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THE KANAL VALLEY

(ETHNOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT)

by

BOGO GRAFENAUER, Ph. D.

Assistant in the University of Ljubljana

LJUBLJANA, 1946

Published by the Research Institute, Section
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1) Territory.

The Kanal valley is enclosed among the Julian Alps, the Carnian Alps and the Karawanken. The valleys of the rivers Bela (Fella) and Ziljica (Gailitz), which compose this region, geologically and geomorphologically form a unit with the upper Sava valley: all three rivers take their courses down the former glacier valley which has been chiseled out along the tectonic breach between the Drava group and the southern limestone Alps. All three valleys lie pretty high: the Sava valley reaches at its westernmost point, at the end of the gently sloping ascent beginning at Jesenice (578 m) and ending at Rateče, the height of 849 m, and then passes by an imperceptible watershed (859 m) in the valley of the Ziljica (Gailitz) (Bela peč [Fusine in Valromana] 770 m, Trbiž [Tarvisio] 704 m), which in turn is connected by the watershed at Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale) (817 m) to the valley of the river Bela (Fella), which at the western end of the territory (at Pontabelj [Pontebba Nova]) again descends for about 250 m. In the south the territory is linked across the relatively low Pass of Predil (1156 m) to the upper Soča (Isonzo) valley. Some 3 kilometres long gorge of the Ziljica (Gailitz) between Trbiž (Tarvisio) and Vrata (Thoerl), connects it to the lower Zilja (Gail) valley. The gorge is extremely narrow and there is room at the bottom of it only for the river-bed. The railway line and the road had to be built about one hundred metres above the water-level.

The greater part of this territory is made up of mountains. According to the statistics from 1900 the territory allotted to Italy after the World War I (the judicial districts Trbiž [Tarvisio], belonging to Carinthia, and the commune Bela peč [Fusine in Valromana], belonging to Carniola) comprised 360,35 square kilometres. More than one third of this territory is barren land (121,92 square km), again more than one third is taken up by high mountainous forests (139,08 square km) and

nearly one sixth has been classified as Alpine meadows (56,78 square km). Barely 1,6 per cent of the surface consists of fields (5,44 square km) and gardens (0,33 square km) and solely 10,2 per cent of meadows (36,87 square km). It is quite comprehensible that in view of such a structure and in spite of the Rabelj (Cave del Predil) lead mine and three industrial plants, the density of the population is extremely small (1931: commune Naborjet [Malborghetto] 13, commune Trbiž [Tarvisio] 32) although the relative figures comprise also the soldiers that stayed in this territory merely temporarily.

2) The administrative development.

The easternmost part of the territory (commune Bela peč [Fusine in Valromana] and from 1928 a part of the commune Trbiž [Tarvisio]) through all stages of its history formed a part of the administrative units centring in the Ljubljana basin. The judicial district of Trbiž (Tarvisio) in antiquity belonged to Noricum, a province comprising the eastern Alps, later on to the Slovene Carantania and from 1077 to the Carinthian Duchy. Prior to 1918 it belonged to Italy only during three short periods: from 623/6 to about 730 to the Lombard State, from 828 to 1077 to Friuli and from 1809 to 1813 to the Kingdom of Italy.

In the Pact of London Italy claimed only the western part of the Kanal valley (the communes of Pontabelj [Pontebba Nova], Lipalja ves [San Leopoldo Laglesie], Naborjet [Malborghetto] and Ukve [Ugovizza]) not comprising Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale), Trbiž (Tarvisio) and Bela peč (Fusine in Valromana) as the railway line Ljubljana—Trbiž (Tarvisio)—Podklošter (Arnoldstein) necessarily had to remain to the Austrian State so as to provide for the internal connexion between Carinthia and the Ljubljana basin which both belonged to Austria. At that time the Great Powers did not, as yet, contemplate the dismemberment of the Habsburg monarchy. Italy's claims were based upon no national rights as until 1918 there were no Italians at all in this region. The reasons underlying the Italian claim for a frontier correction were of a purely strategic character and were dictated not by defensive but offensive strategy. The Kanal valley represented in all war

