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THE SOUTH TIROL PROBLEM SINCE: THE INTERSECTION OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICS.

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Final Report, 10 December 1985

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A thesis submitted to Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife and daughter who have given me exceptional support throughout my studies at Indiana University. Without their understanding and cooperation, the work for this degree and particularly this thesis would have been impossible.

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THE SOUTH TIROL PROBLEM SINCE 1945: THE INTERSECTION
OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The problem of South Tirol has plagued Austro-Italian relations for a large part of the postwar period. Ethnic political conflict in this region, to be sure, has its roots deep in the past, but the primary question is why this particular problem took on a violent character and became an international issue. Also, how the South Tirol question was finally resolved is of importance today when many West European countries are experiencing a revival of ethnic political conflict. This thesis is an attempt to establish the roots and secondary causes of the conflict in South Tirol and determine how the issue was solved. Due to the large role that domestic politics has played in the development of the dispute, this facet of the issue will also be examined from both the Austrian and Italian perspectives.

The first step in the process should perhaps be to define what South Tirol is and who South Tiroleans are. In the pre-1918 era, the County of Tirol extended from the German border southward to Lake Garda in the present Italian province of Trentino. The southern portion of the county was predominantly Italian-speaking and the remainder mostly spoke German. When Italy took over control of the area south of the Alpine watershed after World War I, a portion of German-speaking Tirol was included. This section extends from Salurn on the Etsch (Adige) northward to the high alpine peaks along

the continental divide. This area, which was almost entirely inhabited by ethnic Germans in 1918, is what is commonly referred to as South Tirol. It corresponds almost exactly to the present Italian Province of Bozen (Bolzano).

Who the South Tiroleans are is a bit more difficult to define, as is the case in any ethnic borderland. Family names are not always accurate predictors. The history of the South Tirol dispute is full of people with names like Fogletti, Ferrari, and Peterlini, who are ethnic Germans, and Mitteldorfer, who is an ethnic Italian. A prominent figure in South Tirolean ethnic German group, Silvius Magnago, is the son of an Italian from Trentino, but is always careful to Germanize the pronunciation of his name. Complicating the ethnic issue further is the presence in a few valleys of about 20,000 Romansch-speaking Ladins. These descendants of the pre-Roman inhabitants of the Alps, although speaking a language derived from Latin, have generally sided with the ethnic Germans in the dispute. The ethnic Italian inhabitants, now about one-third of the province's 430,000 population, also have a claim to the title "South Tiroleans," as they too are inhabitants of South Tirol. But for the sake of clarity and consistency, I shall limit the use of "South Tiroleans" to the ethnic German (however defined) and Ladin populations of the present Province of Bozen.¹ Ethnic Italians regardless of their origin, will be referred to simply as "Italians."

I have chosen to define South Tiroleans in terms of ethnicity rather than language alone because of the complex

language structure of South Tirol. Many inhabitants of the province are bi- and even tri-lingual. In many cases, one language will be spoken on the job and another at home. Many ethnic Italians have their children educated in German because they think that the opportunities for advancement are better for speakers of that language. Younger ethnic Germans, on the other hand, often show a preference for speaking Italian. Since the German language issue has been a point of contention over the years, more should be said about it.

Linguists have distinguished four forms of German spoken in South Tirol. First, and rarely used among the South Tiroleans themselves, is the style of High German used in West Germany. This form is primarily used for communicating with tourists and is often learned as a result of watching German television broadcasts. The traditional "Hochsprache" used in education and communications is the Austrian form of High German. The regional dialect understood everywhere in South Tirol is similar to Bavarian, but is now heavily influenced by Italian. And last, there are a number of strong, varied local dialects, many of which are also Italian-influenced.²

Throughout this thesis, I shall use German versions when referring to places within South Tirol. Outside the province of Bozen, Italian place names will be employed unless English ones exist. "Tirol" and "Tiroleans," used unqualified, refer to the present Austrian province of Tirol and its inhabitants, which includes what is commonly called North and East Tirol.

The history of the South Tirol problem is one of insensitivity, justified as well as unwarranted fears, ethnocentric

attitudes, and misunderstood intentions. Origins of the issue lie in the pre-1945 period when both the Italians and the South Tiroleans suffered under Nazi and Fascist persecution. After the war, the Italians were guilty of insensitivity of South Tirolean fears of assimilation. The South Tiroleans hardly made any attempt to understand the Italians and their political system and turned to Austria for protection. The Austrian government, primarily due to political pressures and public opinion, sought to intercede for the South Tiroleans but actually tended to make the problem worse and tacitly encouraged extremism. The South Tirol problem was only resolved when all three parties reversed these trends and sought to find a solution to the problem. This thesis will trace the development of the problem from the pre-1945 era through the immediate post-war period to the debate at the United Nations. The evolution of a solution, which began in 1962, will be examined as well as the aftermath of the 1969 agreement.

NOTES-CHAPTER I

1The Austrian government sometimes refers to the South Tiroleans as the "Austrian minority." Officially, in Italian usage, they are the "German-speaking element." The South Tiroleans usually refer to themselves simply as "Germans."

2Johannes Kramer, Deutsch und Italienisch in Suedtirol (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1981), 103-108.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The rationale for this chapter is not to present a comprehensive history of South Tirol. It is merely to give the reader an overview of the historical development of the issue, especially as it relates to the events of the post-World War II period.

The history of Tirol begins, for all practical purposes, with the establishment of the Rhaetian Province by the Romans in 15 B.C.E. This province consisted of the present day Austrian provinces of Tirol and Vorarlberg, South Tirol, and parts of eastern Switzerland and Trentino. The descendants of these Latin-speaking people still lived in the area when it was occupied by Bavarians moving southward in the early 7th century. The original area of the historical County of Tirol was unified by Count Berchtold von Tirol in 1141. The name "Tirol" was derived from the residence of the Count (Schloss Tirol), located outside Meran, in today's Italian South Tirol. The county expanded both to the south and north and included German, Romansch, and Italian-speaking people. When the last count died in 1363 without an heir, the Duke of Austria, Rudolf IV, took over the rule of the county and the title of "Count of Tirol." This relationship with the royal family of Austria lasted, with one interruption, until 1918.¹

Tiroleans, under Austrian rule, were given a limited form

of autonomous, democratic self-rule. Also, unlike most of the rest of Europe at the time, Tirolean peasants were granted the rights to their own land (Hoferrecht). The Austrian rulers exempted the Tiroleans from having to fight outside their county, but they were required to defend their own land. Because of this autonomy and democratic tradition, there developed in Tirol a strong sense of regional patriotism and ethnocentrism. Until the rise of Italian nationalism in the 19th century, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that this also extended to the majority of Italian-speaking Tiroleans. Local pride was further strengthened by events occurring during the Napoleonic Wars.²

After being defeated in the War of the Third Coalition in 1805, Austria was forced to give up control of Tirol. The Treaty of Pressburg gave Tirol to Napoleon's Bavarian allies. The Tirolean peasantry was dissatisfied with Bavarian rule and the Napoleonic reforms (centralized power, military draft, etc.) that the Bavarians had instituted. When a group within the Austrian government planned war against Napoleon in 1809, the Tiroleans were ready and willing to join the fighting. War broke out in April 1809, and the Tirolean militia, under the leadership of an innkeeper named Andreas Hofer, quickly cleared French and Bavarian troops out of their land. Elsewhere, however, the war went badly for the Austrians. After a decisive defeat by Napoleon and the occupation of Vienna in May, the Austrian Emperor sued for peace and left the Tiroleans to their own fate. After the Austrians made peace, Hofer also took over control of the provincial government.

Hofer's peasant army won two dramatic battles on the Isel Mountain (Berg Isel) outside Innsbruck in May and August. In October, however, the French and Bavarians were able to assemble an overwhelming force of 56,000 men and the Tirolean rebellion was crushed. Hofer went into hiding but was captured and executed, on Napoleon's orders, in February 1810.³ Following this episode, Tirol was divided for the first time. The majority of the county, including Innsbruck and Meran was retained by Bavaria. The area south of Meran, including Bozen, was given to the Kingdom of Italy (and named Alto Adige for the first time). The eastern part went to the Illyrian Kingdom.⁴

After Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Tirol was reunited under Austrian rule and remained so until November, 1918. Austrian sources are quick to emphasize the historical and cultural unity of Tirol. South Tirol, in particular, has played an important role in Tirolean history. Schloss Tirol and Andreas Hofer's home are located there and there also lived the famous poet Walter von der Vogelweide. From the Austrian point of view, the Brenner Pass is not a barrier to unity, but a bridge between Tirol's two parts. But due to the multilingual character of Tirol, the Tirolean consciousness soon had to reckon with a new force in the nineteenth century, Italian nationalism.

The historical County of Tirol included, it will be recalled, the present Province of Trentino. Under Tirolean rule, it was called "Welschtirol" ("Welsch" is an old German

name for Latin). Trentino was and is ninety-seven percent ethnically Italian. Italian nationalists had long claimed such areas as Trentino as belonging to the Italian "nation." But after the unification of Italy, several nationalist writers began to lay claim to all of Tirol up to the Brenner as being included in Italy's "natural frontiers." The founder of this so-called "Watershed Theory"⁵ was a Trentino native with a doctorate in history named Ettore Tolomei. He published his theory first in a newspaper that he founded in Trent called La Nazione Italiana. The paper's first edition contained an ethnographic map which showed the Tirolean area south of Bozen as being pure Italian and the area between Bozen and Meran as being half Italian.⁶ He explained the area's remaining German-ness as being caused by the original Italian inhabitants having adopted German culture centuries before. Tolomei also, for the first time, devised Italian names for South Tirol's geographic and political features. He and other nationalists were tolerated by Hapsburg authorities in part because they lacked popular support.⁷

When war broke out in 1914, Italy initially remained neutral. The Austrian government began negotiations with Rome to secure Italian war support, or as a minimum, neutrality. Neutrality was required under provisions of Article VII of the Triple Alliance Treaty which Italy had signed. During these negotiations, the Italian Foreign Minister, Sidney Sonnino, requested the frontier with Austria be modified to a line between Meran and Bozen⁸ as a condition for securing Italian neutrality. Austria rejected the Italian demand but on April

16, 1915, offered instead "Welschtirol" (Trentino). In the meantime, however, Italy had also been conducting negotiations with the Allies. On March 4, 1915, Sonnio had made the entire area south of the Brenner as Italy's price for entering the war on the side of the Allies. The negotiations proved successful and the Italian request was embodied verbatim in Article 4 of the secret Treaty of London signed on April 26, 1915. On May 23, 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary.⁹

When the war ended in November 1918, all of Tirol was occupied by Italian troops. The Tiroleans soon learned about the provisions of the secret treaty and began to seek a means of preventing the dismemberment of their land. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points seemed to offer some hope, especially since Point IX stated in part: "a readjustment of Italian frontiers will have to be made along a clearly recognizable demarcation line between nationalities."¹⁰ Clearly, the linguistic (and nationality) border would have left South Tirol united with the northern and eastern sections. At the same time, Tirol sought another solution. Since Italy was claiming the Brenner frontier on the basis of its strategic value, the Tiroleans hoped to forestall the planned separation by declaring themselves to be a neutral, independent republic. If the Brenner were neutralized, its strategic value would be lessened.¹¹

At the 1919 Peace Conference, Italy laid formal claim to the Brenner frontier both on the basis of strategic consider-

ation and the Treaty of London. Italy gave verbal assurances that the ethnic Germans would be given a certain amount of autonomy. President Wilson decided to accept the necessity of a strategic border for Italy, despite the ethnic criterion of his Point IX. Britain and France were both bound by the Treaty of London to accept the Italian claim. The Allies also rejected the idea of Tirolean independence. The Treaty of St. Germain was signed on September 10, 1919, and South Tirol officially became Italian territory.¹²

The postwar Italian government intended to grant the Bozen Province a great deal of local autonomy, but this plan was never implemented. The South Tiroleans did, however, establish a political organization, the Deutscher Verband, which won four seats in the Italian Parliament in the April 1921 elections.¹³ But when Mussolini assumed power in October 1922, all plans for South Tirolean autonomy were shelved.

Mussolini's rise to power was preceded by the Italian nationalist Tolomei's appointment as Minister of Language and Culture in Bozen in 1919.¹⁴ Tolomei's plans for the Italianization of South Tirol were drawn up, and after Mussolini's rise, were quickly implemented. Within the space of a few years, South Tirol and Trentino were combined into a single province, the Italian language was made obligatory in public offices and education, geographical as well as family names were Italianized, and German language newspapers and political organizations were banned. The Fascist goal was clearly the denationalization of the ethnic German population. The Italianization measures even went so far as to require tomb-

stone inscriptions to be changed to Italian. Even mentioning the word "Tirol" made one liable to a fine or jail sentence.¹⁵ Tolomei's attitude on the matter are clearly expressed in a pamphlet he wrote in 1919, which states in part "this name [Tirol], an artificial expression of an iniquitous state of things which must cease, has no grounds whatsoever for surviving."¹⁶

The South Tiroleans vigorously protested these measures, but to no avail. Initially, private German language schools were established, but these, too, were later suppressed (although they continued to exist underground). The final Tolomei measure to rapidly Italianize the region was to bring in more Italians. To provide jobs for this influx, Italy created an industrial zone south of Bozen and gave industries locating there special subsidies. Subsidized apartments were also provided the Italian workers. This policy was so successful that between 1919 and 1945, 120,000 Italians moved into the Bozen area. The percentage of Italian inhabitants rose from three to over thirty percent.¹⁷

The South Tiroleans turned north for relief. Although the democratic governments of Austria and Germany expressed concern for the South Tiroleans' plight, neither was in a position to do much. By the time the Austro-Fascists took control in Vienna in 1934, the Austrians were forced to maintain the best possible relations with Mussolini as a counterweight to the influence of Nazi Germany. The plight of the South Tiroleans was played down because of political consider-

ations. Hitler's pan-German ideology offered the South Tiroleans some hope, but this too was dashed when Hitler incorporated Austria into the Reich. As part of the agreement with Mussolini not to interfere with Germany's seizure of Austria, Hitler explicitly agreed to recognize Italy's Brenner frontier. An agreement was reached in 1939, however, that gave the South Tiroleans the option of becoming German citizens and being resettled in Greater Germany. The outcome of the option selections made in December 1939, was that seventy percent of those eligible (185,000 out of 267,000) opted for Germany and thereby automatically became German citizens.¹⁸ But by July 1943, only 77,000 had been resettled outside Italy.¹⁹ Significantly, those who left were those with the least to leave behind, the urban workers. This action left Italian majorities in the larger towns of Bozen and Meran.

Shortly after Mussolini was deposed in July 1943, German troops occupied northern Italy. The first German troops arrived on Italian soil in "Post" busses at the Brenner Pass on July 31, 1943, and were not met with any resistance. After the Italian government signed an armistice on September 8, 1943, the Germans created two administrative units out of the former Hapsburg territories in northern Italy. South Tirol and Trentino fell into the Pre-Alpine (Alpenvorland) Operational Zone. This zone was administered from Innsbruck by the Gauleiter Franz Hofer.²⁰ For the next two years, the occupied zones were ruled as if they were part of Greater Germany (much to the dismay of the Salo government), although they were never formally incorporated. During this period,

South Tiroleans were recruited (and drafted) into police, SS, and Wehrmacht units. According to Italian sources, members of these units were guilty of committing a number of atrocities against Jews, resistance groups, and Allied prisoners of war.²¹ Regardless of the validity of the claims made by the Italian government about the atrocities, it is clear that most Italians in the area which had been controlled by the Germans entered the postwar period with considerable distrust and fear of South Tiroleans.

The roots of the postwar problem of South Tirol were well planted by the time the area was occupied by the Allies in April-May 1945. The ruthless Italianization policy of the Fascists had left the South Tiroleans with a strong dislike and distrust of Italians. The Options Agreement had led to a significant loss of German-speaking population, especially in the cities. And, of course, two years of German rule had caused among the Italians much of the same mistrust as the South Tiroleans felt towards them. Behind all of this there was the desire of most South Tiroleans for reunification with Austria. These sources of discontent significantly affected the relations among Austria, Italy, and the South Tiroleans after 1945.

NOTES-CHAPTER II

¹Karl H. Ritschel, Diplomatie um Suedtirol (Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1966), 13-17.

²Ibid.

³Karl Paulin, Andreas Hofer und der tiroler Freiheitskampf 1809 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 1981), 17-67.

⁴Herbert Neuner, Suedtirol: Geschichtlicher Abriss einer europaeischen Frage (Munich: Suedtirol Verlag, 1966), 7.

⁵So named because the line of Alps along the Brenner Pass constituted the continental divide.

⁶In contrast, the Austrian census of 1910 showed a three percent Italian population in all of South Tirol.

⁷Ritschel, pp. 50-62.

⁸This was the line established by Napoleon in 1810.

⁹Mario Toscano, Alto Adige-South Tirol, Edited by George A. Carbone, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 2-8; Ritschel, pp. 38-47.

¹⁰Quoted in Toscano, p. 6.

¹¹A detailed description of the Tirol question in 1918-1919 is told in Richard Schober, Die tiroler Frage auf der Friedenskonferenz von Saint Germain (Innsbruck: Universitaetsverlag Wagner, 1982).

¹²Ibid., pp. 418-427. The Austrian National Government also made attempts to keep South Tirol. After the Treaty of St. Germain, Tirol held a plebiscite and 98 percent voted for Anschluss with Germany.

¹³The Deutscher Verband like the Suedtiroler Volkspartei of later years were both umbrella parties (Sammelparteien) which included members of various political persuasions.

¹⁴Tolomei was an early member of the Italian Fascist Party and held membership card number one in the Bozen Province.

¹⁵Toscano, p. 21. A detailed, although somewhat biased, view of the problems faced by the South Tiroleans under Italian Fascist rule can be found in Eduard Reut-Nicolussi, Tyrol under the Axe of Italian Fascism, Translated by K. L. Montgomery, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1930).

