people in flight crowd about a legion camp-fires and wait on the morning; the Branzoll (Bronzólo) railway station is in flames; on the highroad between Trent (Trento) and Bozen (Bolzano) leaderless columns jostle each other, lorries, country carts, riders and foot-passengers, cannon and ambulances, all straining every sinew northwards. The War is over—"Home, home!" there is no more need to stand fast and none who desire it. I myself on an army wagon of my detachment was in the midst of the rush. From Trent to Bozen the distance is fifty-nine kilometres (roughly speaking, under thirty-seven miles). Yesterday—November 2nd, 1918—we had started at dusk and already had been seven hours on the road, the column once and again stopping—here a horse falling, there a motor coming to a standstill, or

a man crashing from a wagon down under the wheels, everywhere tumult and cries for help. Then once more forward. None so much as think of the enemy, far in the rear and no longer a peril, for the War is over and all are for home! After us the deluge!

In the grey of morning we arrived at Bozen. Weary to death after the wild orgy of fight, we threw ourselves at dawn on a bench in the Hôtel Austria. So this, then, was the end! As my eyelids sank, two lines occurred to me:

Pass all the rapture and the pain together,
Pass from the world, and lo! the whole is nought! . . .

Such a fall of the curtain was, indeed, not surprising for those who had had ears to hear and eyes to see. Ten years before, in Trent, I had heard the simple folk openly saying, "*Se na volta el Franzele more. . .*" (When once Franz Josef closes his eyes, then will Austria crumble into ruins.) At first the War had worked like a champion's elixir; in Prague as in Trieste once more the "God save . . ." rang out exultantly around colours black and yellow—for the last time. The longer the War endured, the quicker crumbled the cement between the crevices undermining the foundations of Austria. When in autumn 1917 I with two like-minded comrades, Anton Klotz and Pankraz Kruckenhauser, had joined the reserve battalion in Vöcklabruck, we had drawn up a memorial to a group of Austrian deputies, declaring that any chance of saving Austria from the total exhaustion of her national forces would be possible only were the War ended in the coming winter, 1917-18.

In the spring of 1918 I was transferred to the Eleventh Army detachment at Levico. Whenever, as I did many times, I beheld a field battalion from the Front returning after several months' service of digging in the trenches—hollow-eyed, pale, and ragged, with paper taking the place of leather in their outfit—I would wonder over two things: first, the

indestructible heroism of these *Triarii* of the World War, and next the military incompetency of the enemy, who for all their full complement of divisions could not succeed in breaking down the firing-lines of living corpses. Three fighting aeroplanes and no more still rose from our Eleventh Army over heavy enemy squadrons, and one day a corps commandant from the Seven Communes dryly announced: "This afternoon between two and five o'clock the enemy artillery delivered 1,500 shots on our entrenchments, answered by our batteries with 50 shots on the enemy entrenchments opposite—odds, thirty to one!"

Nevertheless, our south front held its own, even when in September the Bulgarians laid down their arms. When I read that, I was returning to Headquarters. Breaking the journey at Bozen, I sought out some friends. "Now comes the end. Look out, for it will be the turn of the diplomatic struggle, for South Tyrol as well!"

In the middle of October, Hungarian and Czech regiments practically went on strike. The Emperor in that unlucky manifesto, given out at once too early and too late, had proclaimed the independence of the various Austrian nationalities—so at least it was understood by outsiders—and the non-Germans of the monarchy were no longer to be induced even by threats of courts-martial to risk their lives in a matter that had no more to do with them. It was told in our Eleventh Army that, orders having come from Headquarters for the enforcing of martial law—in cases of mutineers, General Sündermann, Chief of the General Staff at Levico, fairly bellowed into the telephone: "What! You've taken the Fatherland from the people and we are now to shoot them down, eh?" There was no tenth man executed!

In the face of this dissolution the loyal troops—mainly German Austrians—had a right to demand that the final arrangements of the Armistice should be accelerated. But that it should have been made possible for the Italians,

through an unchivalrous perversion of the conditions, absolutely to commandeer unconquered Alpine troops, was not needed to furnish a last sorrowful proof that nothing of the great tradition of the Past now remained at Headquarters. Old Austria was dead.

The more need of haste for the Italian General Staff now at this eleventh hour to "conquer". No other general of history had had ever so good a chance as Amando Diaz of our times; he could move his troops to and fro as on a table, could conquer provinces at his will, and herd together more prisoners than he could look after. In the course of early November days he arrived at the Defile of Salurn and the Mendel Pass. There all was blocked and jammed; our commanding officer, Colonel Scheuchenstuel, with us in Gries near Bozen, endeavouring to organize the seething crowd of humanity still pressing northwards along the Etsch and Eisak banks. For two days the Salzburg Household Regiment, those glorious Rainers, had furnished troops for the service of hindering the excesses of the undisciplined masses in Bozen; then it too was fain to return home, lest like other comrades of the Edelweiss corps it should fall into captivity. "Stand fast, Bozen!" cried the Rainers at the parting, when all eyes looking after them were wet.

Incapable by itself to cope with the chaos—soldiers on the march, Rumanian divisions of labour, Russian prisoners of war, trained women nurses and first-aids, starving masses without shelter—all pressing onwards out of the Bozen valley basin, the Eleventh Army finally proposed to the Italian military leaders to occupy the railway lines, and thus at least to loosen the tangle, a proposal ratified on his side by the Bozen town magistrate. As in the Armistice conditions, the Brenner had been agreed upon as the line of demarcation, it was but fair that the Italians should likewise bestir themselves as to the furthering to their homes of the returning hosts, for whom there was no smallest provision.

The Italian command accepted the invitation with becoming modesty. On November 5th took place an interview between General Sündermann and the Chief of Staff on the other side, at which in consequence of my knowledge of Italian I was present as interpreter. The next day arrived an Italian deputation from the Mendel, to discuss details of the entry of certain divisions. I was detailed off by the army command to conduct the chatty little Major and the two other officers to Bozen, there to present them to the Board of Defence elected from the Bozen corporation. The meeting took place in the *Zur Sonne Gasthof*, where the heads of the Board put the situation in plain words before the Italian gentlemen, and the latter declared their command ready to march in several divisions on the morrow to keep order, adding with Southern charm that they would only consider themselves as guests entirely at our disposition. Thus in a highly unmilitary fashion, as though it were no more than a question of some fire-brigade practice, was arranged the entry of Italian troops into the town of the minnesinger, Walther von der Vogelweide.

Next morning accordingly appeared squadrons of the First Alpine Regiment, under a certain General Caviglia. This good-natured personage, when waiting in correct style upon our commanding officer, Colonel Scheuchenstuel, repeated before the Town Council assembled in the *Rathaus* the frank assurance that he regarded himself wholly as a guest. Nowadays the Italians have erected on the spot where their troops that November 7, 1918, first trod Bozen soil, a huge Monument of Victory. When old Caviglia and his little Major pass by, they must surely be put to it to avoid a smile!

Yet another courtly approach was in these days attempted by the Italian troops. Once more an officers' deputation whizzed by in two autocars, this time towards Brixen (now Bressanone), there to offer their services as a mere "com-

mittee of defence". Brixen, however, was in the fortunate position of being able to deal single-handed with the stream of returning wayfarers, and the friendly offer, "At your service for law and order", could be declined with thanks by the town of the Prince-Bishops.

On November 9th, while the Bavarian General Kraft von Delmensingen pushed forward over the Brenner to Franzenfeste (now Fortezza), there to establish a new German South Front, the last Austrian high military authority, the Eleventh Army command, set out with the entire park of army wagons for Malsersheide beyond Meran (Merano). General Sündermann requested my company in case of needing my services as an interpreter in the possibility of a new meeting before falling back from South Tyrol. So taking leave of my parents in Gries for, as I thought, a few days, I accompanied my command into the then unoccupied young German Austria, hearing on our journey through the Inn Valley of the flight of Kaiser Wilhelm, and perceived how the Teutonic dynasties in succession were falling without bloodshed.

The sunset of an epoch. We entered upon a new and yet an old country—German Austria.

3. THE REGENERATION OF THE OSTMARK

German Austria! None can ever say that you have not given to the uttermost for the great Danube kingdom and its princes. In the icy winter nights I have seen your mothers standing patiently in the dark Vienna streets until morning, waiting without a murmur for a handful of flour—not indeed to satisfy the hunger of their weakened children, but to cheat it into a temporary relief. In what a matter-of-course spirit of self-sacrifice have widows and orphans and day-labourers dropped their poor savings, the coins earned by the sweat of their industry, into the War Loan, never to see

them again. On the frontiers your husbands stood sentinel, till scarce a man was left to shoulder weapons. Whosoever asserts that old feudal loyalty was not preserved by you to the very end either speaks as a fool or else deliberately lies.

“German Austria is a part of the German Republic”—such by a unanimous vote was the proclamation of the German-Austrian National Assembly. A gleam of light seemed to shine upon us: Unity, Justice, and Liberty for the whole German peoples in a new Europe—was that the meaning of the mighty struggle? Wilson, leader and personified thought of the American Democracy, was coming over to establish in the Congress of Reconciliation between the peoples that work first conceived by thinkers and codified by Immanuel Kant—Peace everlasting!

So passionately had we in the strain and stress of the World War striven for this outcome of the four years' upheaval, that we had come firmly to believe in it. When in the latter half of November, after the recall of the Bavarians, Italian troops fully armed marched through the streets of Innsbruck, I beheld the clanking columns almost compassionately—a folk of yesterday!

We were speedily disillusioned; the enemy's table-talk, to quote Wallenstein, was on another note. Hope's rainbow vanished and chill fears closed in on us, as to whether the lot of our country's dismemberment could be escaped. For there was a bond, by virtue of which Italy might claim its thirty pieces of silver. This bond was the Treaty of London, and the price was the Austrian jewel at the foot of the Dolomites.

Still we must, nay, should be, masters of our fate. Though the Board of War were swept, there still remained the field of politics, where a decision had not yet been given. Without a struggle should we in no case surrender.

4. THE MEMORIAL TO WILSON

Already in November 1918, on my motion in the *Landhaus* of Innsbruck, had been formed a Commission for the broadcasting of the state of affairs to all determinative political circles beyond our frontiers. It was at the moment the only work that we might accomplish, and feverishly we set about it. In connection with its centre in Tyrol, a branch in Berne was started by some patriots, and another in Vienna organized by able friends. Maps, pictures, proclamations, books, newspaper articles were poured out, journeys and interviews undertaken, letters written in every direction. We said to ourselves that, could we but succeed in making known, in spite of the barricades of frontiers, the truth about South Tyrol and its people to the world at large, then surely the country *could* not be dismembered before our eyes, the land of the Tyrol people was too clearly their own.

Neither were the South Tyrolese idle. They had immediately after the Armistice formed a representative body, in the South Tyrol National Assembly, electing as President the undaunted old Burgomaster of Bozen, Dr. Julius Perathoner. The State officers were enrolled and took oaths under German-Austria and a body of laws was drawn up. For some weeks the Italians looked on at this Autonomy or Home Rule, then they dissolved the South Tyrol National Assembly, without, however, being able to hinder the progress of its secret work. It was resolved to make a stand against the Italian design of annexation, and to appeal directly to Wilson, at that time in Paris.

Notwithstanding Italian surveillance, in the January and February of 1919 messengers traversed the country, collecting official signatures in the various communes of the South Tyrol from Salurn to the Brenner, as well as in the four Ladin valleys, for an Address of Protest against Italy's idea of Annexation. Trustworthy and hardy practised

mountain guides carried in this same February the Memorial over the Cetzal glaciers to Innsbruck, whence two representatives of the National Government conveyed it to the American Embassy of Berne, where it was laid before Wilson.

In this important document at first-hand South Tyrol primarily demonstrated that the last census before the War north of the Salurn showed 220,000 German-Austrians and 9,400 Ladiners as against 7,000 Italians, mostly day-labourers without settled dwelling-places. The Memorial then proceeded:

“Does the retention to-day of the Italian troops on Tyrol soil inspire some slight uneasiness as to the real designs of Italy, this uneasiness is increased by the language of the Italian Press and the unceasing Italian propaganda. The whole civil Italian Press of all shades of party demands the annexation of our Tyrol Homeland, forgetful of the language held by itself when members of the Italian lingual stock had been attached to the Austrian Empire. Bissolati, the man who ventured to plead for World Reconciliation and the Wilson programme of fair dealing and justice, was not in Milan allowed even to finish his speech; now Propagandist writings, stuffed full with falsehoods and misrepresentations, demand and urge the rape of a German-speaking land, the dismemberment of the thousand-year-old country of Tyrol. The natural frontiers of Italy according to them are the watersheds of the Reschen, the Brenner, and Toblach, and there only it appears must the Italian lines of defence be established.

What monstrous changes must Europe needs undergo, were watersheds to be claimed as political boundaries, the sources of springs as involving ownership of the kingdoms through which they flow. In that case Belgium might demand north-east France, Germany the whole of Poland, Holland the German and Swiss Rhine territories, Rumania the entire upper reaches of the Danube, and so on. *The Tyrol*

watersheds never were political or national boundaries. These former were set on the high mountain ridges with their valley passes—in the south the Berner (Verona) and Salurn Defiles, in the north those of Ehrenberg, Scharnitz, and Kufstein. There military fortifications were erected, but on the Brenner and Reschen never, these two passes never in history acquiring the strategical importance which the Italians of to-day would fain ascribe to them. *Even Napoleon himself, who certainly was not regardful of German interests, had in 1810, at the division of Tyrol, drawn the Italian frontier far south of the Brenner.*

The language boundary of Tyrol is so sharply drawn that it would be hard to find a parallel for it in Europe. Its line traverses a height of 2,000 metres, in many places rising for long stretches to 3,000, to sink again imperceptibly to its former level. Only once, in the Defile of Salurn, does it slope to the Etschtal, but here is at least a boundary as natural—if not actually one stronger through its sharp ridges and steep descents—as ever any in Reschen, Brenner, and Toblach. It is therefore clear that this language frontier, so sharply defined by Nature, and prevailing through centuries, opposes the development of a multi-language zone of several minorities of nationality, rendering wellnigh impossible a distinct national boundary-line.

The above described language boundary is very well suited to the 'Rectification of Italian frontiers according to clearly recognizable national lines', thus corresponding with Point 9 in Wilson's *Fourteen Points*. It assures Italy every military security, and offers it all strategic advantages, leaving as it does the broad Etschtal defenceless against Italian attacks, though at the same time avoiding the rape of our German-speaking Motherland.

Moreover, the Italian propaganda dares even to falsify historical facts and to represent Italy as the original possessors of South Tyrol—and us Tyrolese as mere intruders

Yet from the beginning of the sixth century Teutonic races occupied the Vintschgau and the Burggrafenamt, and when in the middle of that same sixth century the Gothic kingdom in Italy crumbled into ruin, the remnants of its people fled into our mountain fastnesses. The blond, blue-eyed, broad-shouldered powerful inhabitants of the Schnalser, Passeier, Ulten, and Sarn valleys, those of the valley basin round Meran, and of the Upper Eisack Valley, must be reckoned as descendants of these very Goths, among whom the East Gothic legends have been kept alive. In the Schlern region King Laurin dwells in his Rosengarten, on the slopes of the Iffinger where float the mists of the Teutonic saga, and in his workplace at Gossensass wrought Weyland the smith with hammer and clang. The epic of Dietrich of Berne and his champions has ever been a living reality in our Homeland. Down to it from the north pressed the Germanic race of the *Bajuvvari* as far as the Salurn Pass, and this Bavarian immigration uninterruptedly continued through the successive centuries.

Only in the more secluded valleys and in the wellnigh unattainable high mountains—much as was the case in Eastern Switzerland—have remnants of the original inhabitants of Tyrol, the Ladiners, been able to hold their own down to our times. In the Dolomite valleys of Fassa, Gröden, Enneberg, and Buchenstein, the old Rhætoromänsch roots of language still survive, nearly akin to Old French and in its subsequent development closely related to the German school of culture that, as will be demonstrated later, blended in Tyrol into a harmonious whole, as in the future it will continue to do. Thus South Tyrol, down to and beyond Salurn, was for more than a thousand years an absolutely Teutonic district, in its language, its ways of life, in the evolution of its laws, its culture, and temper of mind.

The large landholders with subordinate tenantry, of the Italian territory, are unknown in Tyrol; the Tyrolese

peasantry had already developed in the early Middle Ages as an independent class. The peasant was a freeman, living on his own farm and working it for his own profit.

For more than a thousand years Tyrol formed a loyal part of the old German Empire and later of the Austrian dominions, often stimulating and inspiring their culture. All social, religious, and spiritual convulsions and currents among the German peoples penetrated the valleys in Tyrol; the Reformation movement and that great German upheaval of the past, the Peasant War of the sixteenth century, found a mighty echo in our mountain land, though not passing beyond the frontiers of German and Italian Tyrol. The most brilliant German minnesingers of the Middle Ages had their home in sunny South Tyrol, bequeathing to posterity the songs of a Walther von der Vogelweide, a Leuthold von Säben, an Oswald von Wolkenstein, a Friedrich von Sonnenburg, and many more. The *Nibelungenlied* itself, according to the latest German critics, found birth in German South Tyrol.

The creative arts have also had a brilliant harbourage in Sterzing, Brixen, Bruneck, Klausen, Bozen, Kaltern, Meran, and Glurns, where even in the modern architecture traces of the medieval civic buildings are still largely preserved intact. The Ueberetsch with its uniquely beautiful type of edifice, its vine-clad castles and strongholds, give a special character to South Tyrol, testifying to the widely spread German culture, manifesting to the world the matured sense of form among the inhabitants, the genius of its masters, and the essentially Teutonic character of the land. Who does not know the impressive Gothic monument, the Pfarrkirche of Bozen, the creation of the master Schussenried!

Long is the roll of painters and sculptors of South Tyrol. From Michael Pacher of Bruneck to Defregger and Egger-Lienz, a crowd of Tyrolese artists comes before us. South Tyrol has, moreover, been lavish of its masterpieces, and

examples of old Tyrolese Gothic are to be found in every land, above all in foreign museums and castles.

Thus German South Tyrol becomes the heart and soul of the Tyrolese land. Here was the Court of the Prince-Bishops established by a German Emperor; here were the hereditary castles of that race of Counts under whose rule the Tyrol lived until the advent of the Hapsburgs, those Counts of Eppan and the Schloss Tyrol which gave its name to the country. Meran was the ancient capital, and the representatives of the land deliberated within its walls. The Passeier Valley was the home of the Tyrolese national hero, Andreas Hofer—that incarnation of the freeborn peasantry of ancient South Tyrol who in 1809 was the watchman rousing the land to its mighty fight for Freedom, and in the midst of an enemy world tore his land from the grasp of the Corsican Caesar.

When, therefore, a people's will for freedom and independence is decisive, can it be voiced more ardently, can a declaration of will be more striking, than that to which the Tyrolese people, weapon in hand, gave vent, which it subscribed in its own blood?

The East Ladin valleys have also participated in the development of South Tyrol.

When the breaking up of the Front in October 1918 was recognizably nearer, all the twelve Ladin communes of the Gröden, Enneberg, Buchenstein, and Fassa valleys sent forth a burning cry to the world, desiring self-determination for their peoples, solemnly emphasizing their adherence to German-speaking Tyrol. This proclamation, which was incorporated by us in legal fashion in our Memorial, runs thus:

We are not Italians, do not wish to be numbered among them, and will never in the future become Italians! An independent people that decides its fate for itself. May the destiny of German Tyrol be likewise our destiny, its future be our future! We and

our fathers have lived together with them in closest connection and on the best terms; so must it continue! *Tyrolese are we and Tyrolese we will remain!*

That the Italian occupation cannot change the decision of the East Ladin people is shown afresh to-day, by the Twelve Communes in the drawing up of this Memorial of German South Tyrol. "Shall, indeed, our Austrian home with its thousand-year history and culture, a freeborn people with its innate ideas of freedom, become Italianized? A unanimous bitter cry echoes through the land at the thought. It cannot, ought not to be, that the name of Tyrol and its brilliant past should disappear from history, that the free sons of this mountain land should bow under an alien yoke and be bereft alike of its own language, art, and culture. In its deepest need with a heart full of sorrow all the people of South Tyrol turn to you, Mr. President, imploring you to be the pleader for our nation. You have stressed the all-importance of self-determination for nations, you have proclaimed the World Peace; will you permit more than 200,000 Germans in the enclosed district of German South Tyrol to be deprived of their national rights, so that the dragon's teeth of hatred instead of the seeds of love should be sown broadcast? Do not suffer our land to undergo a second '*Anno 1809*', obliged to burst the fetters that are now being forged for it. You as an American, a follower of George Washington, your Freedom's hero, can well understand that Liberty is the supreme national asset, and that a free people would prefer its fall to the shame of servitude. German South Tyrol is but a strip of country to Italy, like many other districts in that land so richly blessed by nature; for us, however, it is the one German spot with the southern sun, the Homeland around which our very heart-roots are entwined.

Our messengers will bear this our petition to you over icy mountain passes. Judge justly for our nationality and its country, gain freedom for South Tyrol and its people will

honour your name down to children's children, as the deliverer of our homes. Thus pray the united communes of German South Tyrol together with the twelve Ladin communes of Gröden, Enneberg, Buchenstein, and Fassa.

GERMAN SOUTH TYROL, *February, 1919.*"

This Memorial, from an oppressed land, bled white and scourged by want, in the occupation of a bitter foe, may well be pronounced the strongest and most unanimous expression of a people's mind, an irresistible testimony to the loyalty of Tyrol.

South Tyrol begged to decline Italy and her designs of incorporation!

5. BETWEEN DOUBT AND DESPAIR

Nevertheless, dark clouds speedily began to surge up on the horizon. The Italian Press was writing designedly of German South Tyrol as "Roman ground", as to the regaining of which no doubts could be entertained. The hollowness of such logic did not occur to them; with the same right Italy might demand London, which for long had lain under the supremacy of the Caesars, and possesses many more numerous remains thereof than does Tyrol. But to Article 7 of the London Treaty some cloak was necessary. Tolomei, a notorious falsifier, took his apparatus for historical and political invention over to Paris; he would fain influence Wilson, a neophyte in Tyrol affairs, to the utmost. The Italian Ministers cast their spells on him; the Messiah who would fain inculcate lasting peace fell a prey to lies.

The present writer can submit no stronger admission of guilt for any part of the Paris Peace Treaty than the confession of President Wilson's secretary in his *Reminiscences*:

"Unhappily the President had promised Orlando the Brenner boundary as frontier-line, whereby about 150,000

(to be exact, 230,000) inhabitants of German Tyrol would be handed over to Italy, an action which later he recognized and deplored as a fatal error. This happened before he had thoroughly studied the question, and now he was bound and shared Orlando's guilt in the Italian claim for a strategic frontier. Possibly he fancied that concession in the Alps might modify Italian demands in the Adriatic, but Italy grasped after both."

Such recognition came too late. In April 1919 the newspapers spread abroad evil tidings like Job's messengers—Wilson's attitude on the Tyrol question!

Our consternation was indescribable. Could the only man who was not involved in the London arrangements turn traitor to Tyrol?—the powerful statesman who had pronounced so emphatically that never again might nations, like pawns in a game, be moved about from some imperial height and sold like merchandise! Must even this apostle be now numbered among the wanton hucksters by whom South Tyrol had been offered as the price of breaking an alliance? We could not believe it; yet, even were it true, the fight must still be carried on. The South Tyrolese in Innsbruck hastened to enrol themselves in the Confederation *Heimat*, redoubling their exertions to compel the Government of the country and the Vienna Foreign Office to fresh efforts of rescue. Public notices were anew sent out; at Berg Isel the writers Heinrich von Schullern and Kranewitter made eloquent speeches; the grim gesture is unforgettable with which the latter, pointing to the old battle-ground, cried:

"We fellow-countrymen on both sides of the Brenner are one in race and blood, in love and hate, in sleeping and waking, in labour and repose—one, above all, in the thought that we are German Tyrolese, and German Tyrolese we shall remain! Ye who fought on this sacred spot, ye souls of the iron men of 'the year '9', peace to ye! Hearken to us who say, 'We cannot be treated thus!' Should it come to pass,

no man or woman of Tyrol will ever forget, ever forgive: we men of iron swear it!"

Bruder Willram, the poet, cried aloud before an assembly in the Hofkirche, Innsbruck, gazing heavy-hearted on Andreas Hofer's grave:

"Does Italy think that she may ban for ever the hero's spirit? Despite her famous *gentilezza*, this will never be accomplished! That spirit rises from the vaults of our heroic forefathers throughout the land, inspiring the valleys of Tyrol, the heart of each townsman and peasant, as well as the huts of the mountaineers, to demand their lost freedom, to recall the lost unity of a dismembered country."

Sympathy and protest came from the whole German nation; in Berlin mass meetings on the matter were called and petitions sent up from the Provincial Governments to the National to do all in its power to hinder the partition of German Tyrol. The German Press spoke in the same tone.

Things were not going well among the diplomatists of the *Entente*, opposition was audible in their own countries. Even old Lord Bryce, well known in the War for his keen anti-Germanism, denounced the design of handing over South Tyrol to Italy as a *shameful injustice*, and made his public protest against such cession. He, together with many noted English scholars, drew up and published a declaration as follows:

We, always warm friends of Italy, wish to express our earnest hope that on fresh consideration of the conditions of the concluding Treaty with Austria, the Allies will alter or withdraw the clause ceding to Italy the greater part of Central Tyrol between Bozen and the Brenner Pass, the Vintschgau, and the western part of the Pustertal, districts which from ancient times have been inhabited by a population of Teutonic extraction and language and have never been under Italian domination.

Neutrals also came forward on our side: even in Italy an impeccable advocate for the Tyrol was Leonida Bissolati,

the war volunteer friend of Cesare Battisti, demanding that South Tyrol, German-speaking country as it was, should not be included in the Italian boundaries. It would always be a thorn in Italy's flesh!

The agents of the *Entente* now spread abroad the report that the proposed union of German Austria with Germany had led to the Paris decision; therefore for a Tyrol that sought to be annexed to Germany there was nothing to be done. It seemed unpatriotic to lend an ear to the like whisperings, but the situation was so desperate that we were obliged to notice them. The *Heimat* League pressed into Parliament, demanding from the Government a declaration of Independence for Tyrol, as a final means to influence the Dictators in Paris and compel them to revise their decision as to Tyrol. Weighty considerations filled the minds of the country's Fathers: the Viennese Government was opposed. How should the officials be paid if the source of the bank-notes were stopped? What would become of the Vorarlberg, and what if the *Entente* failed to take cognizance of the Declaration of Independence?

A thousand thoughts were rife. Our vehement representations finally induced the Government on May 4, 1919, to draw up this Resolution:

In the historic hour in which the die is about to be cast for the fate of Tyrol, the Tyrolese National Assembly once more in the name of the Country solemnly declares its readiness for any sacrifice that may save Tyrol.

It therefore commissions the National Government to bring before the Peace Conference in Paris that, according to President Wilson's conception of the foundations of a just Peace, Tyrol is resolved to press for the assured Self-Determination of Tyrol and to ensure the enclosed German and Ladin districts as far as the Defile of Salurn, an independent, democratic, *neutral*, and free state Tyrol, so that thereby the unity of those districts may be maintained.

The whole country thus gives expression of its need and desire for peace, and *all military pretexts for the annexation of South Tyrol will be rendered nugatory.*

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The National Assembly also declares that if, contrary to President Wilson's universally accepted axioms of a just Peace, South Tyrol, in violation of its Self-Determining Rights, should be torn from the rest of Tyrol, that latter, for the preservation of its own economic existence, has no other choice than to become annexed to the German Republic.

This decision is to be communicated by the National Government to all existing authorities at home and abroad.

A keen-sighted judge of events could not be content with this turn of affairs. It was not the daring act which goes to make up history. It was an offer—which remained unanswered. Yet the plea for the annexation danger was invalidated, and the pretext for ever taken from the Italians that their safety required the seizure of our homeland.

The mask was torn from their Policy of Force.

6. MILITARY GOVERNMENT

When General Caviglia, as has been mentioned, stood in the Bozen Council Chamber, November 8, 1919, presenting himself as a guest, the assembly begged him not to forget that he was in a German town. Caviglia, in a tone of the warmest agreement, assured the City Fathers that the Italian troops would respect the national feelings of Bozen to the utmost, adding that the population should retain perfect freedom in their national life. The first governor of South Tyrol, General Pecori-Giraldi, made the same assertion, and on all the walls of the town was placarded the following notice:

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UPPER ADIGE

The Italian Kingdom, founded on Freedom and Justice, announces herewith its will throughout the Country and the World that the firm recognition of the unchangeable union between the redeemed provinces and Italy shall continue, while the foreign language of any inhabitants of the above-mentioned regions shall be respected in all justice and magnanimity.

As Italy insists upon her own rights and powers of action in these

districts, she yet lays aside all thoughts of force or oppression towards her subjects of another race or speech; her endeavours will be to establish mutual fraternal relations.

The Italian peoples of the Adige Valley, Isarco, Gardena, Badia, and Marebbe, together with Italians domiciled in other communes, will, owing to the provisions of their several communities and the expedient and needful support of the Government, be provided with Italian schools.

In the mixed-language zone multi-language schools will be established, the German national schools being retained for the German-speaking districts. The existing private and elementary and religious schools will be permitted to retain the German tongue for instruction, provided that the curriculum and the schoolbooks contain nothing contrary to the dignity and rights of Italy.

The legal and governmental administration undertakes that the giving of evidence and proclamation of Acts shall be rendered in Italian, but also in the German tongue where the latter is in use.

CITIZENS!

Although the multi-language Austrian monarchy, which constitutionally was bound to respect the national sentiments of all in its schools, yet overrode and oppressed the Italian folk in these valleys, Italy on her side has resolved to allow every single nationality under her dominion the direction of its own schools, clubs, and societies, with entire freedom of thought and speech for the administrative officers.

On the basis of these principles it is to be looked for that all questions of language and culture will speedily find their peaceful solution.

Given at Trent on 18th November, 1918.

The commanding Lieutenant-General of the Army,
G. PECORI-GIRALDI.

Thoughts forestall events! Mussolini declared in March 1928 before the Italian Parliament that pledges of previous Governments to keep the Germans in South Tyrol on a pacific basis of freedom were not binding upon him, that the democratic nonsense of any such Governments had been done away with by him and annulled for ever. The Dictator reserved the fact that there was yet another promise that could be broken, that word to which the "victorious

Army" had pledged itself. Fascism asserts that its honour has been reinstated, but in reality that honour each day in South Tyrol is steeped in perjury.

The Italians, even in the beginnings of the Armistice, did not long maintain the friendliness of their attitude. Although by the actual Armistice conditions only the control of administration of the occupied district had been granted them, who could hinder them from infringing the treaty and encroaching on the life of South Tyrol in preparation for their designs of annexation? Between Vienna and Innsbruck official communication was cut off by them, Italian civil commissioners replaced Tyrolese officials, higher courts were created in Trent which German South Tyrol was forced to accept, the ridiculous and irritating name of Venezia Tridentina was bestowed upon the occupied region; *Entente* officers passing through by rail were deluded with Italianized names of stations, and even the educational system was tampered with.

The people were rendered defenceless. Liberty to bear arms, that valued ancient heritage of men famed so often in battle, was withdrawn, and the surrender of all weapons insisted upon—even pocket-knives with more than six-inch blades were soon to be reckoned with. The Italians gave no thought to the humiliation thus inflicted on the men of Tyrol, possibly their own fear was so great that it drove them thus to defend themselves; the command for giving up all weapons was enforced with unnecessary severity, any delay being punished by several years' imprisonment.

The troops in occupation, inexplicably nervous, indulged in vexatious and aimless tactics. On the Gerlos Bridge in Passeier one morning the Italian guard was found shot; it was obvious that he had taken his own life, but a succession of house visitations, imprisonments, and re-imprisonments followed, without result. In Klausen three Italian soldiers broke in at night to rob the *Stampfl Wirt* (innkeeper). The

latter in self-defence shot one soldier dead, wounded the second, and put the third to flight, but had himself to flee to the mountains, where some weeks later he was taken prisoner by the Italian soldiery. He was tried and acquitted, but in revenge Italian soldiers attacked the universally respected burgomaster, Gallmetzer, shot him through the face, and stabbed him as he lay on the ground, so that his life was scarcely spared. Another townsman, father of four children, who was looking out of a window at the time, was shot through the head.

Various persons of consequence throughout the country were imprisoned, among them the national deputy Menz of Marling, the elderly revered burgomaster of Meran, Gemassmer, in the Ultental the fiery Pastor Hass, in the Eisack Valley Dean Moser, in Passeier the chaplain Bruno Simmerle. The grounds for such imprisonments were often purely fictitious, sometimes only to impress the population with the idea of its powerful and unchangeable Government. Some trivial instances caused a certain amusement to mingle with indignation, as when notices of a military auction (*Versteigerung*) invited the public to an "Enchantment" (*Verzauberung*), an unknowing translator having sought thus to render the Italian word for auction, *Incanto*. Such ignorance could have been but laughable, had it not joined hands with brutality to master the soul of a people.

Popular economics also suffered: wine was not allowed to be exported; people said "Things were not so bad for us during all those four War years". Bitter resentment filled everyone, resistance was impossible, though here and there outbreaks took place. In Kaltern the Italian command publicly announced that only the flags of Italy and her Allies were to be run up. The next day the placards were pasted over with red and white strips of paper, the national colours of Tyrol. The doers of this were discovered, imprisoned, and severely punished. One day, however, there fluttered

from the Santner Spitze, the wild rocky peak of Schlern, the mighty red and white and red banner of German Austria. Skilled climbers had been requisitioned to warp the heavy mast to the pinnacle, the ascent of which was always an achievement; now the flag was seen from Bozen streaming on the air, beheld by the Tyrolese with delight, by the Italians with rage. For four days patrol after patrol essayed to remove it, but none dared climb the peak, until at last a guide from Campitello was brought over to take it down.

All Italian attempts at intimacy were discouraged, invitations from officers remained unanswered. The military authorities in Bozen thought to soften the population towards them by means of the philanthropy always dear to Tyrolese hearts. A charity concert for the poor of the town was arranged in the Bozen Theatre in connection with the regimental band. A boycott was difficult, but a solution was found; previous to the concert some of the townsfolk bought up all entrance-tickets and the concert itself was unattended. The poor had their money, but the Italians reaped no political benefit.

The inner conquest of the country was still more difficult. An Italian reserve officer has related that he was asked at that time by a superior whether he considered the solution of the South Tyrol problem possible in the Italian sense. He replied: "Send a wide line of *Arditi* (storming troops) with bombers and hand-grenades throughout the land and root out all living creatures from the suckling to the grey-haired women; then send in bands of workmen to bury the corpses! In that way, Italy may solve the problem of South Tyrol in *her* sense—but in no other fashion."

7. THE AXE FALLS

The Austrian Foreign Minister, Otto Bauer, who had passed some of his youth in Tyrol, for which he always preserved a warm affection, tried another means. He appealed directly

to the Italian Minister President, proposing various mediate schemes in conformity with the agreement for Italian ingress in Tyrol, but preserving the unity of German South Tyrol. Nitti replied through the Italian Agent in Vienna: "Italy will never resign her claim on South Tyrol, but will treat the Tyrolese with magnanimity."

The Chancellor Renner accompanied the Peace Delegates to St-Germain. While he was behind the barbed-wire and had received the draft of the Peace Treaty, the frontier-line of Tyrol had not yet been decisively defined in it. Hope shone upon Tyrol—quickly, however, to be extinguished; in a few days the decision regarding the Alpine boundaries was put in, saying that the line was to be drawn over the Brenner Pass. Baron Eichhoff, one of the most able among the Austrian delegates, drew up a reply to this part of the Dictate. He refuted all the grounds for the alleged necessity of this frontier, and depicted the aggression in its naked truth before the enemy Ministers.

Clemenceau answered:

The Allied and Associated Powers are of opinion that the borders between Italy and Austria, as they have been defined to the Austrian Delegation, must remain unaltered. As the Italian Minister President clearly declared before the Roman Parliament, the Italian Government declares itself ready to follow the utmost, Liberal policy towards their new subjects of German nationality, as regards language, education, and economic interests.

The tragi-comedy of the Peace Negotiations was at an end; Austria had no alternative between signing and non-signing. The *Entente* threatened retention of prisoners, a deprivation of the means of living, and a hint of employing force to Austria. When the programme of the Parliament session was drawn up, in which the acceptance of the proposals had to be made, the Tyrolese deputies commissioned me to speak in the name of Tyrol.

On September 6, 1919, German South Tyrol had to bid

farewell to Austria. The moment was overwhelming. As brothers taking leave of each other in the death-hour of one condemned, so our hearts were weighed down under an unbearable sorrow.

As the bitter word *Ade* was spoken, feeling burst its bonds; the whole Parliament with all its tribunes united with the Tyrolese in a stormy outbreak of emotion. Nature demanded her rights; it was the Call of the Blood. For the last time South Tyrol was represented by me in the Austrian Parliament. I acted as interpreter of my nation's spirit.

In the hour in which a dark cloud overhangs Tyrol, I am commissioned to represent the attitude of my compatriots.

Dr. Renner's explanations relieve me from mentioning the threadbare unreliability of all the grounds of the Peace Proposals as to the justice of the Brenner frontier. It may, however, be useful to bring forward one historical point, namely, that during the late War the entire Austrian-Hungarian Defence Corps endeavoured three times to break through the south-west barrier and thus threaten Italy—the danger indicated by the *Entente* in its covering Note. Each attempt was, however, unsuccessful. If the Tyrolese frontiers had been decided as common sense and justice demand, Italy would still receive for the defence of her final barrier four yet more invincible zones. This point of view has, however, been completely negated in the accompanying Note to the Peace Delegation.

The Tyrol National Assembly recently documented its attitude towards these Peace Proposals as follows:

The subjugation of the Tyrol appears to be decided on, so that no just and fair, but an enforced, Peace looms ahead, to be imposed under conditions which do away with those principles that the victorious Powers themselves had acknowledged as the foundations of Peace.

Tyrol recognizes the injustice of the position resulting from the Peace terms, and appeals to the League of Nations that it may gain a right recognition of Self-Determination for South Tyrol—now being trodden underfoot—in the interests of the maintenance of peace and just and honourable relations between the nations, in order that the deep injustice now threatening South Tyrol may be set aside.

In South Tyrol, during the last few weeks, the representatives of all parties have addressed a protest to the Italian Government, wherein they declare their decision to press for Self-Determination

for South Tyrol. It is comprehensible that I, as representative of South Tyrol in this place, can adopt no other attitude.

Pathos is out of place at this moment, for it is impossible to describe the emotions inspiring one who fought in the ranks of the *Jäger* of Tyrol against Italy, who shed his blood, and who now with his brethren is condemned to servitude!

To these proposals every fibre of our heart filled with pain and anger utters a "No!"—an eternal unchangeable "No!" (*Stormy applause, even from the packed galleries throughout the House. When it had ceased:*) It is impossible for me to speak controversially against the weighty reasons—to which none can be indifferent—inspiring the decision which to-day will probably be accepted by the National Assembly, leaving us no choice but to agree; but here, in your midst and in the name of my colleagues, I can only firmly stress the point that Tyrol will have neither art nor part therein, that neither positively nor negatively will the country have anything to do with such decision, that we can never co-operate in the accomplishment of the Peace Proposals.

From henceforth in South Tyrol will commence a despairing conflict, in every local council, in every field and vineyard, in every peasant-holding—a conflict with every intellectual weapon, every political method. A despairing conflict, since we—a poor quarter-million—dare to stand up against Italy and her forty millions: an unequal battle truly! The words of the State Chancellor, Dr. Renner, as well as those of President Hauser, have rung out in promise that you will guard the solidarity of language, culture, and history which has linked till now German South Tyrol with Austria, and that you will never forsake us of Tyrol. ("*Never! Never!*")

We take your word. (*Loud applause and shouts of, "We will keep our word"*.) As we now go forward into a dark future, it will be our sole consolation that we have still compatriots, still brothers, among the people who will not forget us in the hour of need, who will give us help in the desperate struggle. I recall that seventy-one years ago Jacob Grimm, of the Frankfort National Assembly, moved, as Article 1 of the German Constitution: "All Germans are free and German soil endures no slavery. Even the stranger or the bondsman is free on German soil."

The burning question for the Future is, whether looks of hatred and vengeance shall disappear from the faces of men and Justice be born anew, or whether the state of servitude in South Tyrol shall break out into volcanic revolt, that the land may once more be free as its own mountain winds, never again to enter under the yoke of thralldom. (*Stormy continuous applause from all sides of the House and galleries.*)

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The National Assembly decided, despite the non-votes of the Tyrolese Deputies, on the signature of the Peace Proposals. The Chancellor Renner went to St-Germain.

Then the axe fell.

South Tyrol was separated.

PART TWO

INCORPORATION

MANIFESTO OF GENERAL PECORI-GIRALDI, NOVEMBER 18, 1918

THE Italian Government, based on principles of Liberty and Justice, declares its will that in the country and the world the firm conviction of the Irrevocable Connection of the surrendered districts with the Mother Country shall prevail; at the same time, Italy will treat the inhabitants of these districts of another tongue with justice and magnanimity.

While now Italy's claim in these regions is founded on the declaration of her own right and creative action, yet she waives all thoughts of oppression of these subjects of alien race or language; she desires rather to live with them in fraternal relations.

The Italian State citizens in the Adige and Eisack valleys, Gardena, Badia, and Marebbe, together with the other (German or Romänsch) districts, whatever commune they live in, will have their own schools, which must be maintained by the commune and will be supported in a suitable manner by the Government.

Multi-language schools will be founded in the multi-language zone. For the German-speaking population their communes may continue the German elementary schools; the existing private and religious schools will be permitted to use German as the language of instruction, providing that the syllabus and school-books shall in no wise controvert the rights or the dignity of Italy.

Documents issued by the judicial and administrative authorities, together with all legal business, will be drawn up in Italian, as the official language, as well as in German, where this is in local use.

8. THE LEADERS

A popular witticism relates that a certain South Tyrol farmer, when released as a prisoner of war, 1919, on returning to find his home in Italian hands, remarked with biting humour, "I always thought that we'd get a slice of Italy, but never hoped that we'd pouch the whole of Italy!" We now had to reckon with this "whole of Italy".

In Innsbruck before my departure the governor-general of Tyrol, Schraffl, had proposed that I should remain there and enter the Tyrol Civil Service. I, however, thought that I

should not be wanting at my countrymen's shoulder and have never regretted my decision. Life can have no deeper meaning for any man than to fight for a great cause. In South Tyrol the political cry was no contemptible jargon but a song of freedom, to which through the years of malicious oppression we continued to listen with enthusiasm.

When I, in October 1919, travelled to Bozen, the shrewd activity of the South Tyrolese had made good use of their time. In the early summer the political leaders of all parties had met and resolved to hold out hands of fellowship among themselves, oblivious of all party differences. As a supreme Court of Appeal, they formed a Board of ten Commissioners, drawn from all groups despite the great difference of balance of power on the various sides, the presidency of which was changed monthly. This was the "German League" so feared by the Italians. Men of the conservative popular party of Tyrol, with adherents of liberalism, became united allies when the question was one of the fate of the German-speaking land and its people. In lofty steadfastness this unity of the front in South Tyrol continued until the Government dissolved the "German League," and such unity presented a pattern for all nations in stress.

Gratefully do I think of the individual leaders shouldering the burden of responsibility. Their selfless attitude prepared for any sacrifice is darkened by no unworthy shade; for loyalty's dear sake, honour and profits were renounced by them and a life of sorrow and heaviness chosen. Deep and unshaken was the people's adherence to them, and he who has taken part in our assemblies or confidential gatherings best knows that here no chance had chosen, not only men of picked character as leaders of their country, but rather true sons of the soil, one with it in the same love, the same yearnings. This brave mountain race had the leaders it deserved. First, in the person of DR. JULIUS PERATHONER, burgomaster of Bozen, seventy years old, but straight and slim despite

his years and silver locks, a man of iron will and penetrating understanding, and for a generation the leading citizen of the Talfer town. He had beautified Bozen, increased its prosperity, and watched over its patriotism, as over that of all the land. Now it was his part to defend it against overwhelming attacks. The Past of a thousand years was confronted by dangers, the seriousness of which was fully grasped by the burgomaster. He refused all compromise, envisaging safety alone in Freedom, and this opinion, though never put into actual words, speaks to us now still after his death, through the remembrance of his unflinching and fearlessly defensive attitude.

GRAF FRIEDRICH TOGGENBURG, the former governor of Tyrol and Imperial Minister for the Interior, was an elect representative of the Tyrolese nobility, of sterling cultivated intellect, historical sense, and intimate comprehension of the country, along with its best characteristics. When De Nicola, President of the Roman Chamber, came to know him, he summed up his impressions of Toggenburg in one word—“*Gentiluomo*” (a true gentleman). The Count enjoyed unlimited respect throughout the land, fully merited by his distinguished bearing and rare abilities. I gained a deep insight into his temper of thought when in Rome we were once sitting on the terrace of the Palatine, looking towards the cupola of S. Peter’s glowing in the sunset. Toggenburg led our conversation to the eternal realities, voicing sublime sentiments of his deepest soul, all irradiated by a wealth of knowledge, profound religious instinct, and a compellingly strong faith.

WILHELM VON WALTHER’S strength lay in his fundamental acquaintance with the economic life of South Tyrol, studied exhaustively by him as secretary of the old Chamber of Commerce. Of patrician stock, he had a great sense of civic tradition as well as a vivid comprehension of modern requirements. He possessed a remarkable mastery of

languages, history, and literature, so that intercourse with one of such wide cultivation was inspiring and delightful. The musician in him was averse to dissonance even in politics, and he rose superior to all petty party jars. A high place must be awarded him in the task of the formation of the national community of South Tyrol.

FREIHERR PAUL STERNBACH brought into Tyrolese matters, from his career as a high Government functionary and member of the Provincial Government of Tyrol, a mature experience. He was thoroughly familiar not only with national conditions in Innsbruck, but also with those of the Austrian provinces on the Adriatic. He had specially studied the agricultural question, bringing all his profound knowledge to bear on the Co-operative movement. His unwearied fulfilment of the duties of a deputy was exemplary. Whenever he appeared, either in the Italian Chamber or in international Congresses, he earned through his moderate but unswerving representations sincere recognition; he became more than any other the target for ruthless persecution, faced by him with heroic steadfastness.

KARL TINZL, legal advocate in Schlanders, was the most notable political brain among the South Tyrol leaders. In past days at the Innsbruck University, where I was a fellow-student with him, he was well known for his outstanding intellect. As he had passed all his examinations with unanimously accorded distinction, when he graduated, he was presented with the traditional gift of a diamond ring. A brilliant career lay before him. War, however, summoned him, and subsequently the hour of need in the homeland. He worked in the Schlanders Assembly (Communal Administration) as advocate with his father, putting himself at the disposal of his countrymen, the people's man in the highest sense of the word. Firm as a rock, acquainted with all his country's needs, unaffected as a representative, but decided and arresting as soon as he spoke. He was not only esteemed,

but loved by all who knew him, while through the most troublous times he stood out as "a man without nerves". His political instinct always hit the nail on the head; never caustic, his keen logic was yet indisputable.

I will name no more here than these five men, well known in public life; later we shall meet with others. Many most deserving colleagues I do not dare to mention lest Fascist vengeance should fall on them. South Tyrol has as worthy sons, capable all of carrying the colours when the present standard-bearers shall pass on.

9. THE FIRST VISIT

From the walls of the oak-panelled Senate of the Roman Deputies gleam in gold lettering the dates of the popular votes, whereby the Italian provinces had decided their entrance into National Unity. Even in the year 1870, that saw Rome, the capital of Italy, wrested from the Papacy, after the capture a motion was put to the Romans' vote as to whether the city would belong to the Kingdom or not.

In this Chamber, on July 16, 1919, the old leader of the Italian Socialists, Filippo Turati, advanced to lay a paper on the President's table, the Memorial of all the communes of South Tyrol, including Ladin, which prayed the representatives of the Italian people for the right of that self-determination which was commemorated in glittering legend on the walls around. Turati spoke as follows:

As a citizen, a Socialist, and people's representative, may I hope that the voluntary expression of a free people will be heard and their desire fulfilled.

This document is signed by all three parties of South Tyrol.

This appeal also remained unanswered. The Nitti Government decided, instead, to recall the military governor in the occupied territories, and, following the example of France in Alsace-Lorraine, to appoint a civil commissary general.

The Roman University professor, Credaro, was sent in that capacity to Trent; he had been for many years Minister of Education, and apparently possessed the necessary experience to deal with the most difficult problems of the new province on the Etsch (Adige). He had also studied philosophy in the German Universities, and was looked on as eminently capable of incorporating South Tyrol into the life of Italy with as little suffering as possible.

In August 1919 Credaro received in Bozen the "German League", and, besides accepting a protest against the contemplated Annexation, he opposed the situation created by the military government. Credaro showed himself at bottom our well-wisher, and at first granted some requests—for instance, the replacing of Tyrolese names on the railway stations. The general impression left by the governor was one of reliability.

When Annexation seemed unavoidable, the "German League" found itself compelled to draw up a programme for its further political labours, and this embodied the demand for the autonomy of South Tyrol. Safety for the German nationality south of the Brenner! If Italy were not minded to release her prey, at least the national existence of its population must be untouched. A people is not a chemical substance to be worked with or dissolved at pleasure. European inhabitants of a State are not Asiatic slaves who resign themselves under the master's whip to lead the soulless life of a cowed animal. One of the European peoples the most strongly imbued with ideas of liberty, was to be confined in the boundaries of the Italian State. It demanded its full rights, air and peace for its spiritual existence—that which was right and just for Memel, Dantzig, Carpathian Russia, and Upper Silesia should likewise be granted to South Tyrol.

Credaro expressed himself in full agreement for its autonomy. The Commissary General was not alone in his

opinions; the Foreign Minister, Sforza, later acknowledged in Parliament that the cession of South Tyrol to Italy had been much debated by certain of the Powers. Italy joyously snatched at the possession of the country, and in such a humour promises were rife.

All the Italians, from the King to Mussolini, solemnly asseverated that autonomy for South Tyrol was a foregone conclusion.

Tittoni, the leader of the Italian Peace Delegation and president of the Italian Senate, was especially emphatic in his speech in the Chamber on September 27, 1919. He said:

Italy, like the other Great Powers, has no absolute legal obligation to respect the free status of national minorities, but to my perceptions, following the liberal traditions which have always been Italy's glory and her prerogative, it is a great and moral duty. The people of other nations about to be united with us, are aware that the thought of oppression or denationalization is far indeed from us, that their language and cultural organization will be respected, and that their Government officials will possess all the rights of our liberal and democratic legislature. We can assure the population of German South Tyrol that a police government of persecution or arbitrary rule will never be introduced among them.

The Autonomy Programme of the "German League" was in such weather the best political move.