campaigns against Austria, the natural barrier on the way to Carinthia which was extremely hard to deal with. By way of the inclusion of the gorge at Naborjet (Malborghetto) Italy gained open access to the heart of the Celovec (Klagenfurt) basin. When the Yugoslavs separated themselves from Austria to form a State of their own, which from its very constitution found itself in open dispute with Italy as a consequence of the unrighteous solution of the Adriatic question, Italy extended her claims to include the eastern part of the valley comprising Trbiž (Tarvisio). Her most recent military plan foresaw, in the event of a war against Yugoslavia, the possibility of the castling of her troops to Carinthia and Styria so as to gain the open country near Maribor where a military break-through would be far easier than a strenuous campaign across the hills and mountains on the Italo-Yugoslav frontier.

On the basis of the Treaty of St. Germain (1919) and of the Rappallo agreement (1920) Italy was allotted all the territory she had laid claim on. Until 1924 the administrative order of the region remained unchanged; in 1924 the commune Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova) was united to Pontebba; in 1928 Lipalja ves (San Leopoldo Laglesie) was joined to Pontebba too; Naborjet (Malborghetto) and Ukve (Ugovizza) were fused into the new commune Naborjet - Ovčja ves, (Malborghetto - Valbruna), whereas Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale), Trbiž (Tarvisio) and Bela peč (Fusine in Valromana) were united to form the commune of Trbiž (Tarvisio). Thus there are to-day in the Kanal valley only two complete communes and part of the commune Pontebba.

Traffic was a factor of very great importance for the economy of the Kanal valley. In the late Middle Ages the valley was availing itself for 200 years* (the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) of the advantages of the transit trade running along the Venice—Vienna road, until Austrian maritime traffic became centred upon Trieste. Henceforth the two highways leading to the sea were those from Celovec (Klagenfurt) across the Ljubelj Pass to Ljubljana and from Beljak (Villach) across the Koren Pass also to Ljubljana and on to Trieste. In 1870 the railway line Ljubljana—Trbiž (Tar-

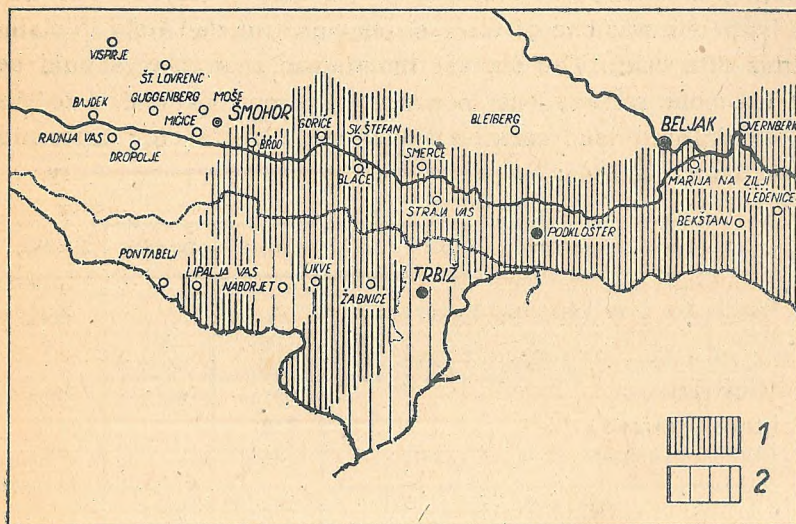
visio) provided for the first railway connexion of the valley with the outer world. In the years from 1873 to 1879 the Beljak (Villach)—Trbiž (Tarvisio)—Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova) railway line was built and at the same time the Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova) — Udine railway line. Thus the Kanal valley was linked to the sea also on the western side of the Julian Alps. This line however, has never been of much importance to the traffic of Trieste. It is a single track line with too great an elevation in some places and therefore unfit for heavy traffic. Yet this railway line was one of the reasons which moved Italy to claim Trbiž (Tarvisio). The Italians maintained that there should be at least one railway line to connect the port of Trieste to the Austrian hinterland running in its entire length on Italian and Austrian territory without crossing into Yugoslav territory. In view of the new frontiers the importance of this railway line has undoubtedly grown, which is not due to Trieste, however. In execution of their general plan to foster Venice at the expense of Trieste the Italians began systematically to deviate to Venice all goods that had been formerly exported and imported by way of Trieste. It fitted into this scheme of theirs to use the Pontabelj railway line.