¹⁶Ettore Tolomei, The Trentino and Upper Adige (Rome: Tipografia editrice romana, 1919), 9-10.

¹⁷Viktoria Stadlmayer, "Die Italienischen Argumente fuer die Brennergrenze," in Franz Huter, ed., Suedtirol-Eine Frage des europaeischen Gewissens (Vienna: Verlag fuer Geschichte und Politik, 1965), 264.

¹⁸Anthony E. Alcock, The History of the South Tyrol Question (Geneva: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1970), 46-59. Later, many would claim that they were told that if they did opt for Germany, they would be forcibly resettled in Southern Italy.

¹⁹Conrad F. Latour, Suedtirol und die Achse Berlin-Rom 1938-1945, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1962), 143. Primarily, those who left settled in Austria or in the newly incorporated areas of the Reich.

²⁰Karl Stuhlpfarrer, Die Operationszone "Alpenvorland" und "Adriatisches Kuestenland" 1943-1945 (Vienna: Verlag Brueder Hollinek, 1969), 17-31.

²¹Italian Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, Aide Memoire on the Question of the Italian Northern Frontier, 1946, Document 4. Quoted in Toscano, pp. 60-67.

III. THE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR PERIOD (1945-1953)

The postwar period from 1945 to 1953 was one of confusion, hope, dejection and cooperation for the South Tiroleans. During this time period, the Austrian government (as well as the South Tiroleans themselves) made an unsuccessful attempt to have South Tirol returned to Austria through a plebiscite. As an alternative to enabling the South Tiroleans to exercise the right to self-determination, Austria was able to conclude with Italy a bilateral agreement securing for itself a "protective function" for South Tirol and guaranteeing a measure of autonomy. This agreement, known as Gruber-De Gasperi or as simply the Paris Treaty, has been the subject of disagreement and confusion ever since it was signed in 1946. The actions taken by the Italians during the period 1947-1953 constitute, in their view, a complete fulfillment of the agreement. The South Tiroleans appeared first to accept this view, but increasingly were becoming dissatisfied by 1953. This chapter will examine the diplomatic and political developments in the South Tirol issue in the immediate postwar period. The events leading up to the end of the war itself, out of necessity, will also be examined.

Resistance to the Nazi occupation by ethnic Germans in South Tirol was quite limited. Most welcomed the German soldiers and German rule. The only resistance group active to any degree was the Andreas Hofer Bund, which had been founded in 1919 as a "Volksbewusste" organization. Another loosely

organized group was made up of Dableiber, those who did not opt for German citizenship in 1939. A few days after Mussolini's removal from office, a group of Dableiber gathered in Bozen. They decided that since the war was surely coming in their direction, preparations must be made for dealing with the Allies and, if possible, secure the return of South Tirol to Austria.¹ The German occupation of northern Italy in September 1943 caught this off guard and two of its number, Rudolf Posch and Friedl Volgger, were arrested and sent to concentration camps. A third member, Michael Gamper, barely escaped the Gestapo and fled south to the Allied lines. Gamper wrote a memorandum in exile calling for the return of South Tirol to Austria and handed it over to the Allied representatives in Rome in February, 1945. Members of these two resistance groups provided the South Tiroleans their initial postwar political leadership.²

During the last days before the German capitulation in Italy (April-May 1945), prominent political prisoners from a number of German concentration camps were brought to a hotel on the Pragser Wildsee in South Tirol. This group included Leon Blum, Kurt von Schuschnigg, Martin Niemoeller, and Peter Churchill, nephew of the British Prime Minister. Working under the direction of a French intelligence officer, the South Tirolean resistance groups disarmed the SS guards and arranged to turn the prisoners over to the advancing Americans on May 3, 1945.³

On May 8, 1945, after the German surrender and South Tirol's occupation by American troops, the South Tirolean

People's Party (SVP) was founded in Bozen. The SVP was recognized by American occupation authorities a few days later. Like the Deutscher Verband after World War I, the SVP declared itself to be a umbrella party (Sammelpartei). The initial party program consisted of only three points, chief among which was "to present the demand for the exercise of the right of self-determination by the South Tirolean people to the Allied powers."⁴

The Italian government as well as local Italian groups had different plans for South Tirol. Committees of Italian Socialists (PSIUP) and Christian Democrats (DC) adopted positions in favor of granting autonomy to South Tirol, in lieu of permitting the exercise of the right of self-determination. In the meantime, all of northern Italy was ruled first by American, and later British military governments. The Italian government, in July 1945, declared itself officially in agreement in principle of granting linguistic and national minorities a measure of local autonomy. The following month the French-speaking area of Val d'Aosta was granted such autonomy. The military administration was withdrawn from Trentino and South Tirol in December 1945, and Italian control was reestablished over the area. The South Tirol issue was to be decided at an international level.⁵

Well before the end of the war, in June 1944, a US State Department committee working on postwar territorial issues published a memorandum recommending the return of South Tirol to Austria for the following reasons: (1) South Tirol is

"Austrian" is history, culture, and tradition (2) its return would help strengthen postwar Austria politically and economically, and (3) because of their relative sizes, Austria would gain greatly while Italy's loss would be slight.⁶ An "Italian Manifesto" written by expatriate Italian politicians and scientists living in the U.S. was published by Life on June 12, 1944. This manifesto expressed assurance that post-war Italy would give up control "over some compact German and Slavic groups that inhabit extreme zones to the north and north-east (of Italy). . ."7 The Italian government remained unaware of American proposals until the summer of 1945. It surely expected territorial and colonial losses when a peace treaty was finally signed, but the cabinet decided to resist the loss of the Brenner frontier to Austria.

On August 22, 1945, the Italian Prime Minister (later also the Foreign Minister) Alcide de Gasperi⁸ wrote US Secretary of State James Byrnes regarding the South Tirol issue. He argued that Italy should be allowed to retain South Tirol because of its economic importance and because of the association of the South Tiroleans with Nazism. Because of its geographic isolation from Austrian markets, the South Tirolean economy was oriented towards the south. The Fascists had erected a network of hydroelectric generating facilities in the province which supplied thirteen percent of Italy's electricity production. Also, the Bozen Industrial Zone provided thousands of jobs. De Gasperi stressed the fact that a large majority of South Tiroleans had opted (a form of self-determination) for German citizenship in 1939, and that they

had welcomed the German occupation in 1943. He expressed a fear of reemergence of German nationalism if Austria were strengthened by the return of South Tirol. On the other hand, De Gasperi promised that South Tirol would receive local autonomy "similar to the one already approved for the Aosta Valley."⁹ These arguments remained the Italian position throughout the next year of negotiations.

The SVP opened its campaign for its party program with a petition signed by representatives of all the South Tirolean communities and districts. This petition, presented to the Allies in August 1945, called for either the direct return of South Tirol or at least the holding of a referendum. On the other side of the Brenner, the Landeshauptmann (Provincial Governor) of Tirol, Karl Gruber, made a direct appeal to President Harry Truman for a plebiscite the same month. The provisional Austrian federal government, headed by Karl Renner, presented a note to the Allied Control Council in Vienna on September 12, also asking for a plebiscite.¹⁰ The Austrian arguments for settling the border issue by a referendum did not solidify until late September, when Gruber took over responsibility for foreign affairs in Vienna.¹¹

The Allied Council of Foreign Affairs met in London in September 1945, to begin discussions on an Italian peace treaty. Austria was not invited to send a representative, but the Austrian request had been communicated via the note of September 12. Italy, on the other hand, had been invited to discuss the question of the Venezia Giulia frontier and De

Gasperi used this opportunity to indirectly present his views on the South Tirol issue as well. The Council, on September 14, turned down the Austrian request for a plebiscite. The American position had changed (in part because of the Italian arguments) since the 1944 committee report; it now favored Italy. The American position paper presented to the Council proposed that "the frontier with Austria would be unchanged, subject to any claim Austria might present for minor rectifications in her favor."¹² When Austria's plebiscite request was rejected, the Council of Foreign Ministers unanimously adopted the American proposal.

For some reason, the Allied rejection of the Austrian proposal was apparently never made known to the Austrian government. Under Gruber's initiative, Austria mounted an autumn propaganda campaign for South Tirol's return. Gruber developed counter-arguments to Italy's main points and presented them to the Allies. Austria pointed out that South Tirol's economy was primarily agricultural and the fruit and wine produced there was not needed in Italy. For this reason, the South Tirolean economy was definitely oriented northward. Austria suggested that South Tirol had suffered under Fascist rule during the interwar period and to blame them for what the Nazis did was grossly unfair. The arguments also discounted the value of a strategic frontier in the age of atomic weapons and stressed the possibility that South Tirol might become a source of strife in the future. Perhaps the most sincere argument made by Austrians was that the separation of South Tirol from Austria in 1919 was a widely recognized injustice

and should be righted.¹³ That the government's position enjoyed widespread support in Austria is without doubt. The Federal Chancellor, Leopold Figl, said in a statement on December 21, 1945, that "the return of this province is in every Austrian's prayer."¹⁴

On November 25, 1945, the first postwar Austrian elections took place. The Austrian Communist Party (KPOe), despite Soviet support, won only five percent of the vote. The pro-Western Austrian People's Party (OeVP) and the Austrian Socialist Party (SPOe) took 49.8 and 44.6 percent respectively.¹⁵ This poor KPOe showing probably sealed the fate of South Tirol. The Soviets no longer saw any reason to support the Austrian claim, especially since it might mean the addition of 200,000 additional conservative voters to the Austrian electorate. The Communists in Italy, however, showed considerable strength in early postwar elections. The Western powers, similarly, worried about the future of Italian democracy in the face of communist threat. These trends worked against any change in policy that the Council of Foreign Ministers might otherwise have adopted.

On January 21, 1946, Gruber resubmitted the Austrian claim to the Council of Foreign Ministers. In this proposal, the Austrians offered to let the Italians retain the hydroelectric plants and would have given Italian residents in the territory special privileges (including the retention of Italian citizenship). The area would be militarily under the control of the United Nations. South Tirol would be Austrian

territory, militarily neutralized, and would have the interests of Italy protected by treaty. At a rally in support of this proposal held in Innsbruck in April 1946, Chancellor Figl was presented with a petition containing 158,628 signatures calling for a plebiscite. This petition had been signed by virtually every South Tirolean of voting age, including some who had left Italy as a result of the option selections. Italy did not respond favorably to this proposal, and submitted documents to the Council restating her previous political and economic arguments. To the Austrian's surprise and dismay, the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris rejected this solution on May 1 on the grounds that it was not "minor border rectifications."¹⁶ For the first time, Austria learned of the Council's decision of the previous September 14.

The Allied rejection of the Gruber proposal provoked demonstrations both in Austria and in South Tirol. The protest in Innsbruck remained peaceful only because the French occupation commander confined his troops to their barracks to prevent clashes with the demonstrators.¹⁷ A one day long general strike was also organized in Innsbruck and the Tirolean provincial government threatened to resign in protest. Thousands of Tiroleans spontaneously gathered outside the Landhaus and demanded to see the governor. He later appeared and asked the crowd to follow him, along with members of the provincial government, to the Andreas Hofer monument on the Berg Isel, in order to demonstrate the will of the people.¹⁸

Despite the setback, the Austrian government sought to

make the most of the situation. It worked out the only possible solution that it felt was worth considering, in light of the "minor rectifications" limitation. The Austrians decided to seek the return of the Upper Eisack and Puster Valleys along with the town of Brixen. This proposal would have given a line of communication between the eastern and western Austrian provinces. The territory involved, about 3,000 square kilometers, was forty-three percent of the South Tirol land area, but contained only twenty-five percent of its inhabitants. Gruber was also pushing this proposal because he felt it would greatly strengthen Austria's position so that in the future a power sharing scheme or "condominium solution" might be worked out for the entire province. The South Tiroleans, however, were dismayed at this proposal and opposed it. They feared isolation and a rapid loss of their ethnic identity due to their decreased numbers. The Italian government, of course, also opposed it, stressing that most of the hydroelectric generation facilities were in the affected area.¹⁹

In his memoirs, Gruber reported that upon arrival in Paris, the Austrian delegation was asked: "Will you be satisfied with the award of the territory indicated and do you renounce any further claim?" The Austrian cabinet had considered the question prior to the delegation's departure and had rejected it. Apparently, the Austrian request would have been received more favorably had the Austrians been willing to foresake all further claims to South Tirol.²⁰

On June 24, 1946, on the initiative of the Soviet Union, the Council of Foreign Ministers rejected this latest Austrian demand, ostensibly on the grounds that it could not be considered "minor." It is more plausible, however, that the Soviets were hoping that by supporting Italy on this issue, the Trieste dispute might be settled more favorably for Yugoslavia. The implications for the Soviets of the November 1945, elections have already been discussed. The Western Allies seemed to be very concerned about the viability of the young Italian democracy, especially since Italy was being stripped of her colonies. Further humiliation might have led to a return to Fascism. One of the Italian negotiators at Paris, Nicolo Carandidi, put it this way: "No democratic government, in fact, could have faced the Italian nation with a Peace Treaty slicing off a bit of Italy in favor of Austria."²¹ Gruber summed it up in this way: "The decision was basically political."²²

On August 17, the Austrians were invited to present their views (over Soviet objections) to the full 21-member Paris Peace Conference. The Austrians, in turn, invited three South Tiroleans to accompany them and act as advisors. Still not having given up, Gruber, in a speech to the full conference, again reasserted Austria's claim to South Tirol. The South Tirolean representatives also began lobbying the member delegations for their right to a plebiscite. But the conference members showed no interest in reopening an issue that already been decided by the Big Four. With the help and encouragement of the Belgian and Dutch delegations, Italy and Austria began

bilateral talks on August 21. Gruber proposed an Austro-Italian condominium. De Gasperi responded with a counter-offer of an customs union. From the proposals, the negotiations which would produce the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement began. The issues negotiated concerned the establishment of autonomy for South Tirol, voluntary return of the optants, provisions for Austro-Italian trade, and the use of the rail line between East and North Tirol. After only ten days of negotiations, Gruber and De Gasperi agreed on the text of the agreement on September 5, 1946. Because of its importance to the South Tirol dispute, the entire text, in its official English version, follows:

1. German-speaking inhabitants of the Bolzano Province and of the neighbouring bilingual townships of the Trento Province will be assured a complete equality of rights with the Italian-speaking inhabitants within the framework of special provisions to safeguard the ethnical character and the cultural and economic development of the German-speaking element.

In accordance with legislation already enacted or awaiting enactment the said German-speaking citizens will be granted in particular:

- (a). elementary and secondary teaching in the mother tongue;
- (b). purification [sic] of the German and Italian languages in public offices and official documents, as well as in bilingual topographic naming;
- (c). the right to re-establish German family names which were Italianized in recent years;
- (d). equality of rights as regards the entering upon public offices with a view to reaching a more

appropriate proportion of employment between the two ethnical groups.

2. The populations of the above-mentioned zones will be granted the exercise of autonomous legislative and executive regional power. The frame within

which the said provisions of autonomy will apply, will be drafted in consultation also with the local representative German-speaking elements.

3. The Italian Government, with the aim of establishing good neighbourhood relations between Austria and Italy, pledges itself, in consultation with the Austrian Government, and within one year from the signing of the present treaty:

(a). to revise in a spirit of equity and broad-mindedness the question of the options for citizenship resulting from the 1939 Hitler-Mussolini agreements;

(b). to find agreement for the mutual recognition of validity of certain degrees and university diplomas;

(c). to draw up a convention for the free passengers and goods transit between Northern and Eastern Tyrol both by rail, and to the greatest possible extent, by road;

(d). to reach special agreements aimed at facilitating enlarged frontier traffic and local exchanges of certain quantities of characteristic products and goods between Austria and Italy.²³

The South Tirolean advisors in Paris were unhappy with the loose wording and impreciseness of the text. In discussions with both Gruber and the Italians, they pointed out that Article 1 of the agreement could be interpreted to allow Italy to include the Trentino Province in the autonomous area. The Italians told them that such an arrangement was, in fact, necessary in order to "sell" autonomy to the Italian Parliament. The South Tirolean expressed fears of being a minority in an enlarged autonomous region, but the Italian delegates felt that if the South Tiroleans were given their own autonomy, the Italian speaking minority in the Bozen Province would suffer. Gruber told the South Tiroleans that a loosely worded agreement was better, since insistence on a detailed one would prolong and perhaps kill the negotiations. Besides, the agreement called for the South Tiroleans' being

consulted on the "frame" of the autonomy. If they didn't like whatever autonomy arrangement the Italians offered, they could reject it. In the end, Gruber signed the document without the South Tiroleans' full approval. Nevertheless, the South Tirolean representatives went home apparently satisfied that the limits of the autonomous area would be determined in accordance with their wishes.²⁴

The Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement almost missed being included in the Italian Peace Treaty. The Soviets objected that the Peace Treaty was only supposed to apply to relations between the Allied powers and Italy. Since a state of war had never existed between Austria and Italy, the agreement had no place in the treaty. A compromise solution was eventually reached, however, on December 2, 1946. The agreement was "taken note of" in Article 10 of the Treaty and the full text was attached as Annex IV.²⁵

The Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement met with mixed reactions in Austria. Communists, nationalists and some circles of the Tirolean OeVP quickly denounced the agreement as a sellout. The Communist press cried "murder" and "treason." Gruber was forced to fly to Vienna the weekend after the agreement's signing to explain.²⁶ The prevailing opinion, however, among the leading members of the governing coalition was that the agreement was the best possible deal, but it should be considered only a temporary solution. Since the only real solution, the exercise of the right to self-determination, was at that time politically impossible to achieve, the next best

thing would be an international agreement guaranteeing the right to autonomy within Italy. The agreement also gives Austria the function of Schutzmacht (protective power) for the South Tirolean people. When Gruber officially reported to the Foreign Policy Committee of the Nationalrat, a joint OeVP-SPOe resolution was passed supporting government policy.²⁷

The Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement was in effect a compromise. Because of its loose wording and vagueness, it was easier to sell the idea of autonomy to the Italian people. Because it gave the Schutzmacht function to Austria, it was easier to convince Austrians that the South Tiroleans would always have a protector. But the agreement had a number of faults. It did not designate a mechanism for settling disputes that might arise over its interpretation. This feature is all the more important considering the vagueness of its provisions. Another major problem was the question of translations. The agreement Gruber and De Gasperi signed was official only in English; there are no official German and Italian versions. According to some experts, the semantic differences of important passages of the agreement were sources of later dispute. Especially difficult to translate is the word "parification," which does not even exist in English. The ambiguities and semantic vagueness would later strongly enter into the debate over whether or not the agreement had been implemented.²⁸

To the South Tiroleans, the most pressing concern was to reobtain citizenship for those who opted for Germany, but had never left Italy. Also, those who had left and now sought to

return must be brought back immediately. They wanted to qualify as many voters as possible for the eventual regional and well as national elections. In accordance with the Paris Agreement, Italy and Austria negotiated an agreement in February 1948, to this end. It restored full citizenship rights to the optants who had never left and set up a mechanism by which those who had left could regain their Italian citizenship and return to Italy. Members of this latter group were prohibited from returning if they had been members of SS or similar organizations. Despite a South Tirolean propaganda effort, less than a third of those eligible eventually returned and about 4,000 were disqualified. The net ethnic German population loss due to the Options Agreement was about 50,000.²⁹

Even before Gruber-De Gasperi was signed, Italy was working on an Autonomy Statute involving South Tirol. The Italian Prefect in Bozen, Silvio Innocenti, had first proposed a Trentino-South Tirol Autonomous Region to Rome in 1945. The proposal would have done away with the provincial borders and created one unified, autonomous region. When a second draft of this statute appeared in September 1946, the SVP was asked to comment on it.³⁰ The South Tiroleans were clearly dissatisfied with the prospect of being included in such a unified region with Trentino, but favored a more localized arrangement with separate provincial administrations and possibly also some shared institutions with Trent. In their own version of an autonomy statute, developed in June 1947, the

South Tiroleans proposed giving both provinces the status of "regions" and wide ranging powers to each. However, on June 27, 1947, the issue was in effect decided when the Italian Constituent Assembly approved the creation of the Region "Trentino-Alto Adige."³¹

The region was actually only then created in the sense that it was given constitutional status. The Trentino-South Tirol Region was only part of the general constitutional revision taking place at that time.³² Since the majority of the South Tiroleans were disenfranchised at the time of the June 2, 1946, election, none were members of the Constituent Assembly when the region was created. Nor was there any other form of "consultation" with the South Tirolean representatives at this time. Although the region was already constitutionally "created," how it would operate and who would exercise power would be determined by the Autonomy Statute.³³

During the summer and fall of 1947, the South Tiroleans attempted to have their own views incorporated into the draft Autonomy Statute. The draft statute had been developed based on previous editions by an all-Italian commission appointed by the Italian government. When De Gasperi rejected South Tirolean demands for a separate autonomy for South Tirol alone in December 1947, the SVP appealed to Austria for help. Gruber wrote De Gasperi expressing regret that the region had been created, but suggested that if the powers given the Bozen Province were enlarged, the South Tiroleans might accept the regional arrangement. A South Tirolean delegation was invited to Rome to meet with the commission on January 10, 1948.³⁴

The South Tiroleans decided to demand some changes in the draft statute, but not challenge the regional setup. They were under increasing pressure to accept the connection with Trent in fear of not attaining autonomy at all. When the Italian commission made several important concessions (such as the cession of the "Unterland" to Bozen and a 3-year residence requirement for voting purposes), the South Tirolean representatives decided to endorse the statute.³⁵

The Autonomy Statute created an autonomous Trentino-South Tirol (Alto Adige, in Italian) Region consisting of the two provinces. There would be a regional council with rather widely-based powers as well as provincial councils with competence only in somewhat limited areas. A large amount of power was reserved for the central government. To implement the language "parification" provision in the agreement, the statute would allow the South Tiroleans to use German in their affairs with government offices, but failed to make the language official. Education was guaranteed to be given in the students' mother tongue, but would be controlled by regional authorities.³⁶

The South Tirolean representatives in Rome were asked by the Italians to write a letter to the president of the commission, Tomaso Perassi, expressing their approval of the Autonomy Statute. This so-called Perassi letter, written and signed by Erich Ammon, the SVP President, would later be cited by the Italians as proof that the consultation requirement of the Paris Treaty had been met. Although Ammon would later

state that the letter was written under pressure,³⁷ it seems to express strong approval when it states in part, "... we note with pleasure that the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement of September 1946 has been translated into reality in so far as the fundamental problem of autonomy is concerned."³⁸ It also appears that the statute was popular in Bozen, as a contemporary newspaper account reports cheering crowds were present on the SVP delegation's return home.³⁹ The Austrian reaction was also generally positive. The Austrian Ambassador in Rome, Johannes Schwarzenberg, expressed approval of the statute on January 31, 1948.⁴⁰ Gruber called it "a great step forward," although "there's still room for improvement."⁴¹

Although it was later disputed, it is clear that the South Tiroleans accepted and, to some extent, even desired some sort of association with the Trentino Province. Less than a month after the Autonomy Statute was passed, the SVP approved an election coalition with the Trentino Autonomists (ASAR) for the upcoming local elections. The coalition, called the "Edelweiss List", won a majority of the votes in South Tirol and placed fourth in Trentino in the April 1948, elections. The ASAR (technically not a party, but a "movement") soon folded and its former members soon organized the Trentino Tirolean Party and remained electoral allies with the SVP. In national elections held in June, the SVP captured three of nine parliamentary seats allocated to the region and two of the six Senate seats. In November 1948, the first regional elections were held. The SVP captured 67.3 percent of the Bozen Province vote and an absolute majority in the

Provincial Assembly. In Trentino, the Christian Democrats (DC) won 56.9 percent of the vote and the Trentino Tirolean Party was second with 16.8 percent. The Regional Council, which is composed of the two provincial assemblies sitting together, was dominated by members of Italian parties thirty-three to thirteen.⁴³ The DC, the largest party, first attempted to build a governing coalition with the Nenni Socialists but were rejected. They then turned to the SVP, with which they shared similar ideologies, and on January 5, 1949, formed a regional government made up of four DC and two SVP members.⁴⁴

Soon after the regional government began business, it became apparent that its powers would be severely limited by the central government. The Italian constitution gave the regions powers that must be exercised in accordance with the constitution and also with "national interests." A representative of the central government (Commissioner) is stationed in each region and has suspensive veto power over the acts of the regional council. If the region reenacts a law, the Commissioner can refer the issue to the Constitutional Court (for constitutional matters) or to Parliament (for matters concerning the "national interest.")⁴⁵ Over the years, many laws passed by the Bozen Provincial Assembly have been rejected by Rome, because of the "national interest" provision. In the early days of the region, its government also faced another problem. Although the Constituent Assembly had passed the Autonomy Statute, the central government had not issued

all the implementing decrees required for the region's operation. As a result, Rome rejected almost all the laws passed by the Regional Council during its first year of existence.⁴⁶

The South Tiroleans also found other reasons to be upset with the workings of regional autonomy. When agreeing to accept the Autonomy Statute, they expected that provincial government would exercise a considerable amount of power. The basis for this belief was Article 14 of the statute which read: "The Region shall normally exercise its executive functions, delegating them to the Provinces, the municipalities and other bodies or by making use of their offices."⁴⁷ This seemed to the South Tiroleans to provide for a far reaching transfer of power from the region to the provinces. They expected not only to exercise power over the areas reserved for the provinces, but also expected to be delegated additional powers from the region. The Italians in the Regional government (DC), whose power was already curtailed by Rome, were unwilling to transfer any additional power to Bozen.

Meanwhile, other problems arose. The SVP complained bitterly about the renewal of Italian migration into the province. Figures cited by the party show a net migration increase of 50,000 Italians migrating into South Tirol during the period 1946-52, most from the Mezzogiorno. If such a trend were to continue (Italian authorities disputed the figures), South Tirol would soon have an Italian majority. Also, complaints were voiced about how the Autonomy Statute

provided for language "parification." Since, in the Italian view, the right to use German was limited to individuals and not offices, the use of Italian was required in official communication, even between two German speaking officials. According to the South Tirolean viewpoint, the Paris Treaty required official bilingualism. Other rumblings of discontent were being heard concerning schools, war pensions, and other subjects. By and large, however, the South Tiroleans seemed to be cooperating readily with their Italian neighbors.⁴⁸ A British journalist visiting the area in December 1951, wrote: "There is little pro-Austrian irredentism among the South Tyrolese."⁴⁹ This would shortly change.

NOTES-CHAPTER III

¹Toni Ebner, ed., Suedtirool in Not und Bewahrung (Brixen, Italy: Athesia, 1955), 104.

²Herbert Neuner, Suedtirool: Geschichtlicher Abriss einer europaeischen Frage (Munich: Suedtirool Verlag, 1966), 22.

³Tyrol, Landesstelle fuer Suedtirool, Liberation in the South Tyrolese Dolomites, 1946, 15-16; Felix Ermacora, Suedtirool und das Vaterland Oesterreich (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1984), 40-41.

⁴Dolomiten, May 19, 1945. This initial issue is reproduced in Ermacora, p. 43.

⁵Anthony E. Alcock, The History of the South Tirol Question (Geneva: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1970), 83-92.

⁶United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume I, 1944, 441.

⁷Quoted in Eduard Widmoser, South Tyrol: A Problem of Justice (Innsbruck: Bergisel Union, 1957).

⁸De Gasperi was a native of Trentino and was a member of the last Hapsburg Parliament.

⁹Full text is quoted in Alcock, pp. 95-96.

¹⁰Alcock, pp. 92 and 104; Mario Toscano, Alto Adige-South Tyrol, Edited by George M. Carbone, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 72-73.

¹¹Gruber did not, technically speaking, become Foreign Minister, as no such portfolio existed until 1959. Until then foreign affairs were handled out of the Chancellery.

¹²United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume II, 1945. Quoted in Toscano, p. 74.

¹³See discussion in Alcock, p. 99.

¹⁴Times (London), December 22, 1945.

¹⁵Results in Kurt Steiner, Politics in Austria (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1972), 430.

¹⁶Alcock, pp. 103-104.

¹⁷Karl Gruber, Between Liberation and Liberty, Translated by Lionel Kochan, (New York: Fredrick Praeger, 1955), 53.

¹⁸Wiener Zeitung, May 3, 1946.

¹⁹Gruber pp. 53-55; Alcock, pp. 105-107.

²⁰Gruber p. 55.

²¹George W. Hoffman, "South Tyrol: Rights and World Politics," Journal of Central European Affairs 7 (April, 1947): 294-305; Nicolo Carandini, The Alto Adige (Rome: Il Mondo, 1958), 8.

²²Gruber, Ibid.

²³From Austria, Foreign Ministry, Memorandum of the Austrian Federal Government of October 8, 1956.

²⁴Alcock, pp. 119-139.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 140-145.

²⁶Gruber, p. 72.

²⁷Curiously, the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement was never ratified by the full Austrian Parliament as required by the Constitution. This was, however, indirectly done by the ratification of the State Treaty in which Austria recognized the validity of the Italian Peace Treaty.

²⁸French and Russian versions were declared authentic on December 3, 1946. The translation first appearing in Europa Archiv in 1947 is the most widely used German version. Leo Weisgerber, The South Tyrol Question: Imperfection of Translation in an Official Document, Translated by Edith Raybould, (Innsbruck, 1961), 2-3.

²⁹Alcock, pp. 183-191, 210.

³⁰Also participating was the small and short-lived South Tirolean Social Democratic Party.

³¹Alcock, pp. 90, 152-160.

³²See discussion of the regional issue in Italian politics in Chapter VIII.

³³Ibid., pp. 160-161.

³⁴Time was critical since the Constituent Assembly's mandate expired on January 31, 1948.

35Alcock, pp. 164-168.

36Ibid., pp. 168-172.

37Ermacora, p. 70.

38Quoted in Alcock, p. 172.

39Unterlagensammlung 19 (1950): 42.

40Ermacora, p. 70.

41Dolomiten, March 24, 1948. Quoted in Unterlagensammlung
18 (1949): 66.

42Unterlagensammlung, Ibid., pp. 48, 81, 128.

43Alcock, pp. 195-197.

44Unterlagensammlung 19 (1950): 15-16.

45Raphael Zariski, Italy: The Politics of Uneven
Development (Hinsdale, Ill.: The Dryden Press, 1972), 135.
The Constitutional Court was not created until 1955.

46Unterlagensammlung 20 (1951): 12-13.

47Quoted in Alcock, p. 172.

48Alcock, pp. 197-204.

49Times (London), December 7, 1951.

IV. "WARM-UP" 1953-1961

I have titled this portion of the thesis "Warm-up" because of the way the issue evolved between 1953 and 1961. The South Tirolean rumblings of discontent and disappointment about the Italian implementation of the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement were transformed, practically overnight, into outright irredentism by a statement made in September 1953, by de Gasperi's successor, Guiseppe Pella. His calling for the settlement of the Trieste dispute by the self-determination of the inhabitants provided the spark that ignited the spread of dissatisfaction. Over the next nine years, Austro-Italian relations worsened, cooperation between the South Tiroleans and Italians virtually vanished, and terrorist acts began to occur. Eventually, in 1960, the issue of how Italy was implementing the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement would be brought to the United Nations.

Pella, De Gasperi's successor as Prime Minister, responding to Tito's suggestion for internationalizing Trieste's Zone A, said in a speech made on September 13, 1953: "The sufferings of these people [Trieste's ethnic Italian inhabitants] have gone on too long. They must be allowed to speak; theirs must be the last word concerning their own fate."¹ It did not go unnoticed in South Tirol and Austria that Italy was using the same argument they had advanced at

the Paris Peace Conference. Pella's words had immediate repercussions.

The SVP representatives in Parliament spoke during the foreign policy debate concerning Trieste (September 30-October 6) and asserted that the right to self-determination must apply equally to all and, therefore, to South Tirol. The Austrian government, under pressure from members of all its parties, presented notes to each of the Western powers again, requesting a referendum for South Tirol and was told, in effect, that the issue had already been settled. In Austrian Tirol the outcry was stronger. The governor, Alois Grauss, spoke openly of irredentism in the provincial parliament. Demonstrations again took place in Innsbruck. Newspapers were critical both of Italy and of the lack of action by the Austrian government. There were also calls for self-determination for the South Tiroleans. The SPOe, up until then barely willing to speak about South Tirol, accused Italy of not fulfilling the Paris Agreement. This activation of the issue among influential Austrians and the congealing of discontent among South Tiroleans was to have far-reaching effects.²

An indirect result of Pella's speech was the founding in Innsbruck of an organization which had as its goal to help the South Tiroleans "preserve their language, culture, customs, and traditions."³ The Berg Isel Bund⁴ was constituted in March 1954, and would later gain notoriety for its extremist positions and support of irredentism. Several other similar

organizations were founded later and also played roles as interest groups in Austrian politics.

On April 9, 1954, the SVP submitted a memorandum to the Rome government outlining its grievances and expressing their dissatisfaction with the way the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement was being implemented. The grievances delineated in this document became the basis of Austrian-SVP policy in conducting negotiations and changed remarkably little over the next fifteen years; neither did the Italian responses to them.

First and foremost, the SVP-Austrian position was that the terms of the Paris Treaty were not being fulfilled. Autonomy for the South Tiroleans had been watered down by the inclusion of Trentino into the region. In the 1954 memorandum, the SVP did not yet demand separate autonomy for the Bozen Province alone. The position at that time was that the enlarged autonomous area contravened the spirit of the agreement. Later, the SVP position hardened and it demanded a separate, autonomous Bozen Province (see below). Regardless of the "frame" of the autonomy, the SVP complained that the authority of the Provincial Council was so limited that all important decisions were made in Trent or Rome. Laws passed by the Provincial Council (like those of the Regional Council) were often overturned by Rome because they were not in the "national interest." For example, during the first ten years of the Autonomy Statute (1948-1958), the Bozen Provincial Council passed seventeen laws of which eleven were rejected by the national government.⁵

The SVP also expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which the language "parification" issue was being implemented. The South Tiroleans believed that Gruber-De Gasperi called for official bilingualism within the region. By this they meant that either German or Italian could be used in any circumstance anywhere in the region. This also meant that government officials and employees must be bilingual. Instead, the Italians only saw it necessary to publish documents in both languages and offer individuals the right to use German when dealing with government authorities. South Tirolean officials were required to use Italian in all official communications, even among themselves. The Italian authorities considered a government office bilingual, even if only one employee could speak German. This problem was aggravated because few South Tiroleans were able to get government jobs.

The Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement called for a "more appropriate proportion" between the two groups in public employment. The Austrian-SVP viewpoint was that this should be accomplished through a guaranteed ethnic quota. In other words, sixty-five percent of the public jobs in the province should be reserved for South Tiroleans. Instead, the Italians recruited workers from outside the province and gave preference to war veterans (Italian military only). The number of South Tiroleans working in the public sector by no one's estimation was ever more than twenty percent, and in some important areas, such as the police, was less than five percent.⁶

The Paris Agreement had assured the South Tiroleans that steps would be taken to safeguard their ethnic "character." The SVP, in the 1954 memorandum, made its harshest criticism of Italian policies on this subject. The Italians were flatly accused of practicing "cultural genocide." The SVP believed that the Italian government was continuing the Fascist policy of encouraging Italian migration into South Tirol and thus promoting the rapid Italianization of the province. The South Tiroleans cited figures showing that 36,000 Italians had moved to South Tirol since 1945 and that the vote for Italian parties had grown from thirty-one percent in 1948 to forty-one percent in 1953.⁷ As proof that Rome was promoting the migration into South Tirol, the SVP quoted figures showing that more government subsidized apartments were being built in Bozen than were being built in Trent. Bozen, with half Trent's population, received 6,788 apartments during the period 1945-56, while Trent received 1,446; of those built in Bozen, ninety-three percent were given to Italian families.⁸ As already mentioned, most new government jobs were going to Italians recruited from the south. Each new Italian family moving to South Tirol further changed the ethnic proportion. The South Tiroleans feared that they would soon become a minority in their own land and would lose their "ethnic character."