10. ROME

I had scarcely settled in Bozen when I was sent off by the People's Party to the "German League", members of which shortly afterwards were dispatched to Rome, I being deputed to accompany them. We were to sound Nitti, and the leader, Francesco Salata, of the newly created office for the Annexed Provinces, on the subject of our appeal for Autonomy.

It was then I saw the Eternal City for the first time. We

often recalled this designation with some humour when other attempts—principally on financial questions—remained eternally unsuccessful. At that time, however, we had the benefit both of the ancient majesty of Rome and the sinister misgivings inspired by the Italian administrative machinery together. The ruins of the gigantic Colosseum and the brilliant halls of the Vatican were eloquent of two world forces, the all-embracing ideas of which encompassed the earth.

Behind the Capitol was a small wooden bridge, built only a few weeks previously, leading through the Forum Romanum into the Via Sacra. In the coming Victory Celebrations it had been planned that Italian troops, like Roman legions in the triumphs of old, should march along this festal way. Did Italy contemplate a new world dominion? Was the idea of it already taking shape—indicative of how they intended to rule us of Tyrol? Later that bridge, unused, was broken up. The Italians bethought themselves, at the end of the Peace Negotiations, that they had only conquered in name—in reality would have to bear for many years heavy taxation for small gains. So the Celebrations were adjourned.

We also learned where Rome might be thought wanting in the technical outfit of a World Dominion. When we in the Minister-President's office inquired where the department for the annexed provinces was to be found, which naturally must be under the Minister-President, it proved not to be known and we were misdirected. Only after long wanderings did we discover it in a wing of the former Austrian Embassy to the Vatican, in the Palazzo Venezia, where with manifest irony it had been allotted quarters. In the office for the New Provinces (*Ufficio per le nuove Provincie*) the head was Francesco Salata, a former statesman of the *Landtag* of Austrian Istria. When the witticism ran through Rome that the Lombards were the sharpest Italians as they had been brought up under Austria's rod, it found an echo

in the office of this Irredentist—Salata had been well schooled in German methods through the alleged hard Austrian training. He certainly had no tender recollections of Austria, had in fact done his utmost at Italian headquarters during the War to prepare the way for the annexation of the Adriatic provinces. He, however, met us Tyrolese with marked good will.

It is a fact that it is difficult to discover with Italians how much their friendliness of *pose* is worth. As a proverb of their own might be translated, "He knows not how to fence who cannot feign". With Salata, however, we had an impression that his friendly assurances were not merely empty nor deceptive.

Italy had taken 600,000 Slavs of the Adriatic provinces under her rule; Salata hated these new subjects from his Austrian past—the Germans, as allies against the Slav people, were a highly sympathetic factor to him. His predecessor, Nitti, moreover, wished to keep to his fundamental maxim—*Divide et impera!* (Divide and govern)—and the influx of 800,000 citizens of an alien race must be rendered innocuous. With these views he met the Germans in amity, but he gave the Slavs short shrift. This method suited Salata himself admirably in his anti-Slav programme.

Nitti received us in the Palazzo Braschi. A mistake of our driver had made us late, but the Minister did not make us suffer for that, treating us with blameless amiability. No one would have supposed the insignificant, good-humoured-looking man to have that keen intellect and political adroitness characterizing his writings and his whole career.

At the beginning of the Conference I read out a declaration drawn up by our Commissioners, repeating our emphatic protest against Annexation and adding: "The 'German League' in South Tyrol, eager for economic reconstruction and the peaceful development of the land which has so

heavily suffered in the War, is ready for loyal co-operation in this work with the Italian Government. It depends wholly and solely on the attitude of the Italian Government whether the union will be able to carry out this scheme in harmony with the population of the district. If Italy be prepared to grant in a magnanimous spirit this our first demand of a far-reaching Self-Determination, the League will discuss later the fundamental clauses of this with the Italian Government and the anticipated co-operation will have the desired result for our Tyrolese Homeland."

Nitti affirmed in agreeable phrases the readiness of the Government to fulfil our wish. His further remarks, however, soon betrayed that he had no right conception of the essence of Autonomy. When we could not hide our surprise at this, Salata spoke reassuringly, referring us to the special subsequent discussion desired by us. We left the apartment, somewhat astonished by the impression we had received but accompanied to the last with agreeable words.

A few further conferences with Salata and his fellow-workers closed our first Roman visit.

We were agreed that in the coming months a formal scheme for the Autonomy clauses for South Tyrol should be drawn up, and before our departure had arranged with Salata an official Press report which should be published through the Telegraphic Agency Stefani. In this was clearly expressed our own desire, and Salata's decisive agreement to, as well as our legal protest against, the infringement of the rights of Self-Determination for Tyrol.

When we bought a newspaper at the Verona railway station on our return journey and in it read the *communiqué* which had meanwhile been published, *the sentence of our legal protest had been omitted*. This was the first official act of dishonesty, one that could be borne, but when we reported to our confidants in South Tyrol all the Roman negotiations, the apparent trifle cast a shadow on the otherwise reassuring

picture of our political reception on the banks of the Tiber. A few pessimists certainly were not hopeful, saying with Hamlet, "Words, words, words".

II. "WE ARE TYROLESE AND TYROLESE WE WILL REMAIN"

Crowds were surging round the Andreas Hofer monument in Meran; more than ten thousand men from all the Burggrafenamt had arranged to meet there, among them 300 Passeier folk who had marched the three hours' journey to the meeting-place. This May 9, 1920, showed how deep the claim for Autonomy went with South Tyrol! The gay embroideries of the Burggräfler coats struck a bright note, the feathered hats of the *Tracht* (national dress) added another touch, the air echoed to the band music stirring the hearts of thousands. A political meeting had been called, which was developing into a popular festival under the blue Meran sky. The orators spoke from two platforms, the strongest and most fiery speaker being Dr. Weinberger, who the previous year had collaborated with us at Innsbruck in the *Heimat* League, an obstinate, uncompromising character, some years later to be overtaken on the Jaufen by a fatal avalanche—perhaps a not unwelcome passing, for he had suffered more than others in the country's oppression. The snowy death at least spared him the humiliations of the future.

The Meran Assembly concluded with songs and jubiliations, accompanied by the following resolution:

The national gathering to-day of thousands of South Tyrolese from the Burggrafenamt, Passeier, Ulten, and Vintschgau, expresses fullest reliance on the "German League", with heartiest thanks for their activities up to the present. We refuse to admit any Tridentine influence in our affairs and decline any common interest with Trent. By every means in our power we resist the design to coerce South Tyrol into one province with the Trentino, and reject in the strongest terms the pretensions of the Trentino to exercise any supervision in South Tyrol.

We also reject forcibly all efforts at Italianization, and protest against the arbitrary and despotic dismissal of officials or any similar attacks on our ancient Tyrolese rights.

We are Tyrolese and Tyrolese we will remain!

Therefore we demand from the Government full Self-Determination for South Tyrol.

This was not the only manifestation of the sort. That spring a wave of warm feeling pulsed through South Tyrol; we went from town to town, from village to village, and a host of competent speakers rallied to our side; the political organization grew of itself. The Tyrolese Popular Party, by far the strongest, quartered the leading districts and groups of villages over mountain and valley, to which duty we gave ourselves whole-heartedly; the first important election to be recorded under Italian domination must be prepared for thoroughly, the Government must recognize that our programme of self-government agreed exactly with the tone of the "German League".

The people were like a ploughed field waiting for the seed, that outspoken cry for Freedom. Now and again the movement was voiced by object-lessons; the Meran Assembly was one such, and on St. Cassian's Day the turn came to Brixen. Thousands streamed into the town in orderly march to military music, taking part in the Cassian procession, and after the religious ceremony thronging to the cathedral square. High above the crowd was a mighty tablet wreathed in pine-branches and inscribed with some such words as:

We will never cede our thousand-year right
To Tyrol, our Homeland dear,—
Have proved ourselves 'gainst odds in fight,
Ne'er looked on the face of Fear!

And once again in every speech rang out the cry, *Autonomy for South Tyrol!*

The influence of great crowds is inspiring; they are more than merely a number of individual sympathizers. When a

people stirred by enthusiasm voices a demand ardently and of free will, that is in itself a proof of a question of justice.

In April 1920 the Government invited the "German League to Rome," in order to enter upon the necessary negotiations concerning our Autonomy programme. Six of us set out—Toggenburg, Walther, Pfarrer Habicher, the lawyer Zallinger, Kinsele, and myself—to be followed some days later by the Tyrolese Social Democrats, and later still by the Trent party. Credaro was likewise on the spot.

We had drafted a well-considered scheme for Autonomy. From the Brenner down to Salurn and the Dolomite-Ladin inclusive, the Tyrol should form one undivided province, to be governed by a freely elected Legislative Assembly (*Landtag*), in whose jurisdiction especially lay all questions of education and agricultural legislation for the Home Economy. A representative (*Statthalter*) should watch over the rights of the Government; the existing autonomy of the communes would, however, remain untouched. Our youths would, like those of Greece in the Dodecanese provinces under Italian rule, not be drawn for military service. All questions of Foreign Policy, Government Finance, and the Defence of Frontiers and Railways were to be in the hands of the Government.

During the negotiations in the Palazzo Venezia no apparent opposition was offered by the Government representative, Salata; he was friendly, humorous, well-disposed as ever. Credaro made an even more favourable impression on us here in his own familiar Rome than he had in Bozen. In any case, it appeared the delegates from Trent must be heard previous to any decision, but we were given to understand that the favourable temper of the Government would be unchanged.

This assurance was not sufficiently satisfactory. Half a year had gone by since our first visit, and many significant

happenings had put us on our guard. While we were sitting at the Council table a dispatch from Meran arrived announcing that Commendatore Taiti, the head of the railways in Trent, had dismissed all the Tyrolese directors on the Bozen-Meran line; other attacks were also made from Trent. If we could bring back nothing from these conferences but renewed assurances of the highest regard, we should prepare not only a bitter disappointment for our people, but a sinister development of the whole Autonomy problem was to be feared.

If the Government were really serious in satisfying our wishes, one point at least ought to be made clear—as to their intention to make us a province absolutely independent of Trent. We desired that a declaration of this nature should be made public. Salata was violently against it, referring to the uselessness of such a step, which might strengthen the nascent opposition in Nationalistic circles; and, above all, objecting that as the head of the Government was not in Rome, but was delegate in the International Conference at San Remo, he could not be disturbed. We protested that matters could be arranged by telegraph and telephone, and that the Nationalists ought to be confronted by a deed accomplished. If the Government could not decide on such declaration, any further stay in Rome would be useless on our part.

Whereupon Nitti's consent was obtained for the following announcement to be published: The Minister-President adheres to the manifestoes which the Speech from the Throne concerning the continuance of local autonomy in the new provinces also recognized, and as he is convinced of the value and necessity of the two independent provinces, each with its own franchise, he desires that preparations for direct consensus of opinion be set on foot.

That at least was a beginning, and we breathed once more. In the next days we were still more encouraged by our

reception from the proxy of the absent Minister-President, the Finance Minister, Luigi Luzzatti. The old man with his white patriarchal beard struck us as a worthy representative of the Italian State. In solemn, almost moving words he responded to our greetings, saying decisively: "I am wholly and solely for the autonomy of South Tyrol! What need for your deputies to appear in the Roman Parliament—you can stay quietly at home. You should manage your own affairs as the Swiss lead their own lives in their cantons. If humanity be not completely bestialized, if the spirit of peaceful unity be instilled through the European nations, then the day will surely come when you may return to your nation."

We kept these utterances to ourselves. Later they were made public, to the rage of the Nationalist Party. Luzzatti then did not actually disclaim, though he endeavoured to soften them, by speaking of them as theoretical. For us, however, it must be more than a platonic opinion. A representative of the Italian Government had given us his word, and we could not be blamed for deriving encouragement from that promise. What had been the Meran cry?

"We are Tyrolese (German-speaking) and Tyrolese we shall remain!"

12. TRENT

When in the year 1848 Italian insurgents advanced on the Tyrol frontier and came up against the country's defenders, they disseminated a broadsheet among the troops which ran thus:

Take no part in the unjust war; it would be to bring down upon you the Vengeance of the Almighty. The pretext is alleged that we would seize your Divinely appointed Homeland and subjugate it. That is a treacherous lie! Nay, never would we trespass across the frontier of Italy! We desire freedom, but we desire freedom for other lands likewise, and, above all, freedom for Tyrol.

Trent is Italian, and Italian shall it remain. Bozen is German,

and German it will always remain. Our motto is: Independence, and Brotherhood among nations.

Long live Germany!
Long live the brave Tyrolese!

For more than five hundred years Bozen and Trent had been at enmity; the bone of contention for long being the district where the great markets should be held, the German-Italian trade centres. Then came the question as to whether the Fleimstal Railway should be carried northwards or southwards, and national antagonism whetted every point in dispute. The temper of both peoples was characteristically symbolized by the dark bronze monument of Dante Alighieri in Trent, and the glistening marble of that of the Vogelweide in Bozen.

In 1848, therefore, the innate incompatibility of both towns led the delegates of Trent and Rovereto in the German National Assembly¹ to demand the release of Italian Tyrol from the Germanic Confederacy. The boundary of the national State was not to be at the Berner (Verona) Gorge: "From the Salurn Defile northwards lofty mountain ridges branch off to right and left, a few steep paths only threading them. Over their summits lies the Lombardic frontier, to the west at Sulzberg, that of the Venetian to the east in the Fassatal: the wall of partition between the two nations created by Nature. Their peoples have respected it, as a national policy will respect it in the future."

This Memorial was signed by all the Italian Tyrolese delegates, Festi, Pretis, Marsili, Vettorazzi, and Prato, with the assent of their electors, expressed in countless communal resolutions and public manifestoes. As, however, their proposals were unsuccessful, the Tridentines showed their indignation by their absence from the Innsbruck *Landtag* (Diet) for many years, and when at last they reappeared in

¹ The German National Assembly was held at Frankfurt a. M. in S. Paulus Kirche. Austria in those times belonged to the Germanic Confederacy.

it, it was to demand autonomy for themselves once more. Cesare Battisti, to-day a hero of Trent, joined in this claim in the Tyrol Parliament. The Italian Tyrol should have nothing in common with the German-speaking Tyrol. Bozen lay for him outside this "Trentino".

While thus in the middle of the nineteenth century the Trent party made autonomy the corner-stone of their political activity, they already possessed nearly all for which we petitioned Rome in 1920, viz. a special section of the national Board of Education, another of the Board of Agriculture, pure Italian (in their case) education under their own control, self-administration for the communes. That which was denied them was the formal separation from the Crown lands of Tyrol, and though they unceasingly complained of this, yet they knew how to profit thereby. Trent lived on the Tyrol domestic economy.

I have often found that dues of vassalage, that is, rights on alien territory, are the most fiercely disputed. To the Tridentines such prescriptive rights appeared to be in danger, when after the Great War the autonomy of German-speaking South Tyrol came into open discussion. Already soon after the occupation, their joy at release from the hated Hapsburg dominions had been considerably damped by the change in the coinage of forty *centesimi* for a *krone*.

Redeemed is our Trent
At forty per cent.!

The air was vibrant with the like mocking echoes. The "Redemption at forty per cent." pleased nobody, and though the Government later added on twenty *centesimi*, the popular temper was already soured. Things grew worse when Italian officials and their methods of government were gradually declared the order of the day. The Austrian administration came to appear an ideal condition of things compared with such helplessness on the one hand, such corruption on the

other! The leader of the Trent Popular Party, Dr. Degasperi, had in 1915 declared in Vienna, when a peaceful separation of the Italian Tyrol had been discussed between Austria and Italy, that such a partition would be dangerous for the Italian Tyrol, taking from it the self-administration of the communes and the religious instruction in the schools. Now, in 1920, Trent would fain rescue her self-determination and demanded autonomy for herself.

Then they learnt that Nitti had agreed with us that South Tyrol should be created an independent province unattached to Trent, and at that they raised an uproar. Meetings were organized and reported at Rome, the subject of such assemblies openly given out by individuals: "the political victims" of Cles have resolved as follows— "We protest against the partition of the province, because it can only be to the profit of those who are our hereditary foes and the bitter enemy of Trent and of Italy, and because it will injure the economic interests of our war-devastated zone."

Here was, indeed, the core of the Trentine opposition—the rights of the tenant, the pasturing on our meadows, were endangered. But as this ground might not seem to the Government sufficient, a patriotic cloak must be thrown over it. During the War many Tridentines had been hardly treated by Austria: war is war. The execution of Cesare Battisti and his companions was certainly short-sighted, but it was carried out with the same lawful rights as France and England had shot deserters or traitors to the colours. Italy herself, according to official Italian reports, had condemned and shot many hundred of her own soldiers behind her lines; the terrible defeat of Caporetto was not after all to be traced to the severity with which Cadorna punished military offenders. We of South Tyrol know well that in the case of war, Italy would not be more merciful to us than was Austria to her Italian citizens.

Now, when it was a question of rights of pasturage on our meadows, memories of Austrian oppression were conveniently revived. The Press opened fire with all its batteries, the Nationalists of Italy proper joined in, backed up by the great Dante Alighieri League. Roman newspapers also lent their aid; often with laughable ignorance, the *Tribuna*, an important paper, writing warmly against "the . . . Slav provocations in South Tyrol". In the Senate a question as to the preparations for a popular rising in South Tyrol was put forward. All this at a time when I myself heard Italian officers in Bozen saying that it was much pleasanter to live there than in Florence or Milan, where the Communists were on the advance march.

The atmosphere soon became infected, aided by the civil-commissaries in South Tyrol, all of them Tridentines. When Commendatore Mosetti, known for his philo-German sympathies, was appointed by the Government as the new civil-commissary for Bozen, Trent raised so great an outcry that the man himself turned back upon his journey.

Trent lies geographically between Bozen and Rome. When Rome would have granted South Tyrol bearable conditions of existence, it was hindered by the Tridentines. Nitti and his successor could not avail against the thirst for revenge and the commercial envy of these new patriots of Italy.

13. CREDARO

When I met Credaro for the first time I was favourably impressed; here was something akin to the Tyrolese. His outer man betrayed the son of the mountains: of a low stature, with massive head, marked features, and friendly eyes that at times looked wellnigh paternal. His speech was free from the disagreeable "gush" of Italian phrasings; there was conviction in his voice and the will to act on his convictions.

That he had studied Kant and Hegel, gaining through

them an admirable knowledge of German philosophy, at once established a certain connection between us. He met me personally with the remark that he had read my farewell speech in the Viennese National Assembly and fully grasped my point of view.

Credaro (as I have already said), unlike many others, appeared qualified to carry out a state of things that would make life endurable in South Tyrol and desirable for Italian interests.

The beginning of his work seemed in fact inspired with the utmost good will. He abolished at once all especially severe military regulations, and kept himself in touch with South Tyrol by regular visits to Bozen. In order to awaken in Italy comprehension of the Tyrolese question and the peculiarities of these new fellow-citizens, he made his secretary Lambertenghi translate Karl von Grabmayr's book, *South Tyrol, the Land and its People between Brenner and Salurn*, and himself gave a lecture on it in the Roman *Accademia dei Lincei*. But the extraordinary difficulty in the Italian intellect to grasp such a problem as this of the Tyrol soon became apparent; in the customary debate after the lecture Salandra declared that he did not consider it necessary to enter into these Teutonic conceptions, and that Italy's best propaganda would be the declaration of the rights of the conqueror. This point of view was undoubtedly far simpler than that of Credaro, flattering as it did the national vanity, making no demands on the comprehension, and laying down the simple formula for treatment of German-speaking Tyrol—Assimilation. Salandra subsequently, at a banquet on the Mendel, expressed this formula even more unequivocally.

All the Italian Nationalist Party supported the Minister-President in his declaration of war on Credaro, to whom the translation of Grabmayr's book is reckoned to-day one of his worst sins. Nevertheless, for long he maintained a

tolerant attitude; tolerance, however, was insufficient for South Tyrol. There deeds were demanded. Any decision equally profitable for Italy and South Tyrol would have certainly prevented the people of Trent from intermeddling in our affair, while the establishment of autonomy would have hindered all such grave friction as any other line of policy must render unavoidable. For this neither Credaro nor the Roman Government had the courage.

When in April 1920 in Rome we gathered around the council table, and the talk turned on the subject of Trent's opposition to our wishes, one of the Italian members related an anecdote. Some years ago, he told us, a heated quarrel had broken out between two Italian communities over the erection of a hospital; the prefect of the province was called upon for a decision, and in despair telegraphed to the Government for instructions, who wired by return: "*Distribuite equamente malcontento*" (Divide the discontent equally). Truly a judgment of Solomon!

Rome, as did Credaro in his governorship, thought to solve the problem of autonomy for South Tyrol after the same fashion. What a petty conception and what short-sighted methods! The problem of South Tyrol has from the outset had an international importance—it affects the relations of Germany with Italy and thereby the whole of Italy's foreign policy. To even the squabbles of intriguing local committees to such a question, and seek to handle it after the pattern of the settlement of a hospital quarrel, has, indeed, a ludicrous aspect.

Degasperi, the leader of the Popular Party, has since declared that in 1920 we should not have awaited a royal decree for our demand of autonomy. As a matter of fact such a royal decree would have been the weapon with which Nitti could have cut the Gordian knot; as soon as so weighty a question had been brought before Parliament and discussed by the man in the street, the matter being hopelessly muddled, he would have allowed it to pass.

It would, however, be unjust to lay the whole responsibility for the delaying of partition of Tyrol upon Credaro's shoulders; Salata played a large part therein. He had an axe of his own to grind on the Tyrolese whetstone of autonomy—his native economic Iстриan interests. The Adriatic provinces desired to be free in their turn from the Austrian police-commissaries; and, on the other hand, there was no wish to see the Austrian head of the self-government and the autonomist burgomaster sacrificed on the altar of Italian patriotism. Salata therefore hoped that the creation of South Tyrol autonomy might at the same time make possible the establishment of similar forms of administration in all the new provinces. On this account he did not expedite autonomy for South Tyrol, and so was equally guilty for its miscarriage.

Then came a change of government. Nitti was replaced by the veteran Giolitti. The unrest of the Italian people voiced itself vehemently in internal conflicts. The Communists, under the leadership of the pale visionary Bombacci, wished to raise the Soviet flag in Italy. The citizens prepared for defence. When I was again in Rome in the summer of 1920, I could perceive the beginnings of opposition to the Communist attacks. The Roman tramways had, after an eight-day strike, received a small increase of pay; now the cars drove out of the garages with red flags, so enraging the Roman youth that they tore down the Bolshevik signs, replacing them by the tricolour. Those youths were not Fascist; in these days there was little talk of Mussolini. The Nationalists on the contrary contemplated a dictatorship under d'Annunzio, who about this time had invaded Fiume and was acting as Regent in the Quarnero, where he at the same time served the Italian foreign policy and incidentally foreign politics, thus causing a good deal of trouble.

The attempts of the Communists were also doomed to

failure, when in the summer of 1920 the red star of the Soviets waned after Russia's defeat near Warsaw. The Italian Communists carried on the conflict, though aimlessly, doing little harm on the whole; here and there a factory or so was seized, there were rumours of the mobilization of a Red Army. The situation was really less dangerous than Spartacus in Germany, not to be compared with Bela Kuhn in Hungary. Giolitti, however, was fain to settle the unrest in his country at a blow. He already had at his command a victorious army, an immense number of *Carabinieri* troops, and the newly created strength of the *Guardia Regia*; why should he then burden himself, through the artillery of official organs, with "political responsibility"? It would be much easier to permit Mussolini's *Fasci di Combattimento* and even, if necessary, to finance them. By this system a statesman of Giolitti's calibre could "continue" without danger. Had he but confronted the Communists with the same strong hand with which he—certainly under international pressure—allowed d'Annunzio to be chased out of Fiume, Italy would have been spared the scourge of Fascism. With over-excessive subtlety he brought Mussolini forward, nourished the snake in his bosom, who in a few years would supersede him in the political field.

In all this vacillation of Italian politics South Tyrol came off short. Our country at the time was as an isle of social peace, between the north suffering hunger and the tumultuous unrestful south. Its individual characteristics were all the more striking in contrast with Italy; therefore we had the greater ground for imagining that Autonomy would be realized through Giolitti. Alas, all our efforts were in vain! Precisely because we were quiet, because Giolitti was well aware, despite the nervous tension of the authorities in his own land, that no special difficulty in South Tyrol could embarrass him, he therefore shelved any action concerning our situation. "After the Election," we were told, "when the

elected deputies from South Tyrol should sit in Parliament." This was the sop thrown to us.

About this time the people of the Trentino succeeded in entrapping Credaro. He gave vent to the significant opinion that the fact must not be overlooked, that the most vehement opposition to our Autonomy programme came from the group who had suffered the most for Italy. For the people of Trent the all-absorbing interest was the problem of South Tyrol—not the problem *quâ* problem, but as regarding Tridentine interests. That they were freed and that this should have satisfied them was not realized by them; and as little did Credaro on his side realize that we of South Tyrol had lost our birthright and now only petitioned for a mess of pottage—Autonomy. It was not long before, after some trivial opposition, he adopted a definitely hostile attitude towards the "German League". He began to intrigue—an entirely different pose from our first impression of him—endeavouring to play the social democrats and individual opponents against us, and manœuvred through a German journalist in his pay to influence the Press in Paris, Switzerland, and Germany, with the aim of compromising our position. When therefore the German Ambassador quite needlessly tried to weaken a pronouncement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and wrote a letter to Credaro speaking in praise of "the good treatment meted out to Italians of German descent", Credaro was sure of his affair. He muzzled the German Press more tightly, while he allowed the Trent newspapers to rage against us. He drew up the programme of defence in the multi-language zone, compelling parents against their will to remove their children from German schools, and he yielded more and more to the Nationalist Party. He was not thoroughly familiar with Austrian law, and therefore was forced to rely on Tridentine advice and influence, so that he ran counter both to the law and our sensibilities. When we pointed this out to him he excused

himself with the naïve remark that Nitti, when he, Credaro, was elected, had made over unlimited power to him, saying, "As commissary-general, you can do what you will". When I appealed to the State-council in Rome and got the verdict that a long list of the commissary's oppressive requisitions were illegal, and must therefore be held null and void, Credaro flew into a rage and defined this decision of the highest Italian officials as "*Una decisione balorda*"—an idiotic verdict!

Despite these vacillations, Credaro was no longer able to overcome the Nationalist opposition, and so made shipwreck on the very formula that he had regarded as a means of pacification, the "*Malcontento equamente distribuito*"—the discontent of both parties. Subsequently, when for some years he had been in the background, he appeared once more, to destroy the last vestige of our good opinion of him—that, though no statesman, at least he would be a man of his convictions, true to what he professed. We shall meet him again in that moral suicide of his.

14. "YOU WILL GET USED TO THE FETTERS"

A night in June! The sparkling heavens like an azure mantle spangled with gold widen over Tyrol, the earth glimmers and glows with a thousand points of flame. Can a shower of stars have descended on the Tyrol mountains or countless beacon fires been enkindled on hill and dale?

I stood with a group on the mountain path of Lengmoos am Ritten, gazing over the land. Not a peak that did not cast its radiance abroad, not a declivity that did not fling out a fiery response. Was this some goblin carnival, some delusion of the senses? Nay, this is a Tyrol festival, the Sunday of the Sacred Heart, from troublous times of old kept sacred by pious vows of the Tyrolese States and celebrated every year by beacon fires on every height. The World War

interrupted the custom, the military authorities being against it even in 1919, but now in 1920 the festival had been revived, as of old leapt out the glow, turning mountain pinnacles and cliffs into living fire. The lurid glory seemed to awake the echoes, soldier songs of our grandfathers. "Up, keep the oath of Tyrol", and whatever else might come to memory in joy or sorrow, rang forth with a good will, while horns were blown and from north and south thundered mighty salvos of mortar shots. The night throbs into life, from every house throng the people over glades or knolls, exchanging memories and exulting over the idea of the brotherhood of Tyrol, not only from the cliffs of the Salurn Gorge up to the Oetztal ridge and the glaciers of the Zillertal, but even beyond to the Bavarian frontier.

Among those who had accompanied me up on the Ritten in order to behold this mighty sea of fire of Tyrolese enthusiasm, was the widow of an Austrian officer who had found a grave in the highlands of the Seven Communes. Gripped by the magic of the June night with its flames and choruses, after a while emotion overpowered her, and among her tears she murmured to me, "Now at least, I know for what my husband sacrificed his life!"

In the valley below, the Italians viewed things differently. They had already learnt something about it, a round-robin of the Tyrolese Popular Party having fallen into their hands, appealing for a resuscitation of the ancient custom. The closing sentence, conceived in a poetic vein, ran, "From Kufstein to Salurn may the beacon fires shine, the night of our servitude to clear", written by the party's secretary, a young and ardent man. These words caused the Italians much uneasiness: something was on foot, perhaps even a rising of Tyrol. All the *Carabinieri* stations received precise instructions, the military were ordered to be in readiness, and when the Sunday of the Sacred Heart dawned, machine-guns proved to be posted before the Bozen parish church and

in the courtyard of the post-office buildings. They were not brought into requisition, for no one had thought of any outbreak; I myself, whom the Italians subsequently pointed out as the most guilty in the affair, happened to be the whole day up on the Ritten.

The *ordre de bataille* had its effect; in many places the *Carabinieri* interrupted with restrictions and prohibitions the Church's morning festival of High Mass and Procession. In Passeier the battle standard of Andreas Hofer, always carried in processions, was requisitioned, but, this meeting with passionate resistance, the *Carabinieri* contented themselves with requiring that all medals and ribbons of honour should be removed from it. In order to avoid bloodshed the heads of Passeier yielded to this demand, but the bitterness caused by it was immense.

In the evening, as the beacon fires sprang up and the mountains joined their voices to the salvos of small cannon, the agitation of the Italians reached its climax. To hinder or even disturb the illumination of the peaks was beyond the powers of the troops available; they must perforce satisfy themselves with attacks on safe spots. At Bozen the military marched on the Talfer bridge, drove back with fixed bayonets the crowd there assembled in fervent admiration of the spectacle, and turned the machine-guns on them, arresting half a dozen men and dragging them off to Trent. So in other communities countless prisoners were made without any reasonable ground, as at St. Ulrich, Stilfes, and Auer; even the venerated Burgomaster Gallmetzer of Klausen was put behind bolt and bar. In Branzoll an officer fired without any necessity into a restaurant garden, but the mob fell on him, disarmed and thrashed him well, and for this sixty were arrested and sent off to Trent.

In Tramin the fight was hottest, the *Carabinieri* having arrested and imprisoned two young fellows, ostensibly because they had fired off wooden mortars without official

permission. Such injustice roused the townsfolk, and a crowd assembled before the barracks, demanding the release of the prisoners. A *Carabinieri* patrol appeared before the door with rifles at full-cock, promptly answered by a hail of stones, persuading the soldiers to retreat without firing, and the siege of the barracks continued for some hours, until the Burgomaster succeeded in soothing the popular temper and inducing the folk to return home. On the following day, however, thirty-one inhabitants of Tramin were put in irons and conducted to Neumarkt, which commune had shortly before been deprived by Credaro of its Elective Council, a commissary being appointed in its stead. This personage officiously and illegally, as he had nothing to do with the business of the Courts, took a "survey" of the prisoners and dispatched all of them, both those from Branzoll and from Tramin, to Trent, fettered in groups of six or eight to a long chain, as Italian law does not provide handcuffs.

When gradually the incidents of the Italian measures of coercion on this national festival became known, a pulse of sheer indignation throbbed through the whole land. The South Tyrol press accused the officials of exaggerated warmth in the case of a non-existent peril, brought forward a number of breaches of the law proved to have been committed by the Italian functionaries, and protested seriously against so time-honoured a festival as the Sunday of the Sacred Heart having been thus wantonly disturbed. The Bozen burgomaster himself stood bail for the innocent prisoners his fellow-citizens, and still further efforts were made to secure their release. I went myself with a deputation from the communal council of Tramin to the commissary-general, and endeavoured to make him understand that the disturbance in Tramin had been caused by the hasty and unjust measures taken by the *Carabinieri* and their superiors. We begged him, in order to restore peace, to order the release of the Tramin prisoners, now amounting to more than forty in number,

or at the least to have their case tried before a regular judge in Bozen, the only legal method of procedure.

Credaro, however, would hear nothing. The affair was now in the hands *dei magistrati* of the Courts, and his Italian sense of justice forbade him to exercise the smallest influence on the proceedings!

A tedious trial now began, I finding myself involved in it. As one morning in Bozen I was occupied in my professional calling at the Courts, my partner, accompanied by two detectives, came into the hall and informed me that a *Carabiniere* officer with eight men was inquiring for me, in order to search my house. On entering my bureau Captain Tagliavacche presented me with a warrant from the inquisitorial justice, the one and only time that such a legal form was laid before me, subsequently it being considered by authority unnecessary. In this magistral document it appeared that I had instigated revolt, and the search of my dwelling-house was prosecuted in Gries, a suburb of Bozen, with no results, except for one amusing incident. Some days after the Sunday of the Sacred Heart, when talking over the events of that day with an Italian mistress of the girls' school at Bozen, she, anxious to play peacemaker, assured me that the *Carabinieri* had a reputation for loutishness, and in her home of Venezia there was a proverb, "Thou art as stupid as a *Carabiniere*!" ("*Sei stupido come un Carabiniere!*"). I had made a note of this tag as a curiosity, and when Captain Tagliavacche opened my writing-desk, there lay the paper in full view! The officer started back, angrily demanding what that meant, but on my explaining the circumstance to him, he let the subject drop, while two interpreters in the background, formerly Austrian *gendarmes*, endeavoured to turn their malicious chuckles into vigorous clearing of throats.

Soon afterwards the legal authorities established that I was in nowise connected with the "riots". The writer, however, of the Tyrol round-robin, the secretary of the

National Party, came off less satisfactorily. Sought out in his office by the *Carabinieri*, he proved to be absent, and we could not inform them as to his whereabouts. On the same day he incidentally telephoned to me from Meran and asked if there were any news.

"Yes, you're going to be arrested, but up to now they have not found you!"

"I'm coming at once to Bozen to give myself up!"

And so he did at the *Carabinieri* barracks, there to be put into chains and sent to Trent. If ever, here it was plain that neither danger nor efforts at escape were to be apprehended, the only conditions which in South Tyrol permitted the use of fetters under the then existing Austrian law. But the law weighed little with Italian officials; if it did not suit them it was set aside. This, for instance, was the case with the enactments of damages for imprisonment of those proved innocent; such legislation would be undesirable in South Tyrol, since the convenient method of arbitrary lockings-up would be hampered by it. Therefore authority ignored it.

The secretary spent three weeks in prison, his circumstances only slightly mitigated by our sending in the tastiest food that an hotel could furnish; but the suffocating July heat in the little cell shared by several real criminals could not be ameliorated by any well-wisher. Evidence of punishable intentional action being totally wanting, the Courts were fain at last to release him; but passed sentence on eighteen lads of Tramin for public acts of violence, their trial being in Trent, though none of the accused knew any Italian. The presiding magistrate was one Emeri, himself one of the bitterest foes to Germany and later a Fascist leader; the youths were found by him guilty and condemned to seven months' imprisonment. During the preliminaries of the trial a girl from Tramin came to the Trent magistrate, to implore her brother's release, as he was urgently needed for the work at home. The examining magistrate, Povenelli,

assaulted her. I laid information against him, with the consequences of his being removed from the Courts and employed in the General Commissariat!

All these incidents were but a symptom. The hatred of the Tridentines, backed up by the Italian Nationalists, had its effect; the administrative authorities were filled with ill will towards us; so much was evident to our people in hundreds of ways, great and small. We became acquainted with the methods of this new Government, such as those of the *Finanzieri*, whose favourite instrument was the *agent provocateur*. Forbidden wares were displayed and even pressed upon the people; did they buy them their houses were immediately searched with satisfactory results—heavy penalties being inflicted on the unfortunate folk, and the *Finanzieri* soldiers banked their prize-money. When such forbidden goods were found in house visitations, a *Verbale*, an Italian protocol not understood by the people, was presented to the terrified and helpless victims, whom the *Finanzieri* assured in friendliest tones of the necessity of signing it, as though it were an empty formality. This done, the lawyer for the defence, in subsequent proceedings, might prove that his client had unwittingly signed an acknowledgment of guilt or otherwise incriminating statement, but the result of the trial was a foregone conclusion.

So thoroughly immoral a system drove many a poor devil to despair.

Likewise those worthy civil-commissioners, already mentioned in these pages, borrowed a leaf from the military book. The domineering Commissioner of Neumarkt, Carlo Trener, acted like a very Pasha. In the village of Laag—under his jurisdiction—several Italian families wished to send their children unconditionally to German schools, and when Credaro Italianized the Laag school, these children were sent to other communes in order to profit by German teaching. The Commissioner of Neumarkt was enraged, but

the Austrian Laws of Education gave no loophole for depriving parents of the right of dealing with their own children, and the Commissioner was compelled to dig out the edict popularly called *Prügelpatent*, an Imperial law dated 1854, during the height of Austrian absolutism. Clause 11 of this decree made officially punishable any defamation of the Government and its functionaries. The Neumarkt Commissioner announced: "The non-fulfilment of my orders is to me an expression of contempt for my person as an official, and is therefore defamatory." Fines hailed down, appeals were frequently tried, but Credaro maintained the Commissioner's extraordinary views as to the legal rights of his office.

Another charlatan in the administration, Civil-Commissioner Gottardi in Brixen, followed Credaro's example. In a meeting at Sterzing a speaker, instead of repetition of the name of Italy, used the expression "The land where the citron blooms", and spoke of the "Land of Citrons", which Gottardi interpreted as a disparagement of the Government and its officials! A fine of 200 *lire* or fourteen days' imprisonment should act as a deterrent to such slanders! I presented an appeal, pointing out the illegality of such a sentence, but Credaro upheld Gottardi's decision.

An attempt was made to bring me myself in guilty under the *Prügelpatent* (penal patent). At a meeting in the Vintschgau I related an incident of the *Herz-Jesu* Sunday, when a certain joyful event was looked for in the family of an Italian staff officer in Bozen. In the midst of the preparations fell bomb-like an order of the regimental commander for the expectant father to repair at once to the barracks, as all were to hold themselves in immediate readiness for military service. With Italian impetuosity the officer, in despair, threw himself on his wife's bed, bidding her a heartrending farewell, "Addio, Marietta, you'll never see me again!" I described the incident as a proof of what a fundamentally wrong idea the Administration had of our designs, for obviously the unfortu-

nate officer was under the impression that a life-and-death combat was imminent. The little anecdote would have cost me a fine, according to one of the clauses of the penal decree, but on my explanations the penalty was for a wonder remitted.

Matters, however, grew more serious. In Vierschach, in the Pustertal, the universally respected priest, Johann Paldele, was one day unsuspectingly walking along. A *Finanziere* and a *Carabiniere* thought fit to amuse themselves by frightening him with firing shots, and when they had enough of that, they followed it up by falling upon him with kicks and blows. The same thing happened on the same day to the pointsman Pichler, the treatment being accompanied with the cry, "Death to all Germans!"

Similar acts of brutality were constantly repeated in the Pustertal, and as the evildoers were never punished, they were stimulated to fresh aggressions.

How deeply responsible for all such incidents the higher officials were, I can professionally assert, from the case of Bernhard Rainer of Mayern, near Sterzing. Rainer one evening at dusk went up to the balcony of a house for some harmless purpose. The *Finanzieri* happening to be quartered in this house, hearing some noise and becoming suspicious, sprang to the balcony and, collaring the lad, dragged him down to the unlighted passage. Rainer fell down and, not knowing what it was all about, fought to free himself. He was, however, overpowered and carried off to prison, where he was so severely handled by the *Finanzieri* that his clothes were soaked in blood and his body bore the scars for long enough. A doctor had to be called in, and on the second day the *Finanzieri* brought the prisoner before the judge in Sterzing, a German Tyrolese by name Hinterholzer. They accused their victim of tearing down certain shields in the house and of resisting subsequent arrest. The judge examined the accused, opened the regular penal procedure,

and released Rainer, as there was absolutely no ground for his committal. This action, so incomprehensible to the Italians, was forthwith reported to Credaro, and for once his sacred dread of any interference with the course of the law was set aside. The following day Hinterholzer was deprived of office and Rainer was again arrested. I undertook his defence. He solemnly asserted that he had never touched the *Finanzieri* shields, and explained his resistance by the darkness having prevented his seeing who had seized him, and therefore he had thought himself justified in his self-defence against maltreatment. But when it was the *Finanzieri's* turn to witness, they maintained on oath that they had caught him red-handed with the shields, and Rainer was thereupon condemned to many months' imprisonment.

At the close of the trial I had an interview with him. "The trial is over; there is no further reason to hide anything. Tell me, for my own satisfaction, did you tear down the shields or not?" The prisoner replied with manly seriousness: "What I told the judges is the absolute truth. I knew nothing about the shields, nor ever had anything to do with them!" The *Finanzieri* had perjured themselves, but there was no possibility of changing the verdict, and the judge Hinterholzer was never reinstated.

I was more successful in another case. From a high pasture near Mals within a short time six kids had been stolen, and, as the Italian soldiers had there been drilled, general suspicion fell upon them. One night a Malser inhabitant, the master baker Adam, heard a noise in his backyard. Suspecting some mischief, he rushed out in time to see two Italian soldiers in the vicinity of their barracks cutting up a kid. Adam spoke, calling them to account, on which one of the soldiers, by name Raimondi, ran into the barracks and procured a pistol from his non-commissioned officer. Meanwhile Adam's son had come upon the scene, armed also with a pistol to defend his father if necessary. Raimondi fell on the old man,

firing and wounding him, whereupon the son shot the Italian through the heart and he died in a few minutes. Karl Adam was arrested, and after months of examination before the Bozen jury, was accused of murder. In my defence it was not difficult to prove him acting in self-preservation; the jury consequently declared him innocent and he was released. The Italian Press, however, loudly protested against this verdict, and the Attorney-General brought the case before the Court of Appeal, who had perforce to admit the regularity of the proceedings, but the Italian newspapers recurred again and again to what was in our opinion a disgraceful case among the Italian troops, but in theirs a proof of the odiousness of a Tyrolese jury when Italians were in question.

On his side Credaro carried his unscrupulousness so far, that once on a visit to Bozen he even summoned the president of the District Court, the magistrate Joas, and called him to account. It had come to Credaro's ears, he said, that Italians could get no justice in the district court, where, however, we knew Joas as an almost exaggeratedly fair and conscientious judge. Credaro, nevertheless, was not ashamed to treat so highly respected a man in the most insulting way imaginable, implying that he was not an impartial judge. Credaro's Italian reverence for law ceded to his auto-conviction of omnipotence.

Thus even before the actual Annexation our people were heavily oppressed. What would it be later on? Now and again we made fresh attempts to move authority by proposals for an impartial administration. One day a deputation came from the Dolomites without a leader, from the confidential members of the "German League" to the commissary-general. They were received by Credaro's presiding chief, Montani. One complaint of the worthy men was the disgraceful and unbearable use of chains by the *Carabinieri*. The high official waived aside their remonstrance with

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scorn. "It is no disgrace to be put in chains; you will get used to them!"

15. COMPULSORY CITIZENS

October 10, 1920, was doubly memorable to the Tyrolese. First, because the people in South Kärnten had on that day with an overwhelming majority voted for union with German Austria, and refused the connection with Yugoslavia. The self-sacrifice and loyalty to the homeland of Carinthia found their own reward on that day and will have lasting claims on the gratitude of our nation.

Secondly, October 10, 1920, cannot be forgotten, because then the elaborate Gates of the Tyrol Passes were bolted and barred. The annexation of German-speaking South Tyrol by Italy was on that day accomplished.

In South Tyrol itself we had devoted the evening preceding that ill-omened day to the memory of our fallen. No church bells might be heard throughout the land, yet none the less the people assembled at immense Requiem services in every church, and on the walls of the district were posted memorial notices with broad black borders. The hour of trial had come, the last blossoms of hope for our country blighted as under the touch of frost. For two years the thought—heavy though the enemy's grip had lain upon us—"We are not yet a part of Italy, her King is not yet ours", had had a gleam of comfort in it for us.

Things went poorly enough with us—three paltry paper *lire* was the exchange for five *kronen* in gold; yet for all that we felt our brotherhood; the tie of blood with "starving North Tyrol" declared itself by generous collections where the widow's mite largely figured, until the Italians had forbidden such subsidies to those who were their defeated enemies—but our brothers.

Now, however, on this October 10, 1920, the Day of Annexation or rather of Compulsory Incorporation, it was

as if a high wall were about to be raised between us of the same flesh and blood, casting a still blacker shadow on our mourning. The Tridentines held an uproarious festival, their burgomaster having the effrontery to invite the communes of "Venezia Tridentina" to take part in it. Dr. Julius Perathoner sent him a scathing refusal. South Tyrol would take no part in the annexation festivals of Trent. When the *Libertà*, the Nationalist paper of Trent, asserted shortly afterwards that representatives from Tramin had attended the festival, the Tramin Burgomaster Waid sent to the Press the following disclaimer: "I hereby explicitly assert that neither any member of the district representatives, nor any representative of our Council, nor, in short, anyone from our commune who with a shadow of right could look on himself as a representative of Tramin, has taken part in the festival at Trent, and I declare the announcement in the *Libertà* to be an infamous invention, which—of this I am assured—will in no smallest wise avail to lower the sturdy temper of the local people in the eyes of our countrymen."

All the political parties in the land joined in publishing the following proclamation, or rather a renewed Protestation:

SOUTH TYROLESE!

This day is the incorporation of South Tyrol with the kingdom of Italy an accomplished fact.

Thereby is the ancient Tyrol Land rent in twain. South Tyrol is the victim of the Peace Proposals which have torn us from our countrymen, despite all solemn protests as to our rights of self-determination.

We of South Tyrol have the unchangeable hope that the day will come when justice and a far-sighted policy will once again bring us national freedom.

People of South Tyrol! Steadfastly shall we endure the gloomy present. We demand of you to avoid every illegal act; we demand that you should bear calmly and with dignity the blows of Fate.

THE GERMAN
LIBERAL PARTY.

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
PARTY.

THE TYROLESE
POPULAR PARTY.

SOUTH TYROL. October 10, 1920.

The Attorney-General crossed out one sentence. In a similar proclamation put out by the Tyrolese Popular Party, he had crossed out all but the first words, "Remember, people of South Tyrol", and the date. The "German League" laid special stress on publicity. In an article written by Dr. Walther, entitled *De Profundis*, he had said:

With the weapons of the Spirit and a steadfast conscience only shall we conquer the Future. But in order to avail ourselves of these weapons in fearless uprightness we shall never cease to strive for our rights. Never shall Italy think that we cede an iota of these rights, even though we refuse not to co-operate with her for the good of the country.

Our rights to self-determination are inalienable; they cannot be bartered for any material advantages. Even had we to choose between privation and plenty, we should gladly and unshrinkingly choose deprivation, if by that only were to be found national and political freedom.

Yet Italy will herself one day be convinced that the unbending will of a small though deeply patriotic people is stronger than the delusive ties of unjust arrangements and that Justice, however much now disgraced and obscured, will once more rise Phoenix-like from the ashes of her dead self.

We must strive to become worthy of this future day through the deepening and intensifying of our national sentiment. We will to remain—shall, indeed, remain—strong in ourselves—taking the unity and common aim throughout South Tyrol as our strongest shield, against which outward force will shatter in pieces.

Thus armed we look forward in confidence to the Future, and in this conflict of the Spirit, in this fiery trial of our national will, in this excessive tension of our moral strength, God will be upon the side of the Right for us as He was for our fathers.

Away then with cowardice or fear! Look onward to the Future!

Protests of a similar tenor, from former deputies of the Vienna Parliament and of the Tyrol Diet, and finally from the Trade and the Chamber of Commerce in Bozen, completed the unanimous declaration of Tyrol against this capture by force.

As before, so also now in Italy, were the Socialists the only party who wished the matter to be put to the popular vote

in South Tyrol. Treves and Riboldi voiced this in the Roman Chamber. Filippo Turati, indeed, proposed that two provinces, Bozen and Trent, should be formed in the annexed territory, and their limits fixed by a parliamentary committee of seven members, in whose especial ward should be placed the national, legislative, and agricultural interests.

Parliament, however, moved that the decision of this question should be postponed until the day when the deputies of the annexed territories should sit in the Roman Parliament.

Yet Article 4 of the Annexation Decree ran thus :

The Royal Government is empowered to make known in the Annexed Regions the State Constitution as well as the other laws of the Kingdom, and to take the needful measures in order to bring into line with them the laws already existing in the said regions, and more especially with the acting communal and provincial autonomy.

The Minister-President Giolitti having on this occasion renewed his pledges to respect and consider his new fellow-citizens, we still nourished a faint hope that we should not be wholly sacrificed to the insensate mania for Assimilation, but that our self-government in however modest a form would be maintained.

Yet the note of danger soon sounded. The *Popolo d'Italia* loudly gave vent to its indignation over the refusal of the idea of Annexation and South Tyrol's boycott of the Trent rejoicings, in the following words: "In South Tyrol the last conflict will be fought out. Either must Italy ruthlessly break down the resistance of the German outposts, and establish her dominion once for all, by declaring that she will never cede the Brenner, or she herself must bow before the German power, withdraw over the Salurn Defile, and declare herself incapable of solving the problem before her."

It was a call to battle.

16. THE OUTWORKS: UNTERLAND AND LADIN

Now that we had been incorporated into the kingdom of Italy, we were faced with the question of the election of the first members for the Roman Parliament, and with it the question of how the electoral districts were to be defined. This was a most important point for us, as well as for our opponents in Trent and Italy. We fancied that after the solution of the electoral question, the attitude of the Government regarding the boundary line of the future autonomous South Tyrol could be foreseen. Our demand was simple: the enclosed Tyrolese district of German-speaking settlers and the Ladin valleys to be united in one specific electoral department. We counted on this to obtain the unanimous expression of the inhabitants' will and an unequivocal representation in the Chamber of Deputies.

In Trent opinions were divided. Should the *Venezia-Tridentina* form a single electoral district? The majority of the Tridentines feared that we Tyrolese in that case would, through our superior organization, override one or more mandates. Their anxiety was all-prevailing as to whether the Italian Tyrolese population might use the secret ballot in order to demonstrate by vote for the German Tyrolese candidates against Annexation, or at least against the hated Italian administration. On the other hand, Trent saw clearly that the division of the electoral district foreshadowed the creation of a single province of Bozen later on. All the Tridentines were at least unanimous that, though the Bozen region were made into a single electoral district, it should not comprise the Unterland and Ladin.

The lower part of the country, the Etschtal from Bozen southwards to Salurn, is as much as the northern part of the land, ancient Teutonic ground. Otto Stolz, in his work *Die Ausbreitung des Deutschtums im Südtirol, im Lichte der Urkunden*, brings forward many conclusive proofs that

for this we need only refer to the past, and the present day is equally confirmatory of the character of the country. The population is German-speaking in an overwhelming majority, and the Italian labourers who migrated from the side valleys, under no compulsion adapted themselves to the prevailing conditions; to a man Italian innovations were refused by them, and the municipalities carried on their business as formerly in the German language. The Italian schools were unattended; the political and economic connection with Bozen was only strengthened. The Tyrolese Popular Party had a flourishing group of members under eminently capable leaders in each commune.

