

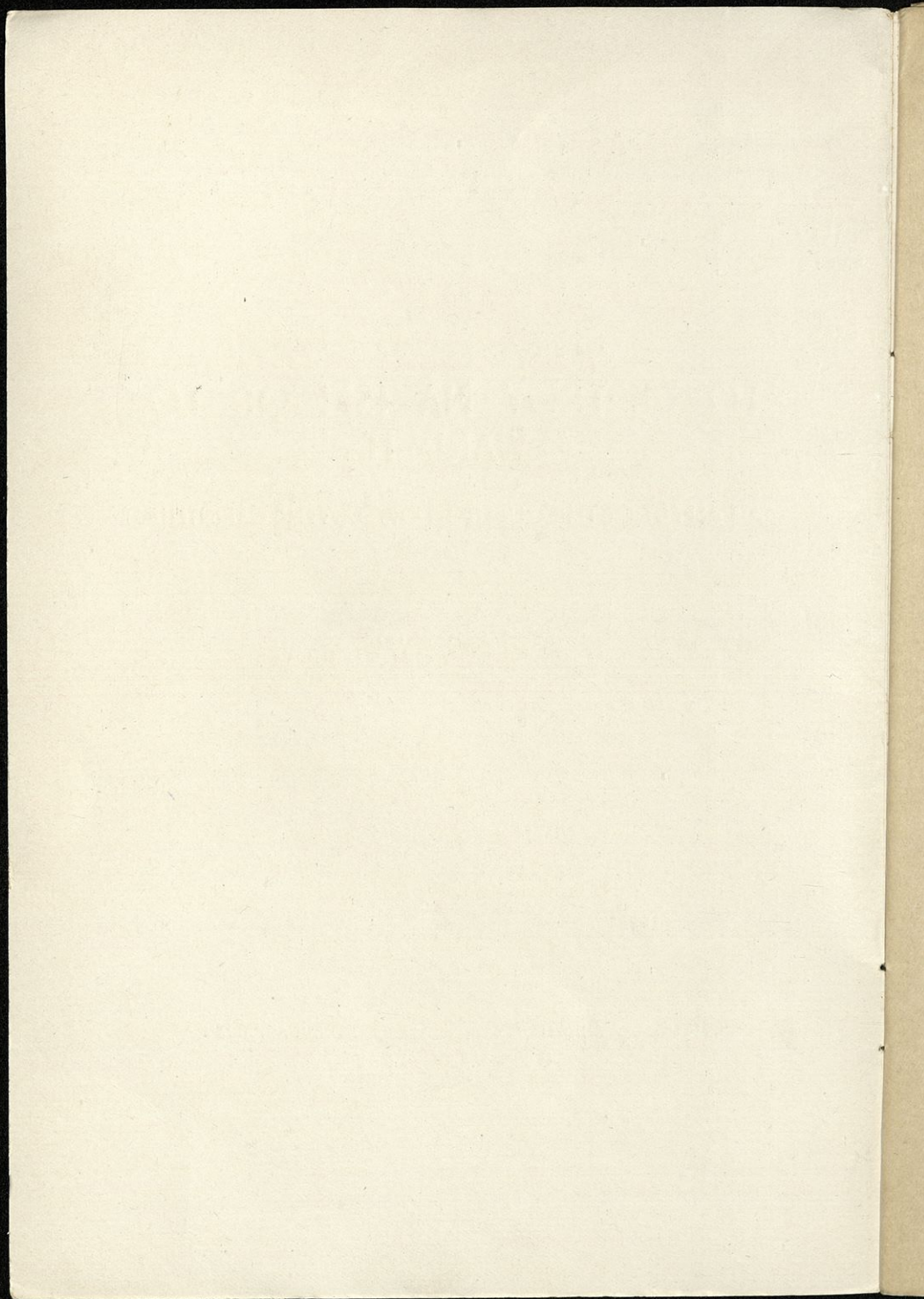
80058

TO DESTROY NAZISM OR TO REWARD IT?

AN ASPECT OF THE QUESTION OF SLOVENE CARINTHIA

BY Dr. FRAN ZWITTER
PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

YUGOSLAV INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
BEOGRAD 1947



TO DESTROY NAZISM OR TO REWARD IT?

AN ASPECT OF THE QUESTION OF SLOVENE CARINTHIA

BY Dr. FRAN ZWITTER

PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

YUGOSLAV INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BEOGRAD 1947

TO DESTROY NAZISM OR TO
REWARD IT?

AN ASPECT OF THE QUESTION OF SLOVENE CARINTHIA

BY DR. FRAN ZWITTER
PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

80558



22.8.1944/8838

YUGOSLAV INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
BEOGRAD 1947

The Allies have always stated, in their struggle against Nazi Germany, that there was no possibility of a compromise. Their common aim was the complete surrender and the occupation of the whole of Germany, including the Austrian provinces; they set forth as their aim the denazification and re-education of the population of Germany and Austria. Nazism, on the other hand, maintained itself in power until the very end. Its rule ended only with the occupation of Germany and Austria by the Allied troops.

There was only one exception in this respect, and that was Carinthia, an Austrian province on the Yugoslav border. In that province, the Nazi régime, when it felt that its last moment had come, handed over power to a new team, in the hope that it would thereby preserve the Nazi heritage which had a specific character in that province. And the British occupation authorities accepted this team which had assumed power in Carinthia from the hands of the Nazi régime and in accordance with Nazi laws. Continuity between the Nazi régime and the new régime was thus maintained, and the men who had accepted power from the Nazis are even now members of the Provincial Government of Carinthia.

Much noise was raised in this connection in January and February 1947 at the Meeting of the Deputy Foreign Ministers in London, because of the fact that the Austrian Delegation included Hans Piesch, *Landeshauptmann*, i. e. the highest Austrian dignitary in Carinthia since May 7th, 1945, when power was handed over to him by authorized representatives of the Nazi régime. The Yugoslav Delegation drew the attention of the Deputies to this transfer of power, and to the collaborationist activities of Hans Piesch in the course of the war. The Deputies decided they would request informations from the Allied Control Council for Austria. The first result was that Hans Piesch tendered his resignation on March 12th, 1947, to the office of *Landeshauptmann* of Carinthia. Anyhow this change of a personal nature does not signify a corresponding change in the system which the person involved represented, the system of maintaining Nazi remnants.

The facts regarding Nazism in Carinthia and its continuity are worthy of notice, because their significance transcends the framework of the political life of an Austrian province and of the fate of a small but sturdy branch of the Yugoslav people, the Slovenes of Carinthia. The question of whether justice will be meted out, and satisfaction given, to those who fought on the side of the Allies, or whether they will be sacrificed to a system which wittingly embodies the traditions of Nazism, assumes the wider aspect of the question of whether there is, in this case, the desire to implement the fundamental points of the program of the Anti-Nazi Coalition, or whether, on the contrary, there is a wish ruthlessly to trample under foot the loyalty the Allies owe to their common aims.

Common aim was the complete overthrow and the liquidation of the Nazi regime in Germany, including the Austrian provinces they set forth as their aim the destruction and re-education of the population of Germany and Austria. Nazism on the other hand maintained itself in power until ———— its rule ended only with the occupation of Germany and Austria by the Allied troops.

There was only one exception in this respect, and that was Carinthia, an Austrian province on the Yugoslav border. In that province, the Nazi regime, when it fell, at the last moment had come handed over power to a new team, in the hope that it would thereby preserve the Nazi heritage which had a specific character in that province. And the British occupation authorities accepted the team which had assumed power in Carinthia from the hands of the Nazi regime and in accordance with Nazi laws. Continuity between the Nazi regime and the new regime was thus maintained, and the men who had accepted power from the Nazis are even now members of the Provincial Government of Carinthia.