The Italian position was that the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement had basically been fulfilled. There might be some minor points awaiting action because of their complexity, but

the basic requirements were already satisfied. The Austrians and South Tiroleans at the Paris Peace Conference understood that the autonomy might include Trentino, and they had agreed to the Treaty anyway. Furthermore, the South Tirolean representatives had been consulted in January 1948, about the "frame" of the autonomy, and had clearly given their approval to the Autonomy Statute in the Perassi letter. Since the agreement had already been fulfilled, any complaints the South Tiroleans had were an internal matter, outside the purview of Austria. As to complaints concerning the power of the provincial government, the Italian government replied that this was a constitutional issue and outside its jurisdiction.

The Italian position on bilingualism was that it was not required by the Paris Treaty. The agreement required "parification . . . in public offices and official documents," and these two requirements were satisfied by the actions they had already taken. To allow South Tirolean public officials to use German in official correspondence was considered to be a threat to national sovereignty.

In the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement, German speaking citizens were granted "equality of rights as regards entering upon public offices, with a view to reaching a more appropriate proportion of employment between the two ethnic groups." In the Italian view, the South Tiroleans' being granted equal rights to public jobs completely satisfied this requirement. The South Tirolean demand for ethnic quotas in public employ-

ment was contrary to the "equality" principle. Besides, the constitution prohibited discrimination in employment. If the South Tiroleans were given special status, the ethnic Italian population would be discriminated against. The Italian authorities had on several occasions tried to recruit more ethnic Germans, but the South Tiroleans were reluctant to take government jobs. The issue of public employment opportunities for minority groups is also tied to the Italian system of patronage, which is discussed in Chapter VIII.

The Italian government took particular offense at being accused of cultural genocide. It pointed out that cultural matters was one of the areas which the Bozen Province had primary jurisdiction. The Italian position concerning migration into the province, was that it could not be prevented. The Italian constitution guarantees every citizen the right to live and work where he chooses. The influx of Italians from the south was both overstated and overemphasized. The migration that was taking place was due to the more rapid recovery of the South Tirolean economy as compared to the rest of Italy, and was part of the general trend of population shifts away from the primarily agricultural Mezzogiorno. More apartments were built in South Tirol because there were more citizens needing them there. They mostly went to Italians because most South Tiroleans were rural dwellers who owned their own homes. Some industries were receiving subsidies, but this was common throughout Italy. There was no concerted effort to denationalize the South Tiroleans.

The most serious outcome of the 1954 SVP memorandum was the conclusions the Italians drew from it. From the SVP demands for safeguarding the ethnic character of their province, many Italian officials concluded that their real aim was to expel all Italians from South Tirol and reunite with Austria. Only this, it seemed to the Italians, could satisfy the South Tirolean demand for redress for past Fascist wrongs. The DC, under the influence of its right wing, would refuse to accept any demands beyond the Paris Agreement (which it considered fulfilled), because it could only serve to further damage the party's prestige. The SVP demands for the Paris Agreement to be implemented and perfected (in other words, revised) was seen as an attempt to reopen the border issue with Austria. Because of this interpretation of South Tiroleans intentions, there could be no thought of granting any concessions to the SVP.⁹

Events in Austria also took a turn for the worse. With the conclusion of the State Treaty in May 1955, (in which Austria explicitly recognized Italy's borders), considerable foreign policy talent and effort was freed up for other objectives. As a result, South Tirol received considerably more attention. During the same year the Saar question was settled favorably for Germany by means of a plebiscite. This was cited by many as an example of how the South Tirol issue should also be solved. These facts as well as the hardline approach taken by the Italian government triggered increased activity and interest in Austria. The strongest calls for action came from

the western provinces of Tirol and Vorarlberg. Both the OeVP and the SPOe, in a bid for Tirolean votes, were in favor of increased support of the SVP's demands. In June 1956, the activists in the Tirolean provincial government were able to get one of their own, Professor Franz Gschnitzer,¹⁰ appointed as State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry. Turning over responsibility for South Tirol policy to the ideologically-committed Tiroleans was to have a negative effect on Austria's ability to negotiate successfully with Italy.

After Gschnitzer took over responsibility for South Tirol policy in the Foreign Ministry, relations with Italy subsequently worsened because of his barely-hidden irredendist attitude. Italian distrust of Austrian motives grew. The official Austrian position remained the acceptance of the Brenner frontier and Gschnitzer, in official statements and speeches made in Vienna, professed to support the official policy. But addressing the members of the Berg Isel Bund in Innsbruck (of which he was elected president), he spoke in terms of Italian betrayal and the "holy" right of self-determination. The Italian press accused him of outright racism; he openly admitted being against mixed marriages. It is perhaps no accident that the first terrorist acts occurred shortly after his appointment.¹¹

On September 15, 1956, the Italian President, Giovanni Gronchi, spoke in Bozen and said that no South Tirol problem existed. Less than a week later, some electric pylons on the

Bozen-Meran rail line were destroyed by dynamite.¹² This was the first of the series of acts of violence that was to continue regularly for the next fifteen years. After a slow start, the attacks became almost a nightly occurrence by 1961. In the beginning, the attacks were directed exclusively against Italian historical monuments and other public property. Only after the South Tirol problem seemed headed for a solution were terrorist acts directed against people and led to loss of life. Officially, the SVP and Austrian policy was to condemn violence, but again Gschnitzer and other officials gave terrorists support by implying patriotic motives to the perpetrators.

The Italians saw the beginnings of terrorism as proof that the South Tiroleans were disloyal and only sought the return to Austria. The authorities cracked down on South Tiroleans advocating extremism and made a number of arrests. Several prominent South Tirolean politicians were arrested and detained briefly for questioning. This only served to further harden the Austrian/SVP position. The Austrians and Italians exchanged diplomatic notes in October 1956, and February 1957, but without results. The Austrians waited for the SVP to decide what the specific demands for a change in the autonomy arrangement would be before proceeding further.

The SVP, at a party congress held in May 1957, decided to demand separation from Trentino and autonomy for the Bozen Province alone. The first step taken was the repudiation of the Perassi letter as being the proof of South Tirolean appro-

val of the Autonomy Statute. The party also passed a resolution stating that only autonomy for Bozen alone could satisfy both the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement. More extremist members were able to add on the provision that, should such an autonomy not be granted, the right of self-determination should be demanded.¹³

Less than a month after the 1957 SVP Congress, the issue of government-provided housing came to a head. The provincial government received word on October 15 that 2.5 billion lire were being allocated to build 5,000 new apartments in South Tirol. The SVP reaction was swift. A SVP delegation visited the Public Works Ministry in Rome and expressed the party's fear of denationalization. The Italians could only explain that this was a social issue, not a political one, and that it was only a small part of the total Italian program for housing construction. The SVP was not impressed and decided to hold a mass rally to protest. The Italian-led administration of the city of Bozen, citing fears of violence because of an expected Italian counterdemonstration, banned the rally in the city. The demonstration took place instead at the Sigmundskron Castle a few miles outside Bozen on November 16, with 35,000 South Tiroleans in attendance. Silvius Magnago, recently elected SVP chairman, addressed the crowd in careful, but strong terms. He outlined South Tirol's complaints against the Italian government and asked for autonomy for the Bozen Province alone. The main significance of the Sigmundskron rally was that it made a direct appeal to Austria that, should

negotiations fail to bring about such an autonomy, to "intercede at the international level so that the right of self-determination may be granted."¹⁴ Austria took this to be a call for help, to be acted upon because of its protective power role given it in the Paris Treaty.

The hard line taken by the SVP at Sigmundskron was followed up by steps taken both in Italy and in Austria. On February 11, 1958, the SVP Senator Karl Tinzl introduced a revised autonomy statute in the Italian Senate. This statute contained the desired separation of the Bozen Province from Trentino, with South Tirol becoming its own region. The proposed law also strengthened the powers of the regional government to limit Italian migration and gave the region control over apartment construction. Since the SVP was proposing the dissolution of the region, it was also decided that cooperation with the DC in the Regional Council was no longer appropriate, and so the SVP left the regional coalition with the DC. At the same time, Austria began discussions with Italy in support of the SVP demands. Action on these two fronts was held up by two changes in the Italian government that took place in 1958-59. The Austrian elections in 1959 also led to a realignment in the governing coalition. The Foreign Minister post went to Bruno Kreisky of the SPOe. Gschnitzer, however, stayed on as his assistant. This change did not lead to a basic change in policy.¹⁵

Kreisky, in an attempt to force Italy to compromise after the fruitless 1958-59 meetings, brought the South Tirol issue

before the United Nations. At the 14th meeting of the General Assembly on September 21, 1959, he stated: "Should however bilateral negotiations not succeed . . ., Austria will have no alternative but to appeal to the UN to put this question on its agenda at the earliest possible moment."¹⁶ The Italians, on the other hand, sought to prevent the problem's being brought to the UN at all. Their point of view was, first of all, that the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement had already been implemented and the issue was, therefore, an internal Italian problem and thus outside the UN's jurisdiction. Second, if Austria disagreed with Italy's interpretation of the Paris Agreement, the proper place to take the dispute was to the International Court of Justice. Austria was afraid, however, that the World Court might rule against them, and then they would no longer have a case. Already a committee of the Council of Europe had concluded (on September 17, 1959) that Italy had already fulfilled its legal obligations in the Paris Treaty.¹⁷ Kreisky felt that the UN, even at that time with a large number of ex-colonial members, would be more sympathetic to a minority issue. Austria wanted to present the South Tirol issue as a political, rather than a legal problem.¹⁸

The South Tirol dispute was brought up at the 15th General Assembly in September 1960. In the end, the Italians, after another change in government, did not oppose it being placed on the agenda. The Austrians presented the UN a memorandum, in which they asked for a resolution supporting the SVP's demand for separate autonomy. The Austrian document

referred to the right to autonomy without even mentioning the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement. Kreisky, speaking in the opening debate, called for the UN to adopt the Austrian memorandum in toto. The Austrian position was sharply attacked by the Italians. They asked how the Austrians could voice demands clearly outside the competence of the Paris Treaty. They accused the Austrians of attempting to reopen the entire border issue. Kreisky replied that even the Paris Agreement required that the South Tiroleans be consulted and this had not been done. Italy again brought up the Perassi letter and other proof to the contrary. On October 18, the General Assembly referred the question to the Special Political Committee.¹⁹

The committee had to decide whether or not to accept the Austrian memorandum or to refer the issue to the World Court, as the Italians had suggested. Most of the members felt that accepting the Austrian proposal would constitute an unwarranted intervention into Italy's internal affairs. Adopting the Austrian draft resolution would be tantamount to accepting as fact Austria's version of the situation in South Tirol, which the committee was not prepared to do. A number of the committee members favored the Italian position of referring the issue to the World Court. Several nations, however, citing the precedent of a recent resolution on racial problems in southern Africa, proposed adopting a resolution which would encourage bilateral negotiations to resolve the issue. Such a resolution was adopted by the committee on

October 27, and was passed unanimously by the full General Assembly on October 31, 1960. The resolution urged "the two parties to resume negotiations with a view to finding a solution of all differences relating to the implementation of the Paris Agreement" and if those negotiations should fail, the parties should seek a solution through the "International Court of Justice or by any other peaceful means of their choice."²⁰

Despite the satisfaction the Austrians officially expressed with the UN resolution, they were clearly disappointed. They expected much greater support from the Afro-Asian countries than they received. But these "Third World" countries did not wish to compromise their own future positions in minority problems, which virtually all of them had. Support from Latin America was also not forthcoming, because these countries generally favored the "melting pot" approach to minorities. The Eastern Bloc basically sat out the debate, content with letting the West disagree among themselves. The Western powers generally favored the World Court idea and Italy's position. Austria did, however, get into the resolution the statement calling for a solution that would settle all differences of opinion relating to the Paris Treaty. This gave Austria the right to demand that Italy discuss the "frame" of autonomy, which the Italians had refused to do until then. Italy perceived itself to have been the victor at the UN, since it was able to block the Austrian attempt to get a resolution which specifically supported Austria's demand for

separate autonomy for Bozen alone. The South Tirol issue failed to generate much interest or debate at the UN because of its rather limited importance. Far more pressing problems were on its agenda that year, including the Congo problem and superpower relations (1960 was the year of Krushchev's "shoe" incident). Despite this, the UN resolution of 1960 would lead to negotiations that would ultimately work out the basis of the eventual settlement.

In accordance with the UN resolution, talks between the Foreign Ministers (Bruno Kreisky and Antonio Segni) were held in Milan on January 27-28, 1961. Austria continued to press for a separate autonomy for South Tirol, while the Italians were only willing to discuss compromise within the framework of their constitution (the Trentino-South Tirol Region was a constitutional creation). Having again failed to break the deadlock, the meeting adjourned.²¹ Renewed diplomatic efforts led to further discussions in Klagenfurt in May and Zuerich in June, but again no progress was made. On the two nights preceding the Zuerich meeting, forty-seven dynamite explosions took place in South Tirol.²² Italy accused Austria of complicity in terrorist activities and in fear of continued outrages, required visas of all Austrian citizens entering Italy as of July 12, 1961. The Italians provided proof that the explosive devices were of obvious Austrian origin and suggested that the Berg-Isel Bund and similar groups were supporting the terrorists.²³ Italy's concern over Austria's inability to prevent of terrorist attacks being launched from

its soil became a major stumbling block in the negotiations during the next several years.

Due to the failure of the 1961 negotiations to make any progress, Austria again brought up the issue at the UN in the fall of 1961. This time the Political Committee took even less time considering the question. Furthermore, the members would not approve any draft resolution without the approval of both Italy and Austria. Italy was, therefore, able to block anything other than a resolution calling on both countries to "continue negotiations."²⁴

In the period 1953-61, the South Tirol issue grew from a few rumblings of discontent among some South Tiroleans to an ethnic conflict known around the world. The spirit of cooperation between the South Tiroleans and the Italians that had prevailed earlier vanished and was replaced by distrust and uncooperative attitudes. But the UN resolutions provided the impetus to continue negotiations and, aided by political changes within Austria and Italy, these negotiations almost produced a settlement in 1964.

NOTES-CHAPTER IV

¹Quoted in Anthony E. Alcock, The History of the South Tirol Question (Geneva: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1970), 228. Trieste ("Zone A") had a large ethnic Italian majority.

²Mario Toscano, Alto Adige-South Tirol, Edited by George A. Carbone, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 140-141; Alcock, pp. 227-236. Pella's speech had a more positive effect on the Trieste issue, as it was settled favorably for Italy a short time later.

³Alcock, p. 236.

⁴Named for the battlefield where Andreas Hofer defeated the Bavarians and the French in 1809. See the discussion of these interest groups in Austrian politics in Chapter VII.

⁵Alcock, pp. 237-242; Maurice Cziskann-Zichy, Turmoil in South Tirol (New York: Exposition Press, 1960), 56.

⁶Cziskann-Zichy, pp. 57-58.

⁷Alcock, p. 239. Some of the increase in Italian electoral strength was due to the fact that the armed forces vote where they are stationed.

⁸Cziskann-Zichy, pp. 58-60.

⁹Alcock, pp. 248-249.

¹⁰Officially Gschnitzer was politically independent and "Konfessionslos." He was a Professor of Law at Innsbruck.

¹¹Franz Gschnitzer, How can the Problem of South Tyrol be Solved? (Innsbruck: Bergisel Bund, 1957). Quoted in Alcock, p. 281.

¹²Alcock, p. 278.

¹³Ibid., pp. 284-288.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 289-293.

¹⁵Felix Ermacora, Suedtirol und das Vaterland Oesterreich (Vienna: Almathea, 1984), 75.

¹⁶Quoted in Ibid.

¹⁷Alcock, p. 312.

¹⁸See discussion in Toscano, pp. 145-147.

¹⁹Alcock, pp. 330-337; Toscano, pp. 147-152.

²⁰Alcock, pp. 339-349.

²¹Austria, Foreign Ministry, Memorandum of the Austrian Federal Government Concerning the South Tyrol Question, October 10, 1961, Annex 3, p. 3.

²²Thereafter the negotiation schedule was kept secret.

²³Toscano, pp. 164-169.

²⁴Alcock, pp. 373-376.

V. THE FIRST SERIOUS ATTEMPT AT SETTLEMENT 1962-65

The UN resolution, as well as political changes in Austria and Italy, made the environment more favorable for compromise in the years following the UN debates. Publicity about the problem proved to be an embarrassment for Italy, and was thus a moderating influence. The Austrians and South Tiroleans, disappointed by the UN's failing to endorse their viewpoint and condemn Italy, also began to turn away from the hardline stance. These events helped direct the turn of events that almost led to a solution in the years 1962-65.

The terrorist offensive that began in 1961 continued unabated. In addition to the regularly occurring dynamite attacks, small bands of terrorists began mounting ambushes on police patrols and even direct attacks on police compounds. Bombs were planted in railroad stations and trains. Terrorist attacks were mounted also outside the province, especially in Trent, Milan and Rome. A booby trap took the first life, that of a Carabinieri, in 1962.