Before the War the Tridentines had stretched no hand towards this Lower Tyrol; on the official maps of the Trent Nationalists the Trentino ended at *the lower end of Salurn*. In the small parish of Pfatten alone, some Italian landowners had introduced so many Italian tenants that they were able, by the *Lega nazionale*, to establish an Italian school. After the War, however, Trent cast avaricious eyes on the whole of the Unterland district up to the gates of Bozen, first because in the case of a partition of the province, land was to be thus gained, and secondly because during the War the much-contested Fleimstal Railway, instead of being carried in the direction of Lavis-Trent, was taken by Auer-Bozen, and the Tridentines desired above all else in their agricultural interests to possess that railway-line. At last Trent announced that the Italian Tyrolese agricultural labourers living in Lower Tyrol must no longer be exposed to Germanization; the multi-language zone must, whatever the boundary of the electoral district should be, vote with Trent. The same wish was proclaimed with regard to the Ladin valleys.

The Government was wavering, and in order to exert pressure on them, we ourselves made an appeal to the folk of Lower Tyrol.

On a "blue day", March 6, 1921, the voice of the people spoke with no uncertain sound—one of the most forcible manifestations ever witnessed by us in South Tyrol. The men of the Lower province streamed in on all sides in an unbroken chain, from some parishes with horses and carts, to the railway station of Neumarkt, before which, in the heart of the land, the meeting was to take place. Thousands arrived, many with their bands, and the Tramin folk carried a placard before them:

Not Hatred, but the People's will !

On the elevated landing of the Agricultural Warehouse before the station buildings, a body of the Lower Tyrol representatives, the leaders of the "German League", took stand with us. The meeting was under the direction of the gigantic Burgomaster, Freiherr von Longo-Liebenstein of Neumarkt, who with his clearly-cut features and silver hair towered above us. He, so ardently patriotic, remarked afterwards that this was the greatest day of his life. The crowds were in an indescribably proud and joyful mood, the speakers—Dr. von Walther, the Canon Michael Gamper, the jurist Josef Noldin of Salurn, the young innkeeper Kerschbaumer of Tramin, and myself—were thrilled with the assent and the applause of the immense assembly. The thoughts that so moved the people could not be better expressed than by quoting the speech of Michael Gamper, ideal Tyrolese in his priestly cassock:

Dear Fellow Countrymen from Lower Tyrol, you have spoken out so fully in this mighty popular manifestation that the rulers in Trent as in Rome must needs hear you. We also of South Tyrol only need to add our Amen—So be it—to what you have said.

We need only repeat that we think as do you, that you belong to us as we to you, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone. Your fate is our fate, your sorrow our sorrow. We belong together as members of the same body, and if it come to pass that Lower

Tyrol should be separated in criminal-wise from South Tyrol, through change of the electoral district or division of the province, we should also be dismembered—crippled! The pound of flesh would be cut from our own flesh, the wound would draw the same cry of suffering from us as from you, a cry of holy anger against the abhorrent attempts of Trent at such butchery.

Aye, truly the Unterland belongs to us, of German-speaking South Tyrol, and this heritage is not of yesterday nor even of a near Past, not of that November day of 1918 nor of many a long century; it dates from the time since the Teutonic race first settled in the land—fifteen hundred years ago!

Those settlers came not as conquerors, sword in hand, but in toil and labour with axe and plough, spade and pickaxe; they cultivated the Lower Tyrol, making the soil their own through their own exertions. The soil from Bozen to Salurn is that ancient settlers' land!

It is their industry, their labour, which have turned those once marshy valleys into a fertile garden, truly a paradise, with a gate of its own, the Defile of Salurn! where the brave men of the Unterland stood on guard when greedy robbers from the South sought to invade their paradise.

Thus was it in 1796, when Napoleon's armies marching up from the South hammered at the Gates of Tyrol. Then in the Salurn Defile massed the people of Salurn to defend their homeland, and in union with the Guards of Kurtatsch and Tramin repulsed the enemy, driving him back to the Italian hamlet of San Michele.

The next year again saw the people of Salurn, Neumarkt, and Tramin, facing a fresh onslaught of the foe, and in the War of Freedom in 1809 the fighting for South Tyrol was always fiercest in the Defile of Salurn. When the contest there seemed unsuccessful, Bozen feared for their town and the whole land, and when the good news of victory pulsed to Bozen its people breathed freely, as did all Tyrol in closest sympathy. A word of the time ran: "*Hold the Salurn Pass and Tyrol is saved!*"

In the following century also, Salurn remained the frontier between German and Italian land.

It is true that many Italian-speaking persons came from the Non and the Fleims valleys to this province, taking their place as inhabitants by diligent labour. You of the Lower land received them in friendly fashion, not despising them for speaking their Italian mother-tongue, while they regarded themselves as an adopted tribe on German-speaking soil and not as Italians, remaining a united people, in customs and language strictly differentiated from the population south of Salurn. The country from Bozen

down to Salurn was then as now Tyrolese land, and so shall it continue.

Now for an historical reminiscence. On January 30, 1810, Andreas Hofer, betrayed and captured, was put in chains and taken on a cart through the south country down to Mantua. His last glance at his Tyrol home lingered on the beautiful towns and villages of Neumarkt, Tramin, Kurtatsch, Margreid, and Salurn! Those beloved spots and the peasants who passed by the sorrowful convoy were the last pictures of the Homeland which stirred his soul. When on February 20, 1810, Hofer knew himself about to face the rifles of death, he rose in the dawn and wrote the last letter of his life, to bid farewell to his wife and child and to greet his friend Pühler of Neumarkt. Thus his last words were a salutation to the Unterland, and to it he entrusted his dying wishes and leave-taking to his loved ones in his Homeland of Tyrol.

It seems to me almost symbolic,—as if Andreas Hofer had deemed that the Unterland would best understand the man of Tyrol, and that just here the spirit of Hofer, the spirit of Tyrol, must live in all hearts, must be preserved throughout the land. Meseems as though Hofer's spirit were hovering over these assembled thousands from that Unterland, the spirit of voluntary sacrifice, the spirit too of inflexibility against the brutality of force, that spirit that throbbled through the words in answer to the command "Kneel!" those words, "That will never I do!" No, never shall we men of to-day "kneel" or bow to the Tridentine dictatorship; we too shall remain inflexible, inflexible in our demand for our own South Tyrol, from the Brenner to the Defile of Salurn, and once more we raise the shout:

Hands off South Tyrol!

A tumultuous resolution was promptly passed, denying the Tridentine claims to South Tyrol. The temper of the assembly was so enthusiastic that it apparently affected even the *Carabinieri* lieutenant present with some of his men. He scarcely understood German, but when the audience with one accord broke out into *Zu Mantua in Banden* and a lad thoughtlessly kept his cap on, the lieutenant himself knocked it off as if it was at a solemn religious service.

When we accompanied a section of the assembled crowd from the railway station square to the enclosed district of

Neumarkt, a sudden shout was raised, "The Fascists are there!" On two lorries, indeed, we saw about fifty armed Blackshirts from Trent, who had come to interrupt the Tyrolese manifestations. A military order had kept them in Neumarkt during the meeting, and now here were we facing each other on the market-place, only separated by two lines of soldiers. The excitement on our side was immense, and the people from Untertal would not have been averse to call their foes to account. A band from Aldein started an inspiring march, as if to attacks of old; the military, however, prevented even a hand being raised: neither party moved. A police commissary from Trent ran pale and excited from one side to another, striving for pacificatory negotiations, and at last the Fascists determined to return to Trent.

Next came the turn of the Ladin folk. Since the October of 1918 we Tyrolese had resolved on regarding them as perfectly free to decide for themselves on all political questions. However much we looked on the population of the Grödner, Ennerberger, Buchensteiner, and Fassaner districts as belonging to Tyrol and knew faithful friends in the Ampezzo Valley, yet we thought it but just to leave them absolutely at liberty as to whether or not they were politically one with us. Their own land was as wholly Ladin as ours wholly German, and no meddling on our part would be justifiable. These Romänsch people of Ladin, however, expressed themselves loudly and unmistakably for union with us.

As in the autumn of 1918, so in 1920 and 1921 the general opinion of the Ladin valleys was voiced with no vacillations. A regular movement began to develop. Numerous sections of the Tyrol Popular Party in these valleys were its moving spring, and brought matters to a climax. In St. Ulrich I addressed a large meeting, which declared that Gröden would now as always remain in the Tyrolese Union, live hand in

hand with us. A few weeks later, on the Gröden mountain saddle, the representatives of all the Ladin valleys met together emphasizing and strengthening that resolution. The Italians had not understood how to awaken sympathy for themselves. "*Ladins sons, i ladins stashons*"—so it ran in their mountain dialect—"We are Ladin and shall continue so!" For them they considered autonomy to be as necessary as did we for ourselves.

In order to leave the Government in no doubt over the national verdict, the Grödner people made public an official pronouncement of the voters of the communes on the question: Whether in the decision for the electoral divisions they would choose to belong to Bozen or Trent. The result was an almost unanimous resolution to belong to the South Tyrolese elective circle.

The Government looked askance on this movement among the Ladin people. Contrary to the learned assertions of Ascoli, it refused to consider the Ladin as a specific race, but only as an Italian variation of type, and felt that it was disgraceful to think of a people so closely related to the Italian conquerors as sympathizing with the Germans of the Annexation. Thereupon the local authorities bestirred themselves with a vengeance; in the Fassa Valley any open expression of Ladin activity was energetically repressed, and when a Ladin deputation from the surrounding dales went to the General Commissioner at Trent, that official remarked barefacedly: "Your children will soon become Italianized. You will never remember that you have not always been Italian!"

For the settlement of the Electoral question was the decision of the Government—Partition. The Unterland should vote with Bozen, but to set against that, the six German-speaking border-communes in Nonsberg and the Fleimstal were entered as Tridentine voters, and Ladin shared this fate. That People's Day at Neumarkt had borne

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fruit, but the Ladin Tyrol and a large strip of the Marches were sacrificed to Trent. The Government, however, did not succeed in hindering the declaration of the national will in the election itself.

But before this a serious event with grave consequences took place between us and the Italians.

PART THREE
SERVITUDE

17. RED SUNDAY

Fair is summer in Tyrol. You lie on the slopes of the sunny mountain pastures, needing but to press the short grass for aromatic scents to exhale, the magic fragrance of the prunella. You breathe in at once health, strength, and purity; you gather close by, the blue gentian, that loveliest blue which can ever delight mortal eye. The air is vibrant with the bells of the flocks, and the clear notes of the birds that dart arrow-like from the pine-tops through the golden ocean of the air.

Beautiful, too, is autumn in Tyrol, when the sun's rays fall aslant on the landscape, when the boughs of the apple-trees, as in Frau Holle's kingdom, are heavy to breaking-point; let us pluck the sweet burden, the Böhmer apple of Kaltern, the golden pearmain, the ivory-pale Kalville, while between the vine-laden *pergolas* wagons are drawing the cider to the cellars.

Winter in Tyrol has its own charms; my heart throbs at the memory of it. The Alpine ridges gleam iceberg-like, unapproachable; yet at the foot of the declivities snowshoes glide through the silent pine-woods, while high above crackles the snow under the edges of the *skis*. Ah, how beautiful is winter on the Rhön, at Klobenstein, on the Seiser high pastureland!

Fairest of all is spring in Tyrol. On a sudden she is with us, with an almost disturbing glory, in Gries, on the Bozen Boden, in the deep vale of Brixen, in the Burggrafenamt. Here, indeed, she is at her prime, blossoms rose and white of almond, peach, cherry, apple, everywhere a roseate bloom, and towering over all the steep bulwark of the Gantkofel, shimmering mystic like an azure flag of victory, to greet the coming of Spring, "the maiden from afar".

Yet it may fall out that among the wealth of flowers a black poisonous viper glides with hissing. 1921!

The Bozen Fair called to us. The merchants of the old trading town wished to revive the Fair which had been derelict for a century; German-Italian commerce should have a meeting-place on the Talfer. The idea was applauded. The town was decorated by a thousand willing hands. April 24th was arranged for the opening of the Fair. Credaro had promised to be present, the tricolour fluttered among the flags on the Exhibition Buildings. The Italians could not say that Bozen folk were hostile or oblivious to the duties of hospitality. Exhibitors and visitors came up from the South to Bozen; they should be received fittingly and with all ceremony. Politics had nothing to do with the Fair.

A wish was next expressed to have something to show the visitors, and a costume pageant was accordingly arranged; the sight could not fail to be a pleasure to all, the Italians not excepted. But everyone did not enjoy it. The impetus with which the Bozen merchants had metaphorically sprung to the saddle was not at all to the taste of envious Trent, or of the South. Among these latter were Mussolini's youthful legions, who were conducting themselves after the pattern of d'Annunzio's *Arditi*, in all the towns of Upper and Central Italy. The petty tradesmen of Trent had confined themselves to unfavourable comments, but Fascism determined to deal with matters in its own fashion. The leader of the Bozen Fascists, a newcomer, young Dr. Moggio, undertook the direction. We found after that April 24th (when the Fascists had had to flee from Bozen without securing their papers) documents which revealed anticipatory and deliberate preparations. The plan had been drafted in the stronghold of Fascism at Bozen, and it was interesting to discover among the items of the day's programme a consultation upon the shelving of the Monarchy!

Dr. Moggio used the telegraph for most of the invitations

for the support of this activity, whereby the officials were fully informed of the proceedings. The Fascists of Mezzolombardo responded that they would send up fifteen men, on which Moggio wired that at least double the number would be necessary, the matter being serious (*una cosa alquanto seria*). The *squadra disperatissima*, a Fascist section especially noted for brutality, signified assent.

The omens were bad indeed. Fascism was in the full tide of bloodshedding, and were it to intermeddle in Bozen affairs, it would be a sinister business. Credaro received warnings on all hands. Immediately before the opening of the Fair, he was informed also from the Tyrolese side, of reports being rife that hundreds of Fascists were to arrive in Bozen on St. George's Day, in order, as Mussolini had written on the Day of Annexation, that the last conflict should take place between the Italians and South Tyrolese. Credaro gave assurances that he would arrange all for the maintenance of order. *He did nothing!* He allowed three hundred Fascists, armed with pistols, hand-grenades, and clubs, to travel by the State Railway through the whole of Venezia-Tridentina to Bozen. The Fascist battalions arrived in separate detachments in Bozen, mostly a sorry lot with countenances that inspired our worst fears.

My father heard just at this time in the Rainer Strasse a dialogue between a Fascist from Verona and one from Trent. The Verona man, pointing to the hat of a Ritten peasant, observed, "I'll take that hat back with me to Verona", to which the Tridentine responded, "Look out then, you might be imprisoned!" And the other, "Oh, I don't mind, I've often been locked up!"

The incoming bands marched in ranks of three deep, shouting loud songs through the streets, annoying citizens and peasants alike, even girls being prevented from passing quietly by. An iron eagle, an inn-sign in the Fruit Market, was torn down and carried off as a trophy; it symbolized

old Austria, a remnant of which the Fascists were dooming to ruin.

At two o'clock in the afternoon the National Costume Procession set bravely out—a gay pageant, folk from Meran, those from the Pustertal, Ueberetsch, and Gröden in picturesque dress, wound way through the crowded streets. Everywhere the liveliest feelings were stirred, and care had apparently been taken to ensure the safe passage of the train. Military patrols were posted to intervene instantly if there were any interruption to the festival; Credaro himself being in Bozen in order to interpose the full weight of his authority.

The principal way had been accomplished without any untoward incident, but when the people reached the Fruit Market there were the Fascists massed together. They broke into taunting challenges when they saw the procession approaching, and when this proved unsuccessful, sought to irritate the oncoming train by swinging their clubs and lifting the stolen iron eagle high on a pole in derision. Then, still no disturbance arising, Fascist bombs began to fall among the defenceless folk, speedily thrown into panic by the explosions, during which the Fascists discharged their pistols. When the military interfered, on the pretext of protecting the Fascists, the ground was strewn with forty-eight wounded, men and women—among whom not a single Italian was found! Our people had come quite unarmed, and had had neither time nor opportunity to defend themselves.

The schoolmaster of Marling, Franz Innerhofer, who had wished to bring two boys from the Burggraf into safety, was followed by a Fascist to the "Stillendorf" House in the Rauschertorgasse and shot from behind, so that he died in a few moments.

The "Festival" was over. The Fascists, after further brutalities, drew off in close formation under the guidance and protection of the military to the railway, and so departed for the South.

The impression of such a beginning, so brutal an act of bloodshed, was shattering to our countrymen; for the first time we saw clearly what had been glimpsed by us before, the Medusa countenance paralysing our rights. All at once it was clear what would become of us, defenceless victims of the lowest instincts in man.

All shops were on the following day closed; the townspeople assembled in numbers on the market square on the Eisack, at a meeting held by the representatives of the three German parties. I myself spoke as forcibly as the gravity of the situation demanded: "There lies Franz Innerhofer before us, done to death! But if the Fascists think that with him our Tyrolese fidelity is also slain—by God! they are deceived. They have destroyed the last shred of sympathy which had perhaps still lingered for Italy in our land!"

The popular rage was perforce dominated by a stern military proclamation, but the Bozen Fascists were obliged to flee from the town on the following Monday, and even the army officers did not dare show themselves save under protection.

The majority of even the Italians were at first much shocked by this outrage. Credaro declared:

"That a ruthless act . . . had set the industrious and peace-loving citizens of Bozen in a comprehensible agitation. . . . The occurrence was due primarily to certain individuals who assuredly had no right 'to represent the Italian people'; I understand and I share the pain of the inhabitants. I shall exert my whole influence that ample compensation shall be afforded to the German population in the Venezia-Trentina, which will in future quash any desire to bombard peaceable men with hand-grenades."

The Bozen Civil-Commissioner Postinger publicly proclaimed: "The event of April 24th in Bozen cannot be palliated either on the ground of provocation, politics, or necessity. It is an infamous crime, a murder, the unexampled

brutality of which has stirred us unspeakably, happening as it did in the midst of our joyous festival. The crime must and shall be avenged. All those responsible will be sternly brought to book; no name and no plausible asseverations, even the most sacred, shall serve to protect the aggressors."

Tridentine Nationalists themselves shuddered at the deeds of their comrades, and *Libertà*, the Nationalist newspaper of Trent, warned them that they should not behave on Tyrolese soil as they had done in Upper Italy. Giolitti dispatched a message to Credaro, in which he stigmatized the deed on St. George's Day as the worst service that could have been done to Italy. The whole Italian public, indeed, experienced a certain shame and embarrassment.

Not Mussolini, however! On the day after the incident he wrote in the *Popolo d'Italia*:

If the Germans on both sides of the Brenner do not conduct themselves properly, the Fascists will teach them obedience. South Tyrol is bi-lingual and Italian, but no one thinks of Italianizing the German settlers there. No German, however, must imagine that Italy can be forced back to Salurn and thence to Lake Garda. Perhaps the Germans deem all Italians of Credaro's stamp; here too they greatly err! In Italy there are more than a hundred thousand Fascists, who are prepared to ravage and ruin South Tyrol sooner than lower the tricolour that waves on the Vetta d'Italia!

If it be necessary to discipline and trample the Germans underfoot in order to bring them to reason, here are we ready—many Italians are trained to this end.

The day following, Mussolini emphasized this bloodthirsty sentiment of his by the remark: The Bozen bombs were only a preliminary solemn warning; Fascist daggers and petrol would be always ready for the Germans in South Tyrol! Two months later, in the Roman Senate, he openly declared that he alone bore the responsibility of the Bozen Fair atrocity.

On the Tuesday, at the grave before the parish church of Peter Mayr—that hero in the Napoleonic fight for freedom—the corpse of Franz Innerhofer was blessed, ere being borne

through the Etsch Valley, to be laid to rest at Marling amidst universal sorrow.

As far as Gries we, with all the people of Bozen, accompanied the body, the air plangent with death-knells. Peasants in national dress, athletes in festival garb, railwaymen in the old Austrian uniform, marched beside the coffin; behind the relatives came the representatives of the "German League" as leaders in the land, then Credaro himself with a few police agents in the name of the Government. At the Gries Stiftskirche the procession halted; some prayers were recited, then the parish choir of Bozen broke into the *Andreas Hofer* song, and the thousands who had meanwhile gathered in our wake joined in with the energy of a mighty wave:

Ganz Deutschland, ach, in Schmach und Schmerz,—
Mit ihm das Land Tirol.

The inspiring verses seemed to echo across the mountains, as never before, from the soul of a suffering people.

Then the dead, followed by his own folk, was borne on up the valley. In every village between Bozen and Meran the people, led by their priests, turned out amid the tolling of the bells, to bid farewell to the dead and speed him with their prayers. In Untermals the assembled townsfolk of Meran and the Burggräfler villagers had gathered. Behind the half-open yard doors, the snouts of Italian machine-guns with their numerous gunners were plain to be seen.

In the evening twilight, the funeral train had reached the Marling Bridge, where the nearest friends and fellow-townsmen of Innerhofer were waiting with the children for their master. Night fell. Torches flamed out, and in their dusky gleam the earthly sheath of Franz Innerhofer entered his parish for the last time. We laid him in his grave two days later, and again an immense crowd assembled round the Marling church. No prince was buried with greater

ceremony than this simple Tyroler, over whose last resting-place the spring blossoms were strewn, frail emblems of the resurrection we hoped for our friend.

Our emotions overflowed in many speeches at the graveside. I had a lump in my own throat when I, as speaker for the people, was called on to express the universal sorrow.

Silver-haired Father Innerhofer, poor young widow bowed down with grief! Kinsfolk of the dead and all ye his other countrymen, bound together with the tie of a common loss as one family!

In this heavy hour we forbid our tongues to utter the curse which from our innermost hearts yet must arise to the ears of all civilized humanity. No such sound must be heard to-day in the moment of leave-taking with Franz Innerhofer. We will rather hearken to him, speaking eloquently dumb, by that token implanted over his heart, his encrimsoned death wound!

Hearken to the Dead:

Weep not for me, dear father, dearest wife, mourn not that I have died a hero's death for our Homeland, died in my effort to protect its young ones from the murderer. My portion is the Heavenly reward, unforgettable honour. Endure then, ye still living, and trust in God, with confidence strong as iron guarding your homes, fostering the young generation.

This, O my country-folk, is our task. Restrain the bitter tears, clench your hands, and pray the Lord God to strengthen us in this our deep need.

We belong wholly and solely to our homes, our love to them shall never know stain. It is ours now to guide our children in the path of duty and Tyrolese pride.

Forward then, O Burggräfler youth, and you other Tyrolese lads from the silver *Heide-seen* to the Dolomites!

The clouds of Tyrolese humiliation, Tyrolese impotence, are darkening your youth, for the four years' War has made many and many a gap in the ranks of our men. The hope of the Tyrolese people, the very Fate of Tyrol, is burgeoning in you. Let the memory of Franz Innerhofer be ever fresh in you, that Franz Innerhofer who for your sakes was done to death by the enemy. Never forget St. George's Sunday, 1921, and its baptism of blood! Young men of Tyrol! follow the dead in uprightness, loyalty, and self-sacrifice for the Homeland. Cherish a right pride and thirst for freedom in your hearts, till even your dreams be invaded by such aspirations, so that you start from sleep with wide-flung arms. . . . Keep your souls sacred, your bodies strong and pure as our mountain ice. Nourish longings for ever greater sacrifice.

When the young eaglets are ready to fly, there shall dawn another St. George's Day over the Iffinger, a solemn festival in which the Saint shall slay his dragon once again and set the King's daughter, on the banks of the Etsch, once more free! Then shall Franz Innerhofer's death-day be blessed, and from those holy trenches where we sow our seeds of heroism, may a magic white and red rose blossom be the symbol of deliverance from shame and misery, be the earnest of bright and better days!

May God the Lord grant this in His grace and justice, at the intercession of Franz Innerhofer, our latest martyr in the Tyrol Homeland!

As the sods fell dully on Franz Innerhofer's coffin they fell upon the grave-place of our hopes, that the people's lot under Italian rule could ever be endurable.

18. THE VOTE OF THE PROVINCIAL DEPUTIES

The attack on Bozen had an effect totally unforeseen by the Fascists. During those weeks we had been taking measures for the election of the first Tyrolese deputies to the Italian Parliament. The incident on St. George's Day had impressed our people so strongly as to render almost superfluous any electioneering contest, our national aim being brought forward in but a negligible number of meetings. In the Bozen electoral districts four delegates were to be chosen. It was not easy for the "German League" to draw up the lists, as no one was willing to undertake so thankless and difficult a task, where lingual knowledge, legal training, and familiarity with Italian men and conditions, were all alike necessary. At last we succeeded in getting three members from the Popular Tyrolese Party and one from the Liberals. As I meanwhile had become President of the Popular Party, I was put at the head of the list, and with me were Wilhelm von Walther, Graf Toggenburg, and Dr. Karl Tinzl as candidates. One of our most outstanding agitators was the chaplain Josef Felderer of Bozen, the chairman of the Mechanics' Club (*Gesellenverein*), a vigorous personality full of ideas,

whom at that time we lost by a premature death. The fiery-hearted old postmaster Psenner, a war veteran of 1866, must also be mentioned.

The Social Democrats of South Tyrol had also prepared a list, at the head of which was the printer Tappeiner, a capital hardworking fellow, to whom at need a mandate might be assigned. The few Italians in the districts knew themselves to be so much in a minority to the German-speaking Tyrolese that they presented scarcely any candidates.

The technical business, however, for the Election Day had to be thoroughly prepared. I stressed ever more deeply the importance of the Election to our countrymen in these words:

“This is the last opportunity for us to speak as a free people. No subsequent election will be honourably conducted, for by that time the Italians will have forced strangers on our valleys. We must now show the world what South Tyrol is like at the beginning of the Italian Rule!”

On May 15, 1921, appeared that which South Tyrol required—a purely Tyrolese overwhelmingly numerous popular vote.

46,192 voters were down on the lists—of whom 40,567 voted—and as the lists contained names of those dead, dangerously ill, or who were absent, the division of votes was more than 90 per cent.

36,574 votes were for the “German League”; 90 per cent. were for our *Edelweiss* list. The Electoral Regulations had adopted a picturesque symbol for each party, on account of the strong analphabetism in the old provinces of Italy, and South Tyrol had printed the emblematic Alpine flower, the edelweiss, on its voting papers.

3,893 votes fell to the share of the Tappeiner lists.

The “German League” had won all four mandates, not one voice had been raised for any Italian candidate. Likewise in the Tridentine electoral district, to which perforce

the Tyrolese German-speaking frontier communes of Nonsberg and in the Fleimstal and Ladin valleys had been annexed, the *Edelweiss* was almost unanimously chosen. If this circumstance procured for us no further mandate, yet those thousands of votes enhanced the picture of Tyrolese United Citizenship, for history once again to show. They gave us deputies, moreover, a formal legitimation, as representative of those Frontier Tyrolese and the East Ladin folk.

Joyous tidings ran through all the country districts after the Election Day, of the enthusiasm with which the people had flocked to this manifestation of their sentiments. Here and there even aged and infirm had been carried to the polling booths to record their votes, and not a single mishap had clouded the day. We deputies accepted our call with the greatest satisfaction; it was truly an honour to be uplifted on the shield of a people's unanimous resolution.

19. THREATENED AND SPIT UPON

All too soon, however, the "Roses, roses, everywhere" were changed into a Way of Thorns. The Tyrolese delegates must enter a Parliament where Italian national consciousness had never before been confronted with various racial sentiments. We had bitter enemies. The Nationalists were enraged at the purely German election in South Tyrol, of which they well understood the historical significance. Contemptuous and insolent letters reached us from Trent; their contents need not be noticed, but the warning was the same in all of them: "It will be the worse for you if you come down here!"

The hatred of us reached even as far as Trieste, where a Fascist from Florence, the advocate Giunta, had been elected. His principal service had been the burning down of the Slovenic national building of Trieste, the Hôtel Balkan. Giunta himself had set it in flames, and was presumably

responsible for the deaths of many in the fire. He was therefore quite worthy of Fascist honours, and now regarded himself as called on to take a stand against the Tyrolese. He picked out among us Graf Toggenburg, and in the open street at Trieste took an oath that that former Austrian Minister should never as a living man enter Monte Citorio, the Roman Parliament. When the Chamber was arranged for June 11th, the question arose as to whether in our passing through Trent an attack on us was probable. We addressed ourselves to Credaro, who declared that he could not pledge himself for our safe passage through that town. On our observing that it would be a disgrace to the whole of Italy should the Tyrolese delegates be forcibly hindered at the very outset of their journey to Rome, Credaro offered us an autocar, which would take us over the Dolomite route to Mestre-Venice, whence the railway would convoy us to our destination. We accepted his proposal, and by this round-about way arrived safely at the capital. There police agents met us, entrusted with our protection in the streets of Rome.

Giunta's oath created new difficulties. Walther and Tinzl undertook to deal with Fascist delegates, and one evening we four Tyrolese met in Toggenburg's room. On his table lay a loaded revolver, for he had to be prepared for anything. The two negotiators, Walther and Tinzl, announced that their efforts had been fruitless, Giunta had no idea of giving up his design. Another deputy, Finzi, even had told them that if Giunta had not pledged himself to such an undertaking he, Finzi, would "do" for Toggenburg before his entrance into the Parliament took place. We agreed to communicate to the Government that we all four would return home, never to return if it did not contrive to control the Fascists. Government, therefore, did grapple with the situation, and the imperative attitude of Giolitti compelled Giunta and his faction to regard the oath as null. Giunta, however, endeavoured to compensate for his defeat by an unworthy attack on Graf

Toggenburg through the Italian Press in the following letter:

The fundamental basis of justice and civilization, so characteristic of my country, is granting your entrance into Parliament. After consultation with my party, I am pledged to submit to the Club discipline, but as an Italian, a fighter on the front, a Fascist, and a delegate of Italian Trieste, I have the right to say to your face that, when Minister, you acted like an executioner, and to vent all the contempt which this quality of your personality arouses; in you the Austria of old is revived—the Austria of the Ambassador, who from the lofty Chigi Palace humiliated the people of Rome, the Austria that allowed Italian students in Vienna to be flogged, the Austria of Oberdank, Battisti, Sauro, Filzi, and Damiano Chiesa, the Austria of that people who assault our women and who, invading the plain of Friuli, robbed us of our possessions, that Austria which by your mouth proclaimed that she would drive all Italians out of the Trentino, banish them to Galicia, and so solve the problem of Irredentism.

I will not prophesy with what designs you now enter Parliament, whether you are ready in less or greater degree to co-operate in the work of Demobilization. I but know that you are the shadow of the former Kingdom, and that therefore your friends have chosen you in order to humiliate my country.

You are as a flag raised by an enemy people on the Roman heights of Monte Citorio. Well and good, but the blows that your masters and yourself rained upon our Italians in the Concentration Camps, I return with good will upon your vile German snout!

FRANCESCO GIUNTA.

This letter was intended to lower Toggenburg in the public opinion and to force him to a duel. He however declined the manœuvre and published a reply through the Press. His religious convictions prevented him from accepting a challenge, though he intended in a Court of Honour to prove that Giunta's assertions in his letter about Toggenburg's past were wholly and solely without foundation. A legal suit in the Courts, however, not being in Giunta's interests he did not rise to this proposal.

So with Toggenburg we made our entrance into the Roman Parliament.

Our appearance on Monte Citorio produced an effect as

might have done that of men from Mars. Our Italian colleagues stared at us with childlike curiosity, journalists begged for interviews and to take our portraits. We resolved through frank representations of our plan of action to correct the picture which the fury of the Nationalists had drawn of us; likewise to make plain the advantages of our old Tyrol administrative arrangements over the superficial Italian tone of thought, all prejudices notwithstanding. The task was made bitter enough for us.

One evening in July we Tyrolese delegates went out at the close of a somewhat agitated sitting through the principal doorway into the great Piazza of Monte Citorio, where, as always, surged to and fro an idle gaping crowd. A few steps from the entrance a small under-sized man approached me, eyes full of hatred glaring from a bloated face under the usual Italian straw hat, and with breathless haste asked me if I were the delegate Reut-Nicolussi. "Yes, certainly." Then this unknown asked me to go with him; he had a matter to talk to me about. I demanded who he might be. "I am Captain Starace." I knew the name as belonging to the Fascist secretary of Trent, from South Italy, who on April 24th had led the attack on Bozen; and now I said to him: "Anything you have to say to me can be said here."

"No, no, come with me. Or are you afraid?"

"Why should I be afraid? But I have no reason to go with you."

During this colloquy the crowd pressed around us, Fascists among them, and, as it afterwards appeared, some others, police agents. These latter pushed between Starace and me; whereupon he, seeing that I was not to be enticed away, threw himself on me, but was seized by the police. With face still more distorted he, growling like a wild beast, turned and spat at me, but the next moment the police had dragged him off and I, with my colleagues, re-entered

the Parliament, where I might cleanse myself from his salute. A higher police official followed me to express his regret, assuring me that Starace and his accomplices were already arrested and would assuredly not escape the penalty of so low an onslaught.

The incident left in me nothing but a feeling of disgust. My fellow-delegates, however, considered such behaviour unbearable, and the Minister-President Bonomi, who in these days had replaced Giolitti in office, sent the following *communiqué* to the Press:

On account of the unpleasant incident recently happening to the delegate Dr. Reut-Nicolussi, the Questor of the Chamber, the delegate Renda, on behalf of the President of the Chamber, De Nicola, has expressed the liveliest regret to the German delegates that a member of the said Chamber should have been so insulted, and he further makes the earnest request that this occurrence shall not be suffered to interfere with the aforesaid delegates' co-operation in Parliamentary affairs.

The State officials of Public Safety have already, according to the report of the Court, imposed a penalty.

The Minister-President received the German delegates to-day, who presented a most earnest petition for the settlement of affairs in their province. The Minister renewed his expression of regret to the delegates for the said incident, coupled with assurances that the Government has taken the most energetic measures for the protection of all delegates without distinction when outside Parliament. After the German delegates had communicated to the President their intention of taking no part in Parliamentary affairs until the directors of the "German League" should come to a decision as to their attitude, the President of the Chamber, the delegate De Nicola, endeavoured to influence the said delegates to consider the matter as settled, after his apologies and that of the Government.

We therefore consented to pass over the affair. The proceedings against Starace lingered on for a year and a day, but when finally the case was brought up, he was released on the ground of an amnesty having been pronounced in the meantime.

20. IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ARENA

At that time in the Roman Parliament endless speeches were made, but nothing was done. The strongest group was that of the Socialists, but they wished for no Government responsibility. The People's Party (*Popolari*), among whom were many young and inexperienced members, were almost equally strong; their gifted leader, Don Sturzo, not, however, being in Parliament, which weakened their readiness of action. In a galaxy of smaller groups their several delegates strove more to maintain their own position than to follow any political aim; while Communists and Fascists lived in continual tumult in the Chamber, encouraged by the deeds of violence of their friends outside.

There was no Committee of Seniors, while in the individual parties themselves stormy opposition frequently arose. The People's representatives offered an increasing example of unrest and want of discipline, and the Government tried various defensive measures—makeshifts—such as the so-called *Decreti Regi*, which completely clogged the functioning of the law.

In such an atmosphere we four Tyrolese delegates realized that Luzatti had had right on his side in asking us, "What would you do in the Roman Parliament?" Only the five Slovenic delegates from Görz and Trieste were faced with such a fate as ours; we learnt to know and esteem them personally. The most remarkable among them was Dr. Wilfan, afterwards president of the European Congress of Nationalities.

Our Parliamentary introduction was inaugurated by a speech of Walther's, whom we had entrusted with the critical office of reading out the *Defence of the Rights of the Tyrol*—which, thanks to its courteous wording, could be pronounced without interruption of noisy outbursts of opposition. It was as follows:

At the commencement of the Peace conferences that should end the World War, the National self-determination rights of all peoples were put forward as the fundamental basis of the new world's arrangements.

The National Rights of Tyrol have been denied to her, that Tyrol which as far back as the thirteenth century had already determined on a union of State rights, which later found expression in the *Gefürsteten Grafschaft Tirol* (Princely Countship of Tyrol). The South Tyrol representatives, regardless of all party differences, at once announced their public claim, at the opening of the Peace Conference, to the preservation of an undivided Tyrol, and also presented a passionate petition to the Powers assembled at St-Germain not to dismember their Tyrol Homeland.

The Kingdom of Italy has no valid, historical, or national right over South Tyrol, but has merely put forward the pretext of the natural geographical frontier and the resultant strategic necessities which have caused Italy to desire and obtain the annexation of South Tyrol.

Yet, as geographical lines can never have a universal validity for the definition of political frontiers, the Brenner has never throughout history been regarded either as a political or a country's boundary, and under no circumstances can geographical conditions constitute a legal right for the rooting up of a People—strategical demands might be satisfied in another way—therefore South Tyrol can only regard any withdrawal of its rights of Self-Determination as an act of aggression, against which, on the moment of departure of its delegates for the Italian Parliament, it is bound to reiterate its formal protest.

The following weeks saw the first Fascist attack. Giunta, in a long speech about our laying down our arms in the War, poured scorn on us, accusing us delegates of inimical and anti-Italian sentiments. I rose and made it clear that we South Tyrolese deputies could not be called on to discuss with the 525 Italian deputies the War and its events; the decision in this matter of dispute must be left to the judgment of history, and it might be considered scarcely courteous to seek to draw us into such a discussion. Giunta's citations were inapposite, as what had been said in our assemblies was merely the answer to the Fascist violence in South Tyrol. I appealed to the chivalry of the Italian members, who must be aware of the peculiarity of our situation.

My short speech was received by the majority in the Chamber with a surprising outburst of applause. The Fascist section had made themselves disliked on account of their riotous *début* in Parliament and by their brutality throughout the country.

In a few days there were fresh complications. The Trent deputies, Grandi, Degasperi, and Flor, made an attack on Toggenburg. He was able to refute them brilliantly, proving that individuals among these very Tridentine delegates, both before and after the War, had begged for and received favours from him, for which they had subsequently offered their thanks. The Italian members of the old provinces showed by their icy demeanour that they had little sympathy in this case with the Tridentines, but in the end Toggenburg was obliged to prove his electoral qualifications before the Elective Committee, it being objected to by the Nationalists on the ground that at the time of the Election he had not been a fully legalized Italian citizen. He brought forward irrefragable proofs to the contrary in a speech that made a great impression, and his mandate was confirmed.

The personal allegations against the Tyrolese representatives were endless. When in the autumn of 1921 the Fascist National Congress took place, Giunta was vehement against us, asserting that we had relations with Bolshevik Russia, and that Toggenburg was receiving money and arms from Moscow. The Fascists broke into a roar of rage, accepting this tissue of lies as truth. That same evening Walther, Tinzl, and I were at supper in an inn, when suddenly a crowd of Fascists, armed with clubs, burst into the room. The clients hastened to pay and depart in a stampede, and we three were left alone among the shrieking and gesticulating Blackshirts. We fortunately were unrecognized and managed to get away, otherwise I probably should not be writing this book!

All this daily tale of opposition and peril was most galling,

and there seemed to be little hope of the successful issue of our political activity. Bonomi, who in the July of 1921 was forming his Government, had little leisure for us, though he recognized that his chief duty was to put an end to the outrages of the Fascists and the Communists. In August, therefore, at Sarzana, he turned guns upon the Fascists and half a dozen were left dead on the square—a few more such strokes and the Fascist movement would have disappeared. Bonomi, however, found no supporters in the Parliament, not even the Socialists, with whom the Fascists had been at loggerheads, would rally to the Minister-President. The violent element among them wished for no strong government, and Bonomi was forced to compromise. The Fascist "Actions" went farther, and their ambition daily rose to ever greater heights, until at last they aspired to the very reins of Government.

21. MUSSOLINI

We beheld the leader of the Fascists for the first time during a session in the Chamber. He had seated himself on the highest bench of the right wing, his folded arms resting on the desk, and his chin supported on his clenched hands, while he looked gloomily down into the Hall. Never, indeed, have I seen the man smile, except with a kind of malicious grimace.

Already his exterior betrayed the anarchical trait in his blood. Continually in his speeches, even in the days of the Minister-President, recurred the words: Bombs—Dagger—Petroleum—and Axe. In me, since I had read his first article, Mussolini had inspired antipathy; and now his bombastic bullying style was in speech more repugnant. None of the orators to whom I have listened in Italy played so unmistakably a farce as he; his phrases either mysteriously whispered as if they were the utterances of the highest wisdom, or

else convulsively ground out, between clenched teeth with rolling eyes and hands sawing the air.

As in Russia he would be fain to play the Bolsheviki leader or in Mexico the persecutor of the Church, so in Italy he aspires to be the emperor of the Nationalists and the patron of the Catholic Church.

His whole life has been a series of contradictions. Not in the Bismarckian sense of reversing his methods, but in the spirit of his own words, he abjures "the Fetichism of Logical Consistency". Already the great change in him from the revolutionary Socialist in Trent and the vagrant of Lausanne, to his present-day attitude of Asiatic despot expresses this, but in the narrow confines of his political activity since 1921 there has been scarcely an act or a speech of his which has not betrayed the exact contrary of his former words and ways. In June 1921 he kept some Fascist deputies away from the opening of Parliament with the Speech from the Throne by announcing that Fascism must not be dependent on the Monarchy. Then he was still toying with the idea of overthrowing the House of Savoy, but when he perceived that he would not get far with an anti-dynastic reputation, he became transformed into a vassal of the King, and allowed himself to be styled his cousin, in the parchments granting him the highest Italian order of knighthood, that of the Annunziata. I remember distinctly Mussolini's confusion when in an open Parliamentary sitting the Republicans gave the exact date when he had extolled the idea of regicide, at which he bent low over his papers and hissed only half aloud, "*Non è vero!*" (It's not true!) Subsequently he protected himself from such untoward reminiscences by the law against Mussolini offences.

On June 21st for the first time we heard him speak. He unfolded a colossal programme, dealing with the subject of the Catholic Church and with that of Socialism, declaring himself an out-and-out Anti-Democrat. (During the War,

as in the Armistice, he had outdone himself by Democratic phrases on Liberty!) He censured the veteran Giolitti, characteristically saying that Italian Unity was in nowise achieved since Ticino was still lacking to it; two years later, in Milan, he declared to the Swiss journalists that there was no question of the Ticino in his mind!

He did not bring this programme of June 21, 1921, into great prominence in the Roman capital, as he could not then trifle with the financial help of the great landowners, or with the industrial difficulties, especially in the steel and iron question. When, however, he was firm in the saddle, he allowed and supported his Fascist syndicate to strike on financial grounds and threatened a class-war if the Industrials did not submit. Moreover, the *Impero*—Mussolini's special organ—announced at the beginning of 1927 that "Property in the Fascist State is only to be regarded relatively!" This view was soon put into practice by the Fascists.

The worst of all Mussolini's shifting character is his perfidiousness towards his fellow-men. He has not only imprisoned or exiled his former Socialist co-workers when his personal interests demanded it, but has also sacrificed in cold blood his one-time associates in the Fascist murders as soon as they became onerous to him. Thus Finzi fell, and Cesare Rossi could only save himself by flight, and when Mussolini's friend, Dumini, the murderer—released after a short imprisonment—of the deputy Matteotti, dared to intimate that he had acted on Mussolini's wish, he was once more seized and thrown into prison for eight years, from which he will scarcely come out alive—if Fascism itself continues so long!

It would be folly not to recognize Mussolini's extraordinary will-power and intellectual capabilities. His chief strength consists in his exact knowledge of the Italian character together with its weaknesses. This gift led him

to the Dictator's position with its wellnigh unlimited powers. His ability is, however, wedded to a false idea of the Might-is-Right policy, and is further rendered worthless by his absolute unscrupulousness in the use of means.

The strongest proof of this is the misery which he has brought into South Tyrol, while it is also a proof the more of his unreliability. The Fascist leader had already, in the autumn of 1919, through the *Popolo d'Italia*, declared that Italy must pursue "in the district of the Etsch (Upper Adige) an upright and legally democratic policy. The German-speaking Tyrolese of the Upper Etsch (who politically were now Italians) must be told by the Parliament and the Press that Italy had no designs of force or of denationalization, that it would respect both language and customs, and was prepared to grant the required administrative autonomy."

This same Mussolini dared, in his first speech in the Italian Parliament when we were present, to utter a flood of foolish untruths, expecting us to be overwhelmed by them. He blamed the attitude of the Government and Credaro's conduct in South Tyrol. Credaro and Salata were responsible for this province having sent German representatives to the Chamber, and the Slavs sitting in Parliament were making the liveliest pro-German agitation. He recalled the national demonstrations in Bozen, Meran, and other places in South Tyrol; he rebuffed all efforts to defend their language, and asserted that the chief presiding magistrate in Trent was an ex-volunteer of the Austrian Army, that the administration of the post office, telephone, and telegraph was in the hands of anti-Italians. He demanded the removal of Credaro and Salata, the dissolution of German Clubs, and the abolition of the principle of bi-lingualism. The whole world of civilization should know that the Italians were in South Tyrol and would remain there.

Thus Mussolini gave the word for subsequent Italian

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attacks on nationality in South Tyrol. He alone is responsible
for our luckless fate.

22. TERROR AND DESPOTISM

In the summer of 1921 the oppression of the South Tyro-
lese declared itself with redoubled ardour. The apologies
of the Italian public for the atrocities of April 24, 1921, gave
but a momentary gleam of hope, now hatred swelled up
anew. The Tridentine Nationalist paper, *Libertà*, which at
first had condemned the Fascist methods, at the end of
that April wrote as follows:

If the Government be incapable of saving itself and us, we must
think about taking steps to get rid of the provocative handful of
Bozner Pan-Germans. . . . The Government may look for the
printing offices of the *Tiroler* and the *Südtiroler Landeszeitung* to
be destroyed, does it not make these newspapers understand that
the liberty of the Press must not be used to depreciate Italy. The
Government may expect that the Tyrolese teachers of the schools
at Salurn, Branzoll, Leifers, St. Jakob, Gröden, and Enneberg
will be driven away by force, unless Italian teachers be speedily
appointed in those places. The cup is full and the day of weakness
must come to an end.

Such ebullitions were the response to the severe German
verdict in and beyond the Tyrol upon the Fascist deeds of
blood: and were entirely in keeping with the determination
of the Mussolini party to break down any Tyrolese efforts
at self-preservation, by the methods of brutal force and resul-
tant terrorism. Conditions of the new *régime* in these annexed
provinces indeed recalled those of the Thirty Years War;
with each day intimidation and danger came ever nearer for
the defenceless population. Once on the occasion of an especi-
ally severe inspection of the Südtiroler burgomaster's offices,
the attention of Government was called to the prevailing
state of "Fist-right". But what good could such protests do?
the Fascists were in nowise disturbed since even the official

organs supported their system, a system symbolized by the abundance of intimidatory acts of 1921-2 in their sphere of action. These were past counting. Three times did they invade Neumarkt, writing up threats of Death upon the houses and endeavouring to compel the burgomaster in the town-hall to sign a declaration of absolute submission, which, however, he firmly refused to do. In Meran they stormed the offices of the *Südtiroler Landeszeitung*, and in Bozen those of the *Tiroler*, to threaten the editors did they continue to write from a German point of view. In Meran, moreover, they started a paper of their own, the *Piccolo Posto*, edited by a certain Desio and a wood-dealer Barbesino, overflowing with abuse and unfounded allegations, thus stimulating the Fascist party to fresh violence. Financial support for this organ being necessary, groups of Fascists, providing themselves with clubs, went through the town, where any shopkeeper who declined to insert advertisements, could reckon at the very least on having his windows smashed. The *Piccolo Posto* further tried to ingratiate (!) itself by an attack on the tradespeople and categorically demanded the lowering of provision prices, practically further emphasizing their point by shop inspections. On one occasion, when such "Inspectors" were thrown out of a bakery, the *Popolo d'Italia* was eloquent on the Italian Martyrdom in South Tyrol!

That on the other side was little accounted of. Woe to him who should trifle with the majesty of the Italian nation, even when represented by some undisciplined youth, such an one as had been brought to book by the innkeeper of the Bozen *Gugler*, for conducting himself improperly in that house. Fallen upon in the street and clubbed so that he never fully recovered, the innkeeper paid the penalty of his protest, his death indeed soon afterwards being due to it. When again in Bozen one of the tricolours set up by the Fascists in front of the theatre disappeared one night, the vice-burgomaster

had to take part in a ceremony of expiation, in order to avoid worse things happening, though finally it was established that two lads on whom sentence had been passed some time before, had taken down the flag out of mischief. The Fascists took a hand in patriotic education by daubing house-walls with the tricolours, and anyone who should try to hinder such activities was given a short shrift, as in St. Ulrich, where the merchant Desaler was shot at and for days lay between life and death. At night they also devoted themselves to destroying most of the relics of the past, such as the iron eagle of Brixen, the monument to the Archduke Heinrich on the Promenade made by him in Gries, the tablet commemorating the visit of Kaiser Franz to Unterau near Franzensfeste, and many more. The signs of Tyrolese firms and shop windows displaying valuable goods were also wrecked; in Klausen the burgomaster was spit upon and beaten; finally, the senseless and revolting method of the *Purghe*, the forcing of castor-oil down people's throats, was introduced by its Fascist inventors into South Tyrol.

The continuance of Tyrolese police in South Tyrolese towns was to the Fascists an unbearable hardship, and as the most virulent Press articles failed to have them removed, the Blackshirts instituted a regular campaign against them. Large detachments came to Bozen at night and hunted away individuals on their beat, unable to defend themselves against numbers, giving them orders not to perform their official duties. In one of these encounters an inoffensive shopman named Ferlesch was stabbed in the back. So sure of themselves did the Fascists feel, that they issued official orders from their Trent secretariat to Tyrolese burgomasters, as in the case of Burgomaster Holz knecht in the Unterland, commanding him to fly the tricolour—and a new one at that—on all special occasions, any refusal rendering him liable to a legal penalty. Yet another Italian officer, who, when marching at the head of his column through the Gilmstrasse

of Bozen, perceived a townsman not taking off his hat to the flag carried past him, proceeded to spring at him, slashing him in the face with his riding-whip. The case was paralleled in Brixen one evening when a youthful set coming home from an excursion and singing folk-songs were without the smallest reason fallen upon by Italian soldiery, arrested, and clapped into gaol.

Nor were those maintainers of order (?), the *Carabinieri*, behind the Fascists. The fact that they carried their feud against the Tyrolese national colours, the red and white, so far as once to break up a national festival because a "flag-wagger" had in his performance used a red-and-white pennon, was not remarkable, but it was as ludicrous as annoying that a peasant woman of Vintschgau should be ordered to cut down the poppies in her garden because of the striking red and white of their petals, or that at Branzoll the Fascists should term the Corpus Christi procession a scandal and a danger to the State, because several houses on the line of march displayed white hangings embroidered in red.