3) History of the colonization.

The Kanal valley was embraced by the Slovene colonization already at the time when the first wave of Slovene settlers arrived in the eastern Alps after the Lombards had left the Pannonian plain for Italy (568). About the year 584 the Roman stronghold at Meglarje (Maglern), erected towards the end of Antiquity to bar the access to the valley, fell to the Slovenes. When in 623 to 629 the Lombards again occupied the Kanal valley and the valley of the Ziljica (Gailitz) as far as Meglarje (Maglern), their historian already explicitly called these regions „the Slovene district“ (Sclavorum regio, Pauli Historia Langobardorum, IV, 38; Egger R., *Fruehchristliche Kirchenbauten im suedlichen Noricum*, 1916, page 101). About 730 the Carinthian Slovenes liberated this territory from the Lombards once more. At that period the Kanal valley represented the route by which Slovenes reached Re z i j a (Resia) to establish themselves

in it. The affinity of the dialects of Resia and Carinthia clearly proves that this valley represented the link by way of which an unremitting and lively intercourse between the Slovenes of the Zilja (Gail) valley and those in Rezija (Resia) was taking place.

All but to the end of the Middle Ages the Kanal valley was peopled exclusively by Slovenes. The two parishes moreover, established by Oton I, Bishop of Bamberg from 1106 to 1139, feudal lord of this tiny country, were also seated in Slovene



National conditions in the Kanal and Zilja (Gail) Valleys in 1846

1. Purely Slovene territory. — 2. German islands with 10—20 per cent of Slovenes

localities (Lipalja ves [San Leopoldo Laglesie], Žabnica [Camporosso in Valcanale]). Both Naborjet (Malborghetto) and Trbiž (Tarvisio) are first mentioned in the fourteenth century. They were small places whose origin was due to the iron manufacturing and whose population was partly Friulian. Just because of this peculiar feature in 1399 Trbiž (Tarvisio) was separated from the Slovene parish Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale). When in the fifteenth century the transit trade between Venice and Vienna went increasing, both places received trading rights from the Bishops of Bamberg and, owing to traffic, their population turned German. All German rural settlements around Trbiž

(Tarvisio) were originated at that time (Rute [Rutte], Kokovo [Coccau], Rabelj [Cave del Predil] -- 1447). Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova), a small locality on the frontier between Carinthia and Friuli, became German, as a result of its frontier position (soldiers, officials) only towards the middle of the seventeenth century, at the time of the Austro-Venetian tensions and combats. In 1611 sources still labelled it as Windisch-Pontafel (as against the Friulian Wälsch-Pontafel — Pontebba) and only from 1673 on it became Deutsch-Pontafel.

The situation underwent no changes till the middle of the nineteenth century, when for the first time statistical data as to the nationality of the population, were collected. We find these data in the recently discovered copy of the Czoernig statistics from 1846:

Commune	Total	Germans	Slovenes
Lipalja ves (San Leopoldo Laglesie) . .	419		419
Naborjet (Malborghetto)	748	648	100
Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova)	520	520	
Trbiž (Tarvisio)	2313	2013	300
Ukve (Ugovizza)	1181		1181
Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale . .	958		958
The district of Trbiž (Tarvisio)	6139	3181	2958

The national structure of the Kanal valley was the following: three communes were wholly Slovene, in two communes the Slovenes were more than 10 per cent and only a single commune, the frontier locality Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova), was entirely German, owing to the influence of soldiers and civil servants. The Germans possessed a majority, except for the environs of Trbiž (Tarvisio), only in the towns and the Slovenes prevailed numerically even at Lužice (Lusnizza), a place near Naborjet (Malborghetto), and there were many Slovenes among the work-people of the Rabelj (Cave del Predil) mine. German agrarian settlers lived only in a few places situated around Trbiž (Tarvisio), (Rute [Rutte], Kokovo [Coccau]).