Much noise was raised in this connection in January and February 1947 at the Meeting of the Deputy Foreign Ministers in London because of the fact that the Austrian Delegation included Hans Piesch, Landeshaupmann, i. e. the highest Austrian authority in Carinthia since May 1945, when power was handed over to him by authorized representatives of the Nazi regime. The Yugoslav Federation drew the attention of the Deputies to the transfer of power, and to the collaborationist activities of Hans Piesch in the course of the war. The Deputies decided they would request information from the Allied Control Council for Austria. The first result was that Hans Piesch tendered his resignation on March 12th, 1947, to the office of Landeshaupmann of Carinthia. Anyhow this change of a personal nature does not signify a corresponding change in the system which the person involved represented, the system of maintaining Nazi remnants.

1. THE NAZI RÉGIME IN CARINTHIA APPOINTS ITS RELAY.

The situation in Carinthia towards the end of the War.

There are three facts which are characteristic of the situation in Carinthia towards the close of the Second World War: the armed struggle of the Carinthian Slovenes against Nazism, the absence of any resistance movement worth mentioning among the German-speaking population, and the general awareness of the impending collapse of Hitler's Army and of the Nazi system.

Carinthia differed from the other provinces of Austria in that a part of its population, the Carinthian Slovenes, had ever since 1942 waged an unceasing partisan struggle from the mountains and forests of Slovene Carinthia. Side by side with this military activity a political resistance movement was going on. Both were incorporated in the movement of the "Liberation Front of the Slovene People", one of whose aims had, from the moment it was formed in 1941, been the union of all the Slovenes including the Carinthian Slovenes, and which was a part of the National Liberation Movement of the peoples of Yugoslavia, the same as the partisan detachments of the Carinthian Slovenes were part of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. This armed struggle and the political movement of the Carinthian Slovenes, were a very important factor in Carinthia, even before the divisions of the Yugoslav Army were approaching the borders of Carinthia early in May 1945. This can best be seen from the fact that there was an Allied Military Mission with the partisan detachments in Carinthia as far back as 1944 (cf. *The National Liberation Struggle of the Slovenes of Carinthia during World War II*, Annex № 2 to the Memorandum of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia on Slovene Carinthia, the Slovene frontier areas of Styria and the Croats of Burgenland).

There was, on the other hand, no such thing as a resistance movement among the German speaking population of Carinthia during the war, with the exception of a few small groups of Austrian anti-Fascists who were genuinely desirous of contributing to the victory over Nazism and who, therefore, linked themselves up with, and relied upon, the political force in Carinthia which was

alone conducting a real struggle against Nazism, i. e. the Liberation Front of the Slovene People. Now the representatives of the present régime in Carinthia are wont to speak a lot of such a movement and to describe themselves as great heroes. It can be seen, however, from the account they themselves give in the *Volkszeitung*, organ of the People's Party in Carinthia, of December 16, 1945, that the people involved were those who had collaborated with the Nazis throughout the war, mainly officials of the Army, *Gendarmerie*, and Police, and also some followers of the former political parties, who had not even then, on the eve of the downfall of the Nazi régime, started any kind of struggle against the Hitlerism, but were, towards the end of April 1945, merely considering the measures which should be taken at the time of the collapse in order to "save the country from a catastrophe". Dr. Rainer, the Nazi *Gauleiter* of Carinthia, who was handed over to the Yugoslav authorities as a war criminal, stated in this connection: "As regards the so-called resistance movement, it should be generally remarked that it failed practically to make itself felt throughout the whole period. In fact, activity was shown only by the Communists and the Slovenes organized from Carniola. It was only in May that I was informed of the existence of a resistance movement, and these reports sounded, in part, completely fantastic. I have experience from five years of underground struggle at the time of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg and I therefore accepted such news with considerable reserve. Certain events, it is true, which in part are still not clear to me to-day, make the conclusion possible that perhaps at the very end there were resistance groups in Carinthia and that they had certain plans for actions, or else that they made certain attempts at action. Nothing of any importance occurred, however, and I was in control of the situation until the evening of May the 7th. Now, of course, many would like to have been "fighters in the resistance movement".

The situation after Hitler's death is described by F. Kg. (Franz Krassnig), who took an active part in the events of those days, as one in which the imminent collapse of the Nazi Reich was the only certain fact among the numerous uncertainties of the near future. He then goes on to quote such uncertainties as these: "Will the British be here before Tito's troops? Will there be fighting here in Carinthia? Will the Russians operate a break-through in Styria and make their way into Carinthia?" (From the article "A year ago", published in the *Volkszeitung*, May 8th, 1946.)

The origin of the idea of handing over power to another team.

In the course of his interrogation, Dr. Rainer thus described the origin of the idea to hand power in Carinthia over to a new team and thus prevent the liberation of the Carinthian Slovenes:

He was called to Berchtesgaden on May 2nd, where he had an interview with Marshal Kesselring, and on the following day he met

Dr. Kaltenbrunner, deputy Reich leader of the SS for the South, in Strobl in the Salzkammergut. In the course of these interviews, he had the opportunity of acquiring information regarding the military and political situation. The Yugoslav claims to Carinthia caused him no small concern, and he pointed this out to Kesselring, requesting him to bring it to the notice of the then Prime Minister of Germany, Admiral Doenitz; he thought that the German General Staff and German Government were still in a position to give consideration to this fact when negotiating the Armistice. On his return journey to Carinthia, he conceived the idea of establishing contact with representatives of the former "democratic parties". Upon his return to Celovec (Klagenfurt), he called ten of his closest collaborators and told them of his idea. It turned out, in the course of the discussion that his deputy, *Gauhauptmann* Natmessnig, had had the same idea and that he had already come into touch with certain persons who had belonged to these parties.

According to the *Kärntner Volkszeitung* of December 16th, 1945, the origin of the idea to contact representatives of the former parties is to be traced back to Lt. Gen. Noeldechen, who was in command of the local troops in the Carinthia area and who was the senior military official in the province. On May 4th, Noeldechen saw two representatives of the so-called resistance movement. These asked him to transmit the request to Rainer that power should be handed over to the old parties, that Celovec (Klagenfurt) and Beljak (Villach) should be declared open cities, and that contact should immediately be established with the British 8th Army for the purpose of ensuring that Carinthia be occupied by British troops.

Rainer denied that Noeldechen would have played a part in all this, and viewed the possibility of these two people having played a part in any kind of a resistance movement with scepticism and irony. However that may be, the idea of this manoeuvre was obviously conceived by the very highest representatives of the Nazi régime in Carinthia.

The motives of the idea.

A very interesting light on the motives which lay at the back of all these events is shed by a letter addressed to Rainer on May 4th, by Dr. Wutte, who had for many years been considered a leading "scientific" representative of anti-Slovene chauvinism in Carinthia, for whom Rainer had great respect as for his professor and in whose honour he established a special "Martin Wutte Prize" for scientific works of this kind: "The speech you delivered on Thursday and of which I, unfortunately, learnt only from the columns of the *Kärntner Zeitung*, showed that what is to-day at stake is again the preservation of the unity and freedom of Carinthia from the Slav South-East which is now Bolshevik and therefore all the more dangerous." Dr. Wutte notes the differences existing between Great Britain and the USA on the one hand, and the USSR and Yugoslavia on the other, and expresses the hope that "this will enable Carinthia to enjoy, as

she did in 1918—19, a certain measure of support on the part of the USA and Great Britain. She must therefore be defended arms in hand as was the case in 1918—19, and preparations for this are already being made owing to your foresight and activity". Dr. Wutte points out the importance of "scientific" work in this connection, while Dr. Rainer takes all the necessary measures for putting his plans into effect.

Military measures.

The fact, that military preparations were being carried out in this direction, is borne out by the article of F. Krassnig in the *Volkszeitung*, of May 8th, 1946, where we read that on May 5th "the troops which were still stationed along the southern border of Carinthia were instructed by Noeldechen and Payer to hold this frontier until the arrival of the British units", which meant that resistance should be offered to the arrival of the Yugoslav troops until the British arrived. Anton Stenzel wrote in the *Volkszeitung* of February 23rd, 1946, that while all resistance to the Western powers had ceased towards the end of April, a small band of Carinthian and Styrian soldiers were fighting on the Koren Pass (Wurzenpass) on the Karavanks against Tito's troops until the British entered Carinthia, and extolled the heroism of these members of the German armed forces.

Discussions on the handing over of power.