A whole series of legal offences and aimless persecutions completes this picture of brutal government by police. When on the anniversary of the death of that hero of Freedom, Peter Mayr, a wreath was laid on his tomb, it was forthwith removed by the *Carabinieri*. In 1921 the Festival of the Sacred Heart was forbidden throughout the whole land. An ordinary Church conference in the Deanery of Stilfes could not be held owing to orders from the magistrates; while in Afers near Brixen the Commune Fathers received commands from Trent to remove portraits of the fallen from the monument to their memory. So also, at their forty years' jubilee, the fire brigade of the Zwölfmalgrein near Bozen were obliged to desist from holding their parade on account of Fascist threats to break up such a "Pan-German" manifestation. This patriotic surveillance of the Italians was all-embracing: in Salurn twelve lads taking part in

a harmless procession were arrested, on the charge of resisting the *Carabinieri*, and imprisoned in Trent for three long months. In the Ahrntal one day a drunken *Finanzer* soldier fancied himself threatened in the alehouse, gave the alarm to his comrades, and had fourteen peasant youths locked up.

House visitations, too, visibly increased. When the inn-keeper Huber in Vals in such a case desired to gather some trusty men in the commune around him in order to be protected from attack, he was struck down, fettered and carried off. In Altrei one morning, on the bi-lingual tablet over the commune fountain, the Italian inscription proved to have been painted over, and the Burgomaster Johann Ludwig was immediately summoned by the *Carabinieri* to explain the circumstance. He not instantly complying with the command, the *Carabinieri* forced their way into his house, arrested and led him off *in chains* to the sergeant (*Maresciallo*).

The absolute illegality of every one of these cases was distinctly pointed out to the officials of the General Commissioner of Trent. Credaro did not give himself any trouble about stopping them; when we once had occasion to inform him that one of the *Carabinieri* had followed up a theft with violence, he observed with a superior smile, "Often a box on the ear is better than a tedious trial in the Courts!" Why should he seek to hinder other outrages? This was characteristic of that alien Italian world, where neither law nor justice is the panoply of its citizens, but solely the weapon of the State against that *suspect* mass of individuals, the people of the land.

When, in those days in the South Tyrol Courts of Justice, the sentence was written up, "*La legge è eguale per tutti*" (The law is equal for all), we were fain in the light of the deeds described in these pages, to change (in our minds) the wording to "The law is equal to all". The sarcasm left a bitter taste in the mouth.

23. THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST US

At the end of 1921 a general census was held throughout Italy. It resulted for German South Tyrol, inclusive of the Ladin valleys, in a total of 260,748 persons; of whom 225,000 were German-speaking, 16,300 Ladin, and the rest some 20,000 Italian, these latter almost entirely officials and their families brought in after the Armistice. The Government attempted by "Further Revision" to "pinch" some thousand souls from the German-speaking and Ladin figures for the Italian advantage, but this contemptible subterfuge was not fruitful. The overwhelming national majority of the Germans in Tyrol received in January 1922, through the communal elections, an overwhelming recognition; everywhere the "German League" members were prominent; in Pfatten alone, Fascist branch associations tried to hinder the voting of the German-speaking candidates.

Government therefore had not the slightest real ground to alter their decision as to our affairs, from that of two years previously. To the Italian Government, however, the background of "political dynamics" was infinitely more important than mere real reasons, the Nationalist persecution and hatred of us met with full approbation, and in the next summer the first openly Anti-German Government measures came into being. An Italian school inspector was appointed to the Unterland. There, several communes having replied to Credaro's inquiry as to whether they would not prefer an Italian school to a Tyrolese one, with a unanimous "No!", the Government put out a royal decree, the so-called Corbino Law, enacting that in the new provinces all Italian families were bound to send their children to an Italian school, where such existed. "Those families will be regarded as Italians who in their homes use as a rule the Italian language."

This law was a direct blow to what we regarded as the basis of the parents' liberty of choice of schools for their

children, and it also appeared as a defensive measure against any Germanizing of the Italian element. The execution of the law, moreover, made it a weapon of attack against us. The determination as to which families were Italian, was left in the hands of officials who wished to carry out "National arrears of conquest"—in other words, Annexation. Children of purely German-Tyrolese families were forced on any pretext into Italian schools; not only Italian-sounding names, but also the former residence of a family in any commune south of Salurn, was taken as sufficient indication of Italian nationality. When the newly elected Burgomaster of Salurn stigmatized the Corbino Law as "infamous", he was deposed.

Our representations to the Minister of Education, Benedetto Croce, and the Minister Anile were in vain. Even the so-called "moderate" party, the *Popolari*, swam with the anti-Teutonic stream; a striking proof of this being a proclamation in the Catholic newspaper, *Corriere d'Italia*, upon Toggenburg's refusal before mentioned to challenge Giunta to a duel. The *Corriere* brought out the point that Toggenburg had based his refusal upon religious grounds, and added characteristically, "This attitude made us forget for a moment that Toggenburg is a German delegate of South Tyrol". Our protest against the Italianizing of Tyrol place-names was also unsuccessful; Tolomei, whom the Government up till then had kept in the background, here won the first complete victory over other Italian experts. For official usage Italian translations—or free inventions—were substituted for our ancient place-names, and the then Burgomaster of Salurn, Ferdinand von Gelmini, was removed from office because he had retained on his official papers the words "*Süd Tirol*".

Next the long-dreaded call to Italian military service resounded through the land. The urgent outcry of a communal public meeting of 247 delegates was disregarded. It set before the Government the impossibility of vindicating

to the world such an instance of oppression of conscience: "If the sons of Tyrol, especially of this generation, were asked to serve against their own convictions in an army to which they themselves, their brothers, and their fathers, in the fight for their own Land, had been opposed." The War Minister, Gasperotto, lent no ear to such a tone. He himself once said to me personally that he was of Slav extraction, but his sentiments were wholly Italian; and when we reminded him that it was impossible for Italy ever to be a "Homeland" for us, he replied with flowery speeches, but the conscription of our Tyrolese youth became a fact. In many places they marched to the muster with mourning bands on arm and hat. We warned them, however, against the dangers of desertion, and this did not happen often, at that time.

What did Italian statesmen know either of Tyrol or her inner life? Once when Toggenburg and I were speaking to the Under-Secretary Spada, a large landowner from the southern point of Italy, he assured us of his utmost good will; even his humble people in Apulia had great sympathy with us—had not men from Apulia hundreds of years ago journeyed over to our land to seek wives? It was evident that the Minister fancied the Tyrol to be in the far-off South Balkans.

It was of little use, therefore, in the existing temper of mind, when in the spring of 1922 a Commission was formed for discussion of future Governmental arrangements in the annexed provinces. It came to the almost unanimous decision that the Austrian form of autonomy for the country and its communes should continue, but the Government no longer approved of such a line of conduct—in fact, all pretence, especially as far as we were concerned, had already been abandoned. Salata and Credaro certainly were at feud with each other on bureaucratic grounds, but when it came to showing themselves free from any suspicion of friendliness to anything German, they sunk their differences.

Salata himself came to Trent about this time. The Nationalists called him to account for showing favour to the Germans, and he defended himself at our expense, denying that the "German League" in Rome had all the influence universally ascribed to it, and that representations had been made to him which would hinder the Government's freedom of action. The announcement of such engagements had been made public by people (that was ourselves!), who wished thus to gain popularity, but such policy on their part would soon place the "German League" in an uncomfortable position, as it was based on deceit!

Credaro also allowed himself to be sounded by a Bolognese newspaper. He was slightly more honourable than Salata, but likewise more cynical; and on the question of release from military service remarked that such promises were indeed formerly made to us, but now their value was merely "historical".

Our most urgent economic needs, moreover, found no help. The failure to redeem the Austrian War Loan, the most important part of our economic capital during the last years, was occasioning a severe crisis, anyone purchasing War Bonds on loan must now pay down heavy sums for worthless paper. The Government guarded itself by ordering a Moratorium, but this led to suspension of payments by both the National Banks, the *Bank für Tirol und Vorarlberg* with its three branches and the *Tiroler Vereinsbank* with ten. The heavy losses resulting for the depositors, many of them of small means, did not extract the smallest support from the Government, despite the fact that the catastrophe was entirely attributable to its own inexcusable negligence of our financial affairs.

Friendliness to anything bearing the name of German was a thing of the past. Credaro sought to weaken the "German League" through treachery.

Since the Armistice, the Tridentine Conci had acted in

Trent as leader of the remnant of provincial autonomy, combining in himself the Austrian district governor and the provincial Council (*Landtag*). Heavy land taxes, from South Tyrol as well as the Trentino, were at his practically unlimited disposition, and when in Trent he had, disregarding our interests, set up a Land-Mortgage Institution, Walther and I were directed by the "German League" to make representations to him on the subject. We declared that we must seek redress from Rome, but Conci merely raised his eyebrows. "Do what you will, I do what I will!"

By degrees, however, he was obliged through the urgency of the other Tridentine parties to consent to the co-operation of a Provincial Board of six members. The "German League" was requested to send in proposals for the posts of assessors. When the said assessors became known, they proved to be four Tridentines and two Tyrolese, of whom only one, the leader of the Peasants' Union, Josef Oberhammer, had been on the list of the "German League". The second Tyrolese was a puppet of Credaro, Herr Granel from Meran, who, not being of Tyrolese birth, had after the Peace Treaty elected to sue for State citizenship. [Such men clogged our every action, each fearing lest Italian citizenship might be denied to him, which for many would have been the loss of means of existence, for instance such as officials, advocates, notaries, physicians, and the like. Such considerations induced much servile flattery, however repugnant its objects might be to them in their secret hearts.] This being the case with Granel, Credaro hoped through him to create an opposition party in the "German League", but what was his despair when, on our seizing a chance to call Granel to account, he took courage to depose that he recognized the "German League" as the only authorized body of political representatives of the German-speaking South Tyrol.

Credaro wished above all to compromise us with the people.

When an assistant councillor was necessary for the National Insurance Company, he named only one Tyrolese against eight Italian candidates, notwithstanding that our German South Tyrol was insured in 726 millions, the Trentino insurance policies not amounting to more than 59 millions. Persons who approached him with self-interested motives were received with amazing affability. Once at Mals he lodged with much ceremony with the wife of a small tradesman, Frau Wieser, but subsequently the person became bankrupt, fled, and was judicially pursued; Credaro, not only politically gaining nothing, but having through his want of address brought the affairs of his Government into disrepute. When we, on account of all these manœuvres, were compelled to attack him in the Press through the columns of the widely read *Tiroler*, he retaliated with a vengeance; towards the end of 1921 pronouncing a sentence of exile against the paper's three editors, the chaplain Weisskopf, Dr. Anton Klotz, and Dr. Hans Kness. This action occasioning us some confusion, I assumed charge for a while of the political department of the *Tiroler*, but there was no falling off in its circulation. The only result of the petty revenge was increased bitterness.

In order to keep well before the population the established domination of Italy, in October 1921 the Government dispatched the King to visit his new possessions. Above all, he must not omit Klausen, which in the previous August had suffered heavily from an inundation. The Emperor Karl of Austria had sent from his place of exile a sum of 10,000 *lire* to the afflicted families, therefore King Victor Emmanuel was obliged to trump this by a gift of 20,000. In the Eisaktal a witticism was inspired by this obligatory royal gift: "Have the folk of Klausen seen to it that there's not a false thousand *lire* note among them?"

The King was not permitted to stop in Bozen, a visit to that town not being considered desirable. Not that there

was any danger of attack on him—the peaceable temper of the South Tyrolese was too well known for any such apprehension—but the Talfer town might be too cold for the Royalties. So His Majesty only descended between trains on the quiet railway station platform, and was there received and greeted in German by Dr. Julius Perathoner with all etiquette, though not without reference to the innumerable unfulfilled promises of the Italian Government.

Meran as a health resort had to do a little more than its sister town Bozen, in order not to give the Government too poor an idea of its various economic industries. The King, who in the *Sandswirt* House in Passeier, had added his signature to the book of honour, entered Meran with its many decorations, the Burgomaster of the Burggrafenat presenting him with a memorial, wherein all our country's sorrows were set down in courteous but decided wording. The royal visit had absolutely no political result; for us as for the Italians it had been an empty formality.

“Colder and louder blew the wind” ever against us; its direction being determined by the Fascists. All too soon would the storm-waves go near to overwhelm our small barque.

24. THE INVASION OF FASCISM

Mussolini had, with deliberate calculation, chosen South Tyrol as that part of the frontier where he on his road to government could most easily break through. South Tyrol was already regarded by the widespread Italian Nationalistic Party as the most befitting prize of victory for the sacrifices of the War. In childish self-appreciation they persuaded themselves that Italy had not only saved the *Entente* by breaking off from the Triple Alliance, but through the legendary victory of Vittorio Veneto had once more saved it from utter ruin; and in the Peace Treaty they considered the Italians but poorly rewarded for their “heroic” sacrifices.

Never in Italian newspapers have I seen a single mention of any losses of Russia, France, England, not to say Germany and Austria, but the Press and the Nationalist deputies in Parliament continually harped on the half-million fallen, offered up by Italy in the War, the half-million on occasions rising in the mouths of orators to one or two hundred thousand more! Not that even one man's death would be an exaggerated sacrifice for such a cause as that for which Italy had fought, but the disproportion between its losses and those of the other Great Powers is too great not to arouse criticism of Italian megalomania. In Tyrol every man in ten fell in the World War, and in order to equal this measure of sacrifice Italy would have to mourn over two million dead. The Italians, however, deluded themselves into believing that they had done wonders, sheer impossibilities, and now they beheld in South Tyrol, and especially in German South Tyrol, the fitting reward for their deeds. Trent and Trieste had long ceased to interest them, and the strongly tintured German character of these "redeemed brethren" made them almost repugnant to Italy proper; how often have we not heard from Italian lips the scornful term "bastard" applied to those former Austrian Italians, and, on the other hand, how satiated were these "brothers" with their "Redemption". Here was no longer any pride of victory.

But the German-speaking South Tyrol! The "Upper Adige"! There, indeed, would be an obvious proof of Triumph: Teutons who could be led captive as once in old Rome, Teutons once so feared by Italy! Now indeed might Italian foot be set on their necks with no fear of consequences, now might they be tormented and tortured at will. How well it sounded; the Fascists licked their lips over the prospects opening before them, the sweet draught of revenge, though Tyrol sinned only in belonging to Italy's hereditary foe, Austria. The Fascists, however, might reckon on the mass of the Italian people offering little intervention, and, moreover,

that this heroic gesture of theirs would be looked on as furnishing a proof, later on, of how fully equipped Italy would be to assume her ancient mastership of the world!

This appears the clue to Mussolini's mania of persecution in South Tyrol in these days. The Blackshirts were there to cover themselves with national glory, and it has been mentioned above how they set about the task. We delegates and the town of Bozen were the chief sufferers; Tinzl, who was not so much on the spot, was spared a good deal. Walther, however, did not come off so easily. One day, as he was returning from Rome, the Fascists, when he reached Verona, forbade his further journey; he was obliged to leave the train and get home as he best might. Toggenburg aroused still deeper rage in the Blackshirts; his having been, during the War, governor of Trent as well as Austrian Minister of the Interior gave continually fresh pretexts for brutal insults and threats. The Fascists, however, devoted their chief attentions to me, I having taken a prominent part in the communal activities and been three times chosen as president of the Tyrolese People's Party, which comprised by far the greater number of the population. All my utterances were stamped with strong opposition to the Italian encroachments, the scope of which I fancied could be grasped from my youthful experiences. I had repeatedly attended meetings on the German Republic's soil, such as the Bodensee Conference of 1922, where I came to know Prince Max of Baden and the former Chancellor, Dr. Wirth. Besides great meetings in Munich, I had in the autumn of 1921 accepted an invitation from the German Democratic Liberal Party in Bohemia to lecture on South Tyrol in the *Deutsches Haus* of Prague. Also, when in December 1921 the deputy Cavazoni mentioned that Home Rule had been granted to Ireland, I promptly rose and expressed my fervent wishes that Italy would show herself as magnanimous as England, and readjust that which was, and would always remain for us,

"*Das heilige Land Tirol*". So I termed my country in German before the Roman Senate, without meeting any opposition. Again, when in spring 1922 the Emperor Karl died, I wrote a warm memorial of him in the columns of the *Tiroler*, laying special stress on the human side of that unfortunate Prince, as experienced by myself when I had come to know him.

All these things taken together, made my attitude quite incomprehensible to the Italians, that is to Fascists. My life in these years was not easy. Sometimes placards were posted up in Bozen abusing me in my own town as a "renegade". I lodged a complaint before the Bozen jury; living as I did then with my parents, nothing could have been easier than to prove the German extraction of my family. The Court of Appeal in Rome, however, withdrew this case from the Bozen Court and handed it over to that of Görz, no German Tyrolese being allowed to give judgement. I therefore concluded not to pursue my action; it was one of those cases which already were beginning to make it plain, that for us no Italian justice was to be looked for.

More dangerous, however, was the daily violence to which I found myself exposed. The way to my home in Gries lay mostly through meadows, where in the evening I twice over, by chance as it seemed, escaped Fascist attacks. Another time, when I was in a sleeping-carriage of a train bound for Rome, some Fascists during the halt at Trent searched the train for me, presumably having been apprised by telephone of my departure from Bozen. I had bolted the sleeping-compartment door, and the guard was apparently ready with adroit assurances, with the result of my safe arrival at my destination. Such experiences were perhaps still more trying for my relatives than for me. "We are consumed with terror for you!" my father, who was then seventy, once said to me; although I tried to let my parents know as little as possible of what happened, yet the gravity of the situation

could not be hidden from them. On the urgent representations of my colleagues, the Government ordered a guard for me, so that for months I was accompanied wherever I went with two *Carabinieri*, who, incidentally, of course always knew my doings and where I might be.

In spite of this measure of protection, in the summer of 1922 the Fascists formally outlawed me. Their newspapers published a lengthy *Diffida*, prohibiting me from public activity of any kind, adding that if I did so "every Fascist was given a free hand to treat me as he pleased". Other decisions at this time came to a crisis. The Facta Government which had succeeded Bonomi was already tottering under the attacks of the Fascists in their clamour to govern. They brought forward a programme for the reconstitution of matters in South Tyrol, demanding its immediate ratification by the Government. Facta announced through Credaro, that in Bozen, Meran, and the communes of Gries, Salurn, Margreid, Neumarkt, Branzoll, Auer, Leifers, and Kurtinig, the bi-lingualism of both place and street names and the equal recognition of the Italian tongue in official and municipal matters should be established. We were not perturbed at this, though certainly the form in which the regulation that we had desired was couched, was not what we had intended. It opposed the competency of the communes—nor did it satisfy the Fascists.

On the ground of a resolution taken by the United Fascist Party, the Fascists in Bozen on September 12, 1922, presented Ten Demands to the Municipal Council, which were to be accepted down on the nail:

1. Resignation of Dr. Julius Perathoner from the Burgomastership and the Municipal Council of the town of Bozen.
2. A Table of the highest prices demanded for the absolutely necessary foodstuffs and other requisite articles, and the maintenance of said Table by the town magistrate.
3. The dissolution of the town police in Bozen and the substitution for the same of a Town Guard.

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4. Bi-lingualism for all public notices of the Commune and all institutions connected with it, and for all public posters as well as street names. The Italian language to have the preference.
5. The conversion of the school buildings in Elisabethstrasse—one of the four educational centres under the control of the town—into an Italian school.
6. The numbering of dwellings, the requisition of all empty houses, and the fair allotment of same to needy families.
7. Supervision of the municipal authorities on days specified as holidays by the State, over the hanging out of the national flag on all buildings, first-class hotels, and all banks.
8. Assurances from the Commune, failing direct arrangement by it, that one of the town churches shall be given over to the Italians and entrusted to Italian priests.
9. The introduction of an Italian-language course for all municipal officials and for employees of all establishments connected with the Commune, so that every employee in a year shall be capable of using the Italian language in business.
10. In the event of official appointments preference to be given to war-wounded from South Tyrol.

When this programme had been answered by counter-proposals, the Fascists on September 27th presented the Burgomaster, Dr. Perathoner, with an ultimatum and four days' grace. If their demands were not fully acceded to by September 30th, Fascist "activity" would begin.

The situation was serious; the fulfilment of the Fascist "demands" impossible. Without dishonouring themselves, the Bozen Commune could not desert a man to whom the town owed so much. The Burgomaster did not yield an inch. He had in the wisdom of his seventy years fully recognized the fate of his town, and the order went forth to Bozen to stand fast. He himself set the example.

The day before the expiration of the ultimatum I was walking with Toggenburg over the Talfer bridge discussing the present situation. The Fascist occupation was to be expected and my own personal danger much increased. Should I leave the town? I assured Toggenburg the Italians

should not see such a thing, they should never be able to say that the Tyrolese leaders were the first to seek safety in the hour of peril. Toggenburg agreed with me.

The ultimatum expired. Some thousand heavily armed Fascists with steel helmets arrived in Bozen. No official authority made the slightest attempt to hinder them. They occupied first of all the most beautiful school-building in Bozen, the *Elisabethschule*, renaming it *Scuola Regina Elena*, and declaring it to be from that time the Italian School of Bozen. Next day they forced their way into the *Rathaus*, where for the sake of appearance some soldiers and *Carabinieri* had been posted, and in "the battle" that ensued one man was "severely wounded" (a Fascist fell in an epileptic fit). The *Rathaus* had been "conquered".

The Fascist action was directed by Giunta and Starace, as well as by De Stefani, subsequently Minister of Finance. The mobilization of all the Fascist battalions from Upper Italy provided for the case of a stubborn resistance of the authorities in office. Every hour brought more reinforcements of the invasion. The Government was helpless and sought to put an end to the Fascist revolt at our expense. With what we could but consider an unheard-of arbitrariness of action, they deposed Dr. Julius Perathoner, the King for this end having to rescind the former Ratification Decree given by his hand. Such a proceeding infringed alike both the law and the statutes of Bozen, besides showing the King to be but a marionette in an unworthy farce.

Dr. Julius Perathoner received the announcement of his dismissal in the *Rathaus*. The Italian officials offered him a guard for his way home, but he refused. Fear was unknown to him. He took leave of the Communal Council in a written address, which ran thus: "I have belonged to the Communal Council for thirty years, during nearly twenty-eight of which I acted as President (elected by free choice) of the town in all the business of the communal administra-

tion. It fills me with joy and pride to have taken part by my labours in all this long time that may be rightly styled a period of Renaissance for Bozen town, and furthered the burgeoning into fuller beauty of this my native place." The address ended with the words: "Unless all signs be deceptive, dark days await the German-speaking population in the town of Bozen, but I would entreat these my Tyrolese fellow-citizens never to lose courage, and to guard a sure and certain confidence that a better Future will one day dawn!"

The Fascists, however, were still dissatisfied. While taking excellent care of themselves in the hotels at the Commune's cost, they declared openly that they had no intention of departure till the Bozen Council should have fulfilled all their demands. The courteous and conciliatory tone of the answer received by them did not affect them, so that the Council then decided to resign office, in order that the town might be freed from the ever heavier burden of occupation. Despite the contrary orders of the Fascist leaders, it soon came to further progress of misrule; as when, on the second day of occupation I was returning home in the evening, I received intelligence from my relatives that the *Carabinieri* command advised me not to go back to my own house. I therefore betook myself to some friends in the town.

When the Bozen Communal Council had thus withdrawn and been at once replaced under Government appointment by a Commissioner, Guerriero, the Fascists departed after fourteen days' occupation, without having ventured on worse excesses. There was a reason for this. In Innsbruck, where the expiration of the ultimatum had been publicly posted up, if Fascists in Bozen had committed any acts of personal violence on their compatriots in South Tyrol, the men of Innsbruck would assuredly have retaliated in sanguinary wise on the Italians to be found there.

The Fascists, therefore, fell back to the South, a detach-

ment occupying Salurn and, as in Bozen, compelling the Communal Council to retire. The remainder went on to Trent and cast Credaro out of office, the principal accusation brought against him being: That he had not availed to force the portrait of the King into the Bozen *Rathaus*! This was said by people who a year before had markedly remained absent from the Roman Chamber during the Speech from the Throne!

We Tyrolese delegates addressed an open letter to the German population. In this we explained how long before the occupation, we had urgently impressed the necessity of a firm attitude on the part of the Government and protection for law and justice. We wound up: "We wish, as we have always wished, that the German and Italian population [of Tyrol] should live in peace one with another, and are to-day, as ever, ready sincerely to co-operate in the work of conciliation. This co-operation can only be between free men of equal rights, with mutual esteem for one another and for the law, but never can it be between oppressors and thralls."

The decay of the power of the State was apparent; the general rehearsal of the March on Rome had been fully successful. Fascism needed not to fear that any firing of shots would be attempted when it presently should direct action against the Eternal City. The Government had thrown us Tyrolese to the Fascists, to check the force of the current of their passions, but it was only the fiercer for it. Mussolini made good use of the moment of indecision, and some weeks later advanced, without meeting any resistance, upon Rome. In the reports of the renowned leader on this March of Revolution, remarks on the bad weather are, after famous examples from the World War, interspersed with matter more important. The rain was the one disagreeability encountered by the Blackshirts on their advance on Rome, before they became masters of Italy.

In these days I wrote my last leading article for the

Tiroler, but it was not printed. The publishing house *Tyrolia*, which brought out the newspaper, had during the occupation barely escaped demolition, and feared now to irritate the Fascists by this leader. I had prophesied in it that Fascism would work no miracle, but would have its fling at us, poor victims, as the *locus minoris resistentiae*.

25. CALM BEFORE STORM

The fact that now in Italy the dominance of law had ceased, and, though apparently in legitimate form, the people were put on the chain, justified gloomy forebodings.

Credaro had been succeeded by Giuseppe Guadagnini, whom report from his former sphere of action, Cremona, declared a pliable tool of the Fascist policy of force.

The tone of the Fascist Press was more than ever unbridled. The *Piccolo Posto* wrote:

We know that the change of street names, of those of roads, and of the official language has not availed to gain a single German Tyrolese. Not one has come over to us. We have not, indeed, intended to bring them over. Our action was only the outbreak of a long suppressed agitation. A greater work lies before us, and this must be undertaken with the utmost energy.

Germanism must be rooted out of the very soul as out of all exterior things; this province must become Italian, its inhabitants Italian, so that all therein is Italian, and Italy only recalled in it.

This savage policy did not immediately declare itself. Trifling Government regulations only indicated what was brewing—a fresh lingual order with sharper directions as to the compulsory use of Italian in placards of special contracts or professional firms, also the removal of pictures of Andreas Hofer from the schools. When, on November 17, 1922, I rose to speak in Parliament almost immediately after Mussolini's first Government declaration, I was able, without much opposition from the Fascists, to set forth our

demands for the inner life of the people as a national Minority. The speech ran as follows:

It cannot be ignored, gentlemen, that there are problems not to be solved by the use of force, problems of feeling and the requirements of the spirit. Neither a *questor* nor any other agent of the Public Safety avails to lead or control the heart, and the needs of the inner life of a people are not to be dealt with by police regulations. In such a case all putting forth of State power is in vain. In the place of force, the statesman must allow another factor to enter here into the preservation of common interests. I find it mentioned in the programme of the new Government, and we should be well satisfied were it speedily realized in the right place—for it is the conception of the dignity of the State.

In my opinion is this dignity the sole foundation on which a Great Power with its nation of 39 millions can deal, as befits it, with a Minority of a quarter million. Doubtless I find myself in entire agreement with many here, when I say that all deeds of violence and all illegal acts, whether of officials or private individuals in our land, must of necessity avail but to injure the dignity of the Italian kingdom.

Our attitude to the Government at the present moment is therefore clear, that of expectation. We can do this so much the more easily, as we have confidence in the future of our people.

Peoples do not come and go like political parties. Their fate depends on natural and moral forces, which are untouched by the changes and chances of political life. Therefore our people will survive this phase of democracy and dictatorship, whatever these may resolve for them.

Mussolini had interrupted me several times, though without passion, and in his summing-up of the debate merely remarked that Italy under hard necessity had established herself at the Brenner. On this first round there was nothing cheering, but neither anything alarming, said.

Then came a pause, and a peculiar game began. The Government Commissioner of Bozen, Guerriero, a trained diplomatist, made an effort to bring about an armistice between Tyrolese and Italians. Mussolini approved of the idea, and conferences took place between the editor of the *Piccolo Posto*, Luigi Barbesino, on the one side and Graf Toggenburg and Dr. von Walther on the other, with Guer-

riero as arbiter, which lasted from December 1922 down to February 1923. Finally a conclusive protocol was drawn up, which was to be laid before the Tyrolese and Fascist leaders for formal ratification, and in which the Tyrolese renounced all Irredentist policy, while the Fascist party in German South Tyrol guaranteed freedom for native culture. The details were classed under thirteen heads, and according to the wording of the agreement, the dawn of a period of peaceful life might be expected to break for both Tyrolese and all law-abiding Italians.

In the first draft of Article 1 we had been required to recognize that the South Tyrol question was a purely Italian one, and that we in the name of the collective German Tyrolese of South Tyrol resigned any accentuation of its international character. In discussions among ourselves it was, however, objected, that for such a declaration a popular vote under guarantees of complete freedom of opinion would be necessary, for this Article in some sort represented the practice of the rights of self-determination in favour of Italy. It was therefore resolved to formulate "that the Tyrolese parties pledge themselves to regard the question of the Tyrolese Minority in South Tyrol as a purely internal matter—not one for international discussions—relying on fair treatment by the Government, and that the Tyrolese would refrain from any kind of Irredentist propaganda or literature."

Personally I felt misgivings as well about this phraseology. If this pledge included all discussion—even the most pacific—of the Tyrol boundary question, then it went too far, verging on that world of thought which had prompted an objection from Credaro when dealing with the question of schools, to a *Volkslied* in a book of songs, "Thoughts are free" (*Gedanken sind frei*). As for the consideration promised for our Tyrolese civilization and culture, I failed to believe in it. Between wolf and lamb no pact is probable; at the most

only a peace guaranteed by the tamer of wild beasts, and such an one here was wanting.

Point 6 of the scheme laid down that the German Tyrolese schools were only to be attended by German Tyrolese scholars, whose nationality must be decided by the then valid legal decisions—the Corbino Law. But what had been our experience under that very Corbino Law, and could an honourable application of it be expected from the Fascists? It was clear to see that the Government tactics—already setting in—of stealing away Tyrolese children through misuse of this law would be encouraged in subtlety.

Towards the end of February 1923 a large meeting for trustees of the “German League” was held in Bozen, to discuss the draft of the Proposal. Toggenburg recommended it, and I, having travelled all the preceding night, was much fatigued and unable to express my objections convincingly. I therefore gave in, and only a few friends agreed with me. On the same day I resigned my presidency of the People’s Party and my delegate mandate, but I was urged at least to wait before taking the final steps, until it should be seen what would come of the Proposal. Some weeks later the great Fascist Council rejected it entirely, and on this the Fascist party decided on the immediate de-Germanizing of South Tyrol. My friends now assured me that I had been quite right, but must still remain at my post.

It may be added that it would have been no great matter had we agreed with the Fascists on the formula of that Armistice. It seems to me now proved that such an agreement could only be one on paper; Mussolini was and is not to be bound by treaties. A man who in a breath signified his inclination to spare the Tyrolese in South Tyrol and in the next by the Tolomei programme agreed to their Italianization, is no reliable partner. In the same way he has kept none of his agreements with other groups of his fellow-citizens, and in foreign politics has rendered his pacts of

friendship with Spain, Czechoslovakia, and Jugoslavia itself worthless; as before the War he helped to destroy a thirty years' Alliance at the very time when it should have been kept.

Mussolini's element is one of unrest and violence.

26. THE FIRST BLOW: HERODISM

In 1923 the thousand-year-old, yet ever young and beautiful, Dornröschen of the Neumarkt School, pricked by a spindle, sank into a heavy sleep.

Chronological Note on the Unterland.

The tokens recalling German art and culture throughout the circuit of Neumarkt country are to be traced back to the hoary Middle Ages. High over the district of the Unterland towers the dome of Tramin parish church, built in the fourteenth century by the master-builder Hans Fewer; while opposite Tramin the Frauenkirche of Vill, raised by Master Konrad of Neumarkt, declares itself as "one of the most perfect examples of Decorated Gothic in Tyrol". The history of the German School in Neumarkt has its origin in even earlier days:

The Middle Ages!
Renaissance Times!
1923!

The latter date signifies the first shot fired against the stronghold of our nationality, the assault on which had begun in the January of that year with the forming of the province of Trent after Italian models: Buchenstein and Ampezzo turned into the Belluno province, while the Unterland found itself incorporated with the Under-Pre-fecture of Cavale in the Fleimstal, although indubitably belonging by their home economies and their commerce to Bozen. In 1923 the schools of Neumarkt and the whole district were Italianized. The aim of all this was soon

evident—the nationality of South Tyrol was to be stamped out, and the Unterland appeared to Fascism the first rung of the ladder leading to this goal.

From March 1923, therefore, it was made known that all communal business must be carried on in Italian, although there were certain communes in the Unterland where no single elder understood a word of it. Yet Sub-Prefect Prandi—who had served under Austria in the Trent police and whom many Italian Tyrolese had had to thank for terms of imprisonment—enacted: “The protocols of the ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the communal representatives and their committees must be drawn up solely in the Italian tongue. Public manifestoes, contracts, etc., must likewise be written and published only in the same language.” So, too, was it ruled that inscriptions and epitaphs in the Unterland should be exclusively in Italian.

Petty Jacks-in-office carried the system still farther. The *Carabinieri* brigadier in Tramin forbade the singing of German songs in the inns, and the Fascist secretary of Neumarkt, Sasor, ordained in his omnipotence that the portrait of the King must be hung up by all innkeepers on their premises; the order subsequently extended throughout the land by Ricci, with the addition of the Queen and Mussolini in the best room of the hostelry. Was not the Hôtel Victoria at Gries formally closed because those portraits had been placed unframed on the walls? Again, in August 1923, when in Salurn the stone of an Italian *Kindergarten* was to be laid, the Italian Commissioner—who had been substituted for the Communal Council on its enforced withdrawal—ordered the people to hang out flags from their houses, and added that, were not this command obeyed, he must decline all responsibility—a distinct threat of violence from the lips of a Government official!

But the worst was yet to come. Herodism joined hands with Fascism.

To a mother her child is the whole world. House and home may be burnt to ashes, an avalanche sweep away field and garden, but so long as her arms enfold her child all else may go by the board. Fleets or mines, colonies or protectorates, ancient palaces or proud standards, do not constitute the strength of a people. To it, its treasure is its blood, the young generation is the latest emblem of a nation's existence.

In the autumn of 1923 the black snake struck its poisonfangs into our little ones. My people's curse rests on the head of Gentile, Minister of Education, for he it was who served the Herod Fascism as executioner, he it was who came between the hallowed link joining mother and child! When he had banished the German tongue from our schools the stroke had been softened by no touch of good faith; the first advance of the enemy in that direction having been taken in the previous March, when the Unterland had witnessed the conversion of its Tyrolese schools into Italian ones. Although those buildings had been expressly raised by their founders for our national education, they were yet ruthlessly seized on for Italianizing purposes, the families designated as Italian by the authorities, forbidden to send their children to German schools outside the Unterland. The hours of instruction in the German tongue originally promised to us were never held; moreover, individual and most competent teachers were not permitted to give them out of the official school hours.

The people protested. They pointed out that the census of 1921 had shown, despite all arbitrary "Returns" on the part of the authorities, a Tyrolese two-thirds majority. The actual strength of the German Tyrolese of the Unterland amounted to four-fifths. In Neumarkt the parents met together, making it clear that the public census in the district showed only 262 Italians as against 2,030 Tyrolese, and that the Italian authorities themselves in the autumn

of 1922 had only enrolled, out of 27 new scholars for the elementary national schools, three for the Italian school, the other 24 drafted into the German-speaking Tyrolese. The parents signed to the number of 126 an appeal against the decree of Italianization, but it was rejected out of hand. The Burgomaster Holz knecht was deposed, and his predecessor, Dr. Anton, Freiherr of Longo-Liebenstein, banished. He died two years later in exile, and his son Felix with his daughter-in-law were forced to leave the country and their estates.

Even the *Kindergartens* of the Unterland were Italianized by order. In Kurtinig the house of the Tyrolese *Kindergarten* was the property of a Club, but it was raped from them. The Club formally resisted, but when in 1926, on the death of one of its members, the president, according to the Society's rules, hung out a mourning standard, he was fined in the Courts on the charge of "A seditious manifestation" and the standard was confiscated.

The Italian staffs of these commandeered schools were, moreover, for the most part amazingly inferior. In Neumarkt the school-mistress Borli was given to drink, and known to shut up the children in their classes during school hours that she might sleep undisturbed, only "letting them out" at the end of school-time. One can imagine the condition of such a school-room after such a morning. It was this teacher of youth who once in a church festival, when a school child said a prayer aloud in German, fell upon him with blows.

Representations of ours to the Government upon the intolerable consequences of the separation of the Unterland were in vain. Tinzl and I spoke on the subject to the Under-Secretary of State, Michelino Bianchi, one of the famous *Quadrurviri* who commanded in the March on Rome. He made a very bad impression on me, one later to be confirmed when in the following year a Roman gentleman told

me that Bianchi had arrived with only a small suitcase in Rome, where now he possessed several houses. At the time of our interview he revealed to me the Fascist policy for South Tyrol: "There can be no talk of autonomy for it. Autonomy is only for some wretched little lot of people who have to be dealt with in a special way, as, for instance, in the Colonies, or for those of an exceptionally high standard. As such, we cannot let the German-speaking Tyrolese count against Italian State citizens."

The true *Leitmotiv* of Fascism was given with no uncertain sound, but before it had yet completed its work in the Unterland, its mania of destruction swept it on to attack the main position in South Tyrol.

27. THE MAIN ASSAULT BEGINS

The prophecy of that unprinted article of mine fulfilled itself with startling accuracy in October 1923. In the previous summer Fascism had revealed the policy of general persecution and destruction of Tyrolese nationality in South Tyrol, which henceforward from year to year has grown in ferocity, becoming the subject of indignation and protest in nearly the whole world.

The right agent for this policy had been found in the Prefect of Trent, Giuseppe Guadagnini, an Italian Despot incarnate in the twentieth century, yellow and cold of aspect, with dead eyes and a toneless voice. Without understanding a word of German, he put forth his decrees of suppression, and when we spoke to him on the subject, referred us to the *Ragione di Stato*, politically justifying his barbarous measures with a lack of feeling as though it were a question of stamping out some contagious epidemic. With icy composure he assured us that Italy must carry on the work of doing away with Germanism in South Tyrol so long as anything of Germanism remained. Even for form's sake he

never troubled himself to put forward any fitting exculpation of his edicts; his preliminary arrangements have far rather been marked with an autocracy verging on cynicism.

What Credaro had with naïve simplicity asserted to us—that he “could do everything”—Guadagnini carried out for himself with systematic thoroughness. He explained to me once categorically that he, like the Roman *praetor*, was the second lawgiver in the State, and related how he, when prefect in Cremona, had in his powers of office even dictated collective terms between the employers and the trades unions. He invoked in this act the provincial regulations, whereby the prefect has full authority to publish his own edicts for the preservation of order in every branch of the community.

In South Tyrol the winged word of an inhabitant of the Sarntal on the Italians is in the air: “They have but the one word in their law code and that they do not tell us!” The saying seemed made for Guadagnini’s conception of Justice, according to which there was no need for the prefect to respect the laws of the State, and certainly Guadagnini did not do so. Incidentally he endeavoured to come round us with Italian cunning, once demonstrating to me how advantageous it would be for us to count as Italian citizens: “It would be nice to read some time, ‘the Minister Nicollussi’.” To which I responded: “We have no other wish than to be left in peace by you in our mountain valleys.”

To this man had Tolomei, the falsifier and the hater, handed over his formulary—Assimilation. July 1923 witnessed the beginnings of it in the Bozen Theatre, whence the inscription “*Der Deutschen Kunst*” (To German Art) chiselled by the citizens, had already been removed from over the entrance. Now this semi-learned functionary, the incarnation of the unintellectual enmity drawn up against us, prepared in this place to make public the programme of our national garrotting, as seemed good to the Fascist Govern-

ment. It was enough and to spare—that which had been agreed on by a frantic Fascist Assembly.

1. Bozen to be united with Trent in a single province.
2. Italian secretaries (town clerks) appointed to the communes, rights of citizenship revoked, revision of the census.
3. The official language to be Italian. German topographical names to be replaced by Italian, public inscriptions and names of streets and inns to be Italianized.
4. Restrictions upon travel and residence for German foreigners; prohibition of German immigration.
5. The acquisition of ground property by Italians to be favoured by the Government. Italian education to be introduced into South Tyrol by the founding of Italian *Kindergartens*, elementary, and secondary schools, and development of the Institute of Studies for South Tyrol.
6. Dissolution of German Banks, and foundation of an Italian Land Credit Bank.
7. Increase of the *Carabinieri* troops, as of the number of military on active service stationed in South Tyrol.
8. The Chambers of Commerce and Agricultural Associations to be strictly supervised, and for the interpenetration of South Tyrol two new branch railway lines, the Milan-Mals and Agordo-Brixen, to be projected.
9. North Tyrol to be separated from the see of Brixen.
10. Establishment of important Customs stations at Sterzing and Toblach; the former Tyrolese officials to be either dismissed or transplanted into the old provinces.
11. South Tyrolese students forbidden to attend foreign High Schools.

Finally Tolomei demanded the dissolution of the "German League", the Alpine Clubs, the suspension of the *Tiroler* newspaper, the Italianization of "Germanized family names"—and the disuse of the name of South Tyrol! Even the monument of Walther von der Vogelweide on the chief square of Bozen was not overlooked by him; it must be removed to a War Museum as a symbol of pan-Germanism.

Tolomei proceeded to declare that the carrying out of this programme in its entirety was but a prelude to the display of power and political influence of Italy in Middle Europe, immediately to come about, now that Tyrol and Austria

lay in ruins and Germany was powerless. From this latter—Germany—especially must a decisive recognition of the Brenner frontier be demanded.

At first we could scarce believe that the Government could support such a programme; had not Tittoni, as Italian representative in the League of Nations, only last autumn joined in the vote that the Great Powers without being bound by treaties should allow freedom in their cultural development to their National Minorities? Tittoni was now the Fascist president of the Senate, but he had not been the sole one so to express himself. A few weeks after the publication of the Tolomei programme the Fascist delegate and representative of Mussolini, Dudan, at the session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at Copenhagen, had voted with every sign of conviction that in the alien Minorities elementary schools should be carried on in their native tongue, and that their Governments should be pledged to assign them befitting grants out of the public money. Yet while he was thus acting, the Roman Ministry of Education was preparing laws for the destruction of German-speaking schools in German-speaking South Tyrol. Here was still another case of the Fascist Government's unblushing lack of good faith, and of its even then advancing to carry out a number of Tolomei's decrees.

August 8, 1923, was marked by the suppression of the name of *Tyrol*, it being also forbidden to speak of our country as *South Tyrol* or *German-speaking South Tyrol*, as of its inhabitants as *Tyrolese* or *South Tyrolese* or "the like and similar names". Only the name *Upper Adige* was to be permitted, a name that in Napoleonic times had served to designate the Trentino, but never the Eisaktal or the Etschtal as far down as Meran.

The blow went home. We had been robbed of a part of our national dignity. We delegates drew up a letter to our electors, which ran:

TO OUR COUNTRY-FOLK THE SOUTH TYROLESE, AND TO ALL
FRIENDS OF TYROL

The Prefecture of Trent has forbidden the use of the names of South Tyrol and South Tyrolese, the use of the names of Tyrol or Tyrolese for our Homeland and for our country-folk, as punishable offences.

We are ignorant of the political considerations inducing the Government to take such measures. We, however, know that all protests against such wounding of our rightful pride of ancestry and our passionate love for the Homeland would be in vain.

To-day naught else remains for us but to bid farewell to the sacred name of Tyrol, until the sun of true Justice reconciling nation with nation shall once more shine upon us, dispossessed heirs.

No decrees of State can alter the fact that the proud fortress of our race, Schloss Tyrol, has for nigh a thousand years looked down on the hallowed Tyrol Burggrafenamt, bestowing on all the Homeland with her mighty sons the name of honour, known to the whole world.

Though the Land Tyrol be rent in twain, though South Tyrol be incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy and made a part of the province of Trent, yet, any new names notwithstanding, our Homeland will remain what it has ever been, our stronghold, our South Tyrol, and the men who in the sweat of their brows have tilled it and have loved it with inextinguishable love, are and will ever be that which their fathers were: Tyrolese.

Whether we may say it or write it, or whether we may but know it with the more conviction and feel it in our inmost hearts, we shall yet remain what we are.

Only with her mountains shall Tyrol pass away. Things often take an unexpected turn, and those men who to-day are inflicting suffering upon us may perhaps yet be among the first to recognize their injustice.

History will pronounce the final verdict.

Bozen, the Day of our Lady's Assumption, 1923.

The South Tyrol delegates:

DR. REUT-NICOLUSSI, DR. TINZL, DR. WALTHER, TOGGENBURG

The *Tiroler*, our gallant champion newspaper, must also change its name, and on my motion was called the *Landsmann*. Its publishing offices, *Tirolia*, received gracious permission to continue for the present the firm officially

registered in the minutes. On the other hand, much loss was caused to our home economy by the doing away of names familiar to trade, such as "Tyrolese Fruit"—"Tyrolese Wine"—"Tyrolese *Loden*-cloth"—"Tyrolese Luck-rings," etc. Garibaldi's Recollections of the *Campagna nel Tirolo* was also withdrawn from circulation, as were Prati's Poems over his *Verde Tirolo*, his verdant Tyrol.

The title *Alto Adige* being abhorred, South Tyrol became the Nameless Land. So our Press found a way out of the difficulty when they wrote quoting foreign opinions of the Press. "The politics of the Italian Government in (the forbidden name) . . ."

The Italians did not object to this, but had no idea of the light in which they stood revealed.

The German Alpine Clubs were the next victims. The Prefect dissolved them and added with no smallest scruple to the clauses of his decision, that their capital should be handed over to the Italian Alpine Club. Such robbery was by no means uncommon, property of considerable value being taken from their founders or owners solely on the ground that they were German, as in the case of a number of well fitted out refuge huts, such as the Schlern Huts of the Bozen Alpine Club. Here, however, was no question of seizing upon Austrian or German Republic possessions; we South Tyrolese were aimed at in our own tourist Clubs; it was an arbitrary decision against German-speaking Italian citizens, and the results were tragic. The Italian Alpine Club was not equal to its responsibilities: the way-marks were not kept in repair, the supports on cliff or peak neglected, the telephone connections given up. Many accidents on our mountains are to be traced back to this annihilating blow to Alpine Climbing.

Even our war memorials were attacked. Guadagnini appointed a commission of experts to decide how far these war memorials could be considered hurtful to the State

interests. As soon as the commissioners' decisions became known I addressed the following open letter to Guadagnini:

HERR PRÄFEKT,

A Trent newspaper of 8th September published the Report of your Committee, appointed to "examine the memorials for those fallen under the Austrian colours".

During the War I was an Austrian fighter on the Front, and those fallen, whose memorials are in question, were not only my countrymen, but my comrades as well. I have therefore a right to speak to you, Herr Präfekt, now when your Committee are spreading abroad utterances which force us to conclude that all feeling has ceased to exist in the breasts of those who give vent to such.

In their Report they belittle those who are commemorated in honour by these their country's war memorials, and it is ordained that the inscriptions conveying our homage for the dead shall be altered, especially when they extol our fallen as martyrs, heroes, or the like.

Herr Präfekt! If it is true what the newspapers say, you have expressed your gratitude to this Committee for their industry. Until you yourself have taught us otherwise, I would prefer to believe that such thanks are a mere courteous banality, with which your heart can have nothing to do. I indeed know you as an official blindly following the present policy of the Italian Government in their aims of treading underfoot our German-speaking nationality, and you have proved that you consider it allowable for "Reasons of State" to utilize the utmost resources of Power against our manners and customs. But you are more than a mere political functionary, you are also a human being, and I cannot believe that you should not comprehend the wrong which this wholly incredible suggestion of the Committee would do to the parents and sisters of the fallen, to their widows and orphans—nay, more, to the dead themselves.

There is a poem in Italian literature which in its way is unequalled in the poetry of any country: I speak of *Dei Sepolcri*, by Ugo Foscolo. There a great Italian patriot raises the lofty chant of reverence to the fallen, reverence to all fallen on the battlefields of the earth. Have the poet's countrymen of to-day forgotten such inspirations of their past; can you, Herr Präfekt, the representative of Italy in our land, in truth ordain us to remove the word "Hero" from our war memorials, thus formally letting it be understood that our dead brothers-in-arms have no claim on the last soldierly honour due to such?

I will lay no evidence before you, not even of how our fallen

held the Col di Lana with full knowledge that they were standing "on the Volcano," until the explosion swallowed them up. I could describe to you how at Pasubio, after its storming, the bodies of the *Kaiserjäger* were shovelled with spades into the tent canvases; did you wish it, you could see to-day on the blackened slopes of the Monte Valbella in what murderous fire our soldiers yet stood fast. Whatever hardship there was to bear was borne by our soldiers, brave as the bravest soldiers of all, and it is not right, Herr Präfekt, what your advisers counsel you. Simple humanity could not justify it, did you indeed take the last laurels from the graves of our dead countrymen with which we, their friends and kinsfolk, sought to decorate the memory of our gallant dead.

And if nothing of all that I have said here to you, Herr Präfekt, makes any impression on you, at least take one thing into consideration: That the Italian Army for three and a half years was withstood by our soldiers in fierce fighting. If you now seek to belittle the courage and heroic temper of our fallen countrymen, will it not be to belittle your own victory?

If my words be rightly conveyed to you, Herr Präfekt, I am convinced that you will find the thoughts in them compatible with your "Reasons of State", and in this expectation I sign myself with assurances of full esteem.

It seemed as though the Italians intended, in order to make the most painful wounds possible in our corporate body, to turn the knife thrice in the living flesh.

In October appeared two lingual regulations—the one on the official language, the other on public notices and announcements. Through their many clauses it was made plain that in the future any use of the German tongue in public and before the Courts would be a penal offence, and within a few years all use of the German tongue in translation of Italian terms would be equally forbidden. Guadagnini explained this to me with the words: "The Upper Adige must be coated with an Italian veneer!"

The enforcing of these lingual regulations followed with ruthless severity. The number of penal sentences, showered by the magistrates on the unsuspecting law-breakers, is legion.

According to the decree were even the dissolution of

corporations (communal councils), associations, etc., and the suspension of newspapers in case of infringement of the regulations, arranged for.

In vain we delegates showed in a memorial to the Ministry that through this decree an exceptional condition of things would be created, for in Italy proper all manner of notices in foreign languages could be put up at will. The Ministry answered that that was correct, but it was a question of an "Indulgence", which could not be permitted in the frontier province. On our representations as to the unconstitutional outrages of the breaking-up of our Alpine Clubs and the barefaced seizures of their property, we were answered that the interests of the State must come before those of the individual. That was plain speaking.