But the terrorism offensive also had positive results. The SVP chairman, Magnago, took steps in 1961 to distance the party from terrorism. Known extremists and terrorist sympathizers were removed from positions of leadership and were eventually expelled from the party. In an effort to head off political reprisals Magnago expected to be taken against South Tiroleans as a backlash from terrorism, Magnago sought to

establish meaningful contacts with the Italian government. On July 24, 1961, the SVP leadership met with Interior Minister Mario Scelba. Scelba told the leaders that not only was the government ready to negotiate about autonomy, but was also prepared to change the Autonomy Statute. Although he insisted that the regional framework be maintained, greater powers could be granted the provinces. Scelba also imposed a condition on his offer: that no steps would be taken during the negotiations at an international level. After stormy discussions and consultations with the Austrian government, the SVP decided to accept the offer, but to reject the condition. Magnago declared that if a satisfactory solution could be reached between the SVP and the Italian government, it must be guaranteed by Italy and Austria as signatories to the Paris Treaty. This step was a basic change in SVP policy from demanding a separate regional autonomy for Bozen Province alone, to what Magnago called a "de facto autonomy." Despite the SVP's rejection of Scelba's condition, the Italian government agreed to go forward with the proposal.¹

The method chosen to implement Scelba's proposal was to appoint a mixed commission "to study the problems of the Upper Adige and report to the government on the results of the work."² Seven South Tiroleans, one Ladin, and eleven Italians were appointed September 1, 1961, to the "Commission of Nineteen." The report of this commission, submitted April 10, 1964, was the basis for negotiations which would lead to the eventual settlement.

The reason Italy became more conciliatory is tied to domestic political events. In the early 1960's, the DC was losing electoral strength and leftist parties were gaining. The party's right wing no longer was able to exert as much influence in government decisionmaking. The more progressive elements of the DC forged a coalition with the moderate Socialists and Social Democrats. This "Opening to the Left" coincided with the appointment of the Commission of Nineteen. The Commission's president, Paolo Rossi, was a Socialist.³ The left's support of a regionalization policy was a source of moderating influence in the Italian government.⁴

The process towards reconciliation was also aided by the fact that South Tirol had become a source of Italian embarrassment. The publicity generated by the UN and Council of Europe debates often portrayed Italy in a negative light. The beginnings of terrorism forced an end to the Italian insistence that there was no South Tirol problem. The Italian government tried to block the matter being brought before the UN and lost. The resulting blows to Italian prestige and other factors led the government, by July 1961, to be earnestly seeking a face-saving solution to the South Tirol problem. It was easier to offer some concessions to some of their fellow citizens (the South Tiroleans) than to Austria in bilateral negotiations. The Scelba proposal was a way out of a difficult situation.

The more positive situation in Italy was mirrored to a degree by events in Austria. One of the most influential

hardliners in Austrian politics, Alois Oberhammer, had been elected Chairman of the Tirolean OeVP in 1957. In June 1961, the Associated Press published an interview with Oberhammer in which he demanded self-determination for South Tirol and if the Italians continued the "antagonistic policy," he predicted "years of bloody struggle."⁵ Although Oberhammer disclaimed the interview (the AP stood by its story), he was forced to resign all his offices in August 1961. In Vienna, similar events were occurring. Gschnitzer, also in an AP (1960) interview, declared that "catastrophic consequences would occur if the UN fails to make a stand with regard to the Austrian recourse on the South Tyrol. . . ."⁶ Gschnitzer came under increasing pressure because of such attitudes and public statements. When a new government coalition was formed in 1962, he was replaced as State Secretary by a career diplomat, Ludwig Steiner. At the same time the Berg Isel Bund was experiencing a traumatic split, with members of the major parties leaving the organization in a disagreement over extremism. Never again did the Bund exert as much influence in Austrian politics as it did during the years 1956-62.⁷

The source of these changes in the Austrian domestic political scene was the terrorism issue and the outcome of the UN debates. The Austrian government expected much greater support for its position than it received at the UN. This failure served to cause some in the OeVP-SPOe Grand Coalition to reevaluate the government's policy. The hardline approach had not achieved any positive results. The intensification of terrorism also gave cause for alarm, especially when prominent

and influential hardliners, such as Oberhammer and Gschnitzer, seemed to be giving terrorists moral support. Austrian politicians also came to realize that these extremists in important positions offended the Italians and served only to impede successful negotiations. Ideologues were replaced by pragmatists and a more flexible stand was adopted.

Despite these positive developments, Austro-Italian relations actually worsened. The terror offensive led Italy to accuse Austria of complicity by not doing everything it could to prevent attacks originating from Austrian soil. The Italians presented proof that materials used in dynamite attacks were either purchased or manufactured in Austria. The headquarters of the most well-known terrorist organization, the Befreiungs-Ausschuss Suedtirols (South Tirol's Freedom Committee, BAS), operated openly in Innsbruck. Foreign Minister Kreisky did not help matters by admitting in a newspaper interview that he had information on terrorists, but would not divulge it to Italian authorities.⁸

The Austrian reply to Italian protests was to deny that it was in any way guilty of complicity with terrorists. Austria cited the principle of freedom of association; citizens could join whatever group they wanted. The BAS was a legal organization. Austria refused to extradite to Italy suspects wanted in connection with the terrorist acts. Only after the Italian imposed the visa requirement in July 1961, did Austria institute a minor crackdown, arresting some of the

more blatant extremists. The Austrian response to terrorism would continue to plague Austro-Italian relations for some time to come.

After the second UN resolution, bilateral talks resumed on January 25, 1962. At first it seemed that the Commission of Nineteen's report would appear in the summer of 1962. But disagreements within the commission and the magnitude of its workload caused long delays. After two rounds of Austro-Italian talks, it became apparent that further bargaining would serve little purpose until the results of the commission's work were known. The Foreign Ministers, meeting in Venice on July 31, 1962, decided to postpone further talks until the commission had rendered its report.⁹

The recommendations made in the April 1964 report of the Commission of Nineteen called for a far-reaching revision of the Autonomy Statute. The changes suggested in the commission's report were in effect a devolution of the powers of the region in favor of the provinces. The Provincial Council would be given much greater authority over most economic matters (e.g. public works, mines, tourism, and agriculture) as well as limited control over education. The commission recommended that Italian remain the official language in the province, but the exclusive use of German should be allowed in German-speaking communities. The commission could not come to an agreement on how best to achieve a better ethnic distribution in public employment. Instead, they expressed "hope" the matter could be worked out in negotiations. The report contained no recommended solution on the problem of

Italian migration, but suggested that control of public housing be given the Province and the residency period required for voting be increased to four years.¹⁰ Despite the progress the report represents, the SVP commission members expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of concessions in some important areas.

Shortly after the commission's report was released, a meeting was held between the the Austrian and Italian Foreign Ministers, Kreisky and Giuseppe Saragat (a Social Democrat), in Geneva on May 25, 1964. Saragat expressed his government's position that the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement had already been fulfilled and that any changes originating from the commission's report were concessions above and beyond the Paris Treaty. Kreisky reiterated the Austrian viewpoint that the treaty requirements had not yet been met. The two decided, therefore, to enter into negotiations to arrange an agreement whose wording would not violate the principles of each other's legal stand. If such an agreement could be reached, Austria would give Italy (and the UN) a statement declaring that the conflict had ended and the Paris Treaty was fulfilled. To this end, it was agreed to set up a bi-national Committee of Experts to review the Commission of Nineteen's report and recommend additional changes. This committee met throughout the summer, and by mid-October had found a positive solution to ninety of the 108 questions it was considering. Several of the remaining eighteen, however, were considered by the South Tiroleans to be the most important.¹¹

On December 16, 1964, Kreisky and Saragat met again, this time in Paris. The Italians proposed an agreement based on the unanimous recommendations from the commission's report and the changes developed by the Committee of Experts. Kreisky expressed misgivings about the lack of concessions in the areas of public education control, rights of residence and control of publicly owned industry. Saragat said that it was currently not within his power to make further concessions. The meeting broke up on an uncertain note. On January 8, 1965, the results of these negotiations were discussed in a meeting between Kreisky and Magnago. Kreisky told Magnago that he believed that no additional concessions could be obtained at this time. Magnago decided that there were still too many important unresolved issues for the SVP to accept the proposed agreement. When the next bilateral meeting took place in March, Kreisky pressed Saragat for further concessions. The Italians were unwilling to go any further and the negotiations broke up. The deal that almost worked fell apart.¹²

The events of 1962-65 established a precedent for making concessions on each side of the dispute. Each side also began to shed its hardline approach and became more conciliatory. These positive effects were not sufficient, however, to reach an agreement. But they did lay the groundwork for making further concessions and for conducting more fruitful negotiations in the following years.

NOTES-CHAPTER V

¹Anthony E. Alcock, The History of the South Tirol Question (Geneva, Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1970), 367-368.

²Quoted in Alcock, p. 369.

³Elizabeth Wiskemann, Italy Since 1945 (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 62.

⁴See discussion in Chapter IX below.

⁵Werner Wolf, Suedtirol in Oesterreich (Wuerzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1972), 86.

⁶Note Verbale 10A/1823 (September 16, 1960) in Italy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alto Adige: Documents Presented to the Italian Parliament by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Signor A. Segni on 19th September 1961 (Rome, 1961), Document I, p. 15.

⁷See discussion in Chapter VIII below.

⁸Neue Zuercher Zeitung, July 21, 1961.

⁹Mario Toscano, Alto Adige-South Tyrol, Edited by George A. Carbone, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 180-181.

¹⁰The report is discussed at length in Alcock, pp. 397-422.

¹¹Karl H. Ritschel, Diplomatie um Suedtirol (Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1966), 474-505.

¹²Ibid.

VI. THE PACKAGE SETTLEMENT AND AFTERMATH 1966-PRESENT

The failure of the 1964-65 bilateral negotiations was followed by four years of further negotiations that would end in the acceptance of the "Paket (Package)" settlement. Progress, after the negative turn of events, was again aided by political changes both in Italy and in Austria. Terrorism continued to plague these negotiations and delayed the Package settlement's progress. The negotiated settlement also took such a long time because each side wanted to produce a carefully worded text that would not be subject to differing interpretations. The South Tiroleans also insisted on some sort of international "anchoring" of the agreement. The Package, signed in late 1969, was the end result of these years of negotiations. Most of the agreement's major measures were implemented by the revised Autonomy Statute and ordinary legislation during 1970-72. Other measures, to be implemented through government decrees have taken longer, and some have yet to be finished. Austro-Italian relations became close and have remained so. The South Tiroleans appear to be satisfied with their autonomy and no longer consider themselves an oppressed minority. In fact, critics of the SVP now allege that it supports ethnic separation to a degree that it can be compared to Apartheid. Terrorism was reduced dramatically after 1970, and despite occasional dynamite explosions, seems

no longer to be a serious problem. Due primarily to an increase in tourism, the South Tirolean economy is booming. It seems that most South Tiroleans are satisfied with their present situation and the demand for reunification with Austria or the exercise of the right of self-determination seems out of place.

At Austrian insistence, low-level talks resumed in July, 1965. The Austrians wanted to continue negotiations based on the 1964-65 proposed settlement, but the Italians considered the concessions made by them to be withdrawn, since they had not been accepted. When the Italians appeared less than enthusiastic to earnestly resume negotiations, the Austrian government redoubled its efforts. The Austrian Chancellor, Josef Klaus, proposed a summit meeting with his Italian counterpart, Aldo Moro, to get things started again. The two men met in a private, unofficial meeting (while Moro was vacationing in Trentino) on August 26, 1965.¹ This meeting appeared to have had a beneficial effect, but further progress was delayed because of the political crisis in Austria.

The Grand (OeVP-SPOe) Coalition, which had ruled Austria for twenty years, broke up at this juncture. Klaus' cabinet fell apart in October 1965, over the issue of the 1966 budget. In the March 1966, elections, the OeVP won an absolute majority in the Nationalrat. The two big parties entered into coalition negotiations as in the past, but could not reach an agreement. In April 1966, Klaus formed the first one-party cabinet of the Second Republic.² To the Foreign Minister's post came Lujo Toncic-Sorinj, who was, in turn, replaced by

Kurt Waldheim in a 1968 cabinet reshuffling. The effects of a single party government in negotiations with the Italians were beneficial. No longer did a Foreign Minister have to contend with pleasing the political forces of both major parties. Neither did he have to deal with subordinates of another party, whom he could not easily dismiss or discipline. Although the Klaus cabinet continued to try to reach a broad consensus on government policies, the benefits of the parliamentary majority would prove essential to the Package's approval.

Also beneficial was the fact that Moro, despite several cabinet shakeups, remained responsible for the Italian side throughout the negotiations. He was Prime Minister until 1968, and then became Foreign Minister in Mariano Rumor's cabinet.

Immediately after its formation, the new Austrian government requested that the talks with Italy on South Tirol be reopened. Chancellor Klaus, in a policy statement to the Nationalrat, appealed to the Italian government to "press on" to overcome the small differences still remaining.³ When talks began in May 1966, the main issues were when an agreement was reached, how it would be "anchored" or guaranteed internationally and how differences arising from the agreement would be resolved. The South Tiroleans, fearing that Italy would renege on its obligations, insisted on such a guarantee. The Italians thought that one of the main problems with the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement had been the lack of provisions

for settling disagreements arising from it. In the 1964-65 negotiations, Saragat, in order to solve both problems, had proposed a court consisting of an Italian judge, an Austrian judge, a third judge agreed on by both parties, and a neutral president. After the negotiations had broken up, however, Italy had withdrawn this proposal.⁴

A breakthrough of sorts occurred in a meeting held in London on July 18-20, 1966. Italy's representatives told the Austrians that they were ready to discuss further matters based on the Commission of Nineteen's 1964 report. This proposal was offered on the condition that Austria would accept the International Court of Justice's jurisdiction in the dispute and would give Italy a formal conflict termination declaration once an agreement had been fully implemented. The Austrians accepted the conditions, with some reservations, as a basis for further negotiations. From this beginning, a series of talks, meetings and negotiations started that would last until December 1969, and would produce a series of measures known collectively as the "Package" settlement along with an "Operations Calendar" as a form of international guarantee.

More rapid progress was held up because of terrorism. A new wave of terrorism overtook South Tirol during 1966. Norbert Burger, a former Innsbruck University professor and founder of the right wing (and allegedly Neo-Nazi) National Democratic Party, had become the chief spokesman for the extremists in Austria. In an AP interview on August 25, 1966, Burger said that the purpose of the latest string of bombings

was to make negotiations between Italy and Austria impossible. The Italian parliament passed a resolution on September 15, accusing Vienna of not taking the necessary steps to prevent terrorism. The terror offensive and the Italian government's reaction touched off what Toncic called a "Note War" on October 6, 1966. For over a year, Italy and Austria traded charges and counter-charges in diplomatic notes concerning terrorism and Austria's role in preventing or supporting it. The issue came to a head the following spring.⁵

The Austrian government brought charges in May 1967, against Burger and fourteen accomplices for providing explosives to terrorists. During the trial held in Linz, Burger appeared on Austrian television and admitted to stealing dynamite. Yet, on May 31, all the defendants were acquitted. On the same day, terrorists mounted a series of dynamite attacks in Bruneck. These events caused a storm of indignation in Italy unknown until then. They were followed on June 25 by an attack at the Porzer Scharte on the East Tirol border, in which four Italian soldiers lost their lives. The Austrian government, fearful of the consequences of inaction, moved to step up police reconnaissance of border areas and to cooperate fully (for the first time!) with Italian security officials conducting the investigation. But this was not enough for the Italian government. On June 27, 1967, the Italian Ambassador gave the Austrians a note which made known Italy's intention of vetoing the continuation of negotiations leading to an associate membership for Austria in the European

Economic Community (EEC). There was, however, no termination of the South Tirol negotiations.⁶

The reaction in Austria was swift and decisive. The cabinet decided to strengthen the patrolling of the border. On July 10th, the government directed the Bundesheer to deploy elements of three battalions along the Italo-Austrian border in the provinces of Tirol and Salzburg. The troops began their mission in strength on July 14. This was the second time in the history of the Second Republic that the Austrian Army had been deployed along Austria's borders. The move, officially, was in response to "unofficial" reports that Italian extremists might be planning to cross the border to conduct terrorist acts in Austria. This was, undoubtedly, merely a face-saving justification since it would be difficult to explain why Austrian troops were needed to protect Italy's border. Critics pondered in which direction the soldiers were supposed to point their weapons and to ask sarcastically if they could be expected to "wirklich schiessen (really shoot)."⁸

The Austrian military move was supplemented by a tough new attitude against extremists. When Burger stressed, in an interview published July 17 in the German magazine Der Spiegel, that "outrages (Attentate) are at this time more necessary than ever," the Austrian government issued an imprisonment order and Burger was jailed in Krems on July 22.⁹ Klaus's government sought and obtained tougher new laws concerning terrorism. Meetings and rallies of groups advocating

extremism began to be banned by the authorities. Members of the major parties distanced themselves further from such organizations.¹⁰ This crackdown in Austria and the progressing negotiations took the steam out of the terrorism, which from 1967 onwards, began to diminish in frequency and severity.

In the fall of 1967, the focus of the Austro-Italian diplomacy again returned to the South Tirol issue. In an ongoing series of meetings with the South Tiroleans, the Italian government had worked out most of the remaining disagreements over the Package. The SVP Executive Committee decided on October 21, 1967, to accept the Package (with some reservations) if a satisfactory international guarantee could be arranged. Italy was still against such a guarantee since it still maintained the Package was the result of a sovereign and independent decision of the Italian government. The basis of a compromise was first conceived of in an informal meeting between Toncic and Mario Toscano, a member of the Italian UN delegation, in New York on October 1, 1967. The compromise discussed was essentially a timetable of events which specified the sequence and timing in which the actions implementing the Package would take place. This solution, the "Operations Calendar," allowed the Italians to retain their position that the Package was an internal decision and also gave the South Tiroleans some assurance that the Italians would follow the agreement.