Nor were the activities confined to the military sphere. Political manoeuvres were taking place simultaneously. As early as May 5th Rainer met certain members of former political parties. According to the *Volkszeitung* of December 16th, 1945, Rainer had instructed his deputy Natmessnig "to form a committee of the former democratic parties to which he is prepared to hand over power. Natmessnig is to introduce this committee to him at eleven a. m. in the Palace of the Government". When these representatives submitted to the *Gauleiter* a list, including two representatives of the Christian Social Party, two representatives of the Social Democratic Party and one nominee who did not belong to any party, Dr. Rainer, among other things, "asked that the list of proposed members of the Government should be extended to include eight to ten people". According to Rainer's statement, Natmessnig expressed at this meeting, obviously in the name of the representatives present, dissatisfaction because of the fact that Rainer had in his speech on the previous day proclaimed the necessity of resistance on all fronts, while in fact all resistance to the British and Americans should cease, because it was to be feared only the Russians and the Yugoslavs, and requested the immediate establishing of contact with the British HQ in Udine (Friuli). Rainer said he was prepared to turn over power the moment the Province was occupied, promised the representatives of the old parties his protection and informed the police of this.

On the same day, May 5, two former Socialists, Hans Piesch and Dr. Newole, established contact with other politicians of the old parties, who were only beginning to come together at that time and were still lacking any form of organisation. Hans Piesch, who was born in the Sudetens, was a school-master by profession, and, under the Nazi régime, proved an extremely loyal and zealous collaborator of the latter in his capacity of director of the higher elementary school in Beljak (Villach). According to Dr. Rainer's statement, the Social-Democrats were left undisturbed in the civilian offices they had previously occupied by the Nazi régime, because they were keeping very quiet and the Nazi Party organization and the police had no cause to trouble themselves with them. In his capacity of district commissioner (*Kreisbeauftragter*) for gathering salvage for the Army, Hans Piesch issued for instance on January 24, 1942, a circular to the Association of National-Socialist Teachers, in which he called upon them to help gather in the salvage, "because military and economic considerations make it imperative that not a single kilogram of salvage should be wasted", and then went on to conclude: "The gathering of salvage is also part of the struggle against the English". It was in his district of Beljak-town that the best results as regards salvage were achieved throughout the territory of the Economic Administration of Salzburg, which consisted of several Austrian provinces, including Carinthia, and this won him the praise of the 18th Military District. (*Communiqué* issued by the Press Department of the Liberation Front on February 6, 1947, regarding the afore mentioned circular on January, 24, 1942, and the commendation of the 18th Military District, 13/43; the note addressed by the Yugoslav Delegation to the Deputy Foreign Ministers in London on February 18, 1947). Dr. Karl Newole was during the war *Hauptmann* in the *Rüstungskommando* in Celovec (Klagenfurt).

On May 6, Piesch and Newole went to see Rainer. According to Rainer's statement, they requested him to hand power over as soon as possible to the new Government, because in that case Yugoslavia's claim to Carinthia would surely be rejected.

They informed him the Socialists request that the new Provincial Government should be headed by the Social-Democrat Piesch.

On the same day the representatives of the former political parties agreed on a new proposal for the composition of the Provisional Government which was to consist of ten members: 3 Social-Democrats, 2 Christian Socialists, 2 members of the Agrarian Party (*Landbund*), 2 Communists and 1 non-party. According to this list Piesch was to be provisional Head of the Government. (Krassnig in the article already referred to). This list — minus the Communists, because it had been agreed that "the list submitted to Rainer should not yet include Communists", — was brought to Rainer by a delegation consisting of Piesch, Tauschitz, a member of the *Landbund*, and Santer, who was not affiliated to any party, in the afternoon of the same day. Rainer agreed.

There are certain noteworthy differences between the first list, submitted on May 5 and to which Rainer had not agreed, and the second list to which he gave his consent. As new names appeared on the second list Piesch himself, his deputy the *Landbund*-member Tauschitz, who had been Austrian Minister to Berlin prior to 1938, and had soon after May 1945 been obliged to resign his post of *Landeshauptmann*-Deputy and was sent to a camp for Nazis because of his dubious activities at the time of his mission to Berlin, and then Ferlitsch, also a member of the *Landbund* and subsequently Deputy *Landeshauptmann*. So there are clear indications that Rainer influenced the composition of the new Government, particularly as regards the allotting of the most important functions.

He could not, however, make up his mind to turn power over straight away. His own followers opposed to this at the meeting they held in the morning of May 7; he was still toying with the idea of confining the role of the new Government to that of a consultative body under himself; being a representative of the Reich, he wished to obtain the approval of the highest Reich authorities. He was extricated from this dilemma by a message from Kesselring summoning him to Graz immediately. He went there in the company of Tauschitz, in the capacity of nominee to office in the Provincial Government. It was only after Kesselring had told him on the afternoon of May 7th, in Graz, of the imminent surrender of the German Armed Force, and had approved of authority being transferred to the new committee as the wisest it can be done under the circumstances, it was only then that Rainer decided to hand over power.

On the same day Enzfelder, one of the Socialists who had taken part in the negotiations, had already established liaison with Rome, i. e. with the HQ of the 8th Army in all probability (Karl Newole, in the Carinthian Socialist paper *Die Neue Zeit* of May 8th, 1946).

Authority handed over.

According to the *Kärntner Zeitung*, Rainer's official organ, which subsequently became the organ of the Provincial Government of Carinthia, of May 8th, 1945, the formal transfer of authority in the night of May 7th—8th, 1945, was accomplished in the following manner.

The *Gauleiter* Dr. Rainer announced his resignation in a special broadcast: "The occupation of Carinthia by enemy forces has begun. The political activity of the Party is thereby terminated. I order that all activity should cease in the enemy occupied areas. Being a National Socialist, I am neither acknowledged or listened to by the enemy as a representative of the interests of Carinthia. I am therefore resigning as *Reichsstatthalter* in order to make it possible for those forces, which better correspond to the conceptions of our enemies, to create a new political basis. I am therefore handing the functions of Government over to the *Gauhauptmann*

and Provisional President of Government Meinhard Natmessnig". He then went on to call upon the population to maintain unity and order, and concluded his address in the following terms: "National Socialist men and women! I thank you for your loyalty to the Führer. His idea is living among us! Now close your ranks in the struggle for a free and undivided Carinthia!"

After Rainer's speech, the *Kärntner Zeitung* published *Gauhauptmann* Natmessnig's address to the members of the new Provisional Government. Natmessnig began by remarking that Rainer had resigned "on account of the general military situation, and particularly of that prevailing in Carinthia". He then pointed out that he had been conducting negotiations, in agreement with Rainer, with representatives of the former Parties and stressed "the need of maintaining peace, order and security in our Carinthian land". He revealed the common basis on which it had been possible to bring the negotiations to a successful close: "I feel 't to be particularly necessary, and I think I am voicing the opinion of all the constructive and therefore positive forces of Carinthia, to thank you, gentlemen, for the unswerving desire you have constantly expressed on your own initiative, in the course of your negotiations with the *Gauleiter* and myself, that not a single of our countrymen should be persecuted only because he had belonged to the Party." "You guarantee that the people of Carinthia will be unanimous in their determination, one already expressed twenty five years ago, to safeguard the indivisibility of our Province, from domestic and foreign enemies. The determination you have all expressed to make the ancient battle-cry 'Free and undivided Carinthia!' your guiding principle, will meet with the approval of the whole of Carinthia." Natmessnig was thus calling upon them to fight their domestic enemy i. e. the Carinthian Slovenes, and the foreign enemy, i. e. Yugoslavia under the old watchword which had served as a cloak for the oppression of the Carinthian Slovenes at the hands of German imperialism. And finally Natmessnig formally effected the transfer of authority: "I am hereby transmitting to you the powers and rights belonging to the *Reichsstatthalter* of Carinthia under the law of April 14th, 1939, and the orders and decrees arising therefrom".

The new *Landeshauptmann* Piesch took over with the following words: "*Herr Gauhauptmann!* I declare here to you that we are prepared to take over this arduous task which is full of responsibility..."