But there were many more arrows in the quiver.

As before in the Unterland, so now our children continued a principal target. While the Fascist school laws were being drawn up, our arch-enemy Tolomei had written in the reading book *Apollo*, that is to-day in use in Italian schools:

These barbarians (the Germans) live in South Tyrol in permanent contiguity with 40,000 Italians and Ladin folk. Neither one nor other of these latter people would ever do wrong to their neighbours nor in any wise injure them. We have never sought to denationalize others, as by enticing children of alien races into our schools, or bribed adults, in order to bring them—damaged goods—into our midst. Italianism never practises the like arts, despicable as unfruitful. . . .

Yet again. The principal collaborator of the Minister Gentile was the General Director of National Schools, Giuseppe Lombardo Radice. In the same year in which the axe had been laid at the foot of the tree of the very existence of our German culture, the third edition of his book, *The Ideal of Education and the National School (L'ideale educazione e la scuola nazionale)*, appeared. In this book the author fore-

stalled Gentile's words: "We seek above all one consciousness and one faith for ourselves and for others, in union with whom each of us will co-operate more or less in education as a mutual intellectual work."

The Tyrolese read with increasing astonishment such unparalleled sentences, more condemnatory in themselves than any other words could be of the Fascist attacks, so murderously directed on our intellectual position:

In our time the work of Denationalization by a conquering people has become the more terrible as it is more radical and wide-reaching. In the democratic world of to-day all strata of society and all citizens with votes are to be reckoned with in the life of civilization; therefore a ruling people feels itself endangered so long as the language, customs, societies, and organizations of the conquered people exist. The victors intend to suppress every point of difference by slaying the national consciousness of its coerced subjects, and the prohibition of their language will doubtless tear up the roots of such consciousness.

This is a diabolically repulsive aim, executed with well-considered and increasing severity; it is the more inhuman the more cultured the people, on whose living flesh is practised the cowardly art of the alchemist who will change the very blood of the peoples.

Page after page of the book goes on in the same strain, emphasized further by Lombardo Radice as follows: "The conqueror has the depravity of one blind and deaf to any outside need, and wholly incapable of recognizing the rights of another people. The oppressed minority on the other side desires to save the treasure entrusted to it, the worth of which far outweighs their numeral inferiority; this defence is an act, a symbol of universal human signification."

In this fashion Lombardo Radice had spoken of the "Oppression" of the Italians under the Austrian dominion, though then the Italians had been granted a purely Italian educational system, and I myself in the Italian school in Trent had learnt Italian so thoroughly as to be able in the Italian Parliament to make impromptu speeches in their

own tongue. Yet these very men, who spoke with such unbounded horror against the "oppression" of their brothers under Austrian rule, were capable, by one clause of the Gentile school reform of October 1923, of ordering that the German language was no longer to be the medium of education in any South Tyrolese school, even down to the *Kindergartens*.

When this became known, feeling rose high, far beyond the borders of the German-speaking districts. Could this indeed be possible, after all the deluge of vows and promises of Italy from 1919 on?

Astonishment mingled with indignation. Switzerland, with its conceptions of its nationality, addressed through the Zürich professor Fritz Medicus an open letter of protest to Gentile, Minister of Education.

What a mass of abhorrent incidents, poisoning the morale of the Italian people, must be called into being, before the mournful aim of spiritual enslavement of the frontier people can be reached! The high-minded between the Brenner and Salurn must set themselves in opposition to the State, and that State must buy the aid of unworthy subjects, and distinguish them by honours for that aid. Nevertheless, the opposition which the State must meet would find a secret support in the hearts of all magnanimous Italians—the sentiment of justice.

We deputies turned to the Minister Gentile himself, pointing out the natural right of our people to educate our youth in its own spirit and language. Gentile laughed contemptuously, "There is no right save that recognized by the State."

We then published in the Press an appeal to our people; the last, as it turned out, that we should be able to write.

All the world, Italy not excepted, will know how to estimate our profound agitation at the heavy blow which is directed against a whole people.

No country has wounded the most sacred feelings of any new citizens with such brutality.

What we all feel to-day, what surges to our lips, cannot be repeated here.

Fellow-countrymen! The point on which we must now concentrate is the preservation of our German tongue and customs for children and grandchildren.

Though we feel the bitterness of this heavy blow, we shall probably not be permitted to express those feelings openly, little though they have to do with politics or diplomacy, and which are of so lasting and all-important validity that they need not to appeal to any State, nation, or Court, whatever it may be. They touch humanity in the higher sense of the word, that humanity which does not allow political considerations to weigh with it in hindering suffering to one of its parts.

28. THE ITALIANS

I was sitting with my wife in the gardens of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli.

Sky and earth were fused in a dreamlike world. Below the old palace a hundred silver brooklets flowed through marble basins or shells, from stone dolphins or the vases of lichened tritons, purling among laurel and ivy, refreshing the cool shrubberies till they reached the green gloom of the garden terrace, where magic ponds and fountains sparkle among ancient cypresses and stone-pines.

Time fled away as with the monk of Heisterbach, and we also dreamed: How marvellous is this land! Boundless joy, limitless light. Surely those who live here must be other than the rest of the world; they could know neither hate nor strife, force nor envy, freedom is in the very air they breathe. Their treasures of Art are superabundant, and in the splendour that irradiates Italy even the beggar at the Porta Angelica is a prince. Happy people, beloved of Fortune!

Alas, it was but a dream! I rubbed my eyes and my consciousness revived to the increasing severity of reality. I recollected my own experiences; the Italian temperament had been early familiar to me.

My father belonged to the German-speaking zone of Lusern, on the borders of the Seven Communes, where nearly all of Lusern are named Nicolussi. The Italian notaries and chaplains had given a *Romänsch* turn to the name and for the sake of differentiation the Lusern folk adopted a prefix. My father had studied for a German teacher in Innsbruck, and worked in this capacity in the National German State school of Trent until his retirement, when he went to Bozen. His former school was intended for the children of German officials and officers. My mother belonged to one of the last German-speaking communes on the right bank of the Etsch, Fennberg, the home of the founder of the Kaiser Jäger regiment.

I grew up under the care of parents, poor indeed in the world's wealth, but rich in goodness and love, in an atmosphere of high Christian ideals. When my father and his friends sang patriotic songs in our home, I was thrilled with enthusiasm for Tyrol and its mighty past. The Tridentines around us were an alien element, but we bore them no malice any more than they did us, even when we boys had our "scraps" together. They had all that belonged to a free and assured national life—one point only was lacking, political fellowship with their own nation. That, indeed, was sufficient to raise a wall between Italian- and German-speaking Tyrol, yet in the German colleges in Trent I learnt more of Italian literature than many a young student in Italy itself. I value the great deeds of the Italians, yet now, when they fling the yoke of servitude on my people, I recognize but too well how little the charm of landscape, even of an historic past, can avail to protect a people against deterioration and transgression against the great ethical possessions of humanity.

The purling waters of the Villa d'Este have no longer a song for me.

29. OPPRESSION IN FULL SWING

The historian Leo Heinrich in the middle of last century penned a severe verdict on the Italians :

Italy is thus the land of popular freedom as of tyranny, and its Tyrants in their arrogance to their foes have sometimes committed the most ghastly excesses, because no counterpoise exists in them to bridle their own passions. We can rightly conclude from this that Italian freedom has no moral foundations. The individual Italian may come to rob others of all freedom as easily as he may claim it for himself.

Fascism has proved the truth of this judgement with terrible emphasis, and South Tyrol experiences as much by her very self. With what unchained passions was the Fascist work of destruction carried on from year to year against a peaceable people, receptive of all reasonable methods of government! The despots, their new masters, turned deaf ears to every counsel of or petition for moderation. If, as Goethe says, the bitterest and strongest national hatred is always to be found on the lowest steps of culture, his words appositely pass sentence on the Fascist psychology, that which with tireless ingenuity ever conceives new methods by which German-speaking Tyrol may be done to death.

Regulations apparently insignificant prepared the way for greater severity. Thus Guadagnini ordered the dissolution of the volunteer fire brigades in South Tyrol, those companies which for long had been antipathetic to the Italians, the Sub-Prefect, Bolis, one day being much alarmed when, at a summons from Streiter's Flower Factory on fire, in twenty minutes the Bozen firemen were on the spot. Would not such readiness for a mere fire be an evil omen for the security of the Brenner frontier? Bolis reflected, and forthwith commanded the chief of the fire brigade to be brought before him, to receive orders that in future cases of fire, even though serious, his *permission must always be first obtained* before the brigade could arrive. His example

was slavishly imitated in other communes by the authorities, yet the Prefect, Guadagnini, was not wholly contented with such measures of safety; as has been said, he dissolved all volunteers and substituted official fire brigades under the headship of Italian reserve or non-commissioned officers. The result of this arrangement was disastrous—the new organization did not work. Yet, though fires were insufficiently or not at all extinguished, the former brigades were forbidden to take part in putting out any such, and popular opinion arose that the real aim of the regulations was that Tyrolese houses and farms should burn down unchecked, so that in this wise the land might be cleansed of the German-speaking element. Whatever may be thought of this idea, it clearly betokens the despairing temper of a people.

The Prefect next aimed at the inns, the owners being in Fascist opinion as a mass pan-German Tyrolese, and their staffs to be suspected. Guadagnini, therefore, ordered that only 5 per cent. of the hotel servants—waiters, chambermaids, cooks, and so on—should be foreign citizens of the State, and by this enactment entailed the dismissal by innkeepers of hordes of Austrian and German employés, a tacit testimony from Fascism to the thoroughness of German management, to which almost the entire Italian hotel system owed much.

Fresh language regulations were next imposed on the people, the Prefect's decree of 1923 not going nearly far enough. The sub-officials gave much wise advice in this matter, as when the Sub-Prefect, Paterno, of Bruneck, at a time when minutes in German were still permitted by the authorities, pointed out to the Communal Councils of the Pustertal "that Italian acts would be more speedily drawn up than German ones, the people must have this explained to them". The military authorities in Bruneck carried on their sharpshooting practice only through Italian words of command and placards, in spite of the resultant danger to

human beings and cattle when the Tyrolese passers-by had no knowledge of any warning as to manœuvres directed in an unknown tongue. The fire brigade of Tramin were even expressly forbidden to use German expressions in putting out a fire. Government burgomasters and *Carabinieri* arbitrarily forbade the use of German Christian names on business sign-boards, not even permitting any abbreviation—such as H. for “Heinrich”—of a German cognomen, under penalty of legal processes. But in the autumn of 1927 Prefect Ricci set the capsheaf on his language regulations by commanding that all inscriptions in German should be removed, with the declaration that “It is not enough that inscriptions in German should disappear; they must be fully rendered in the Italian tongue, so that no empty spaces are to be seen”. Inscriptions, therefore, were not only to vanish from exterior house-walls, but also “from the laundry, and in the household from domestic furniture, glasses, decanters, and cups, whether engraved, woven, or embroidered on any materials”. An inn in St. Ulrich was punished by being officially closed because an iron pot marked *Heisses Wasser* had been discovered in the kitchen. All these regulations came under the head of “Legal Exceptions”, which were quite unknown to the old Italian provinces.¹

Such treatment had the effect on the folk as of lashes from a whip, not fatal, but serving to impress us with a sense of total loss of rights and impotency. The judicial penalties awarded in countless cases to almost unavoidable trespasses, often in open twistings of the law, amounted to a considerable sum, and were absolutely inflammatory, as, for instance, in cases when century-old German names of farms must after countless wranglings in the Courts disappear from the peasants' houses, or when a peasant was

¹ Since the above was written, the present Bozen Prefect, Marziali, has repealed certain of such petty restrictions. In hotels household vessels and linen with German lettering may be used, and bills of fare furnished with translations from the Italian.

punished because he had posted up an irrigation order in German for his neighbours.

Where the Prefect's regulations did not suffice, the Fascist "Syndicates", a State organization, added their quota. Without the smallest administrative rights the Syndicate of Advocates informed its professional colleagues that in future only Italian was to be used on signs, and headings of letters and accounts. Woe to him who should be brought in guilty of such presumption contrary to the orders of the provincial authorities! The General Directors of the Post Office ordained that all Home letters for any place in the Kingdom should be addressed only in Italian. A number, therefore, of such mails never reached their destinations, but such mishaps, with their often annoying or even grievous results, were for the Italians sheer delight.

In the autumn of 1925 Mussolini, inwardly raging, had found himself obliged to sign the Treaty of Locarno without having had his demand for a *guarantee* of the Brenner boundary granted. At this news a sigh of content went out from South Tyrol, although none had ever cherished any serious fears that a German statesman would agree to the perpetuation of a partition of South Tyrol with all its fearful results. Fascism, however, slaked its thirst for revenge on us, and the next months witnessed in quick succession increasingly heavy blows of its axe against our Tyrolese civilization. First and foremost were the so-called German "extra hours" struck out of the national schools syllabus, four lessons in the German language on the Italianized curriculum. Then the Government forbade the use of the German language in the Courts; fines up to 5,000 *lire*, and for legal officials removal from office together with suspension of salary, would be imposed on any such use in business transactions or documentary memorials or petitions. The Courts were now like the rest, a stronghold of Fascist malevolence against the Tyrolese; judges of the latter nationality must either quit their office or South Tyrol, to

drag out a melancholy existence elsewhere. In their stead ruled Southern Italians with the slightest knowledge of the German language or any idea of the manifold still current Austrian laws. Their resulting intercourse with contending parties and witnesses was frequently a tragi-comedy, things being especially bad when they had to do with penal offences. Of this I can give a sad example—that of a nine-year-old boy from the Eggental who was brought up before the Bozen magistrate, a Neapolitan, for stealing. The interpreter asked him if he understood Italian, but the child shook his head, and the magistrate, learning that he was nine years old, declared, "You are bound at that age to know Italian," and dismissed the interpreter. The poor child was consequently unable to answer any questions, yet the trial proceeded, ending with a sentence of a month's imprisonment, although the public prosecutor had proposed to acquit him.

In legal matters Italy, the veritable prison state, under Fascism, has no impartial judge. Tyrants will not, indeed, be restrained by judges, but that the South Tyrolese should not even understand the sentence hanging over him is a feature of the horrific assaults of Italy on the order and civilization of her German-speaking citizens.

The reins continued to be drawn even more tightly. In the beginning of 1926 a very hailstorm of laws with heavy penalties rattled down upon the Nameless Land. One such ordained that those new citizens of the State, who, relying on the Peace Treaty of St-Germain, had come to Italy, should lose their citizenship did they show themselves unworthy of it by their political demeanour. Any not in favour with the authorities could thus reckon on being at a moment's notice uprooted from their own homes and their very existence endangered; the physician, Dr. Haslinger, of Oberau, and the gymnastic teacher, Zössinger, of Bozen, were in this way exiled, Zössinger because he had attended the Gymnasium League Festival in Munich. The law served as an enduring political instrument for oppression,

A further law exacted the Italianizing of family names, which, it was hypocritically declared, must be led back to their original Italian or Latin form. In reality the question was here, too, one of crumbling down the Old German heritage of civilization, a barbaric spoliation of the tradition of a people, betokening the close of human consideration and of respect for knowledge. No longer should the South Tyrolese have any outward reminder of his honourable past, not even the name of his forefathers.

This unheard-of blow aroused so much public notice and indignation that the law could not immediately be carried out. Tolomei first instituted the technical preparations requiring the communes collectively to furnish all German family names. Then all the authorities demanded their underlings "voluntarily" to request that their names might be Italianized, and "thus give a proof of their submission to the political legalities of the Government". That was a shrewd stroke of business; only shortly before had the Fascist Government passed a law that any official who found himself in opposition to the political legalities of the Government should be dismissed from office! Nevertheless, this demand of change of names had practically no results. Since then individual citizens of the State have been pounced on and a dagger as it were held to their breasts, enabling it to be read from time to time in the *Official Gazette* that So-and-so "voluntarily" has desired the "Reversion" of his family name to the Italian form. So, for instance, the name of "Rainer" reverts to the Italian form of "Raineri", and the Fascists in their own opinion afford a proof by this contemptible bit of tyranny, of the "advance" of these German-speaking State citizens to the nation of their Italian rulers. At the present time the compulsory Italianizing of family names—without any request from their owners—has actually begun.

Although Tyrolese officials under the admirable Austrian

administration had discharged their offices with remarkable reliability, politically they remained for the new *régime* "suspect" in spite of their steady avoidance of any political utterance whatever. They were, therefore, dismissed or else transplanted to Italy, where they found no accommodation for family life, fathers being obliged to live separated from their wives and children, all too often in want, as their salaries were insufficient for their needs. The education of their children suffered, privation and desperation seized on most deserving men and their families—and the Fascists rejoiced.

South Tyrol, however, was invaded by a horde of alien and ignorant officials, mostly enemies or undesirables, whom the population was obliged to support out of their own pockets.

Fascism continued to find fresh openings for its industry of denationalizing German-speaking Tyrol. The details of the suppression of the South Tyrol newspaper Press will be dealt with farther on, but already the Fascists were coming to the conclusion that people read far too many German books and papers. Prefect Ricci ordered, therefore, that in every newspaper kiosk, inn, and bookseller's shop or circulating library the number of Italian books should be equal to that of the German ones. This was a natural death-blow to many such bookshops, for who could afford to lay out large sums of money for literature that the public neither could nor would read?

Even the wireless afforded the Italians opportunity for police regulations. By one of the "Exception Orders"—applying exclusively to South Tyrol—it was ruled that the possessor of a wireless set must apply for a licence, and in many cases the licence was refused. Not content with this, the *Popolo d'Italia* clamoured that the South Tyrol Radio stations should be controlled by a special transmitting station in Bozen. No sooner said than done. A Bozen trans-

mitting station was raised, where its very rubbishy programmes with remarkably strong sound-waves interfered with the receiving from foreign stations.

Then came the turn of architecture, with an order from Ricci in the summer of 1927 that the red and white dear to house-painters, without any thought of politics or national colours, were no longer to be used on doors or windows of villas or anything else possessing four walls. For new buildings the style of the Italian Renaissance was commanded, so that the Italian "vener" to be spread over South Tyrol, as Guadagnini had said, should betray no flaw. At all costs should the South Tyrolese show themselves "patriotic".

A very typhoon of persecution set in over hapless South Tyrol, its track marked by ruins on the pleasant meadows of daily life. The following pages will tell of ever worse outrages; our breath seemed to fail under each successive blow.

30. THE CAPTURE OF LABOUR

In Italy itself the Fascists had "gained" Trades Unionism. The burning-down of their club-houses, the destruction of their printing presses, attacks on their guilds, castor-oil and death-dealing blows, had been so many irresistible proofs of the necessity for linking up with the "National"—that is to say the Fascist Syndicate, Rossini's Workers' Organization.

South Tyrol had looked on, until the time came for the characteristic building-up of the Fascist Class Union. With us Rossini's Organization did not advance an inch, as south of Salurn down to Trapani it also would have remained but a dream, had the Fascists not resorted to the convincing argument of the bludgeon. Now, however, it seemed both to the Fascist Party and the Government, time to unite in order to convert the German-speaking South

Tyrol workers, and here the methods familiar to Italy came again into play, which were considered suitable for the higher level of the population.

Since 1897 had the *Freien Gewerkschaften* (Free Trades Union) in Bozen, under Social-Democratic leadership, had a central organization called the *Ortsverband der Gewerkschaft und Arbeitervereine* (Local League of the Trades Union and Workmen's Clubs) in Bozen and the vicinity. In 1911, opposite the Court-house in the Gilmstrasse, the *Ortsverband* had secured a piece of ground and built on it the *Gewerkschaftshaus* (Trades Union House). For this the funds had been only partially raised by the members, the greater part being contributed by a wealthy Labour friend named Eichborn, in Silesia; a further instalment was taken up as a loan by the Bozen Savings Bank, and secured by a mortgage on the house.

On August 16, 1923, arrived in Bozen the former Revolutionary Socialist, Augusto Berti, nowadays the duly appointed Fascist leader, in company with Vito Radina from Trent, and in the *Gewerkschaftshaus* called on Menz, the editor, and Tappeiner, printers' foreman, of the Social-Democratic weekly, the *Volksrecht*. They requested an explanation as to the Free Trades Union attitude towards the Fascist Syndicate movement, and on receiving an evasive reply, the Fascists imparted that the confidential committee of the Social-Democratic organization would meet at five p.m. in the Government office of the sub-prefect, Bolis. This being much like an official invitation, the Free Trades Union representatives, Lorenz Unterkircher, Franz Ascher, Josef Menz, and Karl Kartnaller, in order to avoid greater unpleasantness, presented themselves at the appointed time in the Bolis bureau, finding him there surrounded by about a dozen Fascists, among them being the deputy (member of Parliament) Gray.

Bolis himself now set forth to the Trades Unionists that

their hour had gone by, the Social-Democratic Organization of the whole of Italy finding itself obliged to dissolve; the South Tyrolese Trades Union must draw their inferences from this. The Fascist Labour leaders regarded themselves, continued the speaker, as the real owners of the *Gewerkschaftshaus*, and the Social-Democratic confidential committee now present must decide within fifteen minutes whether they with their whole organization would join the Fascist Union. This peculiar official dealing of the sub-prefect was warmly backed up by the Fascists present. Lorenz Unterkircher and his comrades informed him that in law the *Gewerkschaftshaus* now as ever (as would be shown by the Register of Landed Property) belonged to the *Ortsverband* Union, and that this alone had the right to arrange about it, but that in the evening of the next day the confidential committee of the Free Trades Union should be summoned to discuss the demand of the sub-prefect. This delay was reluctantly granted, with the request that, in order to avoid any alterations in the *Gewerkschaftshaus*, it should be shut up and sealed until matters were decided.

To this the Trades Union agreed, but the next day the confidential committee of the Free Trades Union resolved to refuse the Fascist demand, and commissioned a board to convey this decision to the Fascists, which, accordingly, was done at half-past eleven at night, August 17th. Berti and Radina acknowledged the answer, with the remark that now the Fascists would take possession of the disputed building by force! Accordingly, on August 18th, the Fascists did actually break the seals on the doors of the *Gewerkschaftshaus*, forced their way in, and took possession. The provincial Union of the Fascist Syndicate in Trent had sent over an armed detachment of Blackshirts to Bozen to carry out this "Action", and after their "conquest" they were photographed on the steps of the *Gewerkschaftshaus* in histrionic grouping!

The Trades Unionists on the same day entered a protest by the Social-Democratic deputy (member of Parliament) Flor of Trent to the sub-prefect Bolis, and also to Mussolini himself. Bolis convened the Trades Unionists together on August 23rd and made them a speech, in which he did not reprobate the act of violence executed in front of the Court-house, but declared in the most decisive manner that the occupation of the *Gewerkschaftshaus* was final, and that the Fascists, now fairly in possession, would never give it back. The Free Trades Unionists must make the best of it and unite with the Fascist Organization.

This was accompanied by the sub-prefect with such plain hints of the existing conditions of force, that the Trades Union representatives present could clearly perceive after this experience of Fascism that worse might be in store did they offer open opposition. Also the state of affairs in the *Gewerkschaftshaus* itself had become more acute; the Fascist militia threatening the people who had to do with it and disturbing the printing-press business, which would involve serious money losses. Likewise the situation of the individuals among the Social-Democratic confidential committee was in jeopardy; their leader, Lorenz Unterkircher, would have much to fear for his fragile stock-in-trade (he being a watchmaker), while the rest, being in subordinate positions, felt themselves as family men threatened with a loss of daily bread.

Yet now, when the sub-prefect handed the deputation a document for their signatures, in which the whole affair was arranged in the Fascist sense, they showed fight with a declaration that they could not understand its Italian wording. Bolis said that he would send them a German translation, but they still resisted, and finally demanded that their signatures should be accompanied with the words "Under Protest". This however was not allowed, but when they at last signed, it was with the conviction that the Fascists

would not gain much by such signature, as only one member of the *Ortsverband* Union was present, and, according to the constitution of the League, was entitled in no way to make legal arrangements in the name of the whole.

The aforesaid document contained the following interesting assertions: The Free Trades Unionists had discussed the question of the *Gewerkschaftshaus* with the Fascists and the Signore sub-prefect from five p.m. up to a quarter to nine cordially and serenely—in *forma cordiale e serena*—fully recognizing that the Fascists under the leadership of the Trades Unionists themselves had entered the building. The representatives of the *Gewerkschaftshaus* pledged themselves in no way either secretly or openly to prepare difficulties for the Fascist Syndicate. To this document the Chief of Police, Squillace, had somewhat superfluously appended his signature, and as a finishing touch of comedy Berti, as secretary of the Fascist Provincial Union, and perceiving an opportunity for adulation, telegraphed an endless message to Mussolini, abounding in such flowers of speech as “Steadfast faith—unwearying preparation—full submission and recognition of the Victors—jubilant Fascists—Roman greeting to the Master, the Friend, the Leader (*Duce*)—Triumph of Fascism—Greatness of Italy”.

At the same time the Fascists thought well to institute by the sub-examining magistrate, Radnic, a House Visitation of the *Gewerkschaftshaus*, in order to obtain evidence of the “Anti-National” attitude of the Free Trades Unionists. One of the latter’s confidential committee, Franz Ascher, having been present, could testify that the Fascists had already broken open various furniture drawers and taken away their contents, including ready money belonging to Ascher himself. The latter demanded that the sub-examining magistrate should at once notify this act of theft, but the

other shook his head and was of opinion that Ascher should file a special declaration.

The search of the house proved not to have been in vain. In a loft under the roof the inspector discovered four bars of *Ekrasit*, high explosives of Austrian origin. This was indeed a proof of the criminal designs of the Free Trades Unionists, and sufficient ground for instituting a penal suit against Lorenz Unterkircher and the rest of the managing committee on a charge of infringing the Explosives Act.

The Social-Democrats, after various useless attempts to engage other advocates on their behalf, applied to me. I undertook their defence, and was immediately able to bring forward evidence that gave a new turn to the matter. Eight days previous to the occupation the Free Trades Union had got wind of the contemplated *coup de main*, and forthwith the entire *Gewerkschaftshaus* from garret to cellar was cleared of all so-called suspicious articles such as printed papers, badges, and the like. The loft under the roof came in for an especial clearance and an inventory drawn up of whatever had been left there, which I could show in Court, and a number of witnesses confirmed every detail of this evidence. On its showing, it was impossible to doubt that the Fascists themselves in the interim between their occupation and the house visitation had brought the high explosives into the building, with intention to raise up trouble for the Free Trades Union. In the face of such evidence the sub-examining magistrate was forced to accept it and break off the penal process.

The Fascists who had conceived and carried out this infamous manœuvre escaped scot-free: was not Mussolini, the Minister-President, their "Teacher, Friend, and Leader"? We could only be thankful that the innocent had not been cast into prison.

On August 27th the committee of the *Ortsverband* met for fresh consultation. It declared the deed wrung from the

Trades Unionists by the sub-prefect on August 23rd to be wholly invalid and non-binding, and protested anew against the seizure of the *Gewerkschaftshaus*, resolving also to take proceedings against the intruders on the Disturbance of Property plea. I undertook this case as well, and during the proceedings ran a number of tilts with the Fascist representatives. The latter had willy-nilly to consent to the suit, as for the authorities it was the main thing that the apparent legality, or, at least, the tardy recognition of such, in the occupation, should be acknowledged. The Italian judge, Magnago, wriggled like a snake, but I did not let him escape, and my opposing counsel, Riboli, an Italian advocate, whose engagement by the Fascists I have never been able to understand, being as he was in the first stages of paralysis, showed himself utterly incapable. So much the more temperamentally did those of his Party, who attended the proceedings in Court, comport themselves, Radina basing his defence on the fact that I spoke in German throughout, remarking that he himself understood German, but only High German, and that the German spoken by the advocate was so bad that he could not follow it! Another Fascist, the Prefect's counsel, Carlo Trenner, was even more outspoken; on the judge referring to the advisability of German as the language of the trial, he bellowed out that we were in Italy and that the defendants would, if necessary, act "*in modo fascista* (with Fascist methods) in other words, with their bludgeons". I finally made a concession—in order not to have my clients' cause wrecked on this purely side question in the stammering terror of the judge—that I would sometimes translate my remarks into Italian, this especially because I was privately sure that the trial could but have a favourable issue for us, the speeches of the opposing counsel being entirely ineffectual. The Fascists had built all their hopes on the paper extorted by Bolis on August 23rd, but, as they speedily recognized, this was no good.

Therefore they prepared a surprise for us through the Trent Prefect.

This was a decree enacted by Guadagnini dissolving the committee of the *Ortsverband*, and empowering the Prefect's counsel, Carlo Trenner, to act as in its name; thenceforward as the official organ and prefectoral commissioner to assume the administration of the *Gewerkschaftshaus* and the conduct of the *Ortsverband* as a whole. Guadagnini supported his action by the Austrian Union law, which, however, only related to the right of the authorities to dissolve a Union, but not to the setting aside of a properly constituted board of directors. The dissolution of the *Ortsverband* itself would have spoilt the Fascists' designs, for according to its statutes in the event of dissolution all its property was to go to the General Sick Fund in Innsbruck, in which case an international conflict might be confidently expected. Guadagnini therefore decided on a barefaced act of despotism.

Carlo Trenner presented his deed of appointment at the next day's session, explaining that he, being now the representative of the *Ortsverband*, withdrew from me my right of acting in that capacity. We had, however, appealed to the Ministry against Guadagnini's action; and the decree being therefore not yet valid, I informed the judge that my powers were still entirely legalized, and moreover, according to the rule of the Courts, that even after their regular withdrawal, I had still a fortnight in which I could exercise my functions. Nevertheless, the judge promptly disqualified me as representative, and at the same time announced the classical and really amazing summing-up:

This incident must be regarded as a sequence of the political conflict in a time of political and social upheaval, in the course of which one party gets the upper hand over another and constitutes itself in every respect its lawful successor, and that through the representative, who solely shall act on the business and in the interests of the party.

The question is therefore not one of relations between private

individuals, but of mutual public relations between political bodies, which naturally cannot be judged and decided according to individual rights, but exclusively according to the law of political and administrative rights.

The suit was therefore dismissed, the Court not being competent to deal with it.

This was yet another open breach of the law, the affair relating to the conditions of possession of the house of a private owner, that is of the *Ortsverband* Society, and of the seizing of the same by force, not through any decree of the authorities. The sub-prefect's co-operation was a base misuse of his office, which could be covered by no law.

We tried still another legal resource: an appeal to the district courts, where we could not believe that all laws would be so openly tampered with. But the Government also had a last resource: in the *Official Gazette* a Royal Decree appeared to the effect that provincial prefects should have authority to dissolve the Committee of Labour Associations and substitute for it a prefect's commissioner. This Royal Decree, a new law, had been framed especially for our case. Guadagnini accordingly once more appointed Carlo Trenner as administrator for the *Ortsverband* and its property, and the withdrawal of my powers could be hindered no longer.

Yet there was another slight dilemma. Our legally presented appeal against the first decision of the court was still before the Bozen district court, but at last the authorities hit on a way out of the difficulty. The district court advised Signore Carlo Trenner, he being now the lawfully appointed representative of the *Ortsverband*, himself to withdraw the legal measures taken by them. This was done, and so the legal side of the "conquest" of the Bozen *Gewerkschaftshaus* came—for the Fascists—to a happy conclusion.

The incident, however, had a sequel. After some months Carlo Trenner was replaced in his office by another official, the Prefect's counsel, Enrico Zenatti. The administration of these two gentlemen was so far from satisfactory that they

were unable to pay the modest interest on the mortgage out of the returns of the *Gewerkschaftshaus* business, and as the Bozen Savings Bank somewhat drastically demanded payment of arrears, Signore Zenatti had a brilliant idea. In the *Gewerkschaftshaus* still stood the Wertheim safe of the *Ortsverband*, containing, according to someone, the sum of 5,000 *lire*. As the key of the safe had been handed over by the *Ortsverband* to the sub-examining magistrate at his demand, and by him returned to myself when the Fascist proceedings on the Explosives Act had been closed, so now Zenatti hurried to me to demand it. I responded that I was not in a position to help the Fascist administration of the *Gewerkschaftshaus* out of difficulties, which Zenatti took to be an evasion and threatened to burst open the safe. I returned that perhaps I could procure the key in a fortnight. Zenatti waited. Meanwhile I contrived to forward the key to Filippo Turati, and acquainted the Signore Zenatti that if he considered he had a right to it he might ask for it from the Aventine leader (of the Opposition). The Matteotti crisis was just then at its climax. Three years later the Fascists again came to me to ask for the key, and I repeated that it had been sent to Turati, who in the meanwhile had fled to Paris. Since then the Italian authorities have probably decided to break open the Wertheim safe, to be able to swear to the bankruptcy of the *Ortsverband*.

Despite the setting aside of law, which inspired everyone with horror at such sanctioned theft, I could not resist putting the officially declared legal successors of the *Ortsverband* administration to the test. In the absence of any other means this could only be by asking for my expenses, a request ignored by the Fascists. I accordingly resolved to bring the case into court, and to propose the compulsory auction of the *Gewerkschaftshaus*. It was a matter of some 1,300 *lire*, but Signore Zenatti had not even managed affairs so as to stay the execution. Naturally enough it

seemed to him extraordinarily audacious of me that I should propose to a Fascist like himself to pay the costs of the conflict with the Government Party, and on my delivering the proposal for compulsory sale to the judge that official remarked: "Herr Doktor, you will never see that money!"

I had proved the correctness of my suspicions, that the Fascists wanted to enjoy the privileges of their rights of succession, and at the same time to ignore all obligations appertaining thereto.

31. THE TYROLESE PRIEST

The priest of Tyrol is as much a part of the Tyrolese people as the mountains are a part of the Land Tyrol. As the streams flow from the Alpine heights, so he diffuses a living moral strength throughout the people, without which that deeply patriotic feeling, that love of their homes, of which time and again they have given proofs, would wither away.

When I, a fourteen-year-old lad, for the first time came to Innsbruck with my father, in order to see the Tyrolese sights of that town, a Tyrolese priest, a family friend, had made that first pilgrimage of mine through my native land possible by aiding in my travelling expenses, although he himself was anything but well off. Since then have I perhaps experienced my happiest hours in Tyrolese parsonages, hospitality and shrewd humour being not the least gifts in the Tyrol outfit.

But the greatest respect in which our priesthood is held is chiefly due to the labours and the lives of all. The priest, the *Expositus* (vicar), is identified with the faith of his parish; he instructs, warns, and comforts, his hand is always open to help the needy so far as his limited means allow. Widows and orphans, student lads and those who have by some mischance lost their all, have each a share in his stipend. He takes an interest in the *Raiffeisenkassen* (agricultural co-

operative banks) and the communal fathers listen gladly to his counsel. And though he likes well to see his handsome church full of worshippers, he would equally wish to inspire his flock with lofty home ideals. He used to be the chief speaker on Tyrolese memorial days, and was often to be found at the shooting-butts lending his support. To him his Tyrol patriotism is a matter of course; when it is endangered he is its most loyal ally.

The founder of the German School Association, Pfarrer Mitterer of Proveis in Tyrol Nonsberg, is the master example of all this, but everywhere when the question was of Tyrol rights and Tyrol soil, no surer sanctuary than the parsonage could be found, whether in Bozen Unterland or in the high border communes and the lingual islands. Zuchristian and Steck in Lusern and Thaler in Palai will never be forgotten.

When the aliens invaded South Tyrol the situation of its priesthood was clear. With the sure instinct of the people from whom they themselves had sprung, they recognized the danger and knew where they belonged. When we held our meetings, the priests were always there and among them, the uncoroneted nobility of the district, the *Dekane* (Deans) among their flocks.

The Italians understood the Tyrol priesthood as little as they did its land or its people. At first they fancied these priests might be deluded into playing decoy ducks. Ciarlantini, Mussolini's familiar and the present Fascist delegate, already in the Armistice had written a book upon *The Peaceable Penetration of South Tyrol*. He imagined that the Clerical Party would be the first who would "rat" to the Italian side.

But this was far from the case. On the contrary, when the oppression began, the priest was as a tower of strength to his people; the worse grew the times, the more steadfast did this confederate show himself. The priesthood of the

German-speaking part of the Trent diocese presented to Bishop Endricci the following resolution:

When the question is one of natural rights—and therefore from God—of recognized property or of the education of children, the coming generation, and of the safeguarding of religious instruction in church and schools, only one position is possible for the priest—at the side of the sorely oppressed people committed to him, whose helper and comforter he must be, ready at need to defend the rights recognized as such by Nature and by God—against the oppressor, strong though he be with all earthly might and measures of force.

The Italians' vexation was great. Fascists, secure in the consciousness of power, made no secret of their displeasure, and their mouthpiece at Bozen, the *Piccolo Posto*, wrote immediately after Mussolini's entrance into the Government:

A sorry lot, indeed, are the Tyrol priesthood. Hypocrites, mischief-makers, deceivers, they distil their poison as they may, in all well-known journals, concealing it under much advice, and smearing it over with unctuous admonitions for the use and misuse of the local nest of vermin. Those who are banned between mountains and sky, foresters, vine-dressers, ploughmen, and the legion other country-folk—whose portraiture limned by the art of an Egger-Lienz arouses so much admiration in us—know no other spiritual bread than that (alas, so adulterated!) which these most miserable of all so-called servants of God set before them.

But this wound must be healed. All priests who are not born Italian citizens must fall back over the Brenner. Those who are, may fulfil their office in the old provinces.

This was no such chance slip as on occasions contradicts "the Catholic tendency of Fascism"; the Fascists' attitude towards Religion is much the same as that towards the Monarchy—so long as neither opposes them they pose as friends and protectors of both. The philosopher of the Fascist Prison-State, Giovanni Gentile, has let an apposite cat out of the bag by the remark: "The school is the negation of every party and every sect, the negation of every church and every dogma." In the Vatican the ostensibly Catholic

opinions of Fascism are known for what they are worth; a Roman prelate lately observed that Fascism would be capable to-morrow of marching its Black Guards into the very courts of the Papal fortress, if it were thought advisable for the support or strengthening of its power. This goes far to explain the extraordinary forbearance of the Vatican over the many outrages and encroachments on ecclesiastical arrangements and interests under Fascist guidance and performance. The Pope himself has thoroughly condemned the strongly anti-Christian statesmanship of Fascism in his pronouncement: "On the horizon plainly arises a conception of a State, which cannot be the conception of a Catholic State, because it makes the State to be the ultimate object and its people or the individual but a means to that object, and by such conception all in the State is monopolized and drained dry."

In truth the war now waged by Fascism against our mother-tongue was a godless one. Bishop Egger of St. Gallen has in a masterly fashion repeated the Church's teaching as to that mother-tongue.

The mother-tongue has been received by no one man for himself, but for all; it is one of the dearest possessions that the earth has in its gift. One's mother-tongue is the language of heart and mind, in which the whole soul finds expression for thought, feeling, and mood. It has become so intertwined with one's whole spiritual life that any attack on it seems as an attempt to rend away a part of the soul of a people.

Each one has a sacred inviolable right to his mother-tongue. For all men are the rights of nature the same; let each ask himself whether to him an attack on his mother-tongue—whatever it may be—would not be felt by him as an injustice crying to Heaven!

Our priests raised their voices against such injustice, but only to earn for themselves that systematic persecution, which in the *Seelennot eines bedrängten Volkes* (Soul's Need of an Oppressed People) has been documentarily set forth by Athanasius. Hostilities and insults of every kind have

been heaped on them, with the intention of breaking their spirit, beginning with the authorities' desire to have God as an Ally in the battle waged against the German language. They ordered the use of Italian in the religious instruction in schools; at first universally, in order to have a point on which to draw back in case of violent resistance, then for the Unterland and the larger places. Repeatedly the priests protested, and new concessions were attempted to soften them, but at last a general and brutal order went out. The struggle raged and the soul of a people must suffer loss, but as the auto-created economy of the country was rent away piecemeal by the Italian Government, so its moving-spring of Fascism would tear down stone by stone the edifice of a people's faith. For the supreme aim of Fascism is to destroy the strongest support of a nation; its foundation walls, founded fast on the rock of religious certainty, must be levelled with the earth, that the work of devastation may be complete.

Such warfare in spiritual places cost the spiritual leaders heavily. By dozens they were debarred from giving religious instructions in the schools, and when they sought to hold them elsewhere, they either received commands to the contrary from political authorities, as did the Kaplan Gasser of Altrei, whom the sub-prefect Prandi likewise forbade to impart Christian teaching in church, or else they were cited before the Courts, as was Pfarrer Padöller of Reschen, sentenced to ten days' imprisonment by the judge of Glurns for conducting a "Secret School", the justification of the sentence being that the children unavoidably learnt the German tongue in their instructions at the parsonage. (I lodged an appeal for the Pfarrer and he was acquitted by the second court.) In other cases again the Prefecture categorically demanded the removal of priests, threatening in the case of the Prince-Bishop not complying, that their stipends should be withdrawn, the priests of Salurn and of Margreid

in the Unterland being so removed; as also happened with the priest of St. Felix in Nonsberg, because he, on the occasion of his bishop's visit to a wholly German-speaking commune, had allowed the children to recite a German couplet. Kaplan Victor Wurzer, on account of giving private religious instructions, was absolutely banished from the country, and another, Vigl, the curate-in-charge of Neumarkt, was obliged to leave that commune because he had declined to take part in the unveiling of a memorial to a follower of Garibaldi. When later Vigl came to Proveis, authority there notified him that the *Carabinieri* had orders to prevent him by force from entering the school, did he dare to set foot across the threshold. Moreover, on pain of being so kept out, priests were compelled to give the Fascist greeting!

When the Minister of Education, Fedele, in 1926 visited Bozen, the priests there asked for an audience, in order to present their petitions over such regulations, but the Minister alleged that he had no time to receive them; schoolboys having been hurried up from Trent for a gymnastic display in the bed of Talfer river, thus claiming his attention for hours on end.

The activities of the Italians were soon directed on the churches themselves. In Bozen they desired to have their Divine Services in the parish church, and when, on November 6, 1927, a Mass of thanksgiving for victory was held, the *Carabinieri* turned out the Tyrolese worshippers (it was a Sunday) from their places with little ceremony: Make room for the victors! In the well-known Servite monastery and pilgrimage resort Maria Weissenstein, the German Tyrolese Fathers there had to give place to Italian priests at a night's notice, as it were, the ostensible pretext being lack of "patriotism" on the part of the Tyrolese. The priest everywhere was felt to be an especial foe of the State and the police regarded him in that light. In Fennberg near Margreid the consecration of church bells was forbidden because the

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bells bore German inscriptions, one especially with the
verse

Ihr lieben Heiligen allzumal,
Helft uns in diesem Jammertal!

(Oh, all dear Saints, our prayer appears,
Help us in this our Vale of Tears!)

being too suspicious. "*Jammertal*—that seems to be a play upon *Italien*," growled the *Carabinieri* to the vicar Pacher, and all inscriptions must needs be effaced before the consecration was allowed.¹

Assuredly much of such persecution was difficult to comprehend. When Imfeld, the priest of Gries, stood one day before the Bozen magistrate because he had given out notice only in German at the church door of a service, he defended himself by referring to the express wording of the lingual regulations, by which notices of a religious nature were not affected. The magistrate confirmed the actual wording of the law, but declared that he had received Secret Instructions and according to them he must condemn the priest. Which he did!

There were likewise endless visitations of the parsonages. In one such the *Carabinieri* brought an (exceptional) order from the State lawyers, which said that it was probable the priest concerned "was in connection with efforts to hinder the Italian penetration into South Tyrol". The Italian Penal Code was not so much as mentioned, and, indeed, contained no clause providing for any such crime. The old priest Haas, of Ulten, was subjected to such an inspection because he had refused to obey the order of the official burgomaster to announce from the pulpit that the day of the Fascist March on Rome was to be kept as a

¹ "Doubtless because *Jammertal* might suggest that the Vale of the Etsch is not quite that region of happy content that Government orators in the Italian Parliament frequently portray."—*Case of German South Tyrol against Italy*: C. H. Herford, Litt.D.

holiday, and that in consequence the following Sunday must be regarded as a working day.

The priest of Afers, during a memorial service for parishioners of his who had died during the War in Russian captivity, had permitted eight peasants in national dress to carry a green-and-white rifleman's flag. No political colours these, yet the authorities saw in them a hostile demonstration to the State, and as a lesson to the priest the inn belonging to the church prebend was closed for three months. Often, indeed, were priests imprisoned out of pure hatred and no other reason, as when the Dekan (dean) Gögele of St. Leonard im Passeier was carried off, though he had to be released again within two days as there was absolutely nothing against him. The priest Mair, of Unter der Eggen in the Ahrntal, had fallen foul of the *Finanzieri* by speaking out against them and their far from desirable ways. Accordingly the parsonage was searched and some hunting munitions discovered in a barn, which had been left behind by Mair's predecessor, but now the unlucky priest was dragged through the valley to Bruneck prison, where, however, his innocence was speedily established. Again, too, the Dekan Huber of Kaltern, a "born" prince of the Church, was for years attacked by the Fascist Press and all Fascist authorities, and in November 1926 he was threatened by a wild Fascist outbreak, forcing him to fly from Kaltern and remain for weeks in hiding. Once it appeared as though the Italian Bishop Endricci of Trent were inclined to carry out the Italian wishes and remove him, but in Kaltern a memorial with 2,000 signatures was presented that he might be left there. He held out for a year, but his health was so injured by the continual friction that he was forced to retire. Another priest, Mischi from the Ladin, was accused of *lèse-majesté*, he having during a church choir practice taken down the King's portrait from where it hung beside the crucifix, saying that it was unfitting for the

picture to hang beside the Cross. He justified himself by explaining that the people had had their jest about it, of Victor Emmanuel hanging up there exactly like the impenitent thief; but after being sentenced to heavy imprisonment it cost much trouble to get him released in the Court of Appeal.

In 1925 a Tyrolese pilgrimage from Innsbruck to Rome passed through Bozen; a number of Bozen people gathered on the railway station platform to greet their acquaintances among the pilgrims. Bishop Waitz of Innsbruck wished to take the train at Bozen, but with feverish agitation the *Carabinieri* and Fascist militia sought in every way to hinder Bozen residents from approaching the platform, and, this failing, the train was not allowed to stop, but tore through the railway station at top speed, so that no one could recognize the pilgrims at the carriage windows, and could only exchange greetings with their pocket-handkerchiefs. On their way home the Bozen folk were followed and ill-treated.

Every individual Fascist in Bozen believed himself called on to solve "the religious problem in the Upper Adige". Their *Podestà* and town clerks repeatedly sought to assume rule in the Church, ordering services on National Festivals, especially once when *il Duce* had had a miraculous escape; nor did they even shrink from violence. On the refusal of the Dekan Frenademetz in Cortina to contribute to the Cesare Battisti monument, he was set upon and bodily misused by the Fascists; as was also the Canon Psenner in Bozen before the parish church, because in mere curiosity he had tried to spread out with his foot a rolled-up bit of paper on the ground, without suspecting that it was a fragment of a Fascist election notice directed against the Communists. It represented a Communist attacking an ecclesiastic and bore the inscription: *They even strike the priests!* . . .

The last German Tyrolese priest of Salurn, Delueg, who had worked there for twenty-two years, was an unbearable

thorn in the Fascists' side. After a regular barrage in the Press, the Fascist leader Barbesino of Bozen went over one evening in mid-December 1922 with a hundred men to Salurn, and while the main body in the square before the parsonage vented torrents of abuse of the priest, Barbesino at eleven o'clock at night with several companions forced his way into the priest's presence, reprimanded him in no measured language, and ordered him to leave off his work in Salurn. Some weeks later, February 1, 1923, two Fascists from Mezzolombardo came to the Salurn parsonage and poured the coarsest revilings upon Delueg, striking him in the face when he tried to escape from their torrent of abuse and discharging shots at him as he hastened from the room. Only the intervention of other people prevented the attack being continued, but in such cases of violence nothing ever happened to their perpetrators. On the contrary, in a short time, Bishop Endricci arranged the removal of the loved Salurn priest, and his successor, an Italian, turned around at the very altar to shout down the Church: "*German prayers are forbidden!*"

On Christmas Eve, 1927, a notice was put up by someone unknown on one of the cathedral pillars of Innichen from the Young Men's Association of Cologne, exhorting the German South Tyrolese to stand fast in their troubles. During the Midnight Mass, *Carabinieri* and militia thronged into the church with levelled bayonets, searched it in every corner, and effectively broke up the service by arrests. The provost Fellner and the sixty-year-old sacristan Alois Baumgartner, with his maid, and the head of the *Raiffeisenkasse* (the agricultural co-operative loan bank, everywhere named after the founder, F. W. Raiffeisen) of Innichen, Lorenz Bergmann, were seized, and a number of houses, among them that of the former burgomaster, Michael Wachtler, as well as the Franciscan monastery, were searched at two o'clock at night. Few, indeed, slept on

that Christmas Eve at Innichen, many clenched their fists and ground their teeth—but in vain. The Fascists had been successful in turning the Most Holy Night of a Catholic people into one of suffering and embittering.

In 1928 the German Tyrolese priesthood gave up the National Schools, in order not to demean themselves as instruments of denationalization, and in future decided to impart religious instruction to the children in German, either in the church or in the parsonage. The "priest-schools" were to the Italians unwelcome sources of moral strengthening for the oppressed people, and their oppressors sought to harm them in all manner of ways, the Italian teachers, for instance, filling up the free hours, which might be used for the priest-school, with games and other enticing amusements. When the priests at the close of the year presented the children with diplomas written in German of attendance at the religious instructions, the *Carabinieri* took them away from their recipients either on the homeward road or in visits of inspection to private houses and the parsonages. The priests were adjudged legal penalties in the Courts.

The Concordat between the Vatican and the Quirinal, which in the eyes of the world betokens reconciliation between Pope and King, has in nowise affected the persecution of the Church in South Tyrol. Regrettably in the Concordat was the determination accepted that all pastors must know Italian and that the Government is free to object to the appointment of priests politically suspected, to livings. Now the Fascists feel themselves especially entitled to demand submission from the Church to the Fascist Government and its criminal policy. The Vatican certainly opposes all such tendencies and appointed the chapter-vicar, Josef Mutschlechner, as Apostolic Administrator to the orphaned diocese of Brixen, but the Fascists have no great reverence for any episcopal dignity; only recently the Brixen *Cara-*

binieri summoned the Apostolical Administrator contrary to the old usage to their barracks, and the Courts sentenced him to a fine of fifty *lire*, because he had not obeyed the invitation. To obtain the money for this fine a writing-table in the bishop's palace was mortgaged and put up to auction!

The high-hearted steadfastness with which the Tyrolese priests have rallied shoulder to shoulder with their flocks in this hard fight truly raises the conflict above political struggle and petty party feuds into the sphere of Eternal Right, where always the powers of the Light have wrestled with the powers of darkness.