The subsequent development is shown by the following tables:

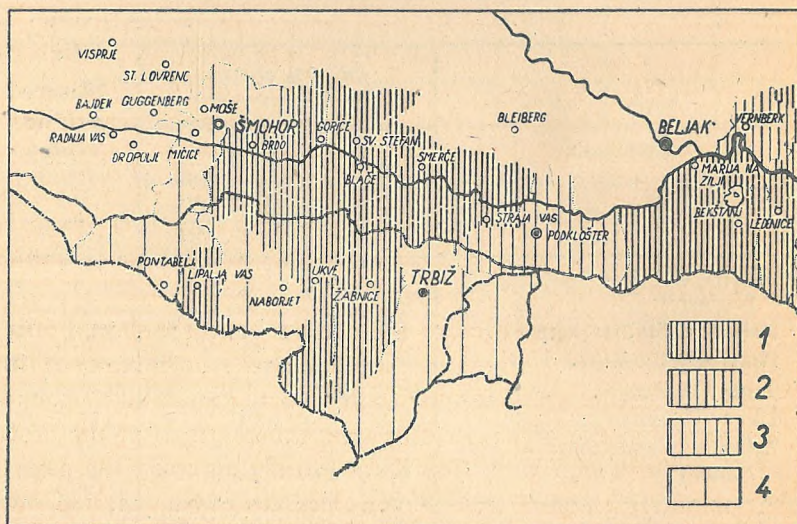
Official censuses:

Commune	1880			1890			1900		
	Present inhab.	Lang. of intercourse of native pop.		Present inhab.	Lang. of intercourse of native pop.		Present inhab.	Lang. of intercourse of native pop.	
		Germ.	Slov.		Germ.	Slov.		Germ.	Slov.
Lipalja ves (S. Leop. Laglesie)	400	21	366	349	7	340	331	15	310
Naborjet (Malborghetto)	894	774	66	770	730	6	763	679	50
Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova)	684	642		734	626	12	804	744	12
Trbiž (Tarvisio)	2953	2735	137	3147	2759	287	3640	3262	223
Ukve (Ugovizza)	1023	21	994	985	43	940	903	82	817
Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale)	913	33	866	859	52	806	856	162	693
District of Trbiž	6867	4226	2429	6844	4217	2391	7297	4944	2105
Bela peč (Fusine in Valromana)	659	606	53	563	470	74	714	618	55
Total	7526	4832	2482	7407	4687	2465	8011	5682	2160

Commune	Official census 1910				Slovene private census 1910	
	Present inhab.	Lang. of intercourse of native pop.			Germ.	Slov.
		Germ.	Slov.	Others ¹⁾		
Lipalja ves (San Leopoldo Laglesie)	367	48	308		5	361
Naborjet (Malborghetto)	781	695	40	25	319?	96
Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova)	917	807	17	10	704	120
Trbiž (Tarvisio)	3914	3480	93	198	2383	1190
Ukve (Ugovizza)	844	247	591		17	821
Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale)	844	345	492		36	801
District of Trbiž	7667	5622	1541	233	3464	3379
Bela peč (Fusine in Valromana)	947	775	141			
Total	8614	6397	1682		¹⁾ Mostly soldiers; forsigners 566	

Localities	Official census 1921					1931
	Present inh.	Italians	Ger-mans	Slov.	Foreig-ners	Present inh.
Bela peč (Fusine in Valromana)	866	44	426	27	369	897
Lipalja ves (San Leopoldo Laglesie)	343	60	203	61	19	288
Naborjet (Malborghetto)	636	57	488	8	83	965
Pontabelj (Pontebba Nova)	702	315	352	6	29	786
Trbiž (Tarvisio)	4003	654	2917	251	426	4736
Ukve (Ugovizza)	771	33	179	548	11	771
Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale)	903	44	525	205	129	912
Total	8224	1207	4185	1106	1726	9355

The particulars of the Austrian official censuses are based upon the statement of the language of intercourse and are therefore in accordance with the confession of the Austrian statistical commission itself, deficient as in localities with a German majority they showed too small a number of non-German nationals. The commissaries in charge of the censuses in localities with a German majority adopted the viewpoint that everybody