The new Provincial Government simultaneously issued two further proclamations. The first proclamation, signed by eight members of the new Government (minus the Communists who had not joined) was in the main a call to union, prohibiting all acts of terrorism and individual actions, as well as any removal of civil servants without the approval of the Provincial Government and proclaiming anyone who failed to comply with these orders to be an enemy of the country and of freedom. The proclamation then

went on to say: "The Provincial Government consider that their main duty will be to safeguard the liberty and indivisibility of Carinthia." The second proclamation which was headed "Let us maintain order and discipline!" was another call to order, peace and discipline, and confidence in the police.

The significance of the handover.

The new Government had thus accepted power from the hands of representatives of the Nazi régime and in accordance with Nazi laws. In vain we look for Nazism and Pan-Germanism denounced in their proclamations. The only reason for a change of régime was the military situation. The principle of the continuity of authority, and of the Nazi Government apparatus, was proclaimed. Natmessnig's speech shows that the new Government had pledged themselves that no one would be persecuted because of membership in the Nazi Party. Rainer had publicly called upon the Nazis to support the new Government. This support was necessary to this Government because they were backed by no political forces of their own. These facts foreshadow the course future "denazification" in Carinthia was to take. The explanation why Carinthia was the only Province of Austria and of the German Reich where Nazism was prepared to hand power to a new team, is to be sought in the slogan of "a free and undivided Carinthia", which means a continuation of the national oppression of the Carinthian Slovenes, a slogan we encounter in all the speeches and proclamations we have quoted. Coupled with this idea we find the hope that the new team will ensure the assistance of the British and Americans against the Yugoslavs.

Nazis submit to the new Government.

All the Nazis and the Pan-Germanists placed themselves under the orders of the new Government with remarkable discipline. On May 11th, Dr. Wutte wrote to Hans Piesch and placed himself at the disposal of the new Provincial Government "whose formation I have eagerly welcomed in view of the collapse of the National Socialist régime". The *Kärntner Volkszeitung*, a Villach newspaper, published on May 10, 1945, under British occupation already, a highly characteristic leader, which, on the one hand, lamented the downfall of Nazi Germany, and on the other, stressed that the struggle for an "undivided Carinthia" was the main task in the new situation, expressing the hope that they would have, in this respect, the support of the British and of the Americans. The troops who were still fighting the Yugoslavs in South Carinthia recognized the new Provincial Government as one which "had come to power in a legal manner" (such are the terms used by the organ of the Austrian People's Party, *Volkszeitung*, December 16th, 1945), as is shown by the fact that the SS units and other German troops

refused to hand over their arms and surrender to the Yugoslavs, on the ground that they had not yet received authority to do so from the new Government in Celovec (Annex IV to the *Yugoslav Memorandum on Carinthia*, p. 15).

British and Yugoslavs in Carinthia.

On May 8th, on the morrow of the assumption of power by the new Provincial Government, troops of the British 8th Army entered Celovec (Klagenfurt), two hours later there were the Yugoslav troops, too. Slovene Carinthia was occupied partly by Yugoslav and partly by British troops. On the basis of the political organization of the Liberation Front which had for three years led the struggle of the Carinthian Slovenes against Nazism, a "Provincial National Liberation Committee for Slovene Carinthia" was formed on May 16th, 1945, as the supreme representative of civilian authority in the province, in a way similar to that in which civilian authorities had in the different provinces of Yugoslavia emerged in the course of the Liberation War from political organizations in the liberated territory. Two civilian authorities were thus in existence: this Committee and the Provincial Government under Piesch.

After the departure of the Yugoslav troops.

This duality of civilian and military power lasted, however, only for a few days. The British and United States Governments demanded the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from Carinthia on the grounds that this province came within the sphere of British occupation under the agreement of the Great Allies, and that Yugoslavia's claim to the territory of Slovene Carinthia would be decided upon at the time of the general peace settlement. Yugoslav troops withdrew from Carinthia. The British occupation authorities then disbanded the National Liberation Committee for Slovene Carinthia, and maintained the Piesch Government as a Provisional Provincial Government.

Both the status and composition of that Government subsequently underwent several changes, but the principal members remained throughout, headed by Hans Piesch who only resigned on March 12th, 1947. His successor, the new *Landeshauptmann* Ferdinand Wedenig, elected by the Carinthian Diet on April 22, 1947, had been a member of the Piesch Provincial Government of May 7, 1945. Both his deputies are Hans Herke and Hans Ferlitsch, also members of the Government formed on May 7, 1945. Still another instance of the continuity of the system which remained unchanged in principle.

The manner in which the Piesch Government came into being was known not merely in Carinthia but was repeatedly described

in the Yugoslav press (the first time by Lojze Ude in the *Slovenski Poročevalec*, Ljubljana, May 25th, 1945). But the British Occupation Authorities simply took no notice.

The case of Nazis handing power over in Carinthia in May 1945 to certain people selected by them, and of these people embodying power of the Austrian State throughout a period of several years and being recognized as such by the Allied Occupation Authorities, is a unique one. It is only possible to grasp its importance if one bears in mind to what extent the political life of the German speaking Carinthia was poisoned by Nazism.

II. THE GERMAN NATIONAL CHAUVINISM AND NAZISM IN CARINTHIA.

The ideas of German Nationalism and Pan-Germanism have a long tradition behind them in Austria. It was they which created so favourable a soil for the growth of Nazism. No impartial observer can to-day harbour any doubts regarding the strength of Nazism in Austria. The provinces of Austria, however, differ among themselves in this respect. And none of these provinces can bear comparison with the German part of Carinthia as regards the intensity of national chauvinism, Pan-Germanism and later of Nazism. The political development of Carinthia in the course of the last hundred years is evidence of this.

The political structure of German Carinthia under Austria—Hungary.

The main bearers of German nationalism and of the struggle against the Slavs in the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were the "National-Liberal" and later the "German-National" parties. There was, in actual fact, far more national-chauvinism than liberalism in these parties. They were in the main satisfied with German hegemony in Austria and a pro-German foreign policy of Austria, while certain groups were already openly coming out in favour of a pan-German or even racist and anti-semitic program (e. g. the group of Dr. Schönerer who had a decisive influence on Hitler). The principal competitors of these groups among the German speaking population in Austria were the various conservative, and later Christian Social parties, whose loyalty went above all to the dynasty of the Habsburgs. The German national movement had the most considerable following among the Sudeten Germans; in the lands of what was to become the Austrian Republic, its main supporters were drawn from among the ranks of the bourgeoisie, while the vast majority of the rural population was to be found in the conservative camp.

An exception in this respect was constituted by Carinthia which was a stronghold of the German national parties, despite its predominantly agrarian character: at least eight of a total of nine members of Parliament for Carinthia prior to 1897 were always members of these parties, while of the ten members whom the Province elected after 1897, the number of those belonging to the German

national parties was nine at the first election, all ten at the second election, six at the third election and eight at the fourth election; the remaining members were either Slovenes or Conservatives or Socialists. We cannot enter here into the question why the Carinthian Slovenes because of the electoral system and the division of constituencies did not enjoy a representation corresponding to their number. The electoral system and the distribution of constituencies represent in themselves a means for the national oppression of Carinthian Slovenes. This German national attitude of the German population precisely in Carinthia is explained even by German authors as having been caused by their national struggle against the Slovenes, which in reality means by the tendency of national oppression of the Slovenes (*Handwörterbuch des Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtums*, III, Breslau 1938, p. 564. Dr. Martin Wutte, Carinthia I, Klagenfurt 1940, p. 56).

German chauvinism was felt above all by the Carinthian Slovenes. There is no doubt that it was precisely the idea of the "frontier mission" of Carinthia in the offensive of Pan-Germanism towards the Adriatic, against the resistance of Carinthian Slovenes — the chief opponents of German national parties — which represented a strong impetus for the development of national chauvinism among the German-speaking population of Carinthia. Austria did not in practice recognize equal national rights to the non-German nationalities in the other provinces either; Carinthia however constitutes a specific case even within this general framework of Government policy. Here, the chauvinism of the autonomous provincial administration was added to this common policy. This administration controlled for instance, elementary education and did not allow the establishment of any kind of Slovene elementary schools. There was also the chauvinism of the owners of economic enterprises, of the large landowners, who were linked up with the German-national organizations and exerted pressure against the Slovenes in accordance with instructions from these organizations thus promoting the Germanization of the Slovenes.