32. THE SUPPRESSION OF THE PRESS

For a popular newspaper to fulfil its office fully and fairly, its issues must be regularly delivered to its subscribers, its contents such as can be readily understood by its readers, and it should be possible for it to serve as interpreter of the hopes and desires, the feelings and the rights of the people.

The march of events has shown that the above conditions are for our newspaper scarce any longer possible, especially that of satisfying its reading public. These circumstances have hastened the decision of the publishers no longer to bring out the paper that for thirty-three years has—at considerable cost, of which the burden was shared by only a few—held its own until to-day.

The above diplomatic utterances of the *Bozner Nachrichten* in its issue of October 21, 1925, betoken better than any passionate outburst the state of tyranny which in the autumn of that year had finally crushed the Newspaper Press in South Tyrol. Already our daily papers had after the occupation had to tread a path of thorns, a satire indeed on the "magnanimous treatment" promised in the face of the whole world by Italy as a Great Power to her Minorities. The Innsbruck papers, and by and by also the *Reichspost* and the *Neue Freie Presse* were banned, but, all the same, far too many journals from Austria and Germany came into the country. Even when those outside influences

were dealt with, home difficulties arose, and after the Annexation the rights of embargo were so freely interpreted that the *Tiroler* was confiscated five times in a fortnight. Bonomi, it is true, had extended in 1921 the Italian Press rights to the new provinces, and for a space our Newspaper Press enjoyed elbow-room—but not for long. When in 1922 Fascists ever more boldly mastered the streets, no German Tyrol newspaper ventured longer to call things by their right names, otherwise the personal safety of editors and staffs alike would have been in perpetual peril. For years the buildings of the Press were watched by *Carabinieri*.

Yet the newspapers of South Tyrol well merit recognition for having unflinchingly defended the people's rights. In the first rank must be placed the *Tiroler*, or the *Landsmann*, as later we were forced to call it, from the Italian enmity to the most popular daily paper of South Tyrol. The *Bozner Nachrichten* had a smaller public, but often its subtle irony and the sarcasms readily understood by the initiated could, in the opinion of the German-reading world, challenge comparison with the *Tiroler's* sturdy fashion of speech. The *Südtiroler Landeszeitung*—later christened the *Meraner Zeitung*—had, as the daily paper of a health resort, a touch of deference in its style, which, however, did not avail it with the Italians. Besides the daily papers were a number of weekly ones, the *Burggräfler* of Meran; an old-time and pithy favourite with Old Tyrol's direct ways of phraseology; then the most popular in Bozen, the *Volksboten*, a very feast of reason and flow of soul for families over hill and dale; after it the *Bozen Volksblatt*, edited by the intelligent and ready President Felderer; next the *Brixner Chronik*, inherited and long established in the Bishops' town; finally the admirably got up family paper, *Der Schlern*, and several professional sheets.

These to the Italians were all anathema, since the South Tyrolese learnt, at least from the daily papers, the truth of

things in the outside world, and the world learnt from all of them the truth of things in South Tyrol. So in 1925 Fascism at last resolved to smash our Press, the assassination of Matteotti furnishing its Government with a pretext for guarding itself from hostile attacks by publishing a Draconian edict for the Press. By this the Prefects were allowed to warn editors when in the former's judgment they tended to produce unrest in any wise through their columns, and after two such warnings the editor might be summarily dismissed, his successor being subject to the approval of the authorities. Thus it was made possible for the Fascists to stamp out newspaper criticism to their hearts' content.

This, however, not being in their opinion enough, South Tyrol to its surprise found a Preliminary Censorship imposed upon it, editors receiving continual hints as to the sense in which news items were to be handled. Also the Prohibition rights came into full swing. The *Volksbote* number was confiscated which had reported that Poincaré had allowed German instructions in Alsace-Lorraine schools, another time when the paper had printed a story of the flight of Frau Andreas Hofer over the snow mountains, and yet again for reporting Baron Sternbach's speech in Parliament—delivered under the Immunity Act—over the Administration in South Tyrol. In their irritation the authorities went so far as to order that the censored portions of the newspapers should not be left blank, and the *Bozner Nachrichten* complied by printing black spots on the empty spaces until this demonstration was forbidden. Government by force was to the Fascists indispensable—but it must not be pointed out.

In the summer of 1925 newspapers were commanded for the future to use only the Italian place-names, and, moreover, not to append the familiar Tyrolese names even in brackets for translation! The people simply could no longer understand where fairs, etc., were to take place, as hardly any country-folk were conversant with the Italianized

names. Such orders leading to sundry infringements, "Cautions" were administered; in one such the *Landsmann* being denounced for "hindering the Brotherhood" between the two nations by false, prejudiced, and exaggerated reports! (In spite of the Preliminary Censorship, be it observed.) In a "Warning" to the *Volksbote*, the Prefect absolutely had the face to write that the paper stirred up discontent in the population by a malicious interpretation of the judicious measures taken by Government in the schools, in order to give those of alien speech opportunity to learn from their earliest years the language of the State and to further brotherhood between these and the national element! To spare, however, newspapers in German any temptation to feckless comments, it was forbidden to them to report anything about school affairs.

Thus through perpetual confiscations, orders, and prohibitions, journalism in South Tyrol had become a regular purgatory, even before the first of the daily papers, the *Bozner Nachrichten*, had ceased to appear, to be followed in the next few days by the *Landsmann*, in consequence of its suspension by the Prefect. The story of what led up to this deserves to be recorded.

On January 10, 1925, the *Landsmann* had published a report—which had been passed by the preliminary censor—of an Italian Christmas festival in the Kurtatsch school. Here over some presentation volumes from the *Dante Alighieri* Society had been written: "These are no suitable Christmas gifts for school-children," and as a proof of this genuine examples from these books were quoted. Thereupon the *Dante Alighieri* Society took an action for libel against the editor of the *Landsmann*, Peter Fuchsbrugger, and the Bozen tribunal condemned him accordingly to eleven months and twenty days' imprisonment, together with a fine of three hundred *lire*. I had been entrusted with his defence, and can still feel the keen indignation with which, after the pro-

nouncement of the sentence, I had hurled in the judges' teeth that they had deliberately tampered with the law—the amazing accusation heard by them with entire composure. What were they indeed but sheer puppets? Fascism does not shrink from making the impartiality of the judges' office a thing of the Past.

In our last resource of the Courts of Appeal in Trent, I certainly did succeed in getting my client acquitted, but Guadagnini had not waited for this second decision before, immediately after the Bozen verdict, suspending the *Landsmann*. Shortly afterwards the *Meraner Zeitung* was also compelled to cease issue, in consequence of perpetual embargoes.

The Fascists therefore felt the coast clear for the ingenious child of their imagination, the *Alpenzeitung*, a Fascist paper in German, destined (or it was hoped so) to keep the world in ignorance of the real state of affairs. It came out in the spring of 1926, and, in spite of the failure of all other South Tyrolese daily papers, needed heavy subsidies from the Government in order to keep afloat, the people preferring the Lenten fare of their little weekly papers to the fatted calf of Italian lies in the *Alpenzeitung*, Fascist literary achievements being apt to cause moral indigestion. As a proof of this last remark may be cited some comments we chanced to read on the acquittal of the schoolmaster Rudolf Riedl, who, innocent though he was, had been sentenced to banishment:

The act of the *Duce* is so fine, manifesting as it does so lofty and at the same time so simple a personality, that any explanation thereof would but impair it. This deed of a truly fatherly mildness cannot raise the *Duce* higher in our admiration, but it lends an added lustre to his aureole of greatness and of goodness. May all pitiable snufflers in the anti-Fascist mire grasp the standard of mortal beauty . . .¹

¹ The final aspiration would appear something of a drop from the exalted eloquence of the rest. (*Translator's Note.*)

The *Alpenzeitung*—subsides notwithstanding—not particularly prospering, the Fascists resolved on a *coup de main*. After the fourth attempt on Mussolini in October 1926, Fascist battalions, under the leadership of the *Alpenzeitung* editor, one night occupied the printing-offices of the Vogelweider publishing house in Bozen and Brixen, where the *Volksbote*, *Katholische Sonntagsblatt*, and the *Dolomiten* were brought out. The authorities fully approved of this manœuvre, being, as it was, on the same lines as Mussolini's own suppression of the entire Opposition Press, and in Brixen the leader of the raid was appointed by them the administrative commissioner of the occupied printing-office.

A period of no newspapers now set in for our people; as all who were not absolutely compelled for business reasons to take in the *Alpenzeitung* resolutely refrained from doing so. This state of things was unpleasant for the Government itself, as about Christmas-time, 1926, the so-called Lictors' Loan (*Prestito del Littorio*) was being enforced throughout the whole of Italy. From this South Tyrol could not be exempt, but without the Press there was little chance of success. Prefect Ricci, therefore, made the Vogelweider House a Christmas present, permitting the *Dolomiten* and the *Volksbote* to reappear under certain conditions—viz. Domherr Michael Gamper and I must remove ourselves from the board of directors, a commissary of police must be associated in the editorship as Controller, and the papers must put themselves at the disposition of the agitation for the Lictors' Loan. In order to pave the way for ending the almost unbearable condition of "No News" throughout the country, the Vogelweider House accepted these terms, and since then their organs as far as politics go have been under the control of the Fascist Commissioner, some of their leading articles at times being written by him when their subjects to his mind need judicious treatment.

The Fascist circle of the *Alpenzeitung*, waxing fat as it

did on Government money, did not find itself mistaken in its calculations for the needs of its existence. On the contrary, in 1927 still another Italian daily paper, *La Provincia di Bolzano*, was started, from which the editors of the *Alpenzeitung* might also derive some profit. In order to give the entire legion of Fascist newspapers more of an impetus, in the summer of 1927 Mussolini sent Giarratana, the Fascist delegate of Brescia, up to Bozen, there to combine the political secretaryship with the head-editorship of the two Fascist daily papers, in which the new policy was summed up in his own words: *To desire to remain German-speaking Tyrolese is to be Anti-Fascist*. Giarratana immediately opened fire with an amazingly confused speech, aspersing all and any German-speaking Tyrolese leaders in choicest "Billingsgate", Tinzl and Sternbach being gracefully styled by him "liars and swindlers", whom all Italians in the country were solemnly enjoined to "treat as plague-stricken, cast out from civilized society". When I myself was prosecuted by the Fascist Advocates' Commission, that committee laid my confidential memorials before Giarratana, who, on their account, held forth in his daily paper on my "impudence and shamelessness", politely terming me "a grinning caricature" and "an ex-advocate", by which last trope he meant that my fate was sealed with him. In my next memorial to the Advocates' Commission, I animadverted strongly on the shameful breach of propriety of handing over documents of confidential proceedings to the Fascists to be so vilely handled—

Butchered to make a Roman holiday

—indeed in their Press, and I wound up by affirming that "In these days respectable folk can only oppose a scornful silence to the persecution of such a Press". It was assuredly one of the most repulsive features in all the contemptible mode of warfare adopted by the Fascist newspapers that they

scattered their insults throughout the country, in the blissful certainty that those vilified by them could neither defend themselves in another paper nor cite their libellists before the Courts. Thus were we German-speaking Tyrolese cast, bound and defenceless, before a cowardly Fascist newspaper pack.

It belongs to Mussolini's type of character that he should have created so unworthy a situation, enslaving public opinion and exposing honourable men defenceless to the attacks of his satellites, despite the fact that he owes his own rise to journalism, and in former years was wont to address juries, in the thrilling tones of passionate conviction, for the Freedom of the daily Press.

33. THE TRAMPLING-DOWN OF THE PEASANTRY

One of the results of the Tyrol Peasant Movement, which, beginning in Sterzing, 1904, swept through the whole land, was the creation in South Tyrol of a Class Union, the *Bauernbund* (Peasants' League) and a Peasants' Savings Bank, affiliated to the Innsbruck *Tiroler Bauernsparkasse*. In South Tyrol, moreover, 134 *Raiffeisenkassen* (agricultural co-operative loan banks) which existed, had their centre in the *Landwirtschaftlichen Zentralkasse* (Agricultural Central Bank) in Bozen. Thus had been formed a united and comprehensive network of peasants' financial institutions and the like associations, which could readily deal with the serious scarcity of money in our agricultural economy. Our peasantry had sunk the greater part of their cash in the now depreciated Austrian War Loan, but the Italian Government did not exchange the stocks nor even fulfil towards the *Raiffeisenkassen* the pledges laid down by its own laws.

The head direction of the Peasants' Finance endeavoured to do its utmost to establish its Self-dependency once more. We thought: "If we are but allowed to work we shall soon

get our heads above water!" "Self-dependency," however, is to a Fascist State an intolerable idea, especially when it might be to the advantage of South Tyrol, and the opportunity for destructive interference soon presented itself.

For on South Tyrol, since the alteration of the rate of exchange, the War Loan already mentioned lay like a nightmare. Thousands of peasants had bought on loan from the Banks Austrian War Bonds, and the best that could be hoped for was the Moratorium, which was announced in July 1922, affording a breathing-space for the "Loan Debtors". But when the Fascists gripped the reins of government the Banks bestirred themselves afresh. The political upstarts were receptive when money was the question; the Banks paid the Chief Secretary of the Fascist Party, the delegate Giunta, a quarter-million *lire*, and received in return the repeal of the Moratorium. Giunta depicted vividly what efforts this had cost him. "I had literally to tear the decree out of the Director-General's writing-table drawer in the Ministry of Finance!"

The mass of Pleas in the Courts increased daily; much money being spent in costs, and the spectres of execution and auction rose terrifyingly upon hearth and field. We organized a special representative for the Loan Debtors, but could not keep pace with the "palm-oilers" of the Banks. The catastrophe loomed ever nearer, our deputies warned the Government in the strongest manner, and in some exceptional cases not without success.

Early in 1925 there appeared in South Tyrol, among a number of influential personages, a certain Cavaliere Piazza, sent upon a special mission, as his letters of recommendation from the Finance Minister and the Prefect testified. Giunta had commissioned him to save the difficult situation in South Tyrol by an astonishing conception, no other than that under the protection of the Fascist Party the great

Italian Finance Institute, already demanded by Tolomei, should be established in South Tyrol, with the especial aim gradually and insensibly of working off the debt of the borrowed War Loan Bonds. Without so many words it could be seen that Giunta anticipated his election as President of the said Banking Institute.

Among the personalities then especially in evidence in the financial state of affairs was the president of the Peasants' League (*Bauernbund*), Josef Oberhammer, Burgomaster of Prags, who was devoting himself with peculiar energy to avert the threatened ruin of numberless farms owned by the peasantry.

The whole work of this Fascist First Aid was suddenly stopped by an unexpected event. Cavaliere Piazza, on account of all manner of frauds in Italy, was arrested! The plan of the Banking Institute vanished in the abyss, and now what was to be done?

This was the moment that the Trent Fascists thought the best in which to take a hand. The Trent delegates Gianferrari and Ciarlantini announced to the Peasants' League that they now would undertake to bring the "Enfeoffed Loan Affair" to a happy conclusion; its debtors must form themselves into a "Syndicate" and trust to them. They hoped that the Government would assent to a new and legal regulation of the business, and as compensation they required three per cent. of the amount to which the Enfeoffed Loan Debt might be reduced. To this the Peasants' League agreed, and in the beginning of June 1925 a great meeting of the Loan Debtors was held in Bozen Theatre, where the Fascist delegates announced themselves ready to undertake the representation of the affair. They calculated on compensation of about a million *lire*, although this assuredly was not mentioned before the assembly, but so much the more was their patriotism extolled, and the next day the *Popolo d'Italia* filled a whole page under a headline

in enormous type: *Thirty thousand South Tyrolese peasants under the Leadership of the able and respected President of the Peasants' League, Josef Oberhammer, have joined Fascism.*

The matter was not unimportant. Oberhammer, indeed, possessed our confidence, yet we feared that the Fascists would have him in their grip and might seek to extract political confessions from him. It subsequently fell out exactly so, but Oberhammer justified our faith and sacrificed himself.

The Trent Fascists proposed to the Government to publish a new law on the Adjustment of the Enfeoffed Debts on the Austrian War Loan, by which, according to the indigence of the debtor, his debt should be decided through a Commission of Arbitration. This was the signal for a corrupt game. The Commission was in the hands of the "Syndicate"; to succeed, one must join the Syndicate and pay the percentage. Moreover, now the Fascists demanded from the Peasants' League a political evolution: it must break off from the "German League" and unite itself with the Fascist Labour Organization. The secretary of the Peasants' League, Rupert Steger, revealed himself as one of the "base and venal subjects" whom Professor Medicus in his letter to Gentile had predicted would be the future pillars of Italian politics. This Steger endeavoured to entice Oberhammer ever somewhat farther, and the latter, a moderate and sincere man, for a while went with him, but when things were required of him inconsistent with national honour, he drew back with firm refusals. The whole committee of the Peasants' League were of his mind, and Steger was dismissed.

This brought down Fascist wrath upon the *Bauernbund*. In May 1926 its direction was by an arbitrary measure without a shred of legality dissolved by the Trent Prefect and replaced by another committee mostly of Italians. The grounds of this decree were as follows:

In consideration that several of the present leaders of the Peasants' League on account of their alien origin, or their political Past, or their known relations to anti-national organizations, or their doubtful behaviour, do not afford reliable security for that national faith which, according to the laws of the Syndicate, is an indispensable quality for the leaders of all Labour Unions . . .

Josef Oberhammer was deprived of his Italian citizenship. Six years previously he had, on the ground of the Peace Treaty, as a scion of one of South Tyrol's oldest families, become an Italian citizen!

The peasant finance affairs still hung in the balance. The Fascist Banks, especially the "Federal Institute" in Trent, had already long hankered after them; in the summer of 1926 began the struggle for the mastery in our agricultural money business. In the Fascist Press the board of directors of the Central Bank was violently attacked, the articles, translated into German, being spread abroad by the thousand. As they produced no impression, the Fascists' patience gave out, and they resorted to other more effective methods. On October 3, 1926, the General Assembly of the Central Bank met in Bozen, with the addition of a number of Fascist burgomasters, while at the same time an armed band of thirty Blackshirts came over from Trent and held themselves in readiness in the vicinity.

As representative of the Government appeared the Commissioner Steffanini, one of the worst elements of the Fascist Party. Already before entering on the day's proceedings the official burgomaster began to speechify, repeating, with coarse abuse of his own, the Fascist newspapers' attacks on the management of the Bank and demanding the resignation of the board, especially of the president, Dr. Köllensperger, who for the last seven years had managed the whole Peasants' Finance Organization. This demand met with absolute refusal from the General Assembly, who expressed in no uncertain terms their confidence in and loyalty to the directors, they on their side

declaring that they would continue at their posts so long as the Raiffeisen Banks might require it. At this the Fascists broke into yells, whereupon their guard, armed with pistols and bludgeons, broke into the hall, forcing their way with violent tumult through the assembly to the president's table, struck and wounded Dr. Köllensperger there in office, as well as a number of Bank representatives, and compelled the dissolution of the general meeting through Steffanini, who was in collusion with the Tridentines.

On account of the above criminal proceedings the board of directors wished to bring the matter before the Courts, but the State Attorney did not see himself called on for any official steps. The Bozen Fascists, however, be it remarked, had taken no part with their brothers of Trent. Having quarrelled with Steffanini, they attacked him after this meeting openly in the *Piccolo Posto*; upon this their leader, Barbesino, was expelled from the Fascist Party and the *Piccolo Posto* suspended by Prefect Guadagnini. The latter now completed the Fascist work by dismissing the director of the Central Bank and appointing Steffanini as General Inspector.

The fate of our institutions was irrevocably sealed.

At the next sitting of the board, Steffanini demanded with threats of fresh violence that the greater part of their number should resign, and in their stead the remnant of the directors should without any discussion draw up a Substitutes' List, from which he (Steffanini) would select as he thought fit. This crack-brained proposal might have been laughable, but we were in no mood for jests; the situation was too grave. I was then president of the board, and Steffanini sent word to me that I would soon be got out of the way, I being among those who under the new police regulations were to be dispatched to Calabria or Sicily.

Ten days later, after the resignation of the greater part

of the managing committee, the board of directors met again. I reported that in the meantime I had addressed myself to the Trent Prefecture, but had not succeeded in obtaining protection for the Central Bank or liberty for its management. There therefore seemed no way out from the Terror that had marked us down. The board of directors must obey the Commissioner; I myself voted against this, laid down my office as president, and left the Central Bank.

With that, indeed, now all was fairly over; in six months' time it was compelled to close down: a Fascist Board of Liquidation battered on its corpse and the Fascist Banks picked its bones. Likewise the Central Goods Supply Co-operative Society, *Landschaftliche Verband* (Agricultural League), in Bozen, failed, measures of support for this beloved Association being publicly forbidden by the Fascist secretary, Giarratana. The Fascists had accomplished their end, the independence of the Peasantry of Tyrol was rendered impossible. All our Agricultural organization was in the hands of Fascism.

Josef Oberhammer had in the meantime entirely withdrawn from public life. Within his own home, notwithstanding, he was subjected to further persecution, and his every step watched. On the occasion of a festival in honour of the Prags priest, he was prevented from attendance, by being arrested on some trivial pretext by the *Carabinieri*, although they had to release him immediately afterwards. In the beginning of 1928 he was dragged one morning from his farm and conveyed to Innichen on the frontier, where he had to sign a protocol, informing him that he had been expelled from the kingdom of Italy. His wife, whom he had left behind with a two-month-old babe at the breast and five more children, had not been told what was to happen to her husband. Since then Josef Oberhammer lives among the band of exiles in North Tyrol.

35. THE TERROR OF THE VILLAGES

The gloomy chapter as to what the village people of South Tyrol had to endure from petty tyrants must now be told. *Carabinieri* and *Finanzieri*, it must be said, ruled like a scourge of God over the villages, without it being ever possible to have the coarsest and most violent attacks condemned as criminal. While before the War in any political district a mere dozen of Austrian *gendarmes* were on duty, now every communal district had its division of *Carabinieri* and all larger neighbourhoods a *Finanzieri* station as well. These soldiers felt themselves representatives of the nation, and considered that they must guard their honour by colonial methods. In a score of things—passport arrangements, business licences, military furloughs and abridgments of service, when witnesses were required, dues and taxes, etc.—the people were dependent on them and unable to defend themselves against their lack of discipline. Woe to whoever fell out with them. Did any dare to lodge a notice against them, it was treated by the authorities as proceeding from racial hatred and passed over—while the accuser was made to repent it afterwards. Only a small part of what South Tyrol had—and has still—to bear from these tormentors is as yet known.

The following cases—their truth in every detail can be proved up to the hilt—may throw a searchlight on a very abyss.

Towards the end of 1924 the *Finanzieri* in Pfunders, a branch of the Pustertal, were behaving atrociously. One house after another was searched and ransacked, and peasants' property was no longer secure; after one such "visitation" a valuable watch was discovered to be missing—later to be found in the box of a *Finanzer* soldier; after still another at the *Grafhof*, two necklaces belonging to daughters of the house proved to have vanished likewise.

As the people gradually became increasingly outraged over the nightly onslaughts perpetrated on the pockets and, still worse, on the persons of those forced to submit to them, indignation waxed fierce over such results of a ridiculous search for saccharine; but the *Finanzieri* had ways of their own of making themselves respected. Their non-commissioned officer, the Brigadier, commanded that all passing him on the road should respectfully salute him, and did a peasant lad unthinkingly leave his hat on his head he was brought to a sense of good manners by a blow on the face—if indeed, as happened often enough, he was not arrested and given thorough instruction on the point in the barracks.

One day in December 1924 the *Finanzieri* came to the farm of Vinzenz Weissteiner, a man of sixty, to see whether any smuggled goods might be there concealed. In the daughters' room a mouth-accordion with its case was taken out of a box in their presence, and one of the *Finanzieri* asserted that a box of saccharine had fallen into his hand on the case being opened. The Weissteiner daughters, however, had seen the soldier putting it himself into the case. The *Finanzieri* also found some old horse-cloths, which had been left behind by troops passing through in the War; and as all spoils of war were to be delivered up, they had now grounds for a double accusation, and accordingly ordered Weissteiner to accompany them to the barracks, a half-hour distant, there to sign a protocol.

The farmer, however, could not leave the farm immediately, on account of urgent business, and declared that he would come the next day.

As on the morrow he did not appear early at the barracks, the *Finanzieri* hastened to the farm to fetch him, and found him fast asleep on the bench by the stove. For the past three nights he had not slept at all, for the cattle, his chief means of living, claimed his care and could not be neglected; only now he was able to rest and sleep. The *Finanzieri*

promptly knocked him off the bench and woke him with a few kicks. Why had he not come early to the barracks? The farmer sought to excuse himself by his great weariness, but found he was to go now with them. He declared that he was too exhausted and would not go after their rough handling. The soldiers arrested him, and on his still refusing to accompany them they took a ladder from before the house, seized Weissteiner, and roped him in chains to it, he offering no resistance. Covered with a cloak of one of them, he was borne to the barracks, up a steep path over ground frozen hard, where from time to time his captors intentionally let him fall, before lifting up the ladder afresh and carrying him on. Arrived at the barracks, he was flung down and brutally beaten, a *Finanzer* kneeling on him until blood gushed from his mouth. Then they left him thus, a helpless prisoner.

In the evening two farm servants came to inquire for him. The *Finanzieri* signed to a corner; there the victim lay, he could be taken home now. His men propped up the farmer between them and got him back somehow, where he was put to bed. The physician, Dr. Eliskases, being summoned, convinced himself of the patient's many severe injuries, and he, suffering from calcifying of the arteries, lay for weeks between life and death. His relations brought an action against the command of *Finanzieri*, those guilty being subjected to a long cross-examination before a number of witnesses, among them the farmer, his children and servants, a neighbouring farmer, Huber, who had been accidentally present on the occasion, and the doctor. An amnesty being in prospect, before it actually came, the trial was brought to a close, the *Finanzieri* getting off scot-free.

Several months later Vinzenz Weissteiner, his children and servants, together with Huber and the doctor, ten persons in all, received a summons. This time they were the

"guilty" parties; the honour of the *Finanzieri* must be vindicated. These stated on oath that they had entered the Weissteiner dwelling in a wholly orderly manner and that in the barracks the farmer had been most civilly treated. The State Attorney, therefore, issued against Weissteiner and his companions, including the doctor, an accusation of bearing false witness and slander.

I was asked to conduct the defence. The case was so outrageous that, in spite of everything, I felt hopeful about the verdict. Through the denunciation of the *Finanzieri* and the accusation of the State Attorney one thought, however, was clear as a scarlet thread: Here is a conspiracy to dishonour the national troops; it must be made an example of. Particularly disagreeable to the authorities was the publication of the case in the *Landsmann*.

My apprehensions increased with the trial, where the president, Trafaglio, understood not a word of German and took little trouble about coming to any understanding with the accused, inquiring of them through an interpreter whether they maintained what they had declared in the previous examination. This being assented to, the *Finanzieri* came forward haughtily and declared the assertions of the accused to be slanderous lies. They swore on their military honour, that in every respect they had conducted themselves unobjectionably.

The trial was adjourned on difficulties of understanding foreign witnesses. Faced with the situation, now an unexpected and threatening alarm rose up in me, to be convulsively crushed down: everything hung on whether the judges would be capable against their better knowledge of committing a judicial murder. Were they, indeed, capable of such monstrous vileness, they could pronounce the accused guilty, and as all witnesses of the deed were among these, the real criminals would be the sole witnesses! Despite all this I administered what comfort I could to my clients,

who, God be thanked, understood no Italian and had, therefore, no idea of their fearful peril.

Before the final trial took place I was compelled for a time to leave the country. My successor in the defence had the satisfaction of securing the release of the accused. In this case, at least, the judges had not sacrificed their consciences, but the guilt of an attempt to cast the guiltless into prison must remain a sable stain on the other authorities.

In the commune Villnös near Klausen a very tyrant was to be found in the *Carabinieri* Maresciallo (Sergeant), Del Fascio. He was well named.

Although still very young, he demanded respectful salutations from the inhabitants of the village, but never was sufficiently polite to return these greetings. On the people discontinuing them therefore, Del Fascio cited the former burgomaster, Mesner, before him, and held him responsible that, if in twenty days he did not succeed in making the folk show the desired marks of respect, the burgomaster himself must answer for it.

In the *Carabinieri* barracks the work-woman, a person of bad reputation, had her say (an important one). The Maresciallo had an affair with her daughter, a minor; therefore the mother could procure important farmers, to whom she bore ill-will, House Visitations whenever she wished. The result of such visits was in many cases the discovery of old useless weapons and severe punishment for the possessors. The folk sighed in vain.

Late one evening a stone thrown at the barracks broke a window. The *Carabinieri* in a panic imagined an attack, and shot wildly into the night. The next day four persons, among them the host of the *Lamm*, Josef Profanter, were arrested at haphazard and taken off to the Klausen prison, without the slightest grounds for suspicion. After the Villnös people had waited in vain for a week for their discharge,

the ex-burgomaster, Mesner, went himself to the Klausen magistrate and begged for the men's release. It had perforce to be granted, seeing that no incriminating fact could be found against them. The Maresciallo was infuriated. His suspicions centred upon the *Lamm* innkeeper, for whom he sent in the evening. Profanter, with his two sons, went to the barracks, but the Maresciallo considered the youths' presence superfluous, sent them home, and detained the father. There in the barracks the unfortunate man was shamefully maltreated. Subsequently he could only say that he had regained consciousness in the early morning hours and had found himself in the *Carabinieri* kitchen, where the soldiers were washing off the blood from his body. When he was sent home he could neither walk nor stand, and had to be carried by three *Carabinieri*. In the icy December day they dumped him down at his house door and ran away before anyone could come out.

Not satisfied yet, however, the Maresciallo preferred another accusation against Profanter. By cunning falsehoods he induced the Courts to bring in the innkeeper guilty of the window-breaking, and to condemn him to a month and a half's imprisonment. Six months after this sentence it turned out that the stone had been flung against the barrack window by a cast-off mistress of the Maresciallo; she was tried, found guilty, and punished.

About this time the Maresciallo's new ladylove's confinement took place, the child died, and the people maintained that she had strangled it. On her being accused of child-murder the judges took her word that the child had been stillborn! The popular excitement was so great that the Maresciallo, Del Fascio, had to be recalled from Villnös, and the commune breathed more freely. Their joy, however, was short-lived; in a few months he returned, more arrogant and brutal than ever. The use of the riding-whip against respected farmers and peasants, blows and kicks on arbi-

trarily arrested men put in chains, made him the prototype of the tyrant most feared in South Tyrol.

What women have suffered from the *Carabinieri* is frightful!

In the vicinity of Kiens on the Pustertal highroad stands the *Gisser* inn of Georg Weissteiner. The *Carabinieri* Brigadier, Giovanni Pipa, had cast a lustful eye on the extremely pretty waitress, Anna Trippacher. One day he behaved in the most disgraceful manner to her, and she, furious, struck him in the face. The "gallant officer" knocked the girl down and shouted for the innkeeper; the girl had been most impertinent to him, he said, and if she did not at once kneel and beg for forgiveness, the inn would be immediately closed! The host did not know what had happened, and could only tremble in bewilderment. The Brigadier's shouts and threats grew louder, the innkeeper thought, "Here are we defenceless against these brutes", and entreated the girl to save them all and beg pardon. She therefore fell on her knees before the Brigadier!

These are no isolated facts, but part of a well-organized system. Commandants act in the same way. A beautiful girl, Hedwig Fink, was standing in full daylight before a house in the Laubengasse in Brixen. With clanking spurs the *Carabinieri* Commandant of the district, Capitano Visioni, came down the street and saw the pretty girl. Despite the presence of witnesses, he threw himself on her, assaulting her in the vilest manner with which a man may treat a woman. The girl repulsed him as best she might, and exclaiming, "Get out, you beast!" rushed into the house.

Some weeks went by, then the girl was summoned to the *Carabinieri* barracks. There a non-commissioned officer informed her that she was suspected of child-murder, and an accusation on that head had been filed against her! The victim denied the atrocious calumny with all the strength of rage, and her vehemence terrified the *Car-*

binieri into discontinuing the hearing. Yet some days later she was forced to appear again at the barracks. This time the accusation was couched in another form, and a medical examination of her was required. She was obliged to go into the hospital, where her virginity was established without a doubt. When after this bitter humiliation she asked for the name of the calumniator, the *Carabinieri* mocked at her, alleging "Official Secrets".

In this way had the Capitano Visioni taken vengeance for the rejection of his bestial assault. He is to-day Commandant of the Section for "Public Safety" in the Brixen district!

Murder was another element in the atmosphere. Many remained a mystery, as that one on Bozen Boden where the officials took all possible pains to destroy every trace, but by so doing only strengthened the people's belief that it was an Italian deed of violence.

In individual cases the circumstances could not be concealed. Militia and *Finanzieri* guards were given to firing off their guns recklessly at Tyrolese, the *Finanzieri* especially unscrupulous in this. I shall only mention here those instances which have nothing to do with duty or self-defence on the part of the soldiery.

In December 1927 Josef Gutgsell of Stilfs, with his brother Daniel, was seized by the *Finanzieri* as the former were returning home from Switzerland with various purchases. What had they there? Some coffee and sugar for family use, and perhaps a few cigarettes for friends. When their knapsacks had been searched, the soldiers ordered them to take them up and come to the barracks. On Josef Gutgsell refusing, he was immediately shot through the body at four paces' distance and killed on the spot. The *Finanzieri* asserted that he had tried to escape and had been fired after, but this was a lie, for the shot had struck him in front and the brother could witness that there had

not been the slightest reason for killing him. The murderers went scathless.

In Sand in Taufers the *Finanzieri* took on themselves one night to announce "closing-time" in a tavern, and there summarily arrested a man named Vinzenz Fohrer. He entreated them not to put him in fetters, but was nevertheless ironed and carried off. In a few minutes shots rang out through the darkness, and the *Finanzieri* fled without their prisoner to the barracks. The next day Fohrer was found in a pool of blood—quite dead.

Could the authorities find any excuses for these acts, there was none possible for that of the same December 1927, when the *Finanzieri* committed the abhorrent murder of the miner, Karl Platter, in Passeier. Platter was celebrating St. Barbara's Day (December 4th) with some other miners in the Rabenstein inn, and the party were more or less elevated when some *Finanzieri* soldiers entered the tavern. The two groups began to "rag" each other good-naturedly enough, until Karl Platter happened to make some disparaging allusion to the King's picture hanging on the wall. The *Finanzieri* insisted on his immediate arrest, but Platter jumped out of the window and took refuge for the night in another house. The soldiers, discovering his hiding-place, lay in wait for the miner next morning, and as he unsuspectingly appeared, they fell on him with their rifle-butts, knocking him down, then dragged him up, meaning to make him march to the barracks. Platter, however, being unconscious, the soldiers had to seize him under the arms and drag him along, and this becoming rather tiresome for them, they got a rope from a peasant's house, bound his feet together, and so dragged him down the frosty paths for a *kilometre* (almost three-quarters of a mile) until they met a cart. On this Karl Platter was taken to the Meran hospital, where he died on the following day, without having recovered consciousness. A widow and two orphans wail

in vain for atonement for this atrocity, but not a hair of the murderers has been touched.

Tyrolese life is held cheap by Italians in South Tyrol!

In this last summer, however, the patience of the indescribably tormented peasants came in Vintschgau to the breaking-point. When a Fascist militiaman named Pederzolli was, on pretext of carrying out the regulations against foot and mouth disease, driving away the cattle of the farmer Josef Pircher of Tanaas from the pasture, a neighbour, Franz Platter, with a log of wood struck him dead.

35. THE RAVAGING OF THE SEED OF YOUTH

The garden of our youth has become a wilderness. Where formerly it had blossomed in a hundred glowing colours, now blade and bud are blighted to the very stem, and among the once fair but now withered growth ill-weeds grow apace.

“Which things are an allegory!”

When it became a fact that German-speaking schools¹ were to be suppressed among our people, a wave of agitation broke over the land. The women of Bozen, Brixen, and Kaltern assembled before the public offices, sending representatives to the sub-prefects and the school directors, and putting forth printed manifestoes of their desire for the restoration of German education. Fifty-three thousand women signed a memorial sent by a delegation to the Roman Government, and the Pope was also implored for his intercession; the Queen likewise being telegraphed to in moving terms, and the Crown Prince, when he came to Bozen, solemnly memorialized. The burden of all these declarations was the same, the sentiment expressed by Gertrud Bäumer,

¹ As has already been pointed out in these pages, the word “German” is used merely in a linguistic sense.

the leader of the Feminist Movement in Germany, in a work on South Tyrol: *The Mother has a claim that all State measures for the Education of Youth should but bind her the more firmly to her offspring: a right for which she must fight, the Right of the Womb.*

The men were not behindhand. In every district the burgomasters gathered together, raising a demand for German schools, and large meetings of reliable men supported them. Then in December 1924 ten burgomasters, under the leadership of the delegate Tinzi and the president of the Peasants' League, Oberhammer, as representatives of all South Tyrol, waited on Mussolini, and set before him the unanimous desire of the people for the education of its youth in their mother-tongue. Mussolini did not reject this petition, but avowed frankly that it was in Italy's interests to possess a peaceable population on her frontier-line. He promised to consider the whole question once more thoroughly and even to make it his especial business—but, alas! this was no more than another scene of the Mussolini Farce. At this very time when Tyrolese schools were being taken away from us, the Ministry of Education was decreeing the establishment of Arabic schools in Tripoli, while the Roman Government signed International Treaties concerning Minorities—not only in other States, but absolutely in Italian regions, in Fiume—our representatives were being addressed by Mussolini with procrastinating and misleading words. In reality, the Italianizing aim was being more fiercely pursued, and the Minister of Education, Casati, in a subsequent meeting of German-speaking Tyrolese and Slavonic Parliamentary delegates, declared quite openly that the object of such policy was to make Italians out of Tyrolese and Slavonic children!

All German Tyrolese teachers were now dismissed in the harshest terms, the formula of decree forwarded to them setting out:

In consequence of your ignorance of Italian, you are discharged from office. Within two years you can assimilate enough of the language for teaching, and may then pass an examination in it. In case of failure, it is open to you to apply for a pension; till then you will receive no fees, as the Italian law affords no regulations in such cases.

Thus teachers, both men and women, who for twenty or thirty years or even longer had taught, were at a day's notice plunged into bitter need, and often with a large family—in one case of seventeen children—thrown on the charity of kindly people. No wonder that in despair the wife of the aged teacher Seier should throw herself into the Passer river!

Neither did the passing of examinations always avail. A teacher, Eisenstecken by name, whose knowledge of Italian had been brilliantly proved thereby, was nevertheless awarded no post, because he had once gained the Austrian gold medal for bravery! Other teachers, after weary waiting, were indeed promised satisfaction, but the salary was delayed, because the Ministry of Education lacked the necessary funds. When in the Pustertal the teacher Brugger, just dismissed, happened to remark in the inn that no change of administration would be any real advantage for the South Tyrolese if the German schools were not restored to them, he was arrested and imprisoned for three weeks.

The Italianization of the secondary schools followed that of the elementary ones, with vigorous endeavours to hinder any from pursuing their studies in German High Schools outside Italy. To this end Government issued an especial Exclusive Law, according to which the recognition of foreign academic degrees must not be awarded to "State citizens of the new provinces non-Italian in nationality". As, however, this did not seem sufficiently effective, in the summer of 1927 the Ministry of War suddenly summoned all South Tyrolese, who were students at foreign high schools, for their term of military service, although the

Military Service Laws allowed, in the case of academic studies, leave of absence until twenty-six years of age.

Even the *Kindergartens* appeared to Fascism a hindrance to the work of denationalizing, for the School Board in Trent ordained that all collective *Kindergartens* should be carried on only in Italian. The parents upon this attempted some alternative; in several communes the German Tyrolese united and entrusted their very little ones to the care of a general superintendent. But against the system of such play-rooms for children from two to five years old the Italians dealt with more ferocious harshness. A professed nun in Nals having undertaken superintendence of such a nursery, Bishop Endricci brought about her recall, whereupon a sister of the Nals chaplain Kofler took her place. The chaplain was at once forbidden to hold religious instruction in the school. Moreover, by the Meran sub-prefect's order, the *Carabinieri* came over, turned the children out and sealed up the play-room's doors. The commune was at the same time formally threatened with the loss of its representative and the appointment of a commissioner as substitute, were this sort of child supervision persisted in. In like manner the sub-prefect of Bruneck caused such another children's nursery of Tyrolese families to be broken up by the police, he himself driving the townswomen, who would have made civil representations to him on the subject, away from his bureau.

Every village had a similar story to tell. In Innichen a play-room for the infants had been established in the so-called *Kapitelhaus*, but after fourteen days the burgomaster, Michael Wachtler, received orders to close it. He delayed, and told the police commissioner on the latter's brutal threats that he would resign his office as burgomaster. Now it was the turn of the *Carabinieri*. The children had to leave the *Kapitelhaus* with their playthings and little benches, and take refuge in a private dwelling; the sister-in-charge

was severely examined, and the mothers who would fain have stood by her were kept away with rough force. The *Carabinieri* drew up before the new room to prevent the children's entrance, but when for a while the little ones had succeeded in evading the guard, there came a violent onslaught, scattering the infants afresh, and knocking down a woman of sixty years, Felizitas Innerkofler, who wished to bring her two grandchildren to the play-room. Alleging falsely that she had spat on the *Carabinieri*, she was arrested and brought before the magistrate at Welsberg, and so the Innichen play-room came to an end; some weeks later, moreover, four townswomen being sentenced to fines on account of this forbidden "School".

This barbarian struggle for the annihilation of German Tyrolese civilization was completed, without the least opposition from the intellectual strata of the people of Italy. In vain our delegates once and again directed appeals to the Government and the whole of the Italian public, in such thrilling words as those of Dr. Tinzi:

It is Potemkin villages that are being created among us. The school work can find no help in the family, and the speech of the family will no more be allowed in the school. How bewildered must be the little heads learning neither language correctly, for in the one the theory of teaching fails, and in the other practice is wanting.

Signore Minister Casati, I am convinced that you imagine according to the reports received by you from your underlings, all goes brilliantly on and the results are represented as excellent. But if you, disguised as was Haroun al Raschid, were to go among our people, inspiring confidence among the parents till they poured out their whole hearts, without State officials fearing dismissal, or innkeepers of losing their licence, or others under Italy in other ways of suffering any persecution, did they complain of what daily happens, then would Your Excellency be stirred in your deepest soul by the universal wail of anguish and lamentation, which from every mountain and valley of South Tyrol goes up from the mouth of parents. These, full of anxiety only for the future of their coming generation, the future fate of their children, are reliable and impartial judges, well qualified to

compare the results of this school year with those of the past, in which the children still enjoyed instruction in their mother-tongue.

While our deputies continued to speak in this way upon the rape of our schools, a wild tumult arose, mostly from the younger Fascist colleagues; the sense of propriety once failing so much among these immature oarsmen of the Ship of State that a delegate of the Fascist faction forced his way up to Tinzl's rostrum and tore his speech out of his hand. With entire composure, however, Tinzl drew another copy out of his pocket and continued his speech to the close.

Among the interruptions assailing our delegates in the debates over the schools question, once one rang out from the delegate Rossi-Passavanti: "Buy your rights with blood, as we have done!" Not only was this an unbecoming but an untrue phrase, since never and nowhere were Italians compelled to shed blood to be granted instruction in their mother-tongue—least of all either in or against Austria.

But even the original Italians refused our natural demands. In Parliament Tinzl quoted Credaro's words: "The Work of Denationalization can only be accomplished in schools, in which principles and system are directly opposed to Nature, History, and the Dignity of Man." When the newspapers reported this, Credaro sent an explanation: "That sentence had been in its time written against Austria!" The philosopher had turned traitor to his own teaching, and from that moment we lost our last shred of respect for the man.

When the day comes that the people of Italy must atone for the despotic rule of Fascism, the poets and thinkers of that land will very surely have to cry *Mea culpa* also.

The Italian schools presented a travesty of education. Their chief aim appeared to be to give our children a wildly exaggerated idea of Italy and Italian matters. Mussolini's own newspaper, the *Popolo d'Italia*, gave as headlines the following "Incontestable Guiding" principles:

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1. Italy is the country that deserves to be the greatest and strongest in the world.
2. Italy will become the greatest and strongest country in the world.
3. The Italian laws are the most perfect in the world.
4. Italian statesmen are the best in the world, therefore deserve obedience and respect from all.

The lunacy of such aphorisms could not be better stigmatized than by Lombardo-Radice's words (although they had been directed against the German nation): "Swollen national pride, overweening presumption, stupid contempt for the greatness of any other free nationalities, are in a nation the surest signs of decadence and incapacity of learning."

The teachers, male and female, sent by Italy to South Tyrol, confirmed the truth of this assertion. At times it seemed as though the Italian folk were emptying its dregs out among us, in order to injure our youth both spiritually and morally. Many of the "teachers" had had no school training, but came direct from some shop or factory, and their methods suggested as much. In Tramin a teacher punished the children by hanging a card round their necks inscribed with the word *Porco* (pig), and in Sterzing the Italian schoolmaster beat a schoolgirl, Maria March, so unmercifully that she fell unconscious. He laughed at this, and an Italian schoolmistress, hurrying in at the cries of the other children, pulled the poor child up roughly, shrieking, "Raise your head!" They tried to make her stand, but her legs gave way and her head sank forward with open mouth. Only then did these Italian teachers allow the little girl to be sent home, where for three hours she lay insensible. In Eppan also another schoolmaster, Cirilli, beat a boy most brutally on the path to the school-house; when the German religious teacher, who happened to be passing, tried to interpose, Cirilli roared that he would soon beat Italianism into the dog!

Such ill treatment every now and then met with vehement

opposition from the parents, as happened in the autumn of 1927 at Tschengels in Vintschgau. Then the *Carabinieri* came on the scene, and the parents had to atone behind bolts and bars for daring to doubt the justice of the Italian teacher.

Moral education, however, suffered still more from the conduct of many Italians. The Eppan teacher, Christoforetti, was taken away in custody by the *Carabinieri* because he had made away with all the school fees. Another, Gervasoni, the teacher of the secondary school, openly announced to his scholars that he only knew five German words: *Eat, drink, kiss, love, and sleep*. In Bozen the gymnastic instructor, Cogliandolo, held such grossly undesirable lectures for his pupils, both boys and girls, that the parents succeeded on their outraged remonstrances in having him removed. Not a few, indeed, among the Italian schoolmistresses practised the like principles. They maintained shocking relations with *Finanzieri* and militia soldiers, receiving visits from them in school hours—many allowing themselves to be kissed before the children; they often went to see their friends in the barracks, and were regarded by the people, accustomed to a very different type of school-teacher, as abominations; especially such an one as she in Dorf Tirol, who cursed and swore in school, or those in Mals and Vahrn, who, in the interests of sex instruction, undressed before the children. Another, by name Tagliaferra, in Brixen, conducted herself so indecently with her little scholars as to be cited in the Courts and removed from the school.

In St. Walburg in Ulten the sexual instructions of the schoolmaster aroused such a storm of indignation that about a hundred women went in close procession to the school to call him to account. The *Carabinieri* thereupon rushed up to defend their countryman and arrested three of the leaders of the train—Maria Schweighofer, Klara Holzer, and Katharina Breitenberger—two of whom were mothers, one

of six children from one to eight years old. They were marched by six *Carabinieri*, joined on the way by a reinforcement of four more, to the Lana prison; giving evidence of their undaunted spirit by breaking out into the *Andreas Hofer* song and that other, *Auf zum Schwur, Tiroler Land*. "*Sooner than see my children morally ruined, I should let myself be shot with them!*" one of them said to the judge during their trial, and when the three heroines were released after a fortnight's imprisonment all Ulten came out to meet them with a triumphal reception. Set on flower-bedecked horses, they entered their villages, white-robed girls reciting verses of welcome, their courage and steadfastness being exalted during a festal meal.

As might be expected, both *Carabinieri* and the staff of the school saw fit to keep out of the way—for the moment.

To Italians the school seemed the right place to deal the death-blow to the Tyrolese national consciousness. Children were forced to satiation to take part in Italian national festivals; even on the day of the so-called "Conquest" must Tyrolese youth salute the Italian colours with up-raised arm. Austria was painted to the children in the blackest dyes; once in Kaltern they were told that the Austrians had hanged innocent Italians over a fire. On this a boy sprang up, crying out: "My father and mother have been Austrians, and they would never have done that!" The mistress was thereupon caused to limit her assertions somewhat.

Italian masters and mistresses belonging, according to their orders, to the spies and persecutors of the Tyrolese "Catacomb" teaching places, children were repeatedly enticed by bribes to inform their new authorities as to where such haunts might be found, the *Carabinieri* thereafter being set on both Tyrolese school-teachers and scholars. Likewise Italian teachers sowed dissension between parents and children, even making the latter put down in their diaries what father and mother talked about at home. In

Kurtatsch an entire school board for four solid hours harassed an urchin of nine years old, Franz Peer, alternately by sweetmeats and threats, endeavouring to get him to declare that his father had instigated the child's dishonouring a portrait of the King. When at last he had been forced to sign a protocol, of which he did not know the contents, he was released with the strongest injunctions not to say anything about it at home.

Likewise through Italian teachers was the work of the Church destroyed, these looking on themselves as the wardens of Italianization and obeying the school boards by espionage on the behaviour of the priests in regard to their national sentiments. When the suppression of religious instruction in German was definitely resolved upon, the Italian teacher held forth with fanatical zeal; fresh orders being continually issued that religious books in German were to be taken away from all children by him and his compeers, in Klobenstein such a catechism being burnt before the little scholars' eyes. In the very churches the teachers would snatch German prayer-books from little hands, and even the customary school prayer was turned into a tool for erasing the mother-tongue from the lips of ill-fated youth.

Thus in South Tyrol these schools—which according to the Italians' own conceptions were to be nursery gardens for the fair growths of virtue and knowledge—with their miasmatic breath, like that of a poisonous marsh, blighted the spiritual and moral forces of the seed of Youth.

36. THE CATACOMB SCHOOLS

Generally cutting pain vents itself in a cry, but at its worst there is silence. Often, too, in the keenest pain there is a relief in hysterical laughter. There was nothing else for us when the Italians went on to hinder instruction in German out of school-time being given to our children at home. This,

indeed, seems to call for an outburst of the mocking laughter of fiends, for here on the one side was Italy, of which the whole population, according to Italian statistics of 1911, showed no less than *43 per cent.* incapable of reading or writing, and where, in individual provinces, 70, 75, aye, even 80 per cent., were absolutely illiterate. On the other hand, there was Tyrol, possessing not a single illiterate, where a race lives which, by the confession of numerous Italians, must be recognized as a people of the highest universal culture.

And now Italy with its 43 per cent. of illiterates had raped from this German race in the centre of Europe, not only her entire school system, but in the autumn of 1925 an urgent Decree of State concerning secret schools was issued through the Prefect Guadagnini to the Sub-Prefects of German South Tyrol.