During the SVP-Rome negotiations concerning the contents of the Package in 1967, Magnago added twelve footnotes to the

text based on oral promises made to him by Moro. He added these footnotes because he felt that some provisions were unclear, and he wanted to prevent the recurrence of multiple interpretations of an agreement. It was to this footnoted version that the SVP Executive Committee had given its approval. The Italians, however, had not inserted the footnotes into their version used in talks with Austria. Throughout 1968 and most of 1969, two or three differing versions of the Package were being circulated between Vienna, Bozen, and Rome. When the final stages of negotiations were taking place in September 1969, Italy handed the South Tiroleans a Package version without the footnotes. The South Tiroleans were astonished. Only the quick action by Italian authorities prevented the SVP from rejecting the Package. Magnago's footnotes were hastily integrated into the Italian version in time to save it. Some commentators have suggested that the reason why the Package was not adopted in 1968 was that no one knew which version was authentic.¹¹

The SVP initially asserted that the Operations Calendar was insufficient as an international guarantee, but as a result of Austrian pressure in late 1967, the SVP modified its stand. The South Tiroleans were persuaded to accept the Calendar in lieu of a more direct form of international anchoring. During negotiations throughout 1968 and 1969, details of the Operations Calendar were worked out. Progress was again impeded by two changes in government in Italy. By the late summer of 1969, all substantive differences had been

resolved through negotiations and after a short delay (explained above), texts of the Package and Calendar were agreed upon as well.

The final version of the Package was essentially the modifications recommended by the Commission of Nineteen and the Committee of Experts with some important changes. As already mentioned, the Package bypassed the issue of whether or not the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement had been already implemented. The Package, like the proposal of 1964-65, retained the existence of the Region Trentino-South Tirol, but transferred additional powers to the provincial governments. The number of areas in which the province would exercise primary competence rose from fourteen to twenty-nine. To be included in the new Autonomy Statute was a modification of the article which gave the central government the power to overturn laws made by the provinces and the region. To the requirement that such laws must be constitutional and in the "national interest" was added that they must also protect the "local linguistic minorities."¹²

The South Tiroleans also received substantive control over the construction of public housing and the residence requirement for voting was extended from three to four years. The Package also gave the South Tiroleans greater language rights. The use of German was to be allowed in all official documents, court proceedings, and correspondence. Italian, however, remained the official language. The South Tiroleans were granted guaranteed ethnic proportions (or quotas) in public employment. Instead of firing the Italian workers

holding government jobs, however, the replacement of Italian employees with ethnic Germans would be implemented through attrition.¹³ The Package gave South Tiroleans greater control over schools, radio and television, and other cultural activities. The Provincial Council was also given the authority to veto the use of any state funds going to subsidized industries. Despite the major improvements in autonomy the Package offered, not everyone was happy with it.¹⁴

Since, in the Austrian view, the Package was part of the fulfillment of the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement, the first step had to be obtaining the approval of the "local representative German-speaking elements." Austria would not proceed without the SVP's approval. Accordingly, the SVP Executive Committee took up the Package on October 26, 1969, and recommended its approval to the full SVP Congress by a vote of forty-one to twenty-three. The SVP Party Congress met to consider the Package on November 22, 1969, at the Meran Kurhaus. Two resolutions were placed before the 1,111 convention delegates. Magnago, most of the SVP leadership, and a majority of the party's representatives in the Italian Parliament supported a resolution agreeing to accept the Package. A second resolution, signed by three dissenters from within the party leadership, called for its rejection. The opponents' arguments were many of the same ones often employed before. Expressed in the long debate was the mistrust of Italian intentions, fears of assimilation, as well as concerns about specific articles of the Package. Several opposition speakers expressed fears that

the new Autonomy Statute would grant South Tirol's Italian minority rights at their expense, since they were also a "local linguistic minority." In fact, Article 85 of the Package expressively granted the Italians in South Tirol the veto power over the provincial budget. Concern was expressed about the viability of the Operations Calendar as a genuine international guarantee. The only true international guarantee expressed in the Calendar was the possibility of bringing Italy before the World Court. Italy was only willing to grant the Court jurisdiction in matters concerning the Package, however, and not in those relating to the Paris Treaty. Proponents stressed the need for unity and support of the SVP leadership who "have up until now led the party well." The supporters asked opponents what they would do if the Package were rejected. In all over fifty people spoke in the debate that lasted well past midnight. It was obvious that the Package's opposition enjoyed considerable support from the party rank and file. Until the end, the outcome of the vote was uncertain. When the vote was finally taken in the early morning hours of November 23, 1969, the resolution in support of the Package was adopted with 52.8 percent of the vote.¹⁵ A majority of the delegates appeared to agree with the SVP's pre-convention propaganda: "Es gibt keine Alternative (There are no alternatives)."¹⁶

With the South Tiroleans' approval obtained, events proceeded rapidly. On November 30, the two Foreign Ministers, Moro and Waldheim, met in Copenhagen and made the formal decision to put the calendar into operation. On December 2,

the Austrian government signed the European Convention for the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, which required Austria to bring disagreements with Italy to the World Court for adjudication. Two days later, the Italian Parliament gave its approval to Prime Minister Rumor' policy declaration by a vote of 269 to twenty-six, with eighty-eight abstentions (247 delegates were absent!). On the following day the Italian Senate also gave its approval. The South Tiroleans voted with the majority in both cases.¹⁷

The Austrian Nationalrat's approval was the next step on the calendar. As in Italy, the Package and the Operations Calendar were not presented as a treaty requiring ratification, but rather as a government policy on which a vote of confidence was to be taken. During the debate held December 15-16, 1969, members of both opposition parties attacked the Package. The SPOe, now led by Kreisky, spoke out strongly about the lack of an effective international guarantee. Kreisky even maintained that the Package should grant autonomy to a South Tirol not linked to any other territorial unit. The Socialist speakers also brought up the problem of the differing versions and Magnago's footnotes, and predicted that this confusion would lead to differing interpretations. The FPÖe speakers went even further. They protested the government's plan as a "total capitulation" and accused the OeVP government of abandoning the South Tiroleans. The solution that Austria should be seeking, in their view, was the exercise of the right of self-determination. The government

spokesmen admitted that the Package/Operations Calendar was not one hundred percent satisfactory, but it was the best possible settlement that could be obtained under the circumstances. They maintained that the Package was only a part of the fulfillment of the Paris Treaty, not a complete fulfillment in itself. Therefore, Austria's protective function for South Tirol remained in effect. The Operations Calendar did provide an international guarantee; if Italy failed to live up to the Package, no conflict termination statement would be issued and the case could be brought up again at the UN and the Council of Europe. The debate was unusually heated and emotional. In the end, however, it was not the merits of the debate that decided the issue, but the OeVP's parliamentary majority. In strict party line voting, the government proposal was approved by a vote of eighty-three to seventy-nine.¹⁸

The Package's implementation began on December 16, 1969, when the Italian Ministerial Council appointed a nine member Commission for the Preparation of the Measures for South Tirol. This so-called Commission of Nine consisted of South Tirolean and Italian representatives from the Provinces of Bozen and Trent, as well as representatives from the central government. This commission finished its work on January 19, 1970, but due to the slow process of Italian constitutional revision and two government crises, the revised Autonomy Statute did not go into effect until January 20, 1972. The Commission's work also extended to the preparation of simple laws to implement the Package's provisions. A single law,

adopted on March 11, 1972, fulfilled thirteen Package provisions.¹⁹

A third set of Package measures was to be fulfilled by government decrees. These concerned mainly modification of the operation of the government bureaucratic apparatus. The Operations Calendar allowed two years after the new Autonomy Statute went into effect in which to finish all measures to be implemented by decree. The Italian government appointed a Commission of Twelve to draw up these decrees. This commission was made up of six representatives of the central government and six from the region (three South Tiroleans). The Commission of Twelve began work on June 7, 1972, and is still in existence. The Italian government issued fourteen of the required decrees in 1973 and thirteen in 1974. After that, the pace slowed considerably and the most recent was issued in 1978. Several important issues, such as the right to use German in public offices, in court, and with the police remain to be implemented. The measures that were supposed to be completed in 1974 are now over ten years late.²⁰

The SVP, however, does not seem to be overly concerned about the slowness of progress in the Package measures' implementation. The party has, of course, complained to Rome about the problem, but has continued to cooperate and show patience. This attitude, in part, stems from the fact that the most important parts of the Package were included in the revised Autonomy Statute and law of 1972. Since ethnic proportion in public employment is already being implemented and now most

government employees speak German, the drive to make it legal no longer seems so important. The measures being implemented by government decrees are also some of the most complicated. The South Tiroleans recognize the value of waiting to ensure that the measures are implemented correctly. Magnago (still the SVP head) expressed his view recently as: "Good performance measures for the Package are more important than speed."²¹

Shortly after the Package's approval by the Nationalrat, new parliamentary elections were held in Austria. These 1970 elections gave no single party a majority, although the SPOe won a plurality of seats. Instead of forming a "grand" or "small" coalition with the OeVP or FPOe respectively, Kreisky decided to form a minority government. One year later, new elections gave the SPOe an absolute majority in Parliament. The Socialists have governed Austria continuously since 1970, although since 1983 in a coalition with the FPOe. Although Kreisky opposed the Package in the 1969 debate, after assuming power he continued the policy of reconciliation with Italy. After Italy lifted its 1967 veto on the EEC negotiations, Austria was able to conclude a treaty granting it associate membership on July 22, 1972. The SPOe government established and has maintained close, friendly relations with Italy. As a symbol of this new relationship, President Franz Jonas made a state visit to Italy in November 1971. This was the first time an Austrian Head of State had visited Italy since Emperor Franz Josef met King Victor Emmanuel II in 1875. In honor of

the occasion, the Italian president amnestied several South Tiroleans convicted of terrorist acts.²²

The Austrian government, during the long reign of the SPOe, has not given up its role of protector of the South Tiroleans. Austria's South Tirol policy since 1972 has been influenced heavily by two advisory committees. The North-South Tirol Contact Committee, made up of members from the parties represented in the Tirolean Provincial Parliament and the SVP, has been a forum of exchanges of opinion about the Package's implementation and a source of recommendations to the Foreign Ministry. A second advisory group, the South Tirol Committee, was created with representatives of the SVP and the Austrian government. This committee has also provided recommendations, but has primarily concerned itself, in later years, with the problems of South Tiroleans studying in Austrian universities. The basic question of post-1972 Austrian South Tirol policy remains to be decided: when, how, and if Austria should intervene to coerce Italy to completely fulfill the Package. The third Foreign Minister in Kreisky's cabinet, Willibald Pahr, refused in 1982 even to send a diplomatic note to Italy on the subject. So long as the SVP appears willing to cooperate and be patient with Italy, Austria's SPOe-led government will surely do likewise.²³

Austria has also been deficient in its implementation of the Operations Calendar. The treaty concerning conflict resolution through the World Court that Austria signed in 1969, was supposed to be ratified immediately after the Autonomy

Statute modification became effective in January 1972. But it has, to date, not been ratified. The Austrian government has brought the treaty before Parliament three times, the last time being October 1983. Each time, however, members concerned about the South Tirol issue were able to prevent it being placed on the agenda.²⁴

A number of changes in the South Tirolean political scene have taken place since 1970. The SVP has lost some of the basis for its claim to be an umbrella party representing the interests of all the South Tiroleans. The first political group to split from the SVP was a group of Social Democrats who formed the the Social Progress Party (SFP) under the leadership of Bozen urologist Dr. Egmont Jenny in 1966. A leader of the SVP opposition to the Package, Hans Dietl, split with the party in 1972, and in 1973 formed the South Tirolean Social Democratic Party (SDS). Both the SFP and the SDS enjoyed a measure of initial success, but by 1978, neither party was represented in the Provincial Council. The growth of leftist parties is hindered by the small size of the ethnic German proletariat, mainly due to the losses associated with the 1939 option selections.²⁵

Since the mid-1970's, the opposition to the SVP from ethnic Germans has come from three sources. Some right-wing Package opponents formed, in 1981, the South Tirol Homeland Federation (Heimatbund) (SHB). The SHB's goal is the exercise of the right of self-determination and the eventual reunion with an independent Tirol. The Heimatbund has achieved a

degree of success among voters, gaining two seats in the Provincial Council in 1983. A second threat to the SVP is the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The SVP became alarmed when the PCI gained ground in Italian politics in the 1970's. Magnago expressed fear that the PCI would come to power and ban all other political parties. The Communists also hit close to home when ethnic Germans were recruited to run on PCI lists and South Tirolean labor leaders were sent to East Germany for training. But these fears turned out to be unfounded. By 1980, it was apparent that South Tirol was in no danger of a Communist take over and that the South Tiroleans were not supporting the PCI in large numbers. The Communists are still the third largest party (behind the SVP and the DC) in the Provincial Council, currently with two seats. A third challenge to the SVP's hegemony is from the new left. A group called the "New Left" first ran in the 1978 provincial elections. Like other European "Alternative" parties, it is concerned with environmental, anti-nuclear, and 'peace' issues. In South Tirol, the new left rejects the separation of the ethnic groups and demands an end to what it calls Apartheid. The new left wants the three linguistic groups living in South Tirol to integrate (assimilate). This group, now called the Alternative List for the Other South Tirol (ASFAS), seeks votes also from Italians and won 4.5 percent of the vote in the 1983 elections and two council seats. Despite opposition from these three sources, the SVP remains the dominant force in South Tirolean politics,

capturing ninety percent of the ethnic German vote and sixty percent of the total electorate.²⁶

A great deal has changed in the social and economic climate in the years since the settlement. The provincial government has used its increased authority to discourage industrial development and to encourage the tourism industry. Italian migration into the province has been controlled, since the industrial sector provides the majority of jobs for Italian-speakers, and government-owned housing is distributed based on ethnic proportion.²⁷ The proportion system in public employment has led to a situation which is somewhat of a national scandal. Despite high unemployment elsewhere in Italy, about 4,000 public jobs are unfilled, due to a shortage of German-speaking applicants. Mail, regardless of destination, has to be transported out of the province to be sorted. Ticket windows at the Bozen train station must close at night.²⁸ A German journalist summed up the changes by declaring that the South Tiroleans now feel like the "masters" and the Italians living in the province like the minority.²⁹

Despite all the changes, a great deal has remained the same. The two ethnic groups live side by side, but have few contacts. Older South Tiroleans fear the loss of their ethnic identity, or what they call "Alsace-ization" (Ethnic Germans living in French Alsace have largely lost their separate identity). They are increasingly worried about some of the younger generations actually desiring assimilation and preferring to speak Italian. Because of this, practically all

political, business, and social organizations are divided along linguistic lines. A recent attempt to break down the ethnic barriers was squashed by the South Tirolean authorities. In a mixed community, school officials wanted to exchange two students from the German- and Italian-speaking schools for one week. Provincial authorities stopped this experiment after only two days, declaring it was a restriction of the right of instruction in one's mother tongue. The condition of ethnic separation has been compared to Lebanon and South Africa. Some Italians simply call it "racial discrimination."³⁰

In the years since the Package's approval, violence has decreased radically in South Tirol. A few attacks on businesses or military targets have been attributed to the "Red Army" and other similar groups. A series of explosions which took place during 1979-81 has been christened the "Denkmalkrieg," or "Monument War." During this "war" Italian and South Tirolean extremists traded blows by dynamiting each others' historical monuments.³¹ This round of terrorist activity was not directed against persons and was clearly less serious than previous ones. There is no doubt that little sympathy exists among most South Tiroleans for extremists. A SVP functionary was recently summarily dismissed when it became known that he had merely corresponded with a terrorist.³²

The conclusion of the Package agreement made possible the numerous social, economic, and political changes that have taken place in South Tirol. The South Tiroleans no longer feel like an oppressed minority; increasingly, with their new

autonomy, they feel like masters of their own land. The policy of reconciliation with Italy, began during the late sixties, has continued under the SPOe-led government. The Package has made possible the spirit of cooperation and understanding that has been typical of the post-1970 period. The Package settlement appears to have essentially solved the South Tirol problem.

NOTES-CHAPTER VI

¹Mario Toscano, Alto Adige-South Tyrol, Edited by George A. Carbone, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 208-210.

²Kurt Steiner, Politics in Austria (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1972), 245.

³Quoted in Toscano, p. 218.

⁴Lujo Toncic-Sorinj, Erfuellte Traeume (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1982), 332.

⁵Ibid., p. 339.

⁶Ibid., pp. 343-344. Technically, Italy could not veto negotiations for associate membership, only membership itself. This "veto" was lifted in 1969, after the Package was approved.

⁷The Operations Order for the Bundesheer is quoted as Source 36, in Felix Ermacora, Suedtirol und das Vaterland Oesterreich (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1984), 470.

⁸Toncic-Sorinj, p. 344; "Wirklich schiessen?" Der Spiegel 21 (July 17, 1967): 86.

⁹"Attentate sind notwendiger denn je," Interview with Norbert Burger, Der Spiegel 21 (July 17, 1967): 87.

¹⁰Werner Wolf, Suedtirol in Oesterreich (Wuerzburg: Holzer Verlag, 1972), 132.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 229-231.

¹²This was the source of most opposition to the Package. See discussion below.

¹³It was estimated that it would take 30 years to achieve full ethnic proportion in public employment. Suedtiroler Volkspartei, Suedtirol vor der Entscheidung (Bozen, Italy: Ferarri-Auler, 1969).

¹⁴The texts of the Package and the Operations Calendar are in Alcock, pp. 434-449.

¹⁵Anthony E. Alcock, Geschichte der Suedtirolfrage: Suedtirol seit dem Paket 1970-1980, Translated by Franz Weisgram. (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumueller, 1982), 20-25. Hereafter cited as Alcock II.