In the Austrian Republic.

This political structure was changed in the Republic of Austria in so far as the two most powerful political parties became the Christian-Social and Social-Democratic parties; small groups, such as the Pan-Germans, the Agrarian Party, which had emerged from within the German national camp, only came third. Out of the total number of members of the Vienna Parliament at the time of the Republic between 1919 and 1933 (this number was 160 in 1919, 175 in 1920, and 165 at subsequent elections after 1923), the number of Christian Socialists varied from 63 to 82, of Social-Democrats from 66 to 75, of Pan-Germans and of Agrarians etc. from 16 to 27. Social-Democracy had its main stronghold in Vienna, and it drew the remainder of its following from among the workers in other provinces, while the bulk of the rural population in other provinces gave its

support to the Christian-Social Party; the Pan-German parties were mainly backed by the bourgeoisie and by the wealthy peasants. The Pan-Germans were, naturally, all in favour of the *Anschluss* and of German chauvinism, the Social-Democratic Party as a whole advocated the *Anschluss*, the majority of the Christian-Social Party was also in favour of the *Anschluss*, and the only section of this Party which showed but small enthusiasm for Germany was the one which still hoped for the return of the Habsburgs. We thus had the curious paradox in the Austrian Republic that in fact nobody was in favour of the Austrian Republic; the republicans were not in favour of Austria, while the legitimists, to whom Austria still meant something, were not in favour of the Republic.

Carinthia's situation within the Austrian Republic was a specific one, different from that of the other provinces with a similar social structure. Three of the nine members of Parliament for Carinthia, i. e. a third, invariably belonged to the Pan-German or Agrarian parties, a higher percentage than in any other of the Austrian provinces; four members were Social-Democrats; only two were Christian-Socialists, a smaller percentage than in other provinces. This goes to show that German national chauvinism was stronger in Carinthia than in other provinces of Austria, and that Pan-German sentiments were even more powerful among the German-speaking population of Carinthia than among the Austrian population taken as a whole. This attitude of the German majority in Carinthia made things even more difficult for the Carinthian Slovenes than they had been in Austria-Hungary; they failed to find protection anywhere, including the Social-Democratic Party which did not differ in this respect from the bourgeois parties. The representatives of Carinthian Slovenes struggled in vain for their national rights in the Carinthian Diet; the Pan-German parties were so strong and the national chauvinism poisoned to such an extent the entire German-speaking population that the Slovenes, as a minority, could achieve nothing.

The beginnings of Nazism.

It was from within the ranks of the German-nationals that Nazism recruited its first adherents in Austria. Its progress was, naturally enough, limited in the initial stages, but so it was in Germany. It is a well-known fact that the Nazi Party had not been a large mass party in Germany before 1930; as late as the 1928 elections for the Reichstag it had only obtained 2.63 p. c. of the votes; at the 1930 elections the percentage of its votes already reached 18.3 p. c., while the votes cast for this party had amounted to 37.4 p. c. in 1932 and 33.1 p. c. at the second elections held the same year; even after Hitler had come to power, his party only obtained 43.9 p. c. of the votes at the elections of March 5, 1933, which were carried out only a few days after the burning of the Reichstag and were accompanied by terroristic methods. If one was to follow the line of argumentation resorted to by the Austrians to-day, and con-

fine oneself to facts taken from the pre-Nazi period and to certain individual symptoms of resistance to Hitler later, one could exonerate Germany too from all responsibility for Nazism and the war.

Any comparison between the development of Nazism in Austria and in Germany is rendered even more difficult by the fact that the last parliamentary election in Austria took place in 1930, while the last election for some of the diets were held in 1932 and for a certain number of municipal and communal councils in 1933; no elections were held after 1933, because the Dollfuss—Schuschnigg régime no longer dared risk an electoral contest with the rising tide of Nazism whereas they did not want to co-operate with the Austrian workers who represented the most powerful anti-Nazi force in Austria.

Facts show that Nazism developed along the same lines in Austria, although at a somewhat slower pace, as in Germany, and that its strength was comparatively greater in Carinthia than in the other provinces of Austria. Dr. Theodor Veiter, a publicist of the Schuschnigg régime, wrote with some resignation in 1936 about Nazism in Carinthia: "Actually, it had long since been there... It had, in fact, been endemic in Carinthia in the form of National-Liberalism." (*Die Slowenen in Kärnten*, Wien—Leipzig 1936, p. 109). The National-Socialist Party made its appearance in this province as early as the 1919 elections, the first Nazi paper was published there in 1921, the Carinthian Nazis took no small pride in the fact that they were the first to send to Hitler a message of loyalty when he was arrested in 1923. Although the Nazi Party was still small, Carinthia was the only Austrian province where the Nazis had a representative in the Diet as far back as 1923, while after 1927 it was the only province, besides Salzburg, with a Nazi member in the Diet. In 1930, the Nazi Party polled 3.3 p. c. of the votes in Austria; the greatest percentage of all the provinces was obtained in Carinthia (6.5). It was only after this election that the Nazi movement in Austria and Carinthia showed a very considerable growth. No election for the Diet was held in Carinthia in 1932. If we bear the fact in mind that the number of Nazi votes had increased in Vienna from 2.3 to 17.3 p. c. between 1930—32, that they had increased from 4.1 to 14.1 p. c. in Lower Austria and from 3.6 to 20.7 p. c. in Salzburg in the same period, and that they had at these elections practically completely absorbed the Pan-German and Agrarian Party, if we bear the fact in mind that their voices had increased at the municipal elections in Innsbruck from 3.1 to 41.1 p. c. between 1931 and 1933 (cf. Gerd Rühle, *Das Grossdeutsche Reich*, Berlin 1940, p. 172—173; P. T. Lux, *Oesterreich 1918—1938 eine Demokratie?* Graz—Wien 1946, p. 54), we can easily imagine the advance of Nazism in Carinthia where it had been strong even before this recent upsurge and where the Pan-German and Agrarian Parties had obtained one third of the votes. At the last municipal elections in 1933, the Nazis made their way into practically all the municipal and communal councils in Carinthia. (The election data have been taken from the book by

Dr. Hans Volz "*Daten der Geschichte der NSDAP*", Berlin-Leipzig, 9th edition, 1939; and for Nazism in Carinthia the already quoted *Handwörterbuch des Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtums* II, p. 581—84 has been used).

Under the dictatorship, in 1934, Austria lived through two serious crises: the struggle of the Vienna workers in February of that year and the attempted Nazi uprising in July.

Carinthia and the struggle of the Vienna workmen.

When the civil war started on February 12 th, 1934, the Vienna wireless was able to announce only for two Austrian Socialist leaders that they had gone over to the side of the Government. They were Zeinitzer, Deputy *Landeshauptmann* for Carinthia, i. e. the highest representative of the Socialists in the administration of the province, and eng. Pichler, the mayor of Celovec (Klagenfurt), the main town of Carinthia. They were the only Socialists, who had negotiated with Dollfuss even before the uprising and were with him when the first news of the uprising began coming in. They immediately denounced the workers and resigned from the Social-Democratic Party. (Pertinax, *Oesterreich 1934*, p. 300, Zurich 1935). "From Vienna the Socialist leaders of Carinthia immediately established contact with their province, and succeeded in preventing the explosions and acts of revolt which had already been prepared. The Social-Democrats in Carinthia complied with the bidding of their leaders so that not a single shot was fired in Carinthia on February 12 th, or on subsequent days." (*Volkszeitung*, the Carinthian paper of the People's Party, of February 10, 1946.) This fact, at a time when a heroic struggle had been going on for several days in Vienna and in other Austrian provinces against the dictatorship, shows the mentality of the Socialist leaders in Carinthia; their party was undoubtedly a strong one, but their spirit cannot be compared to that shown by the Vienna workers in 1934. They had come to an agreement with the Dollfuss dictatorship against the Vienna workers, just as they had previously come together with the other parties in their policy towards the Slovenes. And in 1945 a man, who had once been a member of the Social Democratic Party, Hans Piesch, joined hands with the Nazi *Gauleiter*, Dr. Rainer in the struggle against the Carinthian Slovenes and their striving for liberation from national oppression by the Germans, with the desire to save the situation, in his capacity of "Socialist", at a time, when the Nazi régime had lost the war.