The discovery of a considerable number of German secret schools' especially in the regions between Bozen and Salurn, affords proof that an organized system of opposition exists in South Tyrol, which provides for the engagement of teachers, the fitting-up of the schools, and the necessary financing, evidently having in the communes confidential members.

It is imperative that such efforts be put down with the utmost decision, to hinder their being firmly established and spread abroad. Your worship will therefore cause all possible steps to be taken to discover the headquarters and the supports of this organization. If necessary you will get into touch with the legal authorities, either directly or indirectly through me, in order to start house visitations and sequestrations. Communicate also with the school authorities, expressly warning them that vigilance be exercised to the utmost and the schools already discovered at once closed, the means of instruction confiscated, and those responsible brought before the Courts.

With regard to the instructors who do not possess Italian citizenship, you will move their expulsion; especially with those who live at a distance, you will carry out their dismissal by means of a removal order. All must, moreover, be warned by a protocol, and kept under strict supervision, for which you will avail yourself of the volunteer militia, with co-operation of the regulars, who will be at your disposal.

What could these "secret schools" be?

In numerous places German-speaking parents allowed their children, after duly attending the national schools with their incomprehensible Italian instructions, to spend their free time in learning to read and write German. This was the occasion of so mighty a political commotion! Against these "Catacomb" schools the whole machinery of Italian statecraft was directed; teachers and children could only protect themselves by sentry outposts, secret doors contrived in walls, hiding in cellars, barns, or stables. For official burgomasters, *Carabinieri* and Fascist militia, political secretaries and police agents, Italian teachers and even magistrates raised a steady hue and cry against so harmless a system of education. Children over their primers with someone in charge were pounced upon, copy-books and exercises, slates and pencils, even the school benches, reft away from the weeping little ones, themselves turned out of the house and the teachers from the commune by police orders. The *Carabinieri* amused themselves by abusing the women teachers as "pigs" and "German dogs", and the militia soldiery maltreated them in the streets. The Italian authorities threatened them that if they continued to teach, the Fascists would be called in to flog them, and the authorities would not be able to protect them. "If you do not give up teaching German," said a burgomaster to one such woman teacher, "we can treat you as we will!"

Imprisonments followed thick and fast; the daughters of most respected families were locked up with prostitutes, in cells that contained more inhabitants than beds! In two cases even legal proceedings were instituted, to abolish the State citizenship of such teaching staffs; while threats of banishment were freely used to terrify the leaders of these "Catacomb" schools.

House visitations multiplied daily; even when mother

and children were quietly at a meal, the militia would force entrance to seize all German reading-books and writing materials. The Fascist barbarians in one case broke into the room of a newly confined woman, pushing the sick-nurse aside and searching under the bed and in the chest for German primers. More atrocious was the fate of a "Catacomb" teacher in Kurtatsch, who was driven out of the commune when seriously ill. As she refused to be separated from her aunt and nurse, she was literally dragged through the street, thrown into a vehicle, and rattled off under showers of abuse to the prison in Neumarkt. After several days' imprisonment she was released, but forbidden to return home, hunted from place to place, and when she had to take to her bed, ordered to drive to an Italian doctor an hour's distance away, to obtain a certificate of illness, before she was at last allowed to return to her aunt, who was her only help.

Persecution of this kind was at the worst in the Unterland, where the magistrates against all law and justice imposed countless fines and terms of imprisonment ranging from five, nine, twelve, and nineteen days, on girls who had committed the terrible crime of teaching German Tyrolese children in their mother-tongue. Neither did the parents escape, who preferred their children being instructed at home, according to the Italian law, rather than in the school. The order was issued that such instruction was only to be given in Italian by an Italian teacher, the inspector being given warrant for entrance at any time and complete powers of arrangement. One German teacher, desirous of teaching his child at home, was threatened with the withdrawal of his parental authority if the boy were not sent to the Italian school. So in Salurn the inn *Zum weissen Adler* was closed because instruction in German was held in the upper story, and another householder was threatened by the militia with his house being set on fire because German teaching was allowed in it. In

St. Leonard in Passeier a whole family were turned out of their own country house because some peasant children in the valley had there been taught to read and write in German. In Burgeis in Vintschgau another inn was shut up because the innkeeper had engaged a German governess for his two children; and at Altrei the sub-prefect himself arrived personally, threatening the communal council with dissolution if the "secret school" were not discontinued. On a schoolmistress pointing out that the Italian law did not forbid such home teaching, and that in all the old provinces foreign languages were taught without restriction, the Fascist secretary, Parisi, responded: "The old provinces had different laws than had South Tyrol; that province must be thoroughly Italianized!"

So the process for such injustice was carried on! When in Bozen a *Schillerbund* was about to be founded, with the object of furthering German culture and especially German private schools, it was forbidden by the prefect with the announcement: In so far as the activity of the society aimed at completing that of the State, it was superfluous, and in so far as it aimed to counteract the State, such a society would be mischievous. An appeal to the Ministry in Rome was rejected, without any reason being assigned.

Any assistance for the "Catacomb" schools, especially collections of money, was severely put a stop to. We fancied that something could be collected by bringing out some New Year cards of good wishes. The artist Stolz designed a charming sketch of a peasant mother reading a book with her little boy, and underneath the lines:

Muttersprache, Mutterlaut,
Wie so wonnesam, so traut!

(Mother-speech and mother-tongue,
Sweet through ages they have rung.)

When, however, these cards were hung up under peasant roofs throughout the land, the *Carabinieri* were let loose, and the president of the Raiffeisen Savings Bank in Völs was sentenced to a fine because he had put up the picture in the office of the Savings Bank.

Finally came the heaviest blow of all. Two men, who in Italian eyes were abhorred as the especial champions of German instruction, the teacher Rudolf Riedl in Tramin and the advocate Josef Noldin in Salurn, were to be rendered powerless once for all. To this end a first wild attempt was made. In the middle of December 1925, after numerous intrigues and outrages, confiscation of valuable property, and continued threats of personal violence, Dr. Noldin was summoned to the *Carabinieri* barracks in Salurn, and there for three hours and a half subjected to cross-examination. The Italians sought to provoke him, shook their fists in his face, and put a hundred insidious questions, designed to entrap him into a belittling utterance against the State, Mussolini, or some other sacred object, his inquisitors having been so certain of forcing him to say something imprudent, that the autocar to convey him to prison was already waiting outside. Noldin, an exceptionally self-controlled and able man, did not fall into the snare, but conducted himself in the most proper manner until the Italians' patience gave out, and, suddenly asserting that he had called them *Aguzzini* (hangman's assistants), they arrested him. Noldin later told me that he had not so much as known the expression *Aguzzini*, but for all that he was put in fetters and sent to the tribunal of Trent. There in an icy cell he spent his Christmas Day, 1925, and after twenty days' imprisonment was sentenced to a term of five days more. It was significant that the judges were obliged to acquit him of the charge of having defamed any of the officials, despite the fact of the same men having sworn to Noldin having applied the insulting expression to them; but the judges being plainly

acquainted with the nature of Fascist oaths, did not consider them sufficient grounds for condemning him on that head. Nevertheless, they found him guilty of having got up a collection for providing a Christmas-tree for Salurn children, and for that was adjudged the penalty of the five days' imprisonment.

Furiously must the Fascists realize that this first attempt had failed. They were fain to wait a year, in which the Fascist Parliament had completed the new Criminal Code, under which, from January 1927, Dr. Noldin with no further trial could be sentenced to five years' banishment. Banishment to the rocky Lipari island, where he lived in countless difficulties and privations, forbidden to write in German to his seventy-year-old mother or to his children, his personal liberty being restricted to the two small streets of the little town, in which, as in a prison courtyard, he may pace up and down. At night he and his heroic young wife, who had followed him into exile, would be startled awake at different times by visits of inspection from the Fascist militia. In addition to all this, the heat of the Southern summer making life on a waterless island a sheer hell, it cannot be wondered at that in the hottest season of his second year of banishment Noldin should break down under the deadly illness called, whether or not in cynicism, "Liparitis". Some months later he was sent home, the Fascists evidently considering that through terror and sickness he was no longer to be feared.¹

¹ They yet took no risks! Liparitis being discovered to be a form of typhus, doctors on the mainland recommended Karlsbad waters as the sole cure, but the Italian authorities refused to grant him travel passports! His advocate's licence having since his sentence been withdrawn and being still obdurately withheld, Dr. Noldin lingered on through the year of his release in sore straits.

Since the above was written—*Tirol Unterm Beil* in the original having reached its third edition—two surgical operations being performed without success, and cancer having set in, on December 14, 1929, a couple of weeks after his forty-first birthday, Josef Noldin passed away from earth. That the news of his death went to his country's heart was

Against the schoolmaster Rudolf Riedl in his turn, after a series of petty acts of persecution, more formidable manœuvres were brought into play; the Fascists, having placed a dagger and some cartridges in his loft, proceeded to search the house and arrest him for having weapons in his possession. Significantly, here, too, the magistrates took the right view that the compromising weapons had been concealed on his premises by Italians themselves; yet Christmas in the cells was not spared to him, and in January 1927 he too, like Dr. Noldin, was sentenced to five years of banishment. With incredible brutality he, loaded with chains, was for six weeks dragged from prison to prison, until at last he reached the islet of Ustica. Four young children who the year before had lost their mother were perforce left behind absolutely destitute, but a general outcry making itself heard beyond Italy against this Italian

shown by the couple of thousands attending his funeral in Salurn, watched in manifest uneasiness by Fascists from behind half-open shutters or friendly tree-stems. Since as yet no Italian law forbidding Christian burial to their victims has been put on the records, Fascist authorities were fain to content themselves by seizing on wreaths of edelweiss—Dr. Noldin's favourite flower and the symbol of Tyrol—and any with the forbidden colours of red and white among those heaped in the mortuary chapel of Bozen. Mourning ribands attached to such tender parting gifts were also narrowly scrutinized, no word of German being permissible, and one with the names of Heinz, Karl, Traudl, Werner, was triumphantly detected by a zealous police agent. "The names of his children"—at the curt explanation even a Fascist had the grace to leave the white ribands untouched. Yet when the funeral procession, headed by Noldin's widow and stately aged mother, formed behind the coffin borne by the dead man's fellow-prisoners in Russia during the War, among many missing whose passports had been deliberately delayed until too late was *his own sister*! So they laid him to rest, amidst the glow of his native mountains and an irresistible great sob from all around in the forbidden German tongue: *Herr, gib ihm die ewige Ruhe und das ewige Licht leuchte ihm* (Lord, grant him eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon him).

Dr. Noldin, himself before the War on the threshold of a brilliant legal career, and the Fascists since then having sequestered his property, leaves his widow and their four little children in dire poverty, their circumstances indeed being a tacit appeal to any—whether in England or America—who may chance to hear of them. (*Translator's Note.*)

"Frightfulness", the Government, in May 1927, thought it desirable to send Riedl home.¹ He had, however, no sooner reached Tramin than his troubles began once more; obliged to fly from there, he received imperative orders to return, and as a last resource was fain to apply for Austrian citizenship, whereupon the Tyrolese district administration in Innsbruck procured him a post as teacher. As, however, he was about to enter the train to leave South Tyrol, the *Carabinieri* seized on him, and for two months without the slightest legal ground he was kept in prison, then finally dispatched like any criminal over the Brenner. His experiences are about to appear in print, and it is to be hoped that they will broadcast a thousandfold one of the most painful incidents of the Martyrdom of South Tyrol.

37. AN ENDLESS PURGATORY

From 1924 on, the picture grows ever darker. The murder of Matteotti, brave and able leader though of Italian Socialists, was but a sign of the revolutionary state in which Fascism found itself, its surging flood reaching even South Tyrol. Terrorism was less than formerly, but no less perilous; we accustomed ourselves only to speak in whispers after first carefully looking round on all sides, before mentioning the misery of the times. Suspicion and mistrust surrounded us, no one was secure from the police, neighbour looked askance at neighbour, servants seemed dangerous eavesdroppers. When once I and some young friends wished to meet together to discuss our common plight, we could find no safe place save a mountain-top, where we forgathered in the midst of rolling mists. All the beloved Homeland was like a cave of conspirators, in which the children of the land affrightedly avoided the foreign masters, and the energetic

¹ See the utterances of a Mussolini admirer on p. 185. (*Translator's Note.*)

were liable at any moment to be beaten like dogs or thrown into dungeons.

The spring of 1924 brought fresh political elections, on the ground of the law which the Roman Parliament had in July 1923 suffered itself to be forced to pass in abject cowardice. Election by this was so constructed that two-thirds of the mandates must fall to the Fascisti. The Italian delegates and parties then in office have no excuse for their submission. It is true that Mussolini had gathered strong militia forces to Rome and that the Blackshirts with threatening mien, weapons in hand, swarmed about the Parliament-house, but nevertheless, the shameful attitude, as of a wretch falling on his knees for mercy, of the Roman Parliament in that summer will for ever remain a token of inner instability, and all Italy to-day must needs atone for it. We Tyrolese delegates had voted against this "election reform", but we could not prevent it, and had henceforth to reckon on only one single Tyrolese delegate instead of our former four being appointed in the next Chamber. Thanks to the extraordinarily good discipline of our people, we succeeded in retaining out of the new electoral list in April 1924—Tinzi, Sternbach, Ignaz Mumelter (Haslach)—the two first names. Our election badge this time was the edelweiss with a linden leaf, for the electoral regulations exacted that we also must vote with another province, and we joined with the Slovenes of the Adriatic coastland, whose symbol was the lime-tree.

This second election did not pass over so peacefully as that of 1921. A Fascist placard proclaimed:

To the voters of the Upper Adige! All without exception will be regarded as foes of the country and the Government, who vote for another electoral list than that of the National Government.

One of the leading Fascists in South Tyrol, the Advocate Lins from Zara, did not hesitate to assert that the refusal

of the German Tyrolese to join the Fascists would yet cost many tears, and many officials would be dismissed. A threat which soon was fulfilled.

Our candidates were the targets for Fascist attacks. Baron Sternbach was libelled by the accusation that during the War he had appropriated from the occupied town of Udine valuable articles in the deserted houses. This lie was placarded in capitals throughout the land: "Baron Sternbach is a Thief"; Sternbach was able to lay evidence before the public that the Citizens' Committee of Udine in 1920—long, therefore, after the occupation—had expressed their gratitude to him for his humanity and care in the Italian territory. The packets of German newspapers refuting the falsehood were deliberately at the Bozen railway station taken out by the Fascists from the mail-van, torn up, and burnt on the rails. When protest was lodged against this act of violence, the State lawyer condoned the deed "because those guilty of it could not be found out". Even the sub-prefect of Bruneck was not ashamed to pass on the shameful calumny to the burgomaster of the district; and when Baron Sternbach took legal proceedings against him, the Attorney-General and the whole Bar acquitted the defendant on the grounds: Every offence against Honour implies a design to offend; the sub-prefect of Bruneck is so reputable and cultivated a man that any "design to offend" is impossible to him! Other Fascist scandalmongers were, however, compelled by Baron Sternbach to apologize abjectly in the Court-house.

We were on our side unable to put up any placards, and when we tried to collect money for the election funds the *Carabinieri* interfered. The ex-burgomaster Domanig of Sterzing had to be on his defence for years before the Courts, and even before the delegated Appeal Court of Triest, against the accusations of illegally collecting public funds.

Nor were deeds of blood lacking. On the evening before

the election in Bozen the seventy-five-year-old ex-burgomaster, Perathoner, and I were attacked on the street and knocked down. I can still see the old man lying on the ground, his silver hair steeped in blood. The Fascists used the opportunity to make off with the old burgomaster's walking-stick with its silver knob. On the election day itself a Fascist troop came from a distance to Uttenheim in the Pustertal, forced entrance into Baron Sternbach's house, and maltreated him severely. In Bruneck the vice-burgomaster, Josef Neuhauser, member of the electoral commission, with several other Tyrolese, was brutally beaten, and Welsberg suffered from an actual Fascist invasion. A detachment of Blackshirts arrived on a lorry, stormed into the election place, mishandled various voters, and could only finally be got rid of by an alarm raised by the fire brigade, for here, as elsewhere, for once the *Carabinieri* of "the Government Party" did nothing, and so under the circumstances offered passive help.

The activity of the new delegates was a genuine martyrdom, of which a leading factor was the police. Baron Sternbach was ordered to report to the *Carabinieri* command whenever he was about to leave Uttenheim, and when Tinzl in the summer of 1925 participated in the centenary of the magnificent winding road built by Austria over the Stelvio Pass, the Fascist delegates then in power forbade him to attend the festivities at Bormio, threatening him with violence did he do so, and the prefect Guadagnini declared himself incapable of countering them in any way. The remark of the orator, the Parliament member of Brescia, Morelli, at these festivities had a significance of its own worth recording: "The road over the Stelvio Pass has served for the inroads of the barbarians!" These "barbarians", be it passingly observed, were the achievers of this memorable feat of engineering.

In order to cut off the delegates from the outside world,

passports for travel were sometimes refused them, as in the spring of 1927, when they had wished to attend the General Assembly of the League of Nations at Berlin. Even their connection with the electors was for the Fascists insufferable; therefore Prefect Ricci in the autumn of 1927 closed the Delegates' Office in Bozen, where the German Tyrolese had been accustomed to get advice and information gratis in all sorts of emergencies.

The immunity of our representatives, although not disputed by the Fascist Government, did not protect them against house visitations, and when in the autumn of 1925 Dr. Tinzl was returning home from the session of the "Parliamentary Union" in Washington, and in an hotel at Meran delivered his impressions of America to a small group of confidential committee-men, the hotel next day was closed for a week as a penalty, and proceedings taken against Tinzl on the charge of infringing the regulations for assemblies. All this in spite of our delegates with the utmost self-control abstaining from the slightest bitter word or comment, and having studiously avoided connection with the "Aventine", the Radical Parliamentary Opposition.

On March 24, 1929, Fascism instituted the "Plebiscite" Election—already long before announced in pompous and high-sounding words—to the first purely Fascist Chamber of delegates. The Director of the Fascist Party brought out—as might dictators—a list of four hundred "reliable" men, and the Italian people were simply to intimate by "Yes" or "No" whether or not this list were favoured by them. Any contrary proposal was forbidden by law.

No more repulsive spectacle could hardly be imagined than these proceedings of a *non-elective election*! The voters received from officials in the election booths two voting-papers, the one for "Yes" being printed inside with green, red, and white, the colours being easily distinguishable from

the outside, while the other for "No" was pure white. The election director provided both voting-papers with signature and stamps before handing them to the voters, and thus could make the contents of the papers more clearly apparent by the outside. The voter then must hand in the one that expressed his wish, without any envelope and only simply folded over, to the director, and so make the latter well aware of how the individual had voted. To this lack of election secrecy the Government had added severe threats, the Fascist *Alpenzeitung* the evening before filling up the whole of its first sheet of the issue with the notice in large letters: "*Whosoever votes 'No,' or abstains altogether from voting, is a traitor.*" This significant hint was amplified by all official burgomasters: "He who does not go to the election and vote for the Government is an enemy to the State!" Accordingly, all attempts at any counter-agitation were ruthlessly crushed; a half-witted fellow named Desaler, having in his hand the day before the election a copy of the Innsbruck newspaper *Südtiroler*, the police seized him and threatened that his son's business should be closed, unless Desaler said from whom he had got the paper. At this the terrified imbecile mentioned the first name that occurred to him, Michael Malfertheiner, the former secretary of the Tyrolese delegates, a sixty-year-old man with a large family, who was forthwith arrested and sent before the State Courts in Rome for trial. Here for six and a half months he was kept in prison, until in the absence of any evidence the proceedings were allowed to lapse.

Thus under this Reign of Terror the voters of South Tyrol, downcast and discouraged, were put to the vote. Open opposition was not to be thought of; he who felt it safe, stayed away from the election, but this merely aided the elective officials in their barefaced deceit, for they threw whole handfuls of the red and white and green papers marked "Yes" into the elective urns, *to complete the election,*

as one of them naïvely remarked. Many of the Tyrolese voters, in order to escape persecution, had handed in the "Yes" papers where they had crossed out the "Yes"; nevertheless, such were registered on the "Yes" side. In order, however, to delude the world with the simulacrum of an uninfluenced election, some few thousand "Noes" were allowed to pass as in the other provinces; yet he who had voted "No" was often even on the next day publicly pilloried; as, for instance, in Montan, being posted up on the parish notice-board, and in every case put in the black list of the police. The schoolmaster Starck, of Natz near Brixen, was thus after the election suddenly dismissed, the reason being given that he had shown his unfitness as a teacher by his attitude as a voter.

Not a single Tyrolese delegate existed in the new Chamber. A former Austrian officer, Radio de Radiis, had certainly been included by the Fascists in their list, but he had declared himself an Italian, and died some months after the election. The German-speaking folk of South Tyrol were now robbed of all Parliamentary representation.

The whole country was an arena for boundless atrocities, Almost in every village Fascist militia were stationed, house visitations without reason or form daily occurring, floors torn up and garden-beds raked over in a search for weapons. Letters were shamelessly opened, the *Carabinieri* "censoring" the post for the villages, and in Prettau in the Ahrntal their brigadier stole in such industry seventeen hundred *lire*. Countless money orders, whether registered or not, were never delivered, and although the Government hardily denied any unlawful breach of postal privacy, this hardly impressed us, as once when a Bozen advocate was opening a letter from a client in Prague, an official document of the Bozen police fell out of it!

Mussolini has coined the phrase: *The State is the Carabinieri!* Truly these were in South Tyrol an emblem

of the Fascist State over slaves. With what perseverance and ingenuity did they not handle—or mishandle—the people! Objecting to the black and yellow funeral pall in the Vintl church they commanded its removal; in Tiers, during house visitations, they destroyed holy-water vessels, having the inscription in German, *Gelobt sei Jesus Christus*, upon them; in Bozen, at the crowded funeral of the beloved president, Felderer, of the Journeymen's Association, they confiscated all photographs of the ceremony. At concerts they demanded that music of Italian composers should be included, and even in dancing academies that the *Marcia Reale* should be played. In Tramin they caused the communal doctor, Gamper, and his wife to receive formal admonition because during the exile of the teacher Riedl they had looked after his four motherless children. The putting up of a modest tablet in the porch of the Stillendorf house in Bozen, where Franz Innerhofer had been murdered, was forbidden by the police, as was also another of the same nature on the dwelling where Konrad Fischner, the Sterzing celebrity, had been born.

As for the business world, it was wellnigh driven mad over the question of professional notices. The great bookshop of the Vogelweider House in Bozen was closed for a week because on a price list in the window no Italian translation had been given of the words "*nur (only) 4 Lire*". So the largest Bozen commercial house, the firm of Joh. F. Amonn, a hundred and twenty-five years in business, was closed for ten days because in a disused drawer some old tickets with the word "Bozen" on them had been routed out in a house visitation. The *Zentral* hotel in the town was likewise closed for four weeks in the midst of the tourist season because in one of their advertisements the country had been alluded to as "South Tyrol".

At Christmas, 1925, the police wished to do away with Christmas-trees. From reliable information received by

myself through official circles, a command had been received that the *Befana*, the Italian Christmas festival, was to be substituted, and to this end all forestry authorities were to be prevented from cutting down and selling Christmas-trees. As a fact, till shortly before Christmas, no Christmas-tree could be found on the market, but the tidings leaked out and were later confirmed by the Press in every country: "Italy forbids the Christmas-tree in South Tyrol." Such indignation arose in all civilized lands that the Italians, headed by Mussolini himself, hastened to declare that they had never thought of such a thing, while the official notices in the Italian Embassies asserted that the Bozen Commissioner had permitted the poor of the town to cut down Christmas-trees free in the State forests. This was as great a lie as the other!

Still, in 1925 we could kindle the candles on our Christmas-tree as usual, and the Italians had been foiled in one at least of their mean and petty tricks.

The ardour of militia, *Carabinieri*, and civil Fascists co-operated in the work of police oppression. As often as Mussolini uttered one of his inflammatory speeches against South Tyrol, the savage zeal of his followers leapt up anew. Want of space forbids my depicting the greater number of cases, but a few are sufficiently eloquent.

In Sand in Taufers the official burgomaster, Lamberti, struck the teacher Stark in the school before the scholars, and on Stark trying to defend himself he was arrested by the *Carabinieri* and taken to prison. In Kastelruth a certain Capitano Baviera struck the tower-watchman Turler so violently as to tear the flesh from the bones, and gave for his sole reason that he "couldn't bear the Tyrolese faces!" In the same commune the *Carabinieri* treated the road-mender abominably because he had charged them with maltreating his son. In Bruneck, during a concert at the *Post* hotel, the Fascists fell upon some ladies, because they had not risen

when the King's March was played for the second time. The sub-prefect present supported the Fascist conduct, and roared through the room: "In Italy everyone stands up when the Royal March is played!"

This same town of Bruneck was in the autumn of 1925 the scene of a Fascist orgy. Large Fascist detachments had been assembled for the manœuvres in the Pustertal, and nearly all the houses of the town, not excepting the church, had been daubed by the Blackshirts with the tricolours, the badge of the lictors' *fascies*, death's-heads, and threats. Numbers of townsfolk were struck or beaten in the streets and the ale-houses for no more than speaking German. "*Per bastonare siamo qui*" (We are here to mete out thrashings), announced the Fascists. Before the soldiers' cemetery of Bruneck stood a great column, the memorial for the warriors there buried, but even this was defiled with the skulls, bundles of rods, and the rest of the Fascist tokens, while the bas-reliefs, one depicting a dying soldier, were smashed with pickaxes.

At the end of September 1925 Sterzing seemed apparently to have sinned deeply against the Government, and this demanded reparation. The Fascists placarded up in two languages the following notice:

MANIFESTO

National Fascist Party,
Vipiteno Section.

Fascists!

I announce by this placard that an offence has been committed against us this night, wounding us to the quick, taking advantage of our slumbers under cover of darkness. Some abominable black-guard removed our sacred shield, the lictors' *fascies*, from the wall of our office-room, in order of course to slake his cowardly hate to us in secret.

We call you together with the Blackshirts to demand a correspondingly heavy penalty and exemplary expiation. I assume herewith the command of all the detachments and rely on your iron discipline.

Townfolk of Vipiteno I

Lest our well-deserved vengeance should fall on the innocent, I summon you to a general search for the contemptible scoundrels to deliver them up. I also demand of the Vipiteno Burgomaster to put us again in possession of the Lictors' Emblem, and this to be done within forty-eight hours.

25th September, 1925.

II. Political Vice-Secretary, Galeotto.

The shield was found, but the guilty were not sought for. Probably it was a trick of some Fascist. Nevertheless, the burgomaster and the town band had as a penalty to assemble and hang out the tricolours from the citizens' houses, when a great Fascist ceremony had been arranged for bringing back the shield. "The righteous vengeance"—which in Fascist Italy means violent deeds—was thus averted from the township of Sterzing.

But now came the moment for the destruction of all historical memorials. The monument of the "Mädchen von Spinges", Katharina Lanz, was carried off to a museum of Rovereto. In Meran the Fascists worked with the political officials in destroying the monument to the fighter for freedom, Trogmann, and twice over knocked off the head of the statue of the murdered Empress Elisabeth. In Bozen up to 1926 had stood a memorial to the Fallen of the Second Regiment of the Tyrolese *Kaiserjäger*, the Bozen Household troops. It was dedicated solely in reverence. The Italians could not find any trace of offensive reflection on themselves. In February 1926, when the great discussion between Stresemann and Mussolini took place, the Fascist leader ordered this monument to be demolished, and in its place erected a monstrous Italian monument of "Victory", with representations of the regimental deserters, Cesare Battisti, Finzi, and Chiesa. This Italian mark of contempt, for dead and living alike, is a perpetual reminder to Tyrolese, of the depths of their misery and their defencelessness against all manner of insult.

In the process of Italianization the aid of the prison was not to be overlooked. In Lappach the *Carabinieri* arrested the fire brigade captain, Paul Reichegger, during church service on a Sunday, because he had put up in German on the *Rathaus* a summons to a fire brigade practice, and beat him with chains before the church amid universal excitement, which caused the premature confinement of a woman among the spectators. A butcher's apprentice was arrested in the Pustertal for carrying at his girdle a knife-sharpener, which they considered a dangerous weapon; a tavern assistant in Bozen was dragged straight from his inn to prison because a razor, being taken by him to be ground, was espied sticking out of his pocket. The worthy farmer Putz in Staben was put in fetters, thrown like a brute beast on a cart, and borne off to the Court, he having refused to remove a German proverb from his house front. The secretary of the Tyrolese Popular Party, Michael Malferteiner, was locked up because on his writing-table was a letter-weight, made out of an empty hand-grenade, a war memento, and this though no incriminating papers of any sort were to be found. The former president of the Catholic Tyrolese Teachers' Union, Jakob Nicolussi, had to go to prison because in his roof machine-gun ammunition had been discovered, the Fascists having hidden it there unknown to him. The fact of a lawyer in Schlanders having heedlessly dropped a green, white, and red ribbon was looked on as dishonouring the national colours; it was enough to earn him a term of imprisonment.

Among the German nuns expelled from Tramin was an estimable sister of Sixty, Bertha Rainer, accused on the invented pretext of embezzlement of the communal possessions, and only after eight days' imprisonment did she obtain her release as totally innocent. The physician Ursin from Vienna was incarcerated for four weeks because when crossing the frontier, German prayer-books for school children had been found in his knapsack.

The Mussolini-Affront Law, however, affords even better means than any of the above for filling prison cells. The vice-burgomaster, Pius Wiestaler of Brixen, was condemned to six months' imprisonment for having (or so it was alleged) scratched with a key a likeness of Mussolini stencilled on a house wall; but, without any reasons, arbitrary imprisonments were often resorted to: two of the most respected citizens of Brixen, Haindl, former president of the Courts, and the bookseller von Mörl, were on *the Birthday of Rome* (!), 1926, locked up by the police chief, Marchese, without the slightest lawful cause; on the previous night a tricolour on a house had been spattered, but these two had had nothing whatever to do with that. So in the evening Marchese appeared to think, and owned as much frankly, but added that they might be glad they had been imprisoned, as otherwise the Fascists would have done for them or at least thrashed them, till there would not have been a whole bone in their bodies, as they were considered the most dangerous of pan-Germans. The next time (he added somewhat irrelevantly) anything of the kind happened, they would be locked up once more and many others with them. With that they were released, having served the purpose of scapegoats. On similar grounds the burgomaster and two most respectable farmers were imprisoned in Passeier, a royal portrait in the school having been damaged. They were dragged in fetters through the valley to Meran, where with great pomp they were conducted to the prison, to be released a week later as innocent. Yet even such a lot was preferable to the expulsion and exile of many of the priesthood; Professor Kolb, for instance, subsequently the Austrian M.P., who had become known for an impressive speech of his on South Tyrol, or the Benedictine Pater Arnold, of the Gries foundation, or another priest, of the Teutonic Order, Julian Baumgartner, all obliged on account of (alleged) unpatriotic (?) demeanour to leave their country.

There were also great penal proceedings, which accomplished nothing except causing the accused and their relations angry excitement and considerable costs, as when twenty young students were cited before the magistrates in St. Ulrich, on the charge of having sung seditious songs, especially the *Kaiserjäger* March. The trial ended with the release of the lads and their teacher, a Franciscan.

The sensational trial of thirty-one of the Bozen town-folk for high treason began with the capture of the accused in the *Hofer Katl* inn, where the youths were said to have formed a "Conspiracy" accompanied by piano playing and songs. At all costs the Fascists were resolved to discover preparations for a revolution; already they had sent a young Czech, Michalek by name, as a decoy bird to the Bozen fellows, to extract information of such dangers as stores of hidden arms, etc. At Michalek's instigation the Fascist secretary of Bozen had had cards of membership printed for them at a Trent printing-press, which later, when produced by the State Attorney, were to damn the "Conspiracy". The imprisonment on remand lasted thirteen months, but when in the trial before jury, held at Verona, all the accused were perforce released as innocent. In the meantime, however, their families had been reduced to penury, and it had been all the more difficult to help them, as the police forbade any collections to be undertaken on their behalf. One of the young men's children died during the time he had been remanded, while his wife had given birth to another child and was then lying dangerously ill. The accused had petitioned to be allowed to attend his child's funeral, but, though this was granted, it was under the condition that he should be chained and accompanied by two *Carabinieri*. He declined this permission.

In Taufers in the Münstertal, one night Mussolini heads were depicted on many houses, but on the next night they were found to have grown green horns. On this, two dozen

lads of the village were arrested and popped into prison at Glurns, but after three weeks it turned out that the Mussolini heads as well as the horns had been painted by the Fascists themselves. Pretexts for arrests had been wanting in Taufers!

Finally it was resolved in Italy that the last German Tyrolese societies—Gymnastic and Musical Unions, the *Schlaraffia*—those merry thoughtless evenings of old—all political parties, and the “German League” itself, were to be dissolved and their funds confiscated. One or other society might chance to be overlooked, but its activity ceased of itself.

The authorities based this action on the State Protection Law, the mere circumstance that these were Tyrolese associations and societies, in their eyes making them a danger for the State. In their stead was substituted the great delusion of the *Syndicates*, the compulsory Professional Leagues to complete the enthralling of the citizens. There was not the smallest sign of Self-Determination among the Fascist syndicates: their sole object was to make the Socialistic and other non-Fascist organizations impossible. A free development of individual forces amongst these professional groups would have made useless such wiping-out of the non-Fascists, but now the Syndicate remained the subtle and passive apparatus of the Dictator. Its principal usefulness consisted in placing on election days its members entirely at the service of the Fascist Parliament and bringing them up solid to the voting booths. In South Tyrol it served the Government as a means of hastening the un-Tyrolizing of Tyrol.

In the Court of Trial by jury at Bozen the Italians have constructed an immense iron cage for the accused. Like the chains used by the police in bringing men arrested either to the courts of justice or to prison without trial, the cage represented a deadly insult to the Tyrolese, whose country in these matters had reached a higher level. Mussolini

himself had written in his book *Il Trentino* from his own experiences before the War: "The Austrian police and legal administration are more humane than the Italian. Handcuffs are abolished in Austria, only being used in cases of exceptionally violent resistance. Cages in the courts of justice are equally unknown."

Words, idle words. Now Tyrol has been degraded to the level of Italy's civilization. The cage in the Bozen court of justice is an emblem of the universal setting of the sun.

On the midnight of January 31, 1926, some men were sitting in a little South Tyrol town listening to the wireless. The waves brought a strange language to their ears; here was no concert or lecture, only a great hour voicing itself in peals of bells.

The hearts of the Tyrolese listeners throbbed to breathlessness. Freedom was the burden of the wind coming out of the west, but what of us, what of our Tyrol? Were we ever free? It must have been long, long ago. We know not now what it is to be free; we only know what it is to be homeless in our own land, what to have no rights on our fathers' acres, downtrodden and enslaved, cast with wife and child into ever deeper want and wretchedness, what it means to be fettered slaves of murderers of the soul of a people.

The chimes have died away, only smothered sobs from those Tyrolese listeners break the silence of the night. Dark, how dark is it over South Tyrol!

38. THE WAR ON PROPERTY

In Seis, a Tyrolese painter having built a pretty little house, and inscribed "*Sommerruhe*" over the outside lintel, the *Carabinieri* came and commanded the German word to be removed, but the painter thought that was only a jest. The *Carabinieri* came again and repeated their command, this time with threats. The painter made excuses: "That is just a name

which I have given to the house, that cannot be against the law, and, besides, it is untranslatable!" To which one of the soldiers ground out between his teeth, "What! don't you know yet that we're the masters of the country?"

Colony. That is what South Tyrol means for most Italians in it—a land to be exploited. Attacks on other people's property are by the magistrates hardly regarded as criminal when they have been committed by an Italian on a Tyrolese. Innumerable tricky and thievish acts have remained unpunished. At the time especially when Mussolini had just captured the reins of Government, every Fascist was at liberty to amass considerable sums of money as he liked. For this end he would get a collecting paper printed with the Fascist insignia, and went with this from house to house. In the prevailing reign of terror but few townsfolk would dare to refuse a gift for so patriotic an object,—variously represented as some Military League or an *édition de luxe* of some Fascist book—but in reality a golden stream flowed into the pockets of the *Giovinazza*, for private use among the enterprising Blackshirts.

Official authorities and their official organs also turned their opportunity to good account. It would be almost impossible to represent how many bills for the Fascist militia and other holders of office to this day remain unpaid; but in South Tyrol it is an open secret that to request Italian officials to pay their debts is a dangerous matter, since all business-men, innkeeper and merchant, the owner of an autocar and he of a factory crane alike, can only carry on their callings with the sanction of the Fascist authorities.

The Government takes its own view of these proceedings, not concerning itself particularly with justice—least of all when Tyrolese and Italians are in question—but far more with the interests of Italy. Fascism desires to force the Tyrolese from the land and from business. He who has nothing can have no national sentiments—that

is the hope inspiring the obtuse and soulless policy of Italy under Mussolini. "The Germans (in South Tyrol) must be swallowed up in a sea of Italians, and we need not take much thought as to what they may have to say to that"; so wrote the official burgomaster, Paolo Drigo, of Klausen in a Fascist newspaper.

First came the turn of the Germans of the Reich. (Citizens of the German Republic.)

Already in 1920 the Italian Government had announced that all property of Germans of the Reich also in South Tyrol would be taken possession of by them. Without the slightest claim. The Treaty of Versailles gave them no right to this, for when that had been signed the fate of South Tyrol had not yet been sealed. The Treaty of St-Germain, however, had been concluded between German-Austria and the *Entente*, and had therefore nothing to do with the Reich's possessions in the downtrodden provinces.

Such seizure was consequently an act of violence of the worst kind. Through it a considerable number were from one day to another robbed of their last farthing and reduced to beggary, of which some few instances may perhaps here be rescued from oblivion.

Widow Maria Entleuthner possessed a modest little house in Meran worth a bare 50,000 *lire*, she herself at the time of sequestration being seventy-one years old and sickly. She lived on the slender rents of her house and the earnings of her daughter as a music-mistress. Then at a blow her rents, all her furniture down to her very bed, her daughter's piano, and the music-books from which she taught, were declared sequestered; Frau Entleuthner was offered the choice either to pay rent for the little corner occupied by her in her own house or to be cast out homeless. When the poor woman, the matter of the rent having been settled by sympathetic friends, cut down a dead tree in her own garden for firewood, she was summoned before the authorities and informed

that this had been a theft on her part, to be atoned for either by fine or imprisonment. Only on her frantic entreaties was the poor old widow let off, but she had to give up the wood to the authorities and sit herself in a fireless room—at seventy-one!

Paul Bothe, without means, suffering for twenty years from his lungs, was, with his invalid wife, turned out of his own house in Meran. Frau Bothe had contracted her serious illness during the War, in which she had sacrificed her health as a voluntary nurse in a camp of Italian prisoners, by whom she had been called "The Angel of Captivity".

The widowed Baroness Lydia Hofmann, eighty years old and since many years confined to her room, possessed nothing save her estate in Meran, had formerly long lived in Rome, where from her then large means she had spent enormous sums in charity, especially for poor Roman children. Now through that same Italy was she in her old age plunged into wretchedness.

An even worse case passed through my hands. In Bozen lived a widow, Maria Ihlder, descended from the ancient South Tyrol family of Hellensteiner, herself born in Bozen, where she had lived all her life. From her mother she had inherited a corner-house in the Meinhardtstrasse, and as she had married an immigrant from the Reich, she and her two daughters by law belonged to it. Her husband having fallen in the War, his only property, a small house with a vineyard in S. Magdalena, had naturally come to the widow and children; its produce being their only source of income.

When the unfortunate woman was informed that this property of hers was sequestered, her agitation was indescribable. I advised her first to use the normal legal means, and to lay before the authorities as well, a statement drawn up in Italian legal form of her right as a descendant of an ancient Bozen family to claim Italian citizenship. In addition, I tried to comfort her by saying that in my opinion law and

humanity alike would make it impossible to take away a family inheritance from a woman on so juridically feeble a pretext.

The legal remedy, however, was refused. Like all the other equally hardly hit Germans of the Reich, she presented a plea to the German Italian arbitrator, appointed by the Peace Treaty for the adjustment of such cases of dispute. This post was filled by a Ticino man, Soldati, whom I personally during a suit had learnt to know, as a rather rough but extremely conscientious Judge. It was a hundred to one that he, as arbitrator, would declare the sequestration policy in South Tyrol as contrary to law, and would compel the Italian Government to renounce their claim.

The Italians endeavoured to damage the case as far as possible, again and again deferring proceedings with every conceivable excuse, hoping that in the meanwhile the hard-pressed owner might be compelled by increasing poverty to come to a compromise. In defiance of this lingering process, towards the end of 1925 Frau Ihlder received an official notice that the administration of her property had been taken from her, that the *Opera nazionale dei Combattenti*, the Italian Union of Fighters at the Front, had possessed themselves of the property, and Frau Ihlder must "lease" the vineyard and the little house in S. Magdalena from the *Opera*. At such tidings the dismay and despair of the poor woman were overwhelming, and in 1926 her brain became disordered, making it needful for her to be taken to an asylum. A like fate befell one of the daughters, but within two months she had died there.

Meanwhile the Italians had so contrived matters that the greater number of the landowners of German citizenship found themselves compelled to compound. It was even possible to arrange something of the kind for Frau Ihlder, and to save the little that could be saved, so that she was enabled to "buy back" her mother's inheritance and her

daughter's property for a round 80,000 *lire*. Anything beyond that value (of her own) Mussolini "made her a present of"!

When she was told that she was once more possessor of her own house and ground, Frau Ihlder recovered sufficiently to be discharged from the asylum. The formal taking-over of the property from the hands of the *Opera* remained to be accomplished; this body having during the year and quarter of their administration diligently raised and collected the rents of her town house, but not paid the modest interest of the mortgage thereon. It was said at the time in Meran that the Fascist extravagance in the offices there of the *Opera nazionale* had compelled the Government to send two inspectors from Rome to South Tyrol; and that after looking into things, these had recommended wiping out the whole affair, since if further inquiries were made about it such a scandal might arise, as to destroy the reputation of Fascism in South Tyrol once for all. In order to protect Frau Ihlder from suffering further losses, the tenants in the town house were told to pay their rent no longer to the *Opera*, but this awoke much annoyance among the Fascists, threatening as it did a loss of several thousand *lire* to them. The director of the Meran offices, Capitano Corrado Puccetti, came in his own exalted person to Bozen and summoned me to the offices there. As I entered I found besides himself, two other Fascists and a young woman in the bureau. I presented myself and greeted the gallant Captain politely, but he deigned no response for a moment or so; then, assuming an amazingly self-important air, he folded his arms and, haughtily looking me up and down (although he was smaller than I was),¹ cried:

"Who empowered you to collect the rents in the Ihlder house?"

¹ Rather in the style of Simon Tappertit in *Barnaby Rudge*. (*Translator's Note*.)

Wishing to lighten the evidently overcharged atmosphere, I replied simply, "We are here as representatives of the parties, and so we can converse sociably", but at this slight hint Puccetti flew into an even greater fury than before.

"First you must act sociably. You have acted like a blackguard, like a swine, for you are a blackguard and a swine!"

I took up my hat and walked out of the office, Puccetti shrieking after me "*Farabutto*" and "*Porco*" in senseless and somewhat inelegant rage all the way downstairs.

I took an action for libel in the Bozen Court, where in the ensuing trial Puccetti appeared with a considerable following, and, not being able to deny the facts, he justified himself by saying that my demeanour had offended him. The judge, Macchia, a Neapolitan, hardly allowed me to speak, but condemned the Captain to a fine of 40 *lire* (rather less than nine marks), while according to the penal code of the Italian law imprisonment for some months might be inflicted. I had, however, attained my object. Whether or not Master Puccetti had to pay forty miserable *lire* or was condemned to forty years' imprisonment was a matter of complete indifference to me; the insult itself was only a scratch received in the fight for a widow and two orphans; the main point was that the Fascisti had been prevented by publicity from preying on such helpless creatures.

The turn of the South Tyrolese came next. According to Mussolini the Germans belonging to an Italian State are only a remnant of a barbaric invasion; to cleanse the hallowed soil of Italy from them their possessions must be done away with. With this object the Government in the summer of 1924, without consulting Parliament, brought out a law for the "Regulation of Property in the Frontier Zone". All German-speaking South Tyrol was thereby made as it were the glacis of a fortress, spiked with limitations of any free dispositions on any inch of ground. On the old frontiers of

Italy between Switzerland and France, everything remained unchanged; it was evident that all the Government's concern was to strangle the Tyrolese possession of the Tyrol.

The law laid down that all alterations on the surface of the soil—buildings, ploughings, nourishing the ground in any wise, cutting down wood, and so forth—must not be attempted without the sanction of the Prefect and the military authorities, which likewise must be obtained for all transfer of rights of property, useful agricultural cultivation, dwelling-houses, and stock. In building operations the military authority, moreover, had a right subsequently to order demolition. The refusal of consent needed no grounds to be given for it by the powers, and any appeal against the official decisions would have no effect.

The South Tyrol delegates protested against this monstrous law in a Memorial, as follows:

Through these determinations are the most important ground rights cancelled for a definite class of State citizens.

By this law is the equality of State citizens injured, since land-owners on the frontier and river-shore regions of the old provinces are not subjected to these gigantic limitations (Art. 24 of the Constitution).

The most sacred rights of personal liberty and of the home are, likewise, injured, since through the right of perpetual supervision of the collective ground property, as also of dwelling-houses, gate and door are liable at any time to be opened, thus permitting the most searching control and destruction of personal freedom.

Finally, in the most flagrant manner is injured the right of freedom of property, whatever and wherever it be, since all building activity, aye, even the prosecution of agricultural labours and forestry, is hampered by dependence on the individual opinion of an official—moreover, also by the condition attached of demolition on the merest demand; since likewise the right of expropriation is deliberately extended, because the Right of Demolition, not only with regard to its procedure, but with the Compensations of Art. 39 ff. of the Expropriation Law, is in entire contrariety; and because, moreover, by this law the owner is deprived of any disposition over his own land, even the possibility of a purchase by public auction in free concurrence would appear to be removed by it.

It would be too lengthy to quote even the chapters of the Civil Code, of the register of the land laws, of the Regulation of Executions, and all other codes of landed property, which now are to be prevented from acting, through a mere decree of the Government unjustified by anything in the Constitution, and which no long time since even the highest Court of Justice would not have brought into force against the State citizens, until Parliament had signified assent.

It is here but too plain that such a decree delivers up all decisions over real-estate rights between the living, as in cases of decease, wholly to the unfettered judgment of one single organ.

Naturally this Memorial made not the smallest impression upon the Government. The *Popolo d'Italia* expressed its contempt for the German conception of the law by the words: "German legality is disgusting or ridiculous, according to different cases." In this case it was clearly considered ridiculous, to be answered by the Government with a shrug.

The harshness and injustice of such a blow against the agricultural economy is easily to be comprehended by a comparison of the conditions in the other frontier regions of Italy. There no buildings may be allowed within 250 metres of a fortress, and only to be undertaken with official sanction within 500 metres. With the exception of this stipulation, no limitations for agricultural or building operations exist in those other frontier regions; whereas in South Tyrol the enactments above quoted, are in force at a few yards from the frontier-line down through the very heart of the land. From the experiences of the last years, it is to be deduced without question that the one aim of these regulations is to disgust the South Tyrolese with the conditions of life on his own and his forefathers' acres, and especially to hinder Germans—in the broadest sense of the word, whether of the German Republic or of Austria or of German-speaking Tyrol—from acquiring a foot of the country.

In order to make the economic life still more impossible for the Tyrolese population, a Prefectural Decree of Sep-

tember 1, 1926, declared the whole of German South Tyrol to be "a region of especial military importance", in which no topographical surveying could be allowed, and added that in a far-reaching stretch extending over the Etsch Valley photography, the collection of dates¹ and at many points the mere passing of the border zone, were most strictly forbidden.

Finally, the Government proceeded to deal with requisitions and expropriations.

Already in the Armistice the Italian officials had been unable to find accommodation in any Tyrolese house for themselves and the people immigrating thither. Credaro, with his firm belief in his autocratic powers, caused his underlings to draw up a Requisition Decree, by which he could secure houses and all essentials appertaining to them at pleasure. In the Hôtel Gasser at Bozen this led to the shutting-down of all business, and the proprietor disputed the requisition. The department of the State Council in Rome expressly appointed for the new provinces declared him entirely in his rights, and Credaro's Requisition Decree to be illegal and contrary to the Constitution, most particularly in the case of the Hôtel Gasser.

The consequences of this must have been a surprise to Credaro, being, as might have been foreseen, a flood of suits for compensation from all who had been damaged by requisition. At this the Government intervened with a royal decree, re-ratifying that of Credaro, making it incontestable, thus putting a stop to any and every action for damages! The requisitions therefore resumed their progress; the Fascists through the Sequestration Rights establishing themselves and their secretariat in the handsomest house in Bozen, and housing the families of their dependents in luxurious villas, designed for visitors to the health resort.

¹ Presumably historical ones, especially any not redounding to Italy's glory. (*Translator's Note.*)

The expropriation of estates belonging to South Tyrolese families was the most radical means of making war on all home economy. In the beginning it was applied wherever might be a question of erecting public buildings and residential flats for the systematic immigration of Government officials; and any payment for such expropriated property was delayed for years. In Kaltern it fell out that the farmers, long after their possessions had been distrained, had yet to pay taxes on their produce, while the officials in the meanwhile were leasing the distrained lands to others and receiving all rents, yet still delaying the purchase money. Often such expropriation was effected in pure spite, as with the deceased Dr. Noldin in Salurn, whose property, in violation of legal regulations, was destroyed by the building of a wholly unwanted street, in defiance of the protests of nearly every ratepayer. In Toblach the ground of a very poor inhabitant, Fauster, was taken for barracks to be built thereon, although the commune had offered the military authorities a plot of ground close to it, in order to keep Fauster in possession. Three years after, the poor devil had not as yet received a farthing of the compensation money.

In 1927 the Expropriation Bureau struck out with avowedly national aims. The Government allotted to the Union of Fighters on the Front (*Opera nazionale dei Combattenti*) the task of "draining" the Etschtal from Meran down to Salurn; an especial law giving the *Opera* the right forcibly to expropriate all lands needed for the creation of the Works. The directors of the Front Fighters' Union declared quite openly in the Press that the Bureau had the aim, after the proposals of Tolomei in his day, of bringing numberless Italian settlers to South Tyrol in order to give the land an Italian character.

In the carrying out of this plan it was immediately forgotten that according to the law the question was one of "Drainage". Valuable orchards, fertile pastures, and vine-

yards were sequestrated from the Tyrolese peasants of the Burggrafnamt, families of ten receiving commands to leave their farms within four days, without their receiving so much as a *lira* to establish a new existence elsewhere. The financial part, it was remarked, would be settled later. Thus in the ways recorded in the last couple of pages is an Italian market-place, with the name of *La Vittoria*, shortly to be established near Meran, and a flourishing settlement to be built round it.

The *Popolo d'Italia* is in the right: The German conception of the State and its powers has become ridiculous in South Tyrol. There the Fascist view is solely and wholly in place, that South Tyrol is for the Fascist Government and its myrmidons, only the more spoil, still another victim.

39. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE COMMUNES

The Tyrol commune is begotten by German law. The Tyrolese civic rights and legal precedents are derived from Teutonic ideas of autonomy and associated union, which the old form of democracy represents on German soil. This associated self-determination was an excellent school for political experience, besides being a safeguard against corruption, of which indeed there is little enough in Tyrol communes.

It was impossible but that this refuge of burgher freedom and order should be the first target for dissatisfaction and soon for the open enmity of the Italians, seeing that it was the chief hindrance to the political and economic designs of oppression. Therefore the downfall of the communes mirrors one side of the battle against Tyrolese Germanism. Fascism gave its official seal through the introduction of the Italian Communal Rights, which destroyed the independence of the original Communal Administration and reduced

the Burgomasters to tools of the Prefect. But this was not enough in South Tyrol.

According to Tolomei's programme, concerning the communal secretaries (town clerks), the Government in 1923 decreed that "For the Communes of the province of Trent, which is predominantly populated with German-speaking inhabitants", an exception was to be made. The South Tyrol communes might only have as secretaries, persons who knew Italian, or who possessed testimonials from the Italian intermediate schools. The communes were deprived of the right of choice and the Prefect was at liberty to send whom he would.

Again the unofficial Fascist Terrorists busied themselves with the communal question. After the forcible dismissal of communal representatives at Bozen and Salurn in 1922, the Fascists behaved in a similar fashion to those of Brixen. A Fascist gang led by the chief of police invaded the gallery during a communal session, shouting for the retirement of the chief town councillors. "Clear out!" yelled the Fascists. "Down with the priests who have ruined Brixen; if the lot of you don't resign, you'll be apt to find yourselves trotted off pretty quick to the hospital!" The town council, however, decided not to resign. The burgomaster closed the session, and the Fascist demonstration retired for the time being to the streets. A few days later the Prefect, Guadagnini, accommodated himself to the wishes of "the Government party" and dissolved the council of the ancient episcopal town.

Many other communal representative bodies suffered the same fate. In almost every case anti-German reasons were given, as in Kurtatsch, where the dissolution was explained by the "reprehensible national attitude of the communal representative body", and the same happened at Kaltern, Neumarkt, Bruneck, Enneberg, and Eppan. These were the last free-chosen communal representatives in South Tyrol, and the decree for their dissolution ran as follows:

The direction of the communal affairs is invariably carried out after the spirit of the standing orders of the former (Austrian) rule, although the (Italian) communal and provincial laws have been in force for more than three years in the new provinces. The official enactments continue, nevertheless, in opposition to the standing orders exclusively in the German language, the introduction of Italian school-teaching is systematically opposed, finally in every possible way the economic spreading of Italianism and every attempt at co-operation between the Italian section of the people and those of alien extraction has been as with blows trampled underfoot.

The meaning of such dissolution of communal representatives is best seen by a Fascist utterance in Salurn. On the occasion of the Parliamentary election in 1924, the Fascists were agitating energetically for the "Fasces List". As their principal reason they gave: "If in Salurn a large number of Fascist votes were not registered, the communal representatives will be dissolved and a commissioner appointed by the authorities, who will bring about the downfall of the commune."

The numerous dismissals of burgomasters is also noteworthy. He of Abtei was sent off because he had once hung out a Tyrolese flag, thereby betraying "anti-national" sentiments. Wachtler of Innichen, in connection with the closing of a Tyrolese children's play-room; Dr. Nöggler of Graun, for not having taken part in an Italian "Victory Celebration"; Josef Berger of Burgstall, for not having prevented German teaching in the commune; Gerber of Leifers, because of some unpleasantness after a flag-waving affair; Josef Jungmann of Sand in Taufers, after twenty-five years of outstanding activity, was dismissed on account of anti-Italian sentiments.

Such dismissal of burgomasters and communal representatives afforded the Fascists, opportunities to put their own men into well-paid appointments as communal commissioners. When such an one found himself in office, he in turn brought other Fascists as underlings and invited ever

more Italians to the commune, procuring them possibilities of profit and much else. Tyrolese communal officials were ruthlessly dismissed. The former long-established resident citizens had soon not only no control over the commune administration, but were likewise almost entirely excluded from share in the communal funds, they being obliged not to call the tune, but to pay the piper—and that in an unheard-of proportion. This system sprang up in all parts, for throughout Italy the substitution of Fascist *Podestas* in the place of elected communal representatives was introduced, and thus were all communes given over as lawful Fascist prey. Some instances can best depict the horrible conditions ensuing, and these cases enjoying the exceptional advantage of being known, the authorities saw themselves forced to take legal proceedings, that the Italians might thereby vaunt their “impartial justice”.

When in Bozen Dr. Julius Perathoner and the whole German-Tyrolese Communal Council with him were overthrown, they left behind them a well-ordered state of things with considerable funds in hand. Their successors, the commissioners Guerriero, Mossino, Boragno, and Steffanini, rivalled each other in patriotic lavishness to Italian societies, travel associations, memorials, and charitable foundations. The Fascist administration announced the town of Bozen as perpetual member of the *Dante Alighieri* Society, presented a thousand metres of land to an Italian *Kindergarten* Union, allotted to the Italian lessee of Bozen theatre, on account of his losses during the Italian representations, an annual supplement of 100,000 *lire*, together with the expenses of lighting, fitting-up, advertising, theatre staff, such as dressmakers and hairdressers, etc. They further gave a thousand *lire* for the Italian war memorial on Monte Grappa, and many hundred thousands to Italian War Unions, Invalid Days, receptions of students out of every imaginable Italian town, and members of the Royal Household. As all

such customary reception banquets were styled by the Italians *Vermut d'Onore* (vermouth of honour), a couplet soon made the rounds of Bozen:

Der Kommissär spendet immer Wermut,
Die Bürger erfasst immer mehr Wut.

(The Commissioner pours vermouth with free hand
Wormwood grows ever ranker in the land.)

The guests returned thanks with corresponding dashing demeanour; when with their provocatively obscure pennons they paced the streets, every townsman's hat must be raised—or else practical instructions would be afforded gratis. The students of Padua, who once came to Bozen, made themselves so much promptly at home that at the ticket office of the suspension railway to Kohlern they were for paying only half-price as Bozen folk. On the ticket clerk explaining that he was not empowered to fulfil this wish, the young gentlemen knocked to pieces several tablets recording that the German firms Bleichert and the Agidierwerke had built the railway; till to prevent further destruction the ticket clerk found himself compelled to give them the cheaper rates. Then again, for the Battisti monument in Bozen—subsequently to be called the Monument of Victory—the commissioner Steffanini proposed a hundred thousand *lire*, but as nearly three hundred townfolk raised objections to this, it was not accomplished, the recalcitrants, however, being put on the Black List.

In order to cover all this senseless and, for the Tyrolese citizens, offensive outlay, the commissioners—of whom there had been six in the six years after Perathoner's retirement—made an onslaught on town property of land and other estate. To calm any apprehension in their superiors, they developed a feverish national zeal, changing the names of Bozen streets, turning the *Waltherplatz* into *Piazza Vittorio Emanuele*, and even the *Walther von der Vogelweide*

monument was on the brink of ruin when the anticipatory Press notices alarmed the Italians into abandoning their designs of demolition. The *Perathonerstrasse* received the name of *Via Piave*, and the deserter Cesare Battisti absolutely had a street called after him; that which for years had been known as the *Mumelterstrasse*, in honour of one who for so long had been burgomaster of Gries, now rejoiced in the name *Via 28 Octobre*, the date of the beginning of the Fascist government. Out of the communal funds enormous flags were also purchased and distributed to all householders on the eve of national festivals. "To-morrow every house must fly the tricolour", stood in the Commissioner's public notices, and whoever was of another opinion did not dare to show it.

On the other hand, the boycotting and ensuing losses of the Tyrolese townfolk rose to an unheard-of degree. Tridentine or Italian firms received the communal building contracts, carried out by them, be it said, very ill and with shameless profit; and, as a set-off against this, all civic help was withdrawn from the Tyrolese Infants' Welfare Society, the yearly addition to the Tyrolese Town Band done away with, while the honorary pension to the silver-haired ex-Burgomaster Perathoner, voted to him in all due form by the Communal Council on the occasion of his seventieth birthday as a recognition of his services for wellnigh thirty years, was denied him. It may not here be out of place to mention that when in 1926 he who had spent himself for Bozen died, no mourning standard fluttered from any town buildings, no single flower was laid by the Administration on the grave of the greatest citizen of the town, and the Fascist commissioner Steffanini considered it "not expedient" to lay him to rest beside his wife's tomb in the commune's Vault of Honour. Truly the brutality of those in power knows no bounds.

For their own friends, however, there was money and

appreciation in plenty. As inspector of provisions in the town of Bozen an individual called Canetti was appointed, a gentleman who had several times previously been punished for theft. An engineer of the same kidney, Boccasini of Apulia, at once major and commandant of the Fascist militia, assumed the headship of the Board of Works, where he embezzled large sums and had finally to be dismissed, but in all kindness, Steffanini paying him his salary for the next three months. After his dismissal, Boccasini broke into the office where the documents proving his defalcations were kept, and thus ensured his trial even then in progress being stopped, on account of unknown "miscreants". He further remained militia commandant!

The commissioner Steffanini, who either allowed or actually himself accomplished all this plundering of the commune, was at the same time Fascist party secretary and enjoyed the protection of the prefect Guadagnini, who appointed him manager of all Agricultural Societies. Steffanini nevertheless had enemies in his own party, such as the leader of the Fascist Trades Union, Radina, who on occasions was able to put him in the most unfavourable light. When the province of Bozen had been created and Ricci took Guadagnini's place, Steffanini's foes got the upper hand, and he had to lay down his offices in good time, that others might step into his desirable shoes.

The Fascists in Brixen, after the dissolution of communal representation there, managed their finances even worse than their Bozen brothers-in-arms. The commissioner Scipioni found himself compelled to reorganize the town, economically badly hit by the Annexation. He therefore began by procuring a motor-car at the cost of 40,000 *lire*, in which with large parties he undertook long journeys. The staff of the communal administration was replaced and much increased by Italians; and according to Scipioni's motto, "*Padroni siamo noi*" (We're the masters), a fine life

set in for the communal officials, with numberless banquets and high incomes—at the cost of the townsfolk.

The following proclamation will serve to show the extent of the powers which the Signore Commissioner believed himself to possess:

THE TOWN COUNCIL OF BRESSANONE:

Proclamation.

The authorities in office are agreed that on Sunday, 30th May, 1926, the Sunday rest is to be set aside, and instead, Tuesday, 1st June, substituted as a festival, in order to enable the work-people to take part in the reception of His Excellency the Minister of the Interior, Federzoni.

Given from the Municipio, 28th May, 1926

The Royal Commissioner,
SCIPIONI.

The Secretary General,
BIAGINI.

This was posted up in two languages, and is here literally translated.

The Fascist leader, Giosuè Ballerio, was Scipioni's zealous right hand. He was one of the most dreaded oppressors of the Brixen people, and had made himself notorious by his public ill treatment of the Sankt Andrä burgomaster, who was made to suffer for not having hung out the tricolours on some one of the obscure Italian festivals. Ballerio himself had undergone several penalties, and after some time was thrown into prison on account of forging a public document; but this did not cost him his party's friendship. Marchese, the commissioner for Public Safety in Brixen, visited him in his cell, played cards with him, and prevented his feeling dull by wine and gramophone music.

The official burgomaster, Rizzini, came after Scipioni, the same, who in November 1926 had broken into the Vogelweider printing-offices. With him the Brixen sufferings reached their climax. Innumerable were the prosecutions; and in the various branches of civil services extraordinary

situations came to light. The cashier of the Electricity Works, Mangusi by name, much trusted by the Fascist Syndicate, was arrested on the charge of enormous embezzlements; while the communal secretary, Fea, in his day a noted criminal, so misused his official power that after a revision of his official department he was dismissed on the spot. He openly threatened that he would blow up the *Rathaus* in consequence, and for some time a special guard of sentinels had to be organized in order to prevent this.

Even in Brixen Infirmary corruption found entrance. This institution, one of the handsomest in Tyrol, had been established by the former burgomaster Otto von Guggenberg, co-operating with Waitz, subsequently the bishop, and the able first Primarius (or chief), Dr. Anton Sigmund, who on account of his talent of leadership was obnoxious to the Italians. In spite of his descent from one of the oldest families of Tyrol, Guadagnini therefore banished him, also his wife and eight children having to leave the country at shortest notice, the youngest being but eight weeks old. Dr. Faschingbauer, the house-surgeon, whose reputation was high through the length and breadth of the land, had to leave his house because the Italians refused him State citizenship. Subsequently Italian doctors were appointed, among them a Dr. Graffi, entirely ignorant of the Röntgen rays and their use, his incapacity arousing even among the Italian patients such discontent that in a short time he had to be dismissed. Scipioni, on being questioned, declared: "We do not appoint a German", and proceeded to appoint another Italian, Centoscudi, a veterinary surgeon, who only later extended his activities to human beings.

The same outrageous proceedings as in both these Communal Councils were conducted in all other places, but from the boycotting of the native Tyrolese from public affairs it is wellnigh impossible to give a just representation of the confusion and spoliation of the country through

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Italian officials in power. Some even still existing circumstances, however, betoken an incredible lowering of the standard of public life.

The Commissioner Gottardi in Neumarkt.

A heavy drinker, who in defiance of all form ceded the shares of Neumarkt Electricity Works for a fourth of their value to an Italian Society, in consequence, it is said, of bribery from the purchasers. The scandal gaining publicity, Gottardi was removed from office.

The official burgomaster, Lenzi, of Innichen.

Squandered and pilfered the communal funds right and left, and was threatened with penal proceedings.

The Kurtinig communal secretary, Ferrigato.

Appropriated 42,000 *lire* from the communal chest.

The official burgomaster of Dorf Tirol and Schenna, Dr. Morandi.

Who introduced himself to the commune with the haughty declaration, "All power is given to me, also that of the lash," and who after a year of office was sentenced, on account of house-breaking and embezzlement of large sums from the communal chest, to six years and four months' imprisonment.

Besides such instances, there are still many more, whose deeds perhaps are even worse than their evil name. A noteworthy example, however, was Cioffi, the official burgomaster of Tramin and Neumarkt, by profession a bankrupt dealer in skins. He harassed the population of his commune in an unheard-of fashion, enriching himself without scruple through extortion and cheating, and finally, in order to terrorize the Tyrolese folk of the district the more completely, through his wife wrote anonymous letters in German to

Mussolini, reviling him in every way. These were intended to appear as if coming from the Tyrolese people of Tramin, which would afford cause for banishment and all kinds of prosecution; but mercifully the Tyrolese were enabled to bring irrevocable proofs that Cioffi himself was the author of the letters, and in consequence the official burgomaster had to return to his skins business.

Not always, however, was there such a good moral. In Marling one day, two former burgomasters of the commune and a former committee-man addressed the officials in the communal office, entering complaints against some very undesirable resolutions of the official burgomaster Paolo Drigo. They were arrested and sent over to the barracks at Untermais. There they were taught that silence is golden.

40. THE AHRN VALLEY

The Ahrn stream dashes gallantly down through the valley, on by Schloss Taufers towards Bruneck, where it unites with the Rienz; but during its wanderings it must often and wistfully remember its cradle, for nowhere in all the world is it so sparkling and inspiring as there, where the Alps above the Zillertal seem to float like white clouds on an ocean of blue sky, while below the sloping pastures and green forest rustle as with joy in the keen mountain air.

Firm-rooted as their own pine-trees are the folk of these valleys, full of sap and far from pliable. Of a Sunday in their churches, spectators must wonder how so many spick-and-span *Gitschen* (lasses) and powerful, well-grown lads ever came to grow up on valley ground.

When the Italians appeared in the land, Ahrntal folk did not take them seriously. Was that sort of rubbish going to govern Tyrol? That would not last long! But it has lasted longer than any had thought possible, and it was a hard rule, as the Ahrn Valley learnt by bitter experience. Much of this

has been already told in these pages, but their oppression at its worst deserves especial mention.

The first friction broke out about the frontier-line. The Ahrntal northwards touches the Zillertal, and from old days there was ever much friendly intercourse, not merely of men going hither and thither, but of cattle herded over the mountains to the lush pastures of the neighbouring valley.

Then for years all this was stopped, and when Italy and Austria had agreed on facilitating frontier intercourse, the Italian frontier guards would not keep faith and harassed the Ahrn folk whenever they crossed the mountain ridge. At first it was a question of preventing the smuggling of tobacco and sugar, but with time a regular torment of inquisition developed therefrom that could not but fail to embitter those of the Ahrn Valley.

In order to subdue these longings to cross the ridges, Fascist militia were quartered in the Ahrntal, and the molesting of the people in their houses and on the roads grew tenfold fiercer. Soon every farmhouse was liable to be raided for weapons or saccharine; and at Luttach one Sunday churchgoers were stopped before the church doors by militia soldiers demanding to be shown their "identity cards" and arresting three old people—of whom one was eighty and all but blind—because they had not got such police certificates on them. Not only the militia, but also *Carabinieri*, pilfered money and all kinds of valuables when conducting house visitations, declaring it an excellent joke when the owners sought the return of their property.

The temper of the Ahrntal was still further embittered when the school was to be Italianized and the hunting-down of German spelling-books and of German-speaking emergency schoolmistresses set in. Supremely, however, when the Italians declared themselves against the Tyrolese religious usages. In St. Peter, Ahrntal, schoolchildren taking part in a church procession had their banner taken from them by

the *Carabinieri* because it happened to be in the treasonable Tyrolese colours, was therefore brought into school and there trampled underfoot by the Italian schoolmistress. The sacristan Josef Lechner was arrested, and the *Carabinieri* endeavoured—but vainly—to wring from him by violence the damaging admission that the parish priest had bidden him give out the banner and that he stood with North Tyrol in alliance inimical to the State. Small wonder that bitter indignation ripened among these dalesmen, and even among their children; it was in that same St. Peter's that the school-children refused to give the prescribed Fascist salute and even to obey the orders of the *Carabinieri*, whom the staff of teachers had called in, to break the stubbornness of these young Tyrolese! Once, indeed, the Italian schoolmistress had to be rescued by the chaplain from the children's hands, they being minded to wreak vengeance on her, the luckless substitute of their own beloved Tyrolese Fräulein Marianne Heiss! In St. Jakob, where the schoolmaster was given perpetually to reviling his scholars as "German swine", they joined forces and rushed with sticks and stones, singing the burial hymn

Thy time is sped, thou must away,
To all Eternity,

on the Italian, who hastily crept into a safe hiding-place, and next day the school-house was placed under a double guard of *Carabinieri*. Now and again the Ahrntal folk gave vent to their feelings by the demonstration of a white-and-red or a black-white-red standard fluttering from some tree in the forest or on the fields, even on the very roof of the *Finanzieri* barracks, where it had been affixed in the night.

The Italians redoubled their "frightfulness", arbitrarily imprisoning any or all suspected of such "seditious" manifestations, men and women for months being kept in durance. If any boy in the presence of an Italian made a

scornful grimace, he was overpowered by militia and *Finanzieri*, handcuffed, and barbarously beaten; sometimes, as happened with one Peter Hofer-Niedermair of St. Jakob, rendered insensible, when the Italians would leave him on the ground and go off without troubling themselves more about him. In that last-named village of St. Jakob, the Fascists, to provoke the inhabitants, stencilled, in their wont, likenesses of Mussolini on the walls, and on their being damaged it was the moment for the *Carabinieri* to show their zeal and loyalty. Dragging a school-urchin into the barracks, they flogged him until he mentioned a farmer of the place as the perpetrator, but as even to Italians this testimony appeared insufficient, they seized a servant of the said farmer and required him to furnish the desired damning evidence against his employer. The man, Joseph Steger by name, refused to do so, whereupon the *Carabinieri*, as a new resource, "electrified" the unwilling witness until he lost consciousness; the brigadier Palla being prevented by a subordinate from further torturing his victim. In another instance Paul and Filomena Duregg, children of a farmer, being cross-examined in the *Carabinieri* barracks, were so terrified that the girl fell into convulsions and had to be carried from the barracks to the communal doctor. A special deputation from the Ahrntal brought all such inhuman behaviour of Palla to the prefect's knowledge. The *Carabinieri* were not punished.

More dread days yet were in store for the Ahrn region, when in the village of Steinhaus, in the night of April 28, 1929, two *Carabinieri* and an Italian teacher, coming from a drinking bout, were shot dead. In that same night and the following days one arrest followed another, mothers torn from their sucklings, on many farms none left even to look after the cattle. The corpses of the dead were accompanied by the Bozen prefect himself, conveyed through the valley in solemn procession, and, although all three had had a bad

name, buried with all possible honour, Peasants who from the fields had failed to salute the funeral train with sufficient reverence, had their hats struck off their heads by the Fascisti, soaked with petrol, and burnt; and a dozen suspected were flung into Bozen prison, into unlighted cells, where they might not procure food for themselves, although prison regulations permit this for those on remand. Even exercise in the prison courtyard was refused to them, and methods wanting singularly little of medieval tortures were applied to one and another, the *Carabinieri* binding a certain Franz Hofer together by feet and hands, keeping him in this position for a half-day. When in consequence of his anguish he lost consciousness, they revived him by pouring dish-water on his head.

Meanwhile the police machinery was at work in the Ahrntal, the more completely to terrorize this population. Countless house visitations by day and night kept the peasantry on the alert; countless people, among them priests, were some, according to the police laws, "cautioned"; but others for a term of years sentenced to police supervision. Among those "cautioned" was Frau Marianne Kiener, *née* Heiss, wife of the communal doctor of Steinhaus. Before her marriage she had been a school-teacher in St. Johann, and it has been seen how her pupils there in the beginning of 1928 had demonstrated against her Italian successor. Already on that account proceedings had been taken against Fräulein Heiss, as she was considered to have instigated such behaviour, but the magistrate had had to acquit her. The authorities ordered the renewal of the trial, and, although the evidence now as a year ago was entirely in the favour of the accused and the State Attorney moved her acquittal, the magistrate in obedience to Fascist wishes condemned her to three months and seven days' imprisonment.

Her husband, Dr. Josef Kiener, was in the like way imprisoned and brought before the Prisons Commission

in Bozen. To the Italians it was evident, from the universal esteem of the Ahrntal people, that he was the corner-stone of the Tyrolese sentiment in the valley, though, as he had never been guilty of infringing the laws, it was impossible to bring him to trial. He was therefore adjudged "politically dangerous", and condemned to three years' banishment on the former convict settlement, Ponza, on the Mediterranean, while his wife was undergoing a severe operation and on recovery must leave her little son in other hands.¹

At this, all faithful hearts in the Ahrntal throbbed in burning helplessness. The doctor of Steinhaus had been for them a pattern of upright and absolute honesty, a helper of the poor and a self-sacrificing friend of the sick. That such a man should have been doomed by the Italians as a criminal, branded the Italians themselves as criminals in the eyes of Tyrol truth, and because the whole Ahrn Valley—man and woman, greybeard and little child—were of the one mind, because they dared to write on a wall tablet these lines:

Lästern uns die Feinde auch,
Treue ist Tiroler Brauch

(Let foes plague us as they will,
Tyrol will be loyal still)

they were the more mercilessly dealt with.

¹ While these pages were actually preparing for the press, after the Austrian Chancellor's official interview in Rome, with Signor Mussolini, the latter promised some slight amelioration of the police regulations in South Tyrol. One fortunate positive result of Chancellor Schober's mediation was the release of Dr. and Frau Kiener from their banishment on Ponza, and they have been permitted to return to their loved homeland, and expectations are cherished that means of livelihood may be restored to him, by the embargo on his medical practice being removed. It is to be hoped that other "political" offenders—exiled or *merely* "cautioned"—will likewise profit by the unofficial amnesty, and that Mussolini's promise on behalf of South Tyrol will be wholly fulfilled. (*Translator's Note.*)

41. DESECRATION OF THE GRAVE

Pflanzt Rosen auf den Gräbern—Liebesboten—
 Ein schlichtes Kreuz aus heimatlicher Eiche,
 Dass es zum Himmel seine Arme reiche,
 Zum Himmel schreit: Herr, es ist verboten,
 Das deutsche Abschiedswort für unsere Toten!

N. BOZEN

(Plant roses on the graves—Love's messengers—
 A modest oaken cross from Tyrol tree,
 To lift wan arms to Heaven,
 Seeming to cry: Lord God, forbidden we,
 In mother-tongue our Dead to name to Thee!)

Long ago October and November were joyous months in the Etschtal. In the inns of the Magdalenerberg and at the foot of the Mendel men sat cosily in the *Herrgottswinkel*,¹ held up new wine in the sunset rays and gave thanks for the countless blessings that were poured anew over the land. In such moments Tyrol was an almost perfect spot.

But this was before the Italian grasp had seized the land. Then Joy fled away and black Sorrow took her place. But the autumn of 1927 brought absolute despair.

And it happened thus:

In the summer of 1923 Guadagnini had promulgated in his Language Regulations, "This decree does not in any way apply to religious memorials or grave inscriptions". This new Scarpia had been ashamed not to exempt the church and God's Acre from police enactments.

Fascist Italy, however, had no such scruples. For the "integral" manner of thought there was no reason why the dead should be better treated than the living: therefore from 1923 onwards sheerly barbaric deeds were wrought at the resting-places of our Dead. In the mortuary hall, where in the spring of 1926 Dr. Julius Perathoner lay in his last

¹ In the Ammer country of Tyrol the corner, under a crucifix with its palm branches.

sleep, police pressed in and tore away the greater number of mourning ribands from the wreaths. From the grave of Josef Jungmann at Sand in Taufers, ribands with German inscriptions were likewise seized.

We were fain to hope that these were but isolated cases, outbursts of mistaken Italians blinded by nationalist fever. On November 16, 1927, however, the Fascist Press printed a decree of the Bozen prefect, Umberto Ricci. The name of this man should never be forgotten, for to him attaches the most odious even of all Italy's crimes against Tyrol, that of the war waged on burial inscriptions—hatred carried on even to the Dead.

Ricci ordered: "Inscriptions on Graves must be exclusively in the Italian language after the date of September 30, 1927."

When this regulation went through the land a sob went up over hill and dale, while peasants, wringing their hands, cried to their priest, "Ach, what does the Pope say to this?"

For centuries, when the word "Humanity" had not as yet evolved to its utmost, the putting out of eyes, the stripping of skin from a living body, were legal penalties causing no shudder, murderers and incendiaries sought sanctuary in church or cemetery to escape human justice. But to the German South Tyrolese, who are no criminals, in days of Italy's much vaunted civilization, even sanctuary is denied. In the land of Andreas Hofer, a son may write no pious words, no memorials of a father's life work, no gratitude for mother love in his own tongue, that was her tongue also, on the cross of a grave. Even over those Dead who fought for Tyrol, the Italian language must proclaim that the World War was fought "for the freedom of the peoples"—rather should we say for Italy's freedom from reverence for all that is great and honourable—from pious awe before the majesty of Death.

The Sarner wind, blowing free over the Talfer town—Bozen—wails over the grave of the last burgomaster in the garth of the Bozen church tower, that Gothic tower which Lutz von Schussenried raised to the blue Tyrol heavens five hundred years ago. Here the harpstrings of the wind echo a Tyrolese note among the Gothic pillars and arches, but no more in glad exultancy; mournfully it sighs over the country-side and the hearts of a people chill with dread.

42. PROSECUTION AND FLIGHT

Those police measures which in the Fascist Gaol State were directed against me personally need only be touched upon. Directly my Parliamentary mandate had lapsed, house visitations were at least yearly held both in my advocate's office and in my own dwelling. In 1926 two such followed each other within two days. The police functionaries always alleged that their orders were to search for weapons, which entailed no legal warrant; but at the same time my papers were most carefully ransacked. When I once asked such a zealously inquisitorial senior lieutenant of *Carabinieri* why he was examining my papers when he was supposed to search for arms, he returned, "You might have plans of a munition depôt among your papers!"

At another such visitation I put a presuming non-commissioned officer pretty sharply in his place, and in revenge he ordered my person to be searched! Then followed an exciting moment. Thundering at the *Carabinieri* that they should not presume to lay a finger on me, I finally gave them my clothes piece by piece, and with a triumphant air the Marshal drew out—a penknife, but the blade not measuring more than 4 centimetres, he failed to catch me out. Snorting with rage, he took himself off, quite forgetting to pocket a "dangerous" book, which he had confiscated, entitled *Five Hundred Years of German Humour*.

After the fourth attempted assassination of Mussolini in the beginning of November 1926, the chief of police met me in the office of the Tyrolese Popular Party, which he had come to close. The late lamented Dr. Noldin was also there, and we had both to submit to a personal search. In my pocket there was an article from a *Chicago Tribune* which someone had sent me and which I had not yet read, on the Italian situation and containing the sentence: "The King would do better as a cobbler or a bookbinder than as a ruler." What a triumph for the police, jubilant—"Now we have him!" for they thought that I had written the article! Their joy, however, was shortlived, as I could prove how little I had to do with it. Another visitation in my own house followed as a matter of course, this conducted by a former Austrian *gendarme*, from whom I had to fear no thieving. I remarked to him: "You have been here so often, you don't need to be shown the rooms, you can go through them by yourself." Nevertheless he and his Sicilian companion turned out my writing-table thoroughly, but found nothing incriminating. In spite of all, three weeks later I was confidentially informed from various sources that my removal and banishment were imminent. The night for which my arrest was fixed, that of November 29, 1926, I did not sleep at home, but the *Carabinieri* did not appear after all. On the next day, however, the sub-prefect Vittorelli summoned me before him at 4 p.m., and I did not hesitate to comply with the invitation, as it was wholly improbable that I should be arrested in his presence.

Vittorelli, being an official who abhorred violent measures and wished here to deprive his Fascist colleagues of the chance, informed me curtly that he was in the position to give me a twenty-four hours' passport to enable me to leave "Italy"—my Homeland of South Tyrol—but if I did not use it, I could count on being sent to the Mediterranean Islands! After consulting with my relatives

and friends, I took the passport and crossed the Brenner by night.

A week later the papers were full of the news of the creation of the province of Bozen, and universal were the hopes that a new and milder policy towards the German-speaking South Tyrol would from now on begin. I also said to myself that the Italians could not send me into banishment, as that would nullify the propagandist aims that they were building on; Mussolini moreover laying much store at the moment on keeping up an appearance of justice, as he was endeavouring to gain Germany's friendship. So to the great astonishment of the frontier officials I crossed back over the Brenner at the end of December 1926, and returned to South Tyrol.

The very next morning I was summoned to appear before the police in Bozen. There the official in charge, Conte Mistruzzi, demanded my pass, and as it was out of date already I dispatched it to him, so that it would reach Graf Vittorelli's hands. The latter observed to the messenger: "Now the fellow cannot complain if something unpleasant happens to him."

Fourteen days went by before I received a fresh summons from the chief of police, Silvestri.

"I have to remit to you a formal Caution."

"What have I done?"

"The Government is aware that you are in opposition to the national regulations. Sign this Protocol."

The document in question was to the effect that sharper measures were to be taken against me, did I continue in my present attitude dangerous to all. These "sharper measures" would be police supervision and banishment.

I asked the chief of police: "I am well aware what our present state is, but could you give me a hint as to the best way of conducting myself in future? Will it suffice if I obey the laws exactly?"

"No, it will not. More is expected from you—namely, a political attitude, with which the Government can be satisfied!"

"I understand. In short, it depends on chance whether worse does not befall me."

A fortnight later I was again summoned to the police. Mistruzzi informed me that, as a "dangerous and suspicious individual", I must, according to Article 3 of the Police Code, submit to be furnished with a description of my person, the so-called "Identity Card".

"Is there anything fresh against me?"

"Not that I know of. The Government, however, considers it expedient to take this step in regard to you."

On the card being presented to me in the Communal Bureau the official demanded my finger-prints in the space provided.

"I will not do that."

"You will be compelled by imprisonment!"

"Then I shall let myself be compelled!"

Whereupon the official noted on the card, "*Finger-prints refused!*"

At the same time with me two Catholic ecclesiastics, the editor of the *Katholische Aktion*, Dr. Alfons Ludwig, and the former president of the publishing house, *Tirolia*, Canon Michael Gamper, were "cautioned" and sentenced to carry an "Identity card for dangerous and suspicious individuals". About a hundred other equally respected persons, among them ex-burgomasters, presidents of companies or associations, etc., were also provided with these insulting inscriptions, bound over to carry them on their persons and produce them on any official demand. Did one wish to sleep the night in any Italian hotel, he must produce this card—and thereby was a marked man!

Months passed by. My correspondence was always opened

by the police, I after several days' delay receiving the letters carelessly fastened down. When in early summer I was expected at a pressing business conference in Graz, the police informed me firmly that any travel passports were out of the question for me. I was, moreover, "shadowed" by official *moutons* (spies).

On June 25, 1927, I was defending in Neumarkt two girls of Tramin, accused of giving private instruction in German. Among the witnesses was the official burgomaster of Tramin, Devarda, a former Austrian officer from the Trentino, who in the first breaking-out of the War had deserted to the Russians, becoming with them the Organizer of Italian Legions, among them Italian-speaking Austrians who had been taken as prisoners of war. As now during the trial he appeared to witness against the two girls in a detestable manner, I bombarded him in a cross-examination, from which he came out very poorly. The judge found nothing objectionable in my line of defence, but on the morrow a vicious article on me appeared in the *Provincia di Bolzano*; and two days later I was informed from the Fascist Commission created by the Government for the Liquidation of the Bozen Advocates' Chamber, that by conducting this defence (of two innocent girls) I had put myself in opposition to the law "of national interests" and therefore would be struck off the Roll of Advocates.

Upon this I pointed out that this action, on the part of the Commission was entirely illegal. There was no law by which a legal advocate in the practice of his profession could be struck off the rolls. Nevertheless, as the Fascist provincial secretary, Giarratana, had during the proceedings of the Chamber Commission stigmatized me in his Official Gazette as "ex-advocate", the issue could not be doubtful. The register authorities were merely political cats-paws, who had to cast out any displeasing to the Fascists in office in order to furnish his colleagues with an object-

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lesson—and incidentally to weaken the Tyrolese legal profession.

A few weeks later I received the Commission's foregone conclusion, the announcement of my having been struck off the Roll of Advocates. Now I was not only "dangerous and suspicious", but also deprived of means of livelihood. In the grounds for this decision the Commission pronounced me a notorious enemy of the State, appealing on this point to Giarratana's newspaper, in which many articles had been eloquent on my unworthiness. What the State Advocate had been unable to achieve, because there had been no offence against the law, the *Fehmgericht*, the Council of the Ten, that secret tribunal of Fascism, had carried through. Dr. Noldin, friend and colleague of mine, had already fallen sacrifice to that Council. It required no great intellect to foretell that now at any moment might be taken those "measures" with which in January I had been threatened.

On Italian Festival Days, I, with how many other South Tyrolese, had been wont to take sanctuary in the mountains, out of reach of Italian clamour. On September 20, 1927, I had a yet stronger reason for doing so: I craved in all stillness to take leave of my Homeland. On the high pastures among the mountains of the Seiseralp I threw myself once more on her breast. It was a bitter hour.

Mild and pensive had been the day, kindling in the sunset into a splendour never before seen by me even in South Tyrol. For long and long, flames in a sea of colours, rose and sank and fell through the cloudland, the farewell—*Auf Wiedersehen*—of my home to me.

Soon afterwards I went late in the evening to my motherling and broke it to her that I must escape. To take her with me, she in her seventy-seventh year and in fragile health, to be exposed to a harsher climate, was clearly impossible, as indeed she herself knew. So she signed a

little cross on my forehead and let me go—lest worse should befall me.

Some days later, after an exhausting and dangerous journey over the guarded Alpine ridges, I slept the first night on free Tyrol ground. The excitements of the last few days startled me awake in the small hours, and I drew out the pictures of my dear ones, saying to myself, "Now I have you again. Life and Freedom are mine. God grant that I may help my brothers thereby!" That moment was one pulsing through the depths of the soul.

How narrowly I had escaped the fate designed for me was clear from a characteristic announcement which appeared in Giarratana's paper a few days after my flight. The Fascist chief bluntly censured the prefect in the following sentence:

The Tirolese Reut-Nicolussi, who should have been mercilessly watched by the police—they, as is plain, having made one mistake after another—has succeeded in escaping with his family over the frontier.

In one of the next numbers of the *Provincia di Bolzano*, Giarratana betrayed his disappointment that I thus in the eleventh hour should have avoided the outstretched arms of Fascist justice, and he moreover added the demand that South Tyrol by threats of condign chastisement should serve as hostage lest I should harm Italy in alien eyes. This proposal was as superfluous as useless: Mussolini in March 1928 officially declaring that he would make South Tyrol pay for all the protests which beyond Italy were raised against his rule of violence. For all this Fascist Policy of the Gag, yet the truth about our Homeland will not fail in ever-widening circles to be spread abroad.

From Innsbruck I sent a farewell letter to my country-folk:

Tyrolese of the South! So long as it could serve the country I have shared with you injustice and persecution, abuse and ill

treatment that brought blood. Now, when Italy is forging yet heavier fetters for our Homeland, I have burst the bonds, and stand free on God's earth.

Here as there I am wholly your man, and what a man may accomplish with head as with hand, that have I vowed to the hallowed Cause of our Land.

Brothers of South Tyrol, be ye strong in your stress. Bear, endure! It will not be in vain. He who suffers earns the Right to be free. Friends of Tyrol from day to day increase in every land.

One day, one day shall we meet again—till then God have you in His Keeping!

43. SATANIC DEVICES

A demoniac unrest incited the Italians to one act of violence after another. Evil begets evil. The accursed brood manifested itself plain for all eyes to see in South Tyrol. The pace was as yet too slow for the Fascists; always and ever reverberated through their Leader's words the underlying sentiment: The work must be accomplished before Germany once more be re-established!

As yet the core of the Tyrol people is sound. An especial ally of Mussolini, the chairman of the Italian League of Fighters on the Front, Manaresi by name, has sketched in the newspaper *Italia Augusta* how Germanism in Tyrol can be most fatally dealt with.

First Manaresi emphasizes the necessity of removing from South Tyrol all German teachers, even though they may be entire masters of the Italian language, for they are and will ever remain penetrated through and through with German civilization. Whenever it be possible, they will converse with their scholars in their own tongue, and so bring to naught all effects of the Italian instructions in school.

In the same way the country must be cleansed from all the German priesthood. The aim must be attained that the whole clerical body, from the lowest to the highest, should be Italian by descent, upbringing, and language. It must unconditionally be hindered that the child, who in school is

receiving Italian education, should receive instruction in German at church. Then energetic steps are imperative to further immigration of peasants of Italian descent and language, establishing them on all farms and lands belonging to the State. In this manner it will be possible to plant little Italian seedlings in those jealously guarded German districts, —a nursery destined speedily to increase until the unity of the German inhabitants shall give way under the pressure.

Still all this is insufficient, *so long as the child out of school-hours breathes the same air as its mother, absorbing as it were the merest breath of her spirit!* Mussolini, Oriental satrap as he is, has reached a like conclusion with his last proclamation:

Though the Teacher and the Priest be Italian, the child must yet not be shut up in its German-speaking family. To this end it must as far as possible be brought into the open, and enthusiasm for gymnastics and games be instilled into it. It must be brought into sane educational surroundings of a purely Italian character, till it demands its election into the Fascist Children's organization, the *Balilla*. That will give impetus to the Italianization of the children, heart and mind.

In other words, the family is to cease to exist, the link knitting the hearts of mother and child together to be broken. Parents must become strangers to their sons and daughters—nay, they are to be rendered enemies one to the other.

This satanic idea of forming *Janissaries* taught to wage war on their own blood was formerly the monopoly of Moslem possession. Fascism has more distinctly than ever in this project of Manaresi's, betrayed its psychic relationship with the rankest offshoots of the Asiatic brain. Nevertheless, it calls itself a Catholic system, and boasts itself as the protector of the Family against Free Thought!

When these designs first loomed on the horizon, the Mothers of South Tyrol sent an impassioned cry to the Mothers of Germany:

In our bitterest need we turn to you, hoping that our cry may move your hearts and rouse your sympathy.

German sisters, hear our cry of despair! No longer can we endure the crushing weight of oppression, humiliation, and insults. For seven years a very Torturer has held our Land in thrall. All freedom is dead, all joy has fled. In dull despair we see our nationality daily moulded into alien form by other customs and another tongue, the memorials of our heroes dishonoured, our heritage of Tyrol renown cast in the dust.

Now, however, comes the worst, now the foe rapes away our children, stealthily and shamelessly stealing them from our hearts, poisoning their minds in Italian schools with the venom of estrangement from and contempt of their own nation. And we Mothers of Tyrol have no weapons to defend ourselves against this crime. We may not bring up even our very little ones as we would in the *Kindergarten*; even after school-hours we dare not bring our children to German teachers, that they might learn their own tongue! We must needs look on at our darling children being corrupted in mind as in spirit by the hands of the enemy, and none of the Powers pay the slightest attention to such wrong-doing by Italy.

Do ye then, sisters, hearken to us, hearken and learn that in German South Tyrol the deepest shame is inflicted on a people's nationality that has ever been inflicted . . . and if you can, proclaim it aloud, so that statesmen of Germany and Austria, nay, that all in power elsewhere, in the name of a common Humanity, may pronounce the shame of Italy to a world blind and deaf to the most revolting outrage on the soul of a nation, ever wreaked in this our Christian century.

Once more, ye sisters, once more, ye Mothers of Germany, hear our cry, before we strangle in this last grasp of a ruthless hand. O sisters, forget us not!

44. AT THE BAR OF HISTORY

An hour of Right does not outweigh
A hundred years of Wrong.

OLD PROVERB.

To-day Italy stands at the Bar of Nations, where impartial judgement cannot be influenced by any Fascist brutality and falsification.

As far as space has permitted the relation of ten years' experience, I have given my personal experience, confirming Tyrol's accusation of the Italians.

Italy for her "Military Security" has taken over an ancient German-speaking territory *with a solemn pledge, guaranteed by her Allies, to leave the inhabitants of that land immune in their nationality*. The land of German legend, of the minnesingers, of heroes in peasants' garb, should remain unmolested in the heritage of its honourable Past.

Now, after four years of desperate struggling and despairing protests, Tyrol in dumb resignation has submitted to the yoke of foreign rulers. Year after year it has borne this yoke with no violence of resistance, only and ever defending its Tyrolese self and the faithful veneration of its Past with weapons of the spirit. This was not only for the sake of law; it was also Tyrol's duty, the neglect of which would have drawn on "The Heart of Europe" (as Tyrol likes well to style itself) condemnation from its own people and from all the rest of the world.

But to Italy, this Tyrol loyalty and self-respect is as a crime, to be chastised with wild hatred, with violence and destruction. So far from atoning, by general forbearance and patience, for the primary wrong of subjecting a race instinct with Freedom to an alien dominion, the Italians under the guidance of Fascism have sinned, by breaches of given word and offences that cry to Heaven against all that is best in humanity and all spiritual and material rights of the land, more heavily than any other nation even in the case of a race of slaves.

South Tyrol to-day is the darkest cell in the Italian dungeons, for here Tyranny has not contented itself with putting heavy bars before the windows, but not a ray of daylight is suffered to fall with messages of consolation and hope to the captives within. South Tyrol's existence is to be cut off from the world, to die out away from the sunshine of national spiritual life, while from the night of its prison house no faintest wail of anguish may penetrate into the outer air of freedom.

And now, because the world is ever more fain to know what is happening behind those closed fortress walls, Italy demands from her captives that they shall witness to their well-being, Italy extorts and forges declarations of fullest content from the Land of Terror.

This book can do no more than give the barest outlines of the conditions at present raging in South Tyrol. It, however, adds its voice on the Tyrol question to the general accusation, against which Italy will find no defence, no excuse—even no extenuating plea of circumstance that can be brought forward.

Crime calls for punishment and expiation—and here begin the requirements of History.

It is not imaginable that Italy can of herself sufficiently expiate the crimes suffered by her to be committed in this land. Should the Italians ever free themselves from the curse of Fascism, they will yet never be able to compensate for the Super-Injustice practised by them in Tyrol, far outweighing any political idea. The anguish of this period of persecution, the need of the exiles, the misery of those left behind, the crumbling of the good old customs, the shattering of the communes, the envenoming of youth, the misuse of prayer, the sacrilege of graveyards—even a free Italy could never balance so heavy a reckoning!

We of Tyrol, and we alone, can with toil and energy bring back our life to its own lines, reconstructing from the ruins of the old a new dwelling-place for future generations. Even could we forget that the Partition of Tyrol was based on so-called claims made a thousand years ago, still to-day, after our unspeakable sufferings of the last years, we could find no other solution of the Tyrol problem than the return of our Homeland to a Tyrol whole and undivided once more.

The rectification of the Brenner boundary line would be the kernel of the rectification of the situation into which

Fascism has brought our mountain land. Ramsay MacDonald, in a general discussion of the new European arrangements, laid down: "The boundaries which this Revision will decide must depend on what way the States have used the powers entrusted to them. *If a policy of oppression has been pursued by them, a fresh Revision will be called for.*" The words might have been written of Tyrol!

Tyrol is ours, and Tyrol alone is the compensation that befits us!

To Europe of to-day we cry out with the English of the Magna Charta: "We will have no lords over us, we will seek our own freedom as a people!"

Italy may go her own way and find her own luck where she will. *She has never possessed any claim on Tyrol!* Had she ever had one, it would now be for ever forfeited; her domination in South Tyrol is a proof in itself that no alien race should be entrusted to her. So let her depart from our *Land Tirol!*

If from the Brenner the frontier posts be withdrawn and in their stead peaceable boundary stones mark off South Tyrol from Italian soil, then only shall we look upon the black shame inflicted on our country as blotted out!

45. CONCLUSION

GMUNDEN. Pentecost, 1928.

I have to-day been at an assembly of the German-speaking peoples, all with one accord united in one great aim.

The most thrilling moment was when on the green plain more than ten thousand youthful hands were raised to Heaven, and before the snows of the Alps as white-shining witnesses, cried as with one voice: "Unity, Justice, Freedom!"

Our hearts, sore enough with many, were yet full of thankfulness to the Almighty that He should have pre-

served us for this moment, radiant and inspiring, in which to resolve that our unity should never slacken till liberty and justice should be achieved for all.

Tyrol has become a symbol, that out of the bitter shall come forth the sweet!

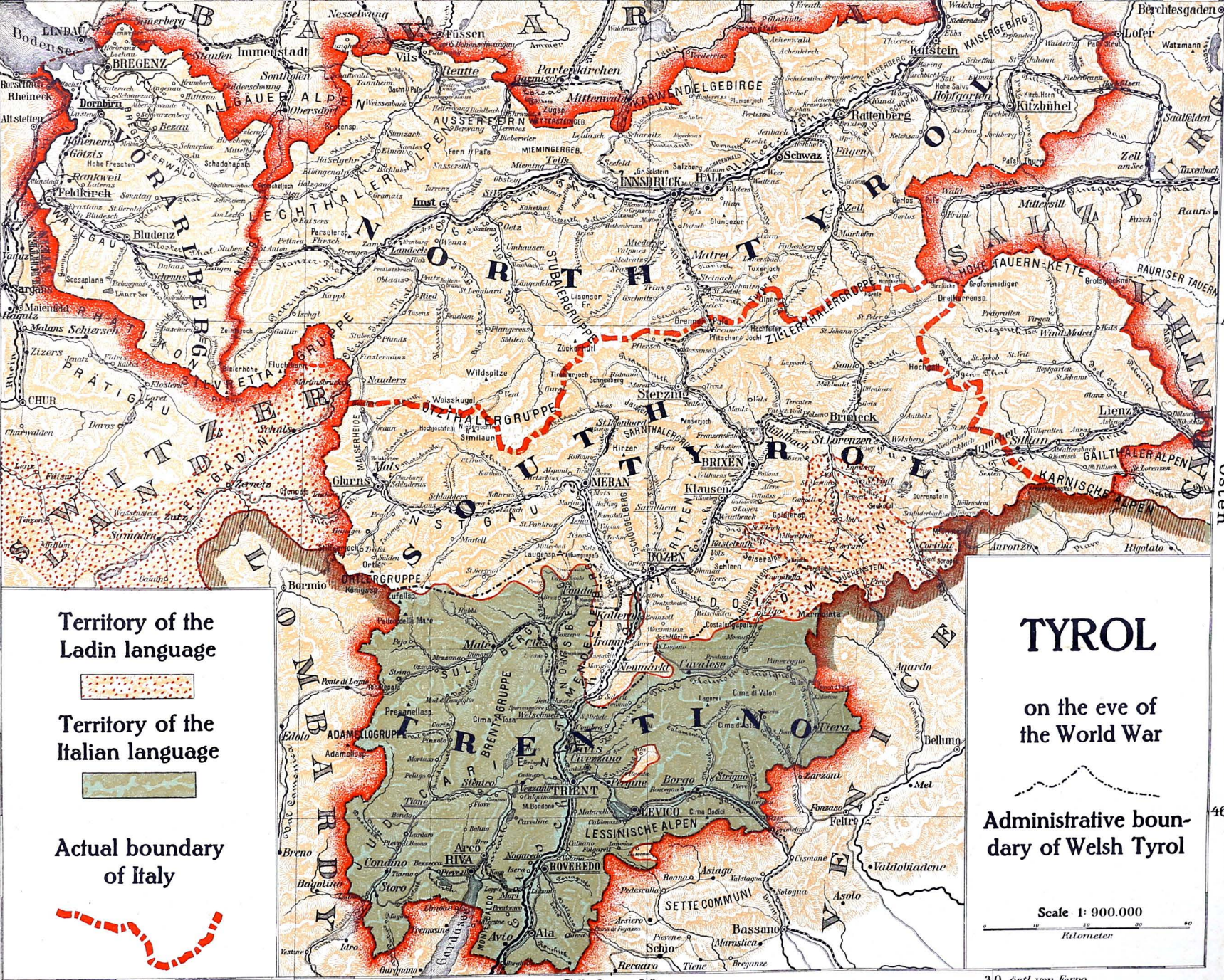
Bitter indeed though is the need of my kith and kin in South Tyrol, I yet do not end these pages in dumb hopelessness. The more profoundly I look into the spirit of our Fight for Freedom, the stronger grows my confidence.

The significance of our struggle goes far beyond the limits of a national desire.

• Our Cause must be that of Humanity, a Cause that in the winter of racial hatreds must soften the frozen earth, bring blossoms and fruits once again to their perfection.

Aye, in the long run the Cause of Tyrol will be recognized as the Cause of God, in whose face our oppressors daily hurl fresh blasphemies.

Our Cause will conquer.



Territory of the Ladin language



Territory of the Italian language



Actual boundary of Italy

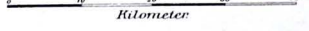


TYROL

on the eve of the World War

Administrative boundary of Welsh Tyrol

Scale 1: 900.000





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