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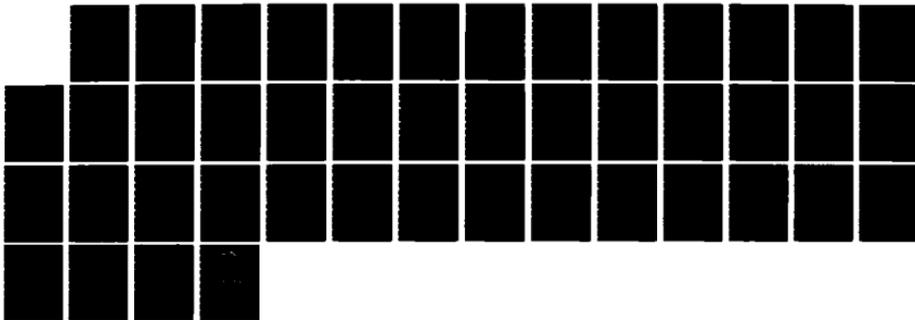
THE SOUTH TIROL PROBLEM SINCE 1945: THE INTERSECTION OF
INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICS(U) ARMY MILITARY
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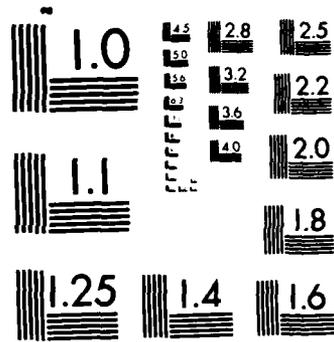
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS 1963-A

- 16 Suedtiroler Volkspartei, p. 5.
- 17 Alcock II, pp. 26-27.
- 18 Austria, Nationalrat, Stenographisches Protokoll, 11th Gesetzgebungsperiode, 168th Sitzung, December 15-16, 1969, pp. 14,222-14,526.
- 19 Ermacora, pp. 168-170.
- 20 Ibid., pp. 170-173.
- 21 Andreas Unterberger, "Du muesst schon ein Wunder geschen," Die Presse, November 23, 1979.
- 22 Elisabeth Barker, Austria 1918-1972 (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1973), 243; 252-253.
- 23 Ermacora, pp. 175-178.
- 24 Ibid., p. 168.
- 25 Alcock II, pp. 154-172.
- 26 Ermacora, pp. 235-245, 248-252. More complete election results are in Autonome Provinz Bozen-Suedtiroel, Suedtiroel-Handbuch, Fourth Edition, (Bozen, 1984).
- 27 Der Spiegel 39 (September 24, 1979): 202-209.
- 28 Der Spiegel 46 (November 13, 1978): 172.
- 29 Der Spiegel 39, Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ermacora, pp. 282-287.
- 32 Die Presse (Vienna), November 23, 1979.

VII. THE SOUTH TIROL ISSUE IN AUSTRIAN POLITICS

Some writers, such as Peter J. Katzenstein, trace the intensification of the South Tirol dispute and the delay in its solution to internal political considerations in both Austria and Italy. This chapter and the one following will examine this particular facet of the issue. They will show how each country developed its South Tirol policy and what forces and personalities influenced that policy. Austrian politics, being more directly involved in the issue will be considered first.

Since World War II, the South Tirol issue has had a profound bearing on the development of an Austrian national¹ conscience. In the months shortly after the end of the war, the provisional Austrian government used the South Tirol issue as a means of pulling together the occupied and divided country. Demonstrations around the country were planned and led by government officials. In one such rally, held in Innsbruck on April 22, 1946, 102 bands and 20,000 marchers participated.² Government leaders in 1945-46 often referred to the South Tirol issue as a Herzensache (matter of the heart) and Austria's demand for the right of South Tirolean self-determination as a heilige Pflicht (holy duty). When the Austrian government's intense campaign for the return of South Tirol was weakened by Allied rejection, the US State Department advised Chancellor Figl to direct his government's

attention toward more pressing problems.³ Subsequently, the intensity of the government-led publicity campaign rapidly diminished. In the years since 1945-46, South Tirol has remained an issue of national conscience, although its appeal has weakened outside the Province of Tirol. Politicians from the major parties no longer express the "holy duty" to protect South Tirol; only the FPÖ members still speak in such terms. South Tirol is widely recognized among Austrians as an historic injustice, but such rhetoric as was common in the postwar period is now seldom heard.

Katzenstein explains the role of South Tirol in the national conscience as a consequence of the disappointment of the results of the 1938 Austrian unification with Germany. Throughout the First Republic, the Austrian people were occupied with the desire for Anschluss. Since the union with Germany ended in war and defeat, instead of the expected benefits, Austrians in the new Second Republic used South Tirol as a displacement of, and in compensation for, the disappointed German nationalism. This account does explain the distinct lack of Austrian response to South Tirol's problems during the interwar era.⁴ Austrians, on the other hand, typically explain their interest in South Tirol as based on its historical and cultural ties to Austria, especially since numerous important historical events took place there. The degree to which one's national consciousness is affected by South Tirol is, in part, a function of one's political orientation.

Austrian political parties took stands on the South Tirol issue both as a result of the interests of their membership and in an attempt to garner additional electoral support. For years, during the Grand Coalition, the Austrian parties followed, in principle, the concept of a single South Tirol policy. The rationale for such a national policy was that a united domestic front would exert greater influence in the international arena. Thus during the 1945-46 negotiations as well as when the question was brought before the UN the Austrian government's position was supported by all the parties. But the idea of a single South Tirol policy was really only a facade; during all this time Austrian political parties were using the issue in order to gain additional votes. After the Grand Coalition's breakup, the nature of the parties' political maneuvers was no longer hidden.

The Austrian People's Party (OeVP) has played a decisive role in the development of an Austrian policy on South Tirol. The OeVP has approached the South Tirol issue on the basis of Austrian national consciousness and the natural right of a people to live in their fatherland. OeVP members emphasize the historical and cultural attachment that South Tirol has to Austria. This sentiment is most strongly felt in Tirol, where the Christian, conservative OeVP and its forerunner, the Christian Social Party, have been dominant since World War I. The fact that much of the party's strength lies in western provinces has affected policymaking in the national party. The strong activist position taken by the Tirolean OeVP (and also the party branches in Carinthia and Vorarlberg) in the

1950's forced the national party leadership also to adopt stronger positions. The Tirolean branch threatened to split with the national party and form an independent regional party in 1946, when the Council of Ministers' decision was made public. There was also talk among Tirolean OeVP Nationalrat delegates about voting against the Package in 1969, but such a move never materialized; if it had, the Package would have been defeated. On the other hand, a major source of moderating influence was its close association with the Italian DC. The OeVP and the DC share similar ideologies and world views. These close relations, developed mostly in the mid-1960's, facilitated the Package negotiations especially in the final stages. The SPOe criticized the Package as a "Christian democrat solution" rather than being the best one for Austria and South Tirol. The OeVP has also been close to the SVP, the majority of whose members share a similar ideology. Because of the OeVP's dominant role in Austria's South Tirol policy-making, party policy, more often than not, has been transformed into that of the government.⁵

The Austrian Socialist Party (SPOe) has traditionally been strongest in the eastern provinces, especially in Vienna. For this reason, the South Tirol question, to SPOe members, has always been less of a national and historical issue than a social and economic one. But the SPOe's relative weakness in the western provinces did not reduce its commitment to supporting the South Tiroleans. During the aftermath of the Trieste episode and again when Kreisky became Foreign Minister, the

SPOe took activist approaches with the hope of winning additional votes in the west. The Proporz system of the Grand Coalition gave relatively large rewards to a party which could post even a modest gain in electoral strength. The evidence suggests that the policy may have had some effect, as the SPOe's share of Tirolean votes in national elections rose from 23.8 percent in 1949 to 35.9 percent in 1970.⁶ After 1966, when the SPOe was in opposition, it openly criticized the OeVP government's South Tirol policy and voted against the Package in 1969. However, since the party has been in power, it has continued the policy of reconciliation with Italy and worked at implementing the Package and Operations Calendar. It has, however, been critical of the SVP's lack of desire to press Italy for a more rapid Package implementation. South Tirol's importance to SPOe members is underscored by the results of a 1967 opinion survey. Members of the three main political parties were asked how they considered the South Tirol issue. Among SPOe members thirty-seven percent answered with "very important" and forty-one percent gave a "less important" response. This is to be compared forty/thirty-four percent responses given by OeVP members and sixty-five/twenty percent given by FPOe members.⁷

That Austrian Freedom Party (FPOe) members would consider the South Tirol question to be more important than members of the other parties is not surprising. The present FPOe is a descendant of the pan-German "nationalist" and Austrian Nazi parties of the First Republic. In its ideology, both Austria and South Tirol belong to the greater German "nation". Having

been left out of government (except since 1983), the FPOe has not had to temper its ideological stance in order to meet the practical requirements of diplomacy. Therefore, the FPOe has consistently demanded that the South Tiroleans be permitted to exercise their right to self-determination, and presumably return to Austria. When Kreisky became Foreign Minister in 1959, he was able to enlist the FPOe's temporary assistance, so that Austria would be able to approach the UN with a policy supported by all the parties represented in the Nationalrat. This arrangement soon dissolved, and the party returned to its critical, hardline position. During the mid-1960's, as members of the major parties left the South Tirol organizations, the FPOe gained greater influence within them. During the negotiations of the 1960's, the party's position was that no agreements should be made that did not provide for self-determination. Consequently, when the Package was brought before the Parliament in December 1969, the FPOe delegates joined the SPOe in voting against its acceptance. In the years since the Package, little has changed. The party still actively supports ethnic German minority issues and still openly calls for self-determination.⁸

The Austrian Communist Party (KPOe) was represented in the Nationalrat until 1959. Like the FPOe, it was left out of coalition government decisionmaking. The KPOe, however, has occasionally cooperated with the government and has also developed its own proposal for a solution to the South Tirol problem. During 1945-46, the KPOe supported the government's

efforts to obtain the return of the province. But the KPOe condemned Gruber for making the 1946 agreement, saying that he had sold out to the Western powers. The party's foreign policy spokesman, Ernest Fischer, also demanded the return of Berchtesgaden from Germany. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, the KPOe generally supported the government's position toward South Tirol. Working with the Italian PCI, the KPOe in 1958 developed a plan which would militarily neutralize South Tirol and strengthen its autonomy. Because of its ever-decreasing electoral strength, the Communists' role in Austrian South Tirol was at best minor.⁹

Norbert Burger's National Democratic Party (NPD) has as its political goal securing the exercise of the right of self-determination for South Tirol. Unlike the FPOe, however, the party has not chosen to sever connections to radical and terrorist groups. In the late 1960's the NPD tried to gain control of the South Tirol organizations, but was unsuccessful. Instead some NPD members founded a new organization, the "Popular Movement for South Tirol (Volksbewegung fuer Suedtirol)." The party's extremist views and poor vote-getting record have not enabled it to influence significantly Austrian policymaking.¹⁰

The role that the Province of Tirol and its citizens has played in the South Tirol issue has been large. To the Tiroleans, like no others, South Tirol has been and remains a "Herzensache." The particulars of Tirolean history have created in Tiroleans a strong sense of regional patriotism, self-consciousness, and distrust of outsiders. The strength

of the Tirolean consciousness is demonstrated by the fact that they refer to themselves as the Tirolean "people (Volk)" rather than "population (Bevoelkerung).¹¹ The word "nation" is also sometimes used when referring to Tirol. This sense of regional identity among Tiroleans developed, in part, out of the events of 1809, which are still remembered and celebrated. Traditionally, the local militias, or Schuetzenkompanien, have played a large role in keeping the traditions alive.¹¹ Religion also plays an important role in Tirol. Tirolean identity (sometimes as God's chosen people living in "God's garden"), cultural traditions, and patriotism are all tied to the Roman Catholic Church. Tirolean distrust of outsiders extends beyond mere chauvinistic attitudes. Many Tiroleans remember the Emperor abandoning them in 1809. On one occasion a member of the Tirolean Parliament suggested that Innsbruck should handle the South Tirol negotiations since Vienna had stabbed Andreas Hofer in the back.¹²

Because of these strong feelings among Tiroleans, the Tirolean political system allied itself with the SVP. Through this connection, Tirolean politicians, especially the Governor and the provincial OeVP chairman, became spokespersons for the SVP in Austria. When the Foreign Ministry in Vienna needed advisors for negotiations or for developing policy, it turned to Innsbruck for help. Throughout the period of the Grand Coalition, Tiroleans participated both on policy committees and in delegations at negotiations. The influence of the Tirolean politicians on Austrian policy was enormous, and

reached its zenith while Gschnitzer was in office (1956-62). For a time, it was almost as if the SVP directly ran Austrian South Tirol policy; virtually no steps were taken by the Foreign Ministry without the Tirolean OeVP and, hence, the SVP's advance approval. During the period of the OeVP's single party government, the influence of the Tiroleans diminished somewhat due to the fact that professional diplomats handled the negotiations, but both Toncic and Waldheim still consulted with the provincial governor.

The most influential of the lobbies or interest groups on Austrian South Tirol policy were the so-called South Tirol "Schutzverbaende (protective organizations)." The oldest of these organizations, the Berg Isel Bund (BIB), has also been the most influential. Founded in Tirol in 1953, it had spread by 1959 to have provincial and local affiliates in all the Austrian provinces and 300,000 members. Technically, it was not tied to a political party, but OeVP members (especially from Tirol) provided most of its leadership. To the BIB belonged many influential and knowledgeable Austrian politicians. Throughout the mid to late 1950's, the BIB sought to activate Austrian policy with regard to South Tirol. It undertook this task by increasing public awareness through propaganda, by lobbying, and by placing its members in positions of power. To this end, the Bund published numerous pamphlets, tracts and periodicals. But it was through the indirect influence of its members that the BIB would have the greatest impact. Gschnitzer was president of the organization, and most of the leading Tirolean politicians were

members. BIB members sat on Austrian delegations in negotiations with Italy and at the UN. Austrian sources consider the influence of the BIB on official government policy during the period 1956-62 to have been considerable.¹³

When the disagreement over extremism caused the rift within the BIB in 1962, its influence on official Austrian policy evaporated. Its influential members from the major parties (Gschnitzer among them) left the organization. The BIB and other similar organizations became dominated by the FPOe. In 1966, they united under an umbrella organization, the Union for South Tirol. A representative of the Union participated as an observer in some of the Package negotiations, but there is no indication that it exerted any influence over policy. As the FPOe has shared power with the SPOe since 1983, the possibility exists that the South Tirol organizations may once again be able influence government policy, but it is still too early to tell.¹⁴

The Austrian press has demonstrated throughout the history of the issue a strong commitment towards South Tirol. In the years between 1953 and 1958, most newspapers (especially those in western Austria) were critical of the government's passivity in the dispute and supported a more active policy. From 1959-61, while the issue was before the UN, the press, like the parties, closed ranks and supported the government policy. Thereafter, however, the media mostly returned to their roles as government critics. Practically all rejected the Austrian government's plans to negotiate a

settlement. Only in 1968-69 was the OeVP government able to dissuade its own party press, as well as most of the major independent newspapers, from such sharp criticism and move toward more neutral or favorable positions.¹⁵ The greatest influence exerted by the press on the South Tirol issue was that, along with the BIB, it helped build public support for an activist policy in the 1950's.

Although many Austrians referred to South Tirol in such terms as "affairs of the heart," there is evidence that economic considerations played a role in the development of Austria's South Tirol policy. Most of the arguments used during 1945-46 were economic in nature. Some such as Austria's need for South Tirolean wine and fruit, were somewhat trivial, but others were more important. Due to the mountainous terrain in central Austria, the western provinces are almost cut off from the east. The rail line and highway running through the Puster and upper Eisack valleys between East and North Tirol would have greatly alleviated this problem. Gruber proposed such a "minor rectification" to the Italo-Austrian frontier in 1946. Although he later tried to explain the proposal in terms of strengthening Austria's bargaining position for greater demands,¹⁶ clearly his proposal was motivated by economic concerns. Austria and Italy wrote into the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement provisions for the free passage of traffic through that section and for a treaty for exchanging goods tariff-free between the North and South Tirol (it was later expanded to include Trentino and Vorarlberg). Later, when the dispute appeared headed toward settlement,

Austrian economic considerations exerted influence once again over policy.

Austria, prohibited (by its own interpretation) by the State Treaty from membership in the EEC, joined, instead, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). When it appeared likely that Britain, Norway, and Ireland would soon be joining the EEC in the mid-1960's, Austria applied for associate membership with the Common Market. In order for its membership to be favorably considered, Austria had to rely on good relations with all EEC member nations, including Italy. When the Italians imposed a veto on Austria in response to terrorism in 1967, the concerns in Austrian economic circles was tremendous. Business and government leaders feared being cut off from the rest of Europe in the free trade of industrial goods. These concerns spurred the government to action, taking steps to prevent terrorism and seeking a solution to the South Tirol dispute. After the veto was lifted in 1969, Austria and the EEC concluded a treaty in July 1972 granting associate membership. In addition to domestic considerations, forces from outside Austria also affected its South Tirol policy.

The SVP, and the South Tiroleans in general, exerted a great, often decisive, influence on Austrian policy. From the very beginning Austrian policy was presented as expressing the will of the South Tirolean people. Austria cited the desire of South Tirol to be reunited as the main rationale of its early postwar policy. Not surprisingly, the SVP maintained

close relations with the Tirolean government and the Tirolean OeVP. After 1953, when the SVP began to shift its own policy away from cooperation, these close ties allowed the SVP to heavily influence Tirolean politicians. After the State Treaty was concluded and Gschnitzer was given the job in the Foreign Ministry, the SVP's influence was extended to the national government as well. For several years, the Austrian government essentially delegated responsibility for South Tirol policy to the Tirolean OeVP and, hence, to the SVP. Even after the Socialist Kreisky became Foreign Minister in 1959, North and South Tirol retained their veto power over Austrian policy. Austria's rejection of the 1964-65 negotiations must be seen in this light. Only when Toncic became Foreign Minister in 1966, did the Tiroleans and the SVP lose their dominant influence. He limited the SVP's veto power of the Package to those provisions directly affecting the living conditions in South Tirol. He also removed from the SVP veto power procedural questions involving international and political guarantees. The SVP's excessive influence on Austrian policymaking had a negative effect on the final settlement of the issue.¹⁷

One might expect that Austrian South Tirol policy would be affected by the politics of neutrality. This is especially the case considering the fact that Italy is a NATO member. But only little evidence exists to support the argument. Because Austria was occupied until 1955, some suggest that the Austrian government put off raising the issue with Italy because it was so closely allied with the West. Austria

expected and got little support from the West at the UN debates, in part, because of Italy's ties with NATO. Neutrality entered the dispute once in the late 1960's in response to the terrorism issue. Italy reminded Austria in diplomatic notes, that it was the responsibility of a neutral country to prevent its soil from being used as a base for military actions against another country. This was a reference, of course, to the terrorists operating from Austria. But these situations do not suggest that Austria actually modified its policy in any way because of its neutral status.