The Nazi Putsch, July 1934.

Different was the situation in July 1934. The attempted Nazi Putsch which resulted in the murder of Dollfuss in Vienna on July 25th, was put down within a few hours. While, outside Vienna, there was fighting only in Styria, Carinthia and in certain frontier villages in Salzburg and Upper Austria. In Carinthia, the uprising broke out on July 26th, and the fighting went on for five

days against the regular troops which were compelled to withdraw several times (cf. Schuschnigg, *Dreimal Oesterreich*, Wien 1937, p. 258). Entire areas of Carinthia (Lavanttal, Metnitztal, a part of Gurktal, the town St. Veit an der Glan, Gegendtal, a great part of the Upper Drava Valley, the Upper Gailtal) were in the hands of the Nazis, who had disarmed the *Gendarmerie*. Practically the whole of the German part of Carinthia, with the exception of the principal towns Celovec (Klagenfurt) and Beljak (Villach), was for several days under Nazi control (cf. the already mentioned *Handwörterbuch* and Rohrwig: *Der Freiheitskampf der Ostmark-Deutschen*, Graz—Wien—Leipzig 1942, p. 153—204). In the Slovene part of Carinthia the Nazis did not even attempt to start an uprising. Even then it could be felt that the Carinthian Slovenes will represent in this province the only political force which would seriously oppose the Nazi tide.

Anschluss.

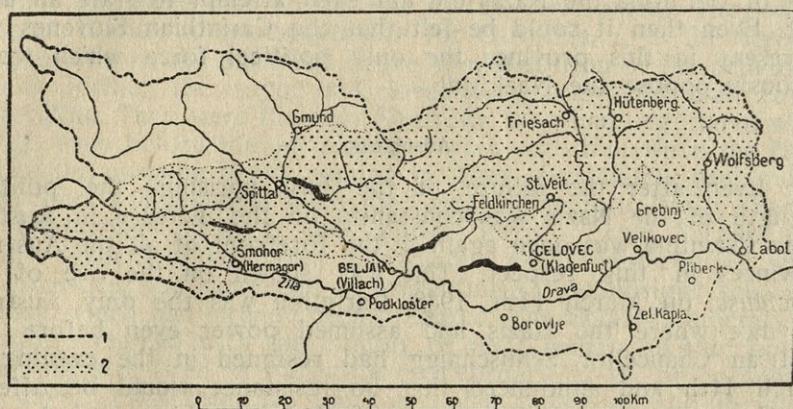
Even after the failure of the July uprising, the political strength of the Nazis was constantly on the increase in Austria, while Carinthia was once again in the forefront of all the Austrian provinces in this respect. This was shown on the eve of the *Anschluss*, on March 11th, 1938. Carinthia was the only Austrian province where the Nazis had assumed power even before the Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg had resigned in the evening of March 11th and announced that no resistance would be offered the German troops in the event of their marching into Austria, at a time when the situation in Vienna was still uncertain. Describing the situation, Dr. Friedrich Rainer said: "In the meanwhile one *Gau* and one *Gau* only, proceeded to take over power, and that was Carinthia!" (cf. his informative lecture read at the Nürnberg Trial and published in the Carinthian Socialist paper *Die Neue Zeit* of February 9th, 1946, under the sub-title »*Kärnten marschierte zuerst ins Dritte Reich*«).

The Nazi period. The Slovenes are the only opponents.

Under the Nazi régime, from 1938—1945, the German speaking population of Carinthia was almost unanimously behind Hitler. Therefore Nazi persecutions were limited almost exclusively to Slovenes as an element which it is impossible to absorb and which by the very nature of things was an adversary of Nazism. In 1942 the deportations of Slovenes started and it was only due to the lack of success on the fronts that this plan was not fully carried out. In 1941, Carinthia was presented with »Southern Carinthia«, a part of annexed Yugoslavia with a Slovene population of 200.000, for the purpose of Germanizing it by means of the methods already tried out upon the Carinthian Slovenes. The Nazis of Carinthia bear particular responsibility for this régime of oppression, extermination and crime, because they were its

main protagonists. The limited instances of anti-Nazi resistance among the German-speaking population of Carinthia in the course of the war were sustained exclusively by the struggle of the Carinthian Slovenes. Carinthia was the most nazified province of Austria. This is confirmed by the registration of Nazis, i. e. of members and candidates of the Nazi Party, members of the SS, and SA, not including the members of their families, which was accomplished by the present Austrian Government. This registration, up to November 1st, 1946, which was incomplete because a

Map of the Nazi Putsch in Carinthia in the last days of July 1934.



1. Frontiers of Carinthia
2. Territory controlled by Nazis at the time of the Putsch of July 1934.

This map shows that practically the whole of Carinthia, with the exception of the main towns and of the Slovene part of the province, was at the time under Nazi control.

not inconsiderable number of Nazis succeeded in evading it, showed that the number of Nazis amounted to 536.660 or 7.5 percent of the total population of Austria. In Carinthia, their number reached 46.753 or 11.5 p. c. of the total population. (Official report of the Austrian Ministry for Home Affairs, *Wiener Kurier*, № 258 of November 8th, 1946). If we leave out the Carinthian Slovenes, the percentage of registered Nazis rises to 14 p. c. of the German-speaking population of Carinthia. Nazism in Carinthia is just as strong as in those German provinces where the National-Socialist Party wielded the greatest influence.

III. THE PRESENT SYSTEM IN CARINTHIA CONTINUES THE TENDENCIES OF THE NAZI RÉGIME.*)

General features of the new policy.

Nazi Carinthia succeeded in legally surviving the downfall of Nazism, owing to the new team which had offered its services at the time of the collapse of the German Armed forces and replaced the Nazi régime there. Carinthia thus preserved its essentially Pan-German character before any kind of far reaching change. She is prepared to disguise this character in all sorts of ways in order to maintain the Carinthian Slovenes under her domination. Her purpose is not merely to pursue the Germanization of a part of the small Slovene nation, but also to ridicule the hope which had led the Carinthian Slovenes to rise in a sanguinary revolt against Nazism at the side of the Allies, the hope that they were thereby contributing to the triumph of justice in general, and of justice for themselves, that they were, that is, achieving their national liberation. The system which is holding Carinthia under its sway since May 1945, a system embodied in the person of Hans Piesch, *Landeshauptmann*, until March 12th, 1947, a system which has not been changed by his resignation and which enjoys the support of the British occupation authorities, is a system which consists in evading denazification and continuing the national oppression of the Carinthian Slovenes.

In the first place, all branches of the civil service in Carinthia, both at high and at lower levels, had been thoroughly nazified. As regards the Carinthian school-teachers, Hans Piesch, who is himself a teacher by profession, said that all schools would have to be closed in Carinthia, if all the Nazi teachers were dismissed (*Kärntner Nachrichten*, organ of the British PWB, № 55, of July 17th, 1945). This applies not only to the teachers, but to all other civil servants as well — including, of course, the police and the Gen-

*) In this chapter I am confining myself to the main facts which are characteristic of the situation in Carinthia after May 1945. As regards the motives and principles governing the policy of the British occupation authorities, I should like to draw the reader's attention to the pamphlet by Kenneth Syers, *Austro-Yugoslav Frontier Problems, Slovene Carinthia*, London 1947.

darmerie — who had for decades been Pan-German, and had, in their majority, turned to Nazism even before the *Anschluss*. In Slovene Carinthia, where the German-speaking population consists in the main of civil servants, teachers, gendarmes etc., those who were not Slovenes were practically all Nazis.

The only way to start denazification in a land of this kind, would have been to turn the Government over to those who had waged a political and military struggle against the Nazis, to those who proved in the course of the war to be the only anti-Fascist force. It is on this basis alone that an anti-Nazi system, capable of effecting denazification and re-educating the German-speaking population of Carinthia, could have been built up. Instead of that, power was, even under the British occupation authorities, left in the hands of men who had accepted it from the Nazi régime and who had promised that they would persecute no one because of membership in the Nazi Party. Dr. Rainer called upon the Nazis to support this régime in the struggle against the Carinthian Slovenes, i. e. against those who had waged an armed struggle against Nazism. It is only too obvious that under such conditions denazification can be nothing but a farce.

Elections.

The electoral law of October 19, 1945, issued by the Provisional Austrian Government and approved by the Allied Control Council for Austria, deprived certain categories of Nazis of the right to vote. In Carinthia, the Chairman of the Provincial Electoral Commission was a Nazi named Dr. Wolte; this shows the manner in which the law was put into effect. The relevant figures show that it was in Carinthia that the number of voters had suffered the smallest decrease (Hans Riemer, *Die Wahlen vom 25. November 1945 im Lichte der Zahlen, Die Zukunft, Sozialistische Monatsschrift*, mid-April, 1946, pag. 19). It is understandable that the pro-Nazi voters cast their votes for parties whose representatives had accepted power from the Nazis, i. e. for the Socialist Party of Hans Piesch and for the People's Party. These two parties won at the elections. It is significant that it was only in Carinthia that a fourth party, the so-called Democratic Party, which was exposed after the elections as a Nazi grouping, found it possible to contest the elections, while the Slovene Party, the Liberation Front, was not allowed to take part in the elections, of which more will be said further on.

»Denazification«

There can be no question of the Nazis having been removed from the administration, the judiciary, the police force etc.; all the branches of the civil service are on the contrary infested with Nazis from top to bottom. Among the senior officials of the Provincial Government, of the administration and of the law courts,

among the mayors of towns and villages, within the police force and the *Gendarmerie*, we encounter a great number of Nazis, who are, of course, not openly showing themselves as such, but are, none the less, doing everything in practice to safeguard the Nazi heritage under the existing circumstances. Former Nazis are shielding one another, proceedings before law courts against Nazis are practically non-existing, the political and administrative leaders are endeavouring to make use of their connections with the occupation authorities in order to have Nazis released from prisons and concentration camps; thus Rainer's deputy, Natmessnig, was set free, among others. The whole situation was described to a delegation of British M. P. s. by Major Burness, an official of the British Security Service in Carinthia, in these terms: »At present Austrians are responsible for the denazification; it is our responsibility to push them, because they don't do anything if we do not compel them. I think myself that they would best like to allow everything to sink into oblivion.« (Quoted according to the German translation, published in the *Volkswille, Klagenfurt*, of February 26th, 1947).

Attitude towards Slovenes.

The feelings of the new régime towards the Carinthian Slovenes are sufficiently obvious. The very reason why it was established was to ensure the continuation of the oppression of the Carinthian Slovenes with the ultimate aim of achieving their complete disappearance, i. e. their complete Germanization, its purpose is to defend the »indivisibility« of Carinthia, i. e. the system of oppression carried on by Austria-Hungary, the Austrian Republic and the Third Reich, against the domestic enemy, i. e. the Carinthian Slovenes, and against the foreign enemy, i. e. Yugoslavia. The methods to-day cannot be quite the same as those applied at the time of the Nazi régime, because the downfall of Nazism is still too recent, and because the question of Slovene Carinthia is an open international question, and it is therefore essential to weather this critical period by means of various promises similar to those so freely indulged in 1918—1920, that the rights of the Slovene minority would be respected.

The surest guarantee that the anti-Slovene policy would be continued lies in the fact that the civil service, the police and the *Gendarmerie* have remained unchanged. There was no room for Slovenes in these institutions even at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, nor at that of the Austrian Republic, i. e. not merely at the time when the Nazi régime was in control. The dismissal of individual Nazis from this Governmental apparatus, which is Nazi in its overwhelming majority, cannot operate any fundamental change in the attitude of the apparatus itself. It is obvious that in the eyes of these officials, the Slovene partisans are even now »bandits« and traitors. Nor can gendarmes and poli-

cemen, who had been fighting these partisans as late as 1944 and the beginning of 1945, civil servants who had served Nazism throughout the war, be expected to have different feelings to-day. This fundamental attitude explains why it has proved impossible to discover the culprits of numerous terroristic outrages against Slovene meetings, gatherings, against Slovene homes and individual Slovenes, which are being perpetrated by Nazi *Wurffkommandos*, sometimes in conjunction with »displaced persons«. The latter are welcome because they are enemies of Yugoslavia. According to the statement of the new *Landeshauptmann* Wedenig, there are 54.000 displaced persons in Carinthia (*Die Neue Zeit*, Klagenfurt, April 26, 1947). Reports from Carinthia speak of twenty attacks against the Slovenes on the part of these »*Wurffkommando*« terrorists in March 1947 alone. There exists a scheme to grant members of German minorities from other countries Austrian citizenship and to have them settled in Carinthia (*Oesterreichische Volksstimme*, Vienna, of February 1, 1947). There is no doubt that behind that scheme there is the aim to have anti-Yugoslav elements in Austria, and especially the German element, reinforced.

The same as the public administration has not changed, so have no changes occurred as regards the economic dependance of the Slovenes upon their German employers, which is the second main reason of the national oppression of the Carinthian Slovenes. Thus for instance in February 1947 Count Thurn dismissed twenty Slovene workers and tenants, including some former partisans and people who had been in his service for many decades (*Presse-dienst* of the Liberation Front, Klagenfurt, II, № 8, March 1st, 1947).

Political measures against Slovenes.

The frontier with Yugoslavia has been completely closed ever since May 1945, a *Sperrzone* has been established along the frontier, and severe restrictions upon freedom of movement have been imposed throughout this zone; this is an attempt to make all contact between the Carinthian Slovenes and Yugoslavia impossible. Although the frontier question is admittedly still an unsettled one, propaganda in favour of Austria is carried on unimpeded and is indulged in even by the press run by the British occupation authorities, while, on the other hand, all pro-Yugoslav propaganda has been considered illegal and subject to persecution ever since the withdrawal of the Yugoslav troops. At the beginning of October 1945, Austrian political parties were allowed to organize and publish newspapers. The Slovene Liberation Front, which had a record of three years of political and military struggle against Nazism, was, however, forbidden to engage in any kind of political activity. Six weeks before the elections of November 25th, 1945 were to take place in Austria, the ban from the Liberation Front was lifted (on October the 17th), but as soon as it had become manifest at the pre-election meetings it was holding that it had very considerable following among the masses of the

Slovene population, its representatives were requested to pledge themselves to refrain from expressing their demand for the incorporation of Slovene Carinthia into Yugoslavia. When this request was rejected, the Liberation Front was banned once again on November 2 and 8, and that is why it did not participate in these elections. Ever since the elections the Liberation Front has existed under conditions of semi-legality: it is not recognized as are the other parties, its press is banned and it is not acknowledged the rights enjoyed by the Austrian parties, its conferences and meetings are forbidden whenever the authorities think it fit, its adherents are searched and arrested under the most various pretexts. The Liberation Front has not even been in the possibility of publishing its organ in Carinthia, but has been compelled to publish it in Vienna since the second part of 1946. At the time of the Moscow Conference all public meetings and gatherings, all declarations in favour of union with Yugoslavia were banned by the Occupation Authorities, and so were Slovene and Yugoslav flags and even the sending of telegrams to the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow (on April 11, 1947); propaganda for Austria and an "undivided Carinthia" is, however, being carried on quite freely.

Hindering of cultural activities.