European integration played a somewhat larger role than did neutrality. The response of Austrian policy to Italy's EEC veto has already been discussed. The ideal of a united Europe was very much on the minds of Austrians and Italians in the early postwar years. Both Gruber and De Gasperi were committed Europeanists. When they negotiated the Paris Treaty, they both expressed hope such an arrangement would only be temporary; national borders should lose all importance in a united Europe. Such optimistic assessments continued for some time. Gruber, speaking in 1948, said: "Our policy is the rejection of nationalism and the placement of the South Tirol problem in its proper place in a united Europe."¹⁸ De Gasperi expressed similar thoughts at the same time, calling the Autonomy Statute "the first step to bring about an atmosphere in which the founding of a United States of Europe can take place."¹⁹ The plan to "Europeanize" the Saar created some excitement in Austria; many saw this as a possible solu-

tion to the South Tirol issue. Such emotions had an early positive effect on the dispute, but the optimism soon faded away. The reality of the slowness of the integration process and the limitations imposed by the State Treaty led to a decrease in the role European integration played in shaping Austrian South Tirol policy. By the late 1960's, only the FPÖ still envisioned a "European" solution to the dispute.²⁰

Three foreign examples of conflict resolution played roles in the development of Austria's policy. As already discussed, Italy's handling of the Trieste issue served as a catalyst that would lead to the activation of Austrian policy. That the Trieste issue was later settled favorably for Italy, was seen by some in Austria as making the demand for self-determination a viable alternative. A second example, taking place at the same time as the State Treaty was being finalized, was the Saar. After plans for the Saar's "Europeanization" fell through, the German-speaking province decided to join West Germany by means of a plebiscite. This example, especially because it involved ethnic Germans, gave more steam to the Austrian policy activation. One other foreign example, Algeria, played a role during the UN debates. Austria, appealing to the Third World vote, sought to portray South Tirol as a colonial issue, such as Algeria. The UN, of course, failed to agree, but when Algerian independence was won after years of bloody struggle, it was cited as an example by extremists and terrorists. Foreign examples of conflict

1950's/early 1960's and therefore had a negative effect on the dispute's settlement.

Austrian policymaking in regard to South Tirol was affected strongly by economic, political, historical influences. In some cases, these influences had a positive effect and in some they were surely negative. To be able to state that the South Tirol dispute actually worsened because of the negative effects of domestic political influences requires one to have a vision of what would have happened in their absence. But the strong negative effects caused by the Austrian political system almost surely slowed the progress towards settlement. A similar situation existed in Italian politics.

NOTES-CHAPTER VII

¹Use of the term "national" in relation to Austria is tricky, since it usually refers to Pan-German nationalism. Unless otherwise indicated in this chapter, however, it will be used to mean an Austrian nationalism.

²Chancellor Figl also addressed this rally stating: "Justice is the basis of freedom between nations, and we want nothing but justice." Times (London) April 30, 1946.

³Telegram from the Acting Secretary of State to the US Political Advisor for Austria, May 16, 1946 (863.014/5-1646) in Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume V, 1946.

⁴Peter J. Katzenstein, "Ethnic Political in South Tyrol," in Milton J. Esman, ed., Ethnic Conflict in the Western World (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 302-303.

⁵Werner Wolf, Suedtirol in Oesterreich (Wuerzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1972), 97-100.

⁶Austria, Verbindungsstelle der Oesterreichischen Bundeslaender, Die Wahlen in den Bundeslaendern seit 1945, Nationalrat und Landtage, 1981, Table 8, pp. 22-23.

⁷Wolf, pp. 100-106.

⁸Ibid., pp. 106-110.

⁹Ibid., pp. 111-112.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 113.

¹¹A rifle range is located at the Berg Isel battlefield in Innsbruck.

¹²Wolf, pp. 66-67, 91.

¹³Ibid., pp. 129-134.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 134-135.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁶Karl Gruber, Between Liberation and Liberty, translated by Lionel Kochran, (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1955), 53-54.

¹⁷Katzenstein, pp. 300-306.

¹⁸Tiroler Tageszeitung, April 13, 1948. Quoted in Unterlagensammlung 18 (1949): 79.

¹⁹Corriere Tridentino, April 6, 1948. Quoted in Unterlagensammlung 18 (1949): 81.

²⁰See Scrinzi's speech in the 1969 Nationalrat debate in Austria, Nationalrat, Stenographisches Protokoll, 11 G.P., 168th Sitting (December 15-16, 1969): 15434-15435.

VIII. THE SOUTH TIROL ISSUE IN ITALIAN POLITICS

As might be expected the South Tirol question was never as important an issue in Italian politics as it was in Austrian politics. The entire German-speaking population, about 280,000, is a relatively minor part of a nation of 56 million. The South Tirol issue and relations with Austria did, however, generate a great deal of debate and controversy during certain periods of Italian postwar history. The development of the Italian government's policy with regards to the South Tirol issue can be traced to the general developments in Italian politics.

In the immediate postwar period (1945-46), there was considerable agreement among the political parties represented in Parliament about the way De Gasperi's government was handling the peace negotiations. Essentially, all the parties supported the Italian position on keeping South Tirol. The Italians played down the ethnic issue in regards to South Tirol, considering it only a "matter of minor importance." But the threatened loss of 350,000 ethnic Italians in Trieste and Istria was termed an "outrage."¹ Although there seems to have been no opposition² to this double standard, members of several parties opposed the ratification of the Peace Treaty, when it became known that Italy was being forced to give up her colonies. The governing coalition was able to finally put

together enough votes to ratify the treaty, but the retention of South Tirol, the only point where the Italian negotiators had been successful, became a source of national pride.

The initial postwar cooperation among the major parties soon dissolved. The leaders of the Christian Democrats (DC), the dominant party, were in favor of dividing up the country into regions to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of the central government as it had been the case under Fascist rule. The regions were mentioned in the new republican constitution that was drawn up in 1946-47, but it was left up to Parliament to create the regional administrations and decide what powers to give them. The Trentino-South Tirol region was one of the five special regions whose governments were set up at that time by a series of autonomy statutes. Shortly after the Trentino-South Tirol Region was established in 1948, the DC won an absolute majority in parliamentary elections. This monopoly of power by the DC allowed the party's right wing to exercise greater influence. The special regions that had already been formed began operations, but no action was taken regarding the other regions established by the constitution. This can be traced to the DC's fear that the regional governments would be dominated by leftist parties. Similarly, the leftist parties, who had initially opposed regionalism because they had hoped to share power in the national government, came to support the regions' creation.

Although Trentino-South Tirol was never in danger of leftist rule, the DC's policy on the South Tirol issue was

tied to the general development of regional policy. During the period of the DC's rightward shift (1949-ca. 1960), Italian policy towards South Tirol was relatively inflexible. Coinciding with the "Opening to the Left" in 1962, was the establishment to the Commission of Nineteen³ whose proposals would eventually lead to the solution of the South Tirol issue. The leftward shift of the center of power permitted the progressives in the DC to forge a coalition with the Nenni Socialists. This set the stage for the eventual regional reform, since both groups were in favor of regionalism. The approval and implementation of the Package coincided with the final implementation of the regional system in 1969-1970.⁴

A second feature of the Italian political system which played a role in the ethnic conflict was the use of patronage. Because the role patronage played in the distribution of government jobs and financial rewards (e.g. government contracts) was increasing in the 1950's and 1960's, the South Tiroleans were effectively excluded from public employment. And since much of the industry in the province was publicly owned, this discrimination often extended to those jobs as well. For these reasons, control of industrial policy and a guarantee of ethnic proportion in public employment were among the most sought after provisions of the Package.⁵ In the post-settlement period, however, it seems that the SVP has adopted the patronage system as its own and uses it to the advantage of the South Tiroleans.

An important source of domestic political concern about

South Tirol is, undoubtedly, due to its economic significance. As already mentioned, both Italy and Austria presented economic arguments to the Allies at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946. The initial importance of South Tirol to Italy lay primarily in its energy potential. In 1946, South Tirol supplied thirteen percent of Italy's electric power and the area's hydro-electric potential was not fully exploited.⁶ This was all the more important because of Italy's lack of energy reserves, especially after her colonies were taken away by the Peace Treaty. Industry in the Bozen Industrial Zone had come through the war with relatively minor damage and was soon operating again at near full capacity. The agricultural sector, larger by far than the industrial, remained, however, primarily oriented northward. The two primary cash crops, fruit and wine, were rarely sold in Italy outside South Tirol. For example, in 1939 seventy-nine percent of the fruit and wine shipped from Bozen went north.⁷

The Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement stipulated that Austria and Italy negotiate agreements leading to the free [without tariffs] movement of goods and passengers between North and East Tirol. Such an agreement was reached on April 29, 1947. This agreement allowed for trains to pass through Italian territory between East and North Tirol without passport or customs inspection.⁸ The Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement also required that the two countries reach agreements that would enlarge bilateral trade between them. An agreement signed on May 12, 1949, allowed for free trade between the Trentino-South Tirol Region and the Austrian provinces of Tirol and

Vorarlberg.⁹ Trade between Italy and Austria increased over the years, in spite of the continuing dispute over South Tirol. It appears the only sector of the Italian economy hurt much at all was the tourism industry, which was adversely affected whenever terrorists struck. One source credits, in part, Italy's flexibility in offering concessions in the Package to the ailing tourism industry.¹⁰ Part of Italy's problem with tourism was self-inflicted. It had unexpectedly required visas of all Austrian citizens entering Italy during the height of the tourist season in 1962 (it was later lifted). Also, several tourism boycotts were organized against Italy by some Austrian groups, although there is no evidence that these had much effect.¹¹ The Package settlement and the decrease in terrorism have helped lead to a large growth in tourism. South Tirol now has more tourist beds than inhabitants. The issue of bilateral trade has been securely anchored, since 1972, in Austria's Association Treaty with the EEC.

One final factor of Italian domestic politics that impacted on the South Tirol dispute was the frequency of coalition governments in the postwar experience. Since 1945, forty-five governments have been formed in Italy. During the long period of South Tirol negotiations, the frequent changes in governments caused numerous delays and often confusion. For example, on two separate occasions, Austrian foreign ministers explained to the Nationalrat that progress on negotiations was being held up so that the new Italian government could review

its position.¹²

In Italian politics, the South Tirol issue was never as significant as it was in Austrian politics. But as in Austria, political developments within the country did affect both Italy's foreign relations with Austria and its handling of the South Tirolean issue.

NOTES-CHAPTER VIII

¹"Memorandum on the Question of the Italian Northern Frontier," in The Italo-Austrian Frontier, Volume I, (Rome: Ministero degli affari esteri, 1946), 2-4.

²No South Tiroleans were in Parliament until 1948.

³The Commission of Nineteen was headed by a Socialist, Paolo Rossi. Elizabeth Wiskemann, Italy Since 1945 (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 62.

⁴Peter J. Katzenstein, "Ethnic Political Conflict In South Tyrol," in Milton J. Esman, ed., Ethnic Conflict in the Western World (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 306-308.

⁵Ibid., pp. 308-309.

⁶Giuseppe Mammarella, Italy after Fascism: A Political History 1943-1965 (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1966), 167.

⁷Tyrol, Tyrolese Provincial Government, Austria's Just Claim to South Tyrol (Innsbruck, 1946), 75.

⁸Wiener Zeitung, April 30, 1947.

⁹Dolomiten (Bozen), May 13, 1949.

¹⁰Wiskemann, Ibid.

¹¹Austria, Nationalrat, Stenographisches Protokoll, VIII G. P., 81st Sitting, March 4, 1959, p. 3978.

¹²Austria, Nationalrat, Ibid., IX G. P., 97th Sitting, April 5, 1962, p. 4205, and XI G. P., 108th Sitting, June 28, 1968, p. 8730.

IX. CONCLUSION

Examining the historical, political, social, and economic influences concerning the South Tirol dispute leads one to speculate about its causes and about the lessons that can be learned from it. Is it possible to compare South Tirol to other areas of ethnic conflict in Western Europe? Can the lessons learned from this dispute help solve other problems with different historical roots? Similarly, the history of the South Tirolean problem leads one to ask what the future of the South Tiroleans might be. Is the issue of reunification with Austria dead? Is the serious discussion of self-determination for the South Tiroleans heresy? In this brief final chapter the causes of the dispute will be examined and a short attempt will be made to answer questions relating to the lessons learned, their relevance to other Western ethnic conflicts, and the future of South Tirol.

Fate placed the South Tiroleans on the southern side of the Brenner Pass. Destiny had left them basically a rural people in an era of industrial and technological expansion. The primary cause of the ethnic conflict in postwar South Tirol stems from these facts and can be summed up in one word: fear.¹

Italian fears of the revival of pan-Germanism and the loss of their "natural" northern border were directly related to the Italian tendency of first ignoring the problem in South

Tirol and later maintaining an inflexible policy towards it. This was compounded by the fears that the Italian minority living in Bozen Province would be harmed by allowing the ethnic German majority to exercise a large amount of power. The South Tiroleans, on the other hand, had only one fear: denationalization through economic and social measures implemented by the Italians. These fears show up everywhere in the story of the South Tirol dispute. They were the motivation behind the actions taken in both camps and on both sides of the Brenner. When the South Tiroleans raised the issue of the nonfulfillment of the Gruber-De Gasperi Agreement in their 1954 memorandum, the Italians interpreted that as the Austrians' desire to reopen the issue of the Brenner frontier. When the Italian government sought to provide funds for apartment construction in 1957, the South Tiroleans saw it as a deliberate attempt to encourage Italian migration into the province. Because of the direct link the SVP had to the Austrian government, such fears were also often translated into Austrian policy. In Italy, the politics of the 1950's with the Christian Democrats dominated by its right wing, caused these Italian fears to be directly incorporated into national policy. Only when these fears began to lessen did the dispute begin to move along the road to a solution.

The dispute was settled only when its causes began to disappear. Italy began to understand that a solution was in its own best interest and that the fears of a pan-German revival had no basis. The South Tiroleans were finally convinced that the Italian government was not deliberately

trying to denationalize them and could be trusted. Italian politics evolved towards the center of the political spectrum where fears of granting powers to national minorities were less. Control of policy-making in the Austrian government passed from extremists to moderates, thanks in part to the breakup of the Grand Coalition. As long as these conditions of cooperation and moderation exist, the case of the South Tirol dispute should remain closed.

Given this explanation of the causes of the dispute and the basis of its solution, how does it compare with other ethnic conflicts? First of all, the South Tirol dispute was at its height at the same time when the rest of Europe was moving toward transnational integration. During the 1950's and early 1960's South Tirol was essentially the only active ethnic conflict in Western Europe. When South Tirol was headed for its solution, other disputes broke out in Spain, France, and the United Kingdom. South Tirol differs in many respects from the pattern of these later disputes. Most of these later-originating ethnic movements have clear ties to left-wing politics and rhetoric. Such was definitely not the case in South Tirol. But many of the countries involved in these newer ethnic conflicts do seem to have learned from the mistakes of Italy's handling of South Tirol. Whenever the central government displays responsiveness to the demands of the ethnic minorities and proposes an autonomy solution, there has generally been a lessening of the conflict. Thus the South Tirol does fit in some ways into the general pattern of

ethnic conflict resolution in postwar Western Europe.³ So long as the forces that caused it do not reappear, it should remain solved.

The question of what South Tirol's future will be is, at present, uncertain. Economically, South Tirol is overwhelmingly successful. It has been one of the few real bright spots in the sometimes lackluster Italian economy. The tourism industry is booming, to the point that any South Tirolean who wants a job in it can get one. The industrial sector, traditionally the employer of Italian migrants, is kept under tight control. More Italian industry has expressed interest in locating in the province, but official discouragement and the fact that South Tirolean farmers refuse to sell them any land usually prevent it. Magnago considers the vacant public positions created by the implementation of the ethnic proportions to be a "reserve" against future hard times.³ Politically, there are three possible courses for South Tirol's future. First, the Heimatbund's plan for self-determination and reunification with the Tirolean "fatherland" appears headed nowhere in the current political climate in Europe. Most South Tiroleans maintain that they still have the right to self-determination which will be exercised at some future date when circumstances are more favorable. One has difficulty imagining, however, what the circumstances might be and when they might occur. Another possible course for South Tirol's future might be the assimilation and loss of ethnic identity. This possibility, actively sought by the new left, becomes likely if the ideal of a united Europe ever

comes to fruition. But recent experience has shown a reluctance to accept a loss of national, in favor of a "European" identity. Even if European unity never occurs, the possibility exists that the South Tiroleans might lose their separate identity within the Italian state. But what Mussolini and Tolomei failed to accomplish by brutal tactics, seems unlikely to take place in democratic, pluralistic Italy.

The third possible course of South Tirol's future seems to be the most likely. Magnago, considered by many to be South Tirol's "national" hero, is the longest serving political party leader in Western Europe (since 1957). During his long period of leadership, he has steered South Tirol towards the center, neither advocating extremism nor permitting assimilation. Magnago's SVP, since the Package, has cooperated with the DC and has been a source of stability in Italian politics. Despite challenges from the right and the left, the SVP's continued dominance of South Tirolean politics shows that there is a great deal of public support for it. South Tiroleans, prosperous and autonomous, are satisfied with the course set by the SVP within the Italian state. It seems unlikely to change. The South Tirolean problem, as far as can be foreseen, appears to have been solved.

NOTES-CHAPTER IX

¹Anthony E. Alcock, The History of the South Tirol Question (Geneva: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1970), 458.

²Charles R. Foster, "The Unrepresented Nations," in Foster (ed.), Nations Without a State (New York: Academic Press, 1972), 1-3.

³Sueddeutsche Zeitung (Munich), November 21, 1978.

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