This system, however, does not merely deprive the Carinthian Slovenes of the possibility of political activity; it also makes cultural work impossible for them. The Nazi régime had disbanded all the forty-three existing Slovene cultural organizations, burnt down, looted or confiscated the cultural homes of the Slovenes, destroyed or confiscated Slovene libraries, the archives of Slovene organizations, the manuscripts of Slovene scientists, while it threw Slovene cultural workers into prisons or concentration camps; many of them lost their lives as victims of Nazi oppression. When, after the downfall of Nazism, the Slovenes requested permission to renew their cultural organizations, the British Military Government rejected this request on September 7, 1945, and prohibited all cultural work and public performances by the Carinthian Slovenes. The representatives of the Slovenes again intervened, but it was only after they had sent a petition to the Allied Control Council in Vienna in 1946, that the British Military Government asked that a new request be submitted and finally issued the necessary instructions to the Austrian authorities, who delayed taking a decision on the matter until May 16th, 1946, when the Director of Security of Carinthia, a former Colonel of the German Army, permitted the activities of the Slovene Cultural League. Although the activities of the League had been permitted, the renewal of practically half of its organizations (sixteen out of forty-three) remains banned to the end of March 1947 (*Slovenski Vestnik*, Vienna, March 28, 1947). The Slovenes have not been given back their cultural homes, their cultural gatherings are frequently prohibited, terroristic raids against those gatherings which are allowed, are organized. They are also forbidden to

print Slovene books. Slovene cultural societies are not given back their confiscated libraries which are — in so far as they have not been destroyed by the Nazis — in the hand of the Austrian authorities, while the Austrian gendarmerie searches the homes of Slovenes in quest of books brought in from Yugoslavia. All this goes to show that the Slovenes are, in the cultural field too, subjected in the main to the system set up by Nazism, and that they had not been given back even those limited rights which they had enjoyed prior to the advent of Nazism.

Obstructing the restoration of cooperatives.

The Slovenes asked already in August 1945 to be permitted to renew their cooperatives and that the property of their cooperatives, confiscated by the Nazi régime, be returned. It was publicly stated only on January 23, 1947, that the Carinthian Provincial Government on principle accepted this claim; now all those measures of indirect obstruction of the restoration of Slovene cooperatives are to start which were already mentioned in connection with cultural organizations.

Prohibition of various organizations of Carinthian Slovenes.

The Union of Carinthian Partisans was forbidden (*Volkszeitung*, March 30, 1946), and so far neither the organization of Slovenes deported by the Nazis nor that of Slovene concentration camp internees was permitted.

Continuation of the Nazi system in Church.

In the Austrian Republic the Slovene language enjoyed relatively the greatest rights in the Church; the Nazi régime expelled the Slovene priests and even now pre-Nazi situation has not been restored; a Slovene priest quotes as an instance 17 Slovene parishes from which the Slovene language is now still banned (*Slovenski Vestnik*, January 31, 1947). Thus it is clear that on this field as well the pre-Nazi situation has not been re-established and that the present régime likes to continue the system introduced by the Nazis.

»Putting right« Nazi injustices.

The representatives of the present Austrian and occupation régime aver that the injustices inflicted by the Nazi régime have been "put right". They point to the fact that the land, which had been taken away from the Slovenes, has been given back to them, that the Slovenes, which had been driven from their homes by the Nazis, are given indemnities, that bi-lingual schools have been established. In actual fact, however, this return of property, the propriety of which is surely self-evident enough, is carried out in such a manner that, up to the beginning of 1947, i. e. twenty months after the end of the war, 242 out of a total of 300 expelled Slovene families have

been given their land back (Statement of the Austrian Delegation at the London Conference, p. 27); that means that one fifth of the expelled Slovene families have not yet been given back the land they were compelled to leave, in 1942, at a notice of not more than a few hours. The assessing of the idemnities due to these families was effected with the cooperation of eng. Maierhoffer and of *Hofrat* Stotter, who had conducted the expulsion of the Slovenes in 1942 in conjunction with the war criminal Maier-Kaibitsch; this explains why the losses involved were evaluated at not more than 3,150,000 shillings. Only 1,150,000 shillings of the idemnities thus evaluated had been paid up to the beginning of 1947, according to the statement of the Austrian Government, i. e. only one third (Statement of the Austrian Delegation to the London Conference, p. 27). As regards schools, the regulation on bi-lingual schools of October 31, 1945 (*Kärntner Nachrichten*, organ of the PWB, № 152, November 11, 1945) is being implemented — according to the statement of Kazianka, a member of Carinthian Diet, at a meeting of the Diet in December 1946 on the basis of data which the *Landeshauptmann* Hans Piesch was unable to deny — only in 9 out of 69 supposedly bi-lingual schools. Mr. Hands, an official of the British Occupation Authorities in Carinthia, told a delegation of British M. P. s regarding the school question: "The Austrian authorities proceeded in a manner which justifies the complaints of the Slovenes". "The Slovenes especially complain that there are no teachers and that those teachers who are able to teach in Slovene are dismissed, transferred and moved about" (quoted from the German translation in *Volkswille*, Klagenfurt, February 26, 1947).

Perspectives of the future.

Moreover, the existing system does not only mean that the Slovenes are still being deprived of their rights, that they are being Germanized with the ultimate aim of being made totally to disappear, but this system is, even at this stage, hardly troubling to conceal its intention to resort in the future to Nazi methods in order to attain its goal. Mr. Sharp, an official of the British Military Government, told the British M. P. s: "The mentality of the German speaking population as regards their Slovene countrymen is, in general, not of a nature to inspire the Slovene element with great Austrian patriotism". "Those who decide to make the same use of Slovene as of German, are looked upon as traitors by Germans" (quoted from the German translation of the official report in the *Volkswille*, Klagenfurt, February 26, 1947). In its campaign for an "indivisible" Carinthia the existing system does not hesitate to threaten the Slovenes, in a truly Nazi fashion, with expulsion from their land; such threats have, in various forms, been expressed by Hans Piesch (*Die Neue Zeit* of March 19, 1946), by the Austrian Minister for Home Affairs, Helmer (*Koroška Kronika*, organ of the British PWB, of March 29, 1946), and by the Deputy — *Landeshauptmann* Hans Ferlitsch, at the meeting of mayors of the Beljak (Villach) district in January 1947.

These representatives of the Nazi-inherited system in Carinthia are saying, besides, that the bi-lingual schools will be closed down as soon as the Peace Treaty is signed (e. g. Glantschnigg, member of the Diet and one of the leaders of the *People's Party*, at a meeting in Velikovec (Völkermarkt), second half of September 1946).

Destruction of Nazism or reward of Nazism.

A decision which would leave the Carinthian Slovenes under Austrian rule would grievously hurt the feelings of all Yugoslav peoples, because a part of the Yugoslavs would be handed over to vanquished German secular oppressor of the Yugoslavs; the ethnical principle would be violated. But the aim of this paper is not to throw light from this basic, ethnical point of view. Its only purpose was to show that if after a heroic struggle they were handed over to the revenge of the Nazis and their acolytes in a province where chauvinism, Pan-Germanism and Nazism have always wielded greater influence than in other provinces of Austria, the intentions which in 1945 Dr. Rainer and his Nazi advisers had would be realised; Austria would acquire a proof that her participation in the War at the side of Nazi Germany remained without consequences for her and that she was even allowed to keep the territory of a people which had fought Nazism; all those for whom Austria in her privileged position is a starting point for the development of a new German imperialism would be encouraged in their striving; such a decision would mean a new "Victory in the German Night", as Hans Steinacher, a Carinthian Nazi who became subsequently in Berlin the organizer of all the fifth-columnist German minorities abroad, had described the 1920 plebiscite in Carinthia (Hans Steinacher, *Sieg in deutscher Nacht. Ein Buch vom Kärntner Freiheitskampf*. Wien 1943).

On the other hand the inclusion of Carinthian Slovenes into Yugoslavia would not only provide a settlement in conformity with ethnical principles, not only a well-deserved satisfaction to Carinthian Slovenes and other Yugoslavs for the blood shed in the common Allied cause, but it would also mean a severe blow to Austrian Pan-German and Nazi traditions. Through the liberation of Carinthian Slovenes Austria would lose a powerful impetus for a chauvinist policy both at home and abroad. And it was precisely the destruction of Nazism and its uprooting which represented the common Allied war aim in the Second World War.

The question of Carinthian Slovenes is for the Allies one of the touchstones of their faithfulness to the principles which they proclaimed while they were waging war.