National conditions in the Kanal and Zilja (Gail) Valleys according to the official census of 1880

1. above 90 per cent of Slovenes. — 2. 70—90 per cent of Slovenes. 3. 60—70 per cent of Slovenes. — 4. 1—10 per cent of Slovenes.

who lived in these localities had to serve himself in public life of the German and that consequently German was his language of intercourse. An official document taking this line has been found exactly in Carinthia. It was set up in 1890 by the municipal authorities of Celovec (Klagenfurt). In compliance with official instructions in localities of less than 3.000 inhabitants the commissaries in charge of the census themselves, and not the population, put down into the questionnaires the statement of adherence to one's language of intercourse. As those commissaries were for the most part German nationalist-minded schoolmasters who had received the order to count as few Slovenes as possible, in Carinthia one very often comes across palpable perversions of statistics: they counted in all communes, as a rule, a larger number of Germans than actually lived there. From 1900 onward such discrepancies were particularly large. Until 1900 there was a strong Slovene majority in three communes of the Kanal valley (Lipalja ves [San Leopoldo Laglesie], Ukve [Ugovizza], Žabnica [Camporosso in Valcanale]). In 1910 the majority was still theirs yet it had unnaturally shrunk: at Lipalja ves (San Leopoldo Laglesie) the percentage of the Slovenes decreased for 8,5 per cent, at Ukve (Ugovizza) for 20,6 per cent and at Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale) for 22 per cent. The increase of the German population in the valley as a whole was quite natural a process since the numbers of the population of the Slovene villages went decreasing whereas the population of the German localities was on the increase. Yet as a result of the official German policy at the collection of statistical data, the actual total of Slovenes in communes with a German majority and those with a Slovene majority alike, was reduced even more and strongly at that.

The results, therefore, of the official censuses should only be approached with the greatest caution and a correction of them should be made. The basis for such a correction is to be found in the results of the official ecclesiastic schematisms of the diocese of Celovec (Klagenfurt) (the Krka [Gurk] diocese) and partly in the results yielded by the Slovene private census carried out in 1910. The ecclesiastic schematisms demonstrate that four parishes in the Kanal valley were utterly Slovene (Žabnica [Camporosso in Valcanale], Ukve [Ugovizza], Ovčja ves [Valbruna] and Lipalja ves [San Leopoldo Laglesie]) and that the branch parish

at Rabelj (Cave del Predil) was mixed, German-Slovene. Now, let us calculate the data of the ecclesiastic schematisms and take for granted that in Slovene parishes in 1880 and 1890 5 per cent and in 1900 and 1910 10 per cent of the population consisted of Germans, (which is rather high a percentage) and that there was a Slovene minority of 10 per cent in German localities. The results thus arrived at are as follows:

The Slovenes in the Kanal valley

(without the commune of Bela peč)

1880	2900
1890	3000
1900	2880
1910	2800

True, these figures again prove that the Germans prevailed in the rather rarely populated Kanal valley but, when deciding as to where the valley should be allotted to, one is bound to consider also the adjacent regions. The Kanal valley is except for its entrance near Pontebba, from all sides surrounded by utterly Slovene territory, in the east by Upper Carniola, in the south by the Slovene Littoral (Julian March) and in the north by the Zilja (Gail) valley. The Valley itself is nationally mixed, nearly half and half, but it represents the unique and most suitable link between the central parts of Slovenia (Carniola) and the Slovenes in Rezija (Resia) and besides it links all the remaining Slovenes with the Slovene territory lying between Šmohor (Hermagor) and Beljak (Villach). From 1846 to 1910 the national structure of this territory of the upper Carinthia (i. e. the Slovene part of the judiciary districts of Šmohor [Hermagor], Podklošter [Arnoldstein], Beljak [Villach] showed the following outlines:

		Germans	Slovenes
Official censuses	1846	366	19.991
	1880	3096	16.665
	1890	2960	17.397
	1900	3895	15.787
	1910	7265	12.467
Private census	1910	839	18.864

Up to the World War I even official censuses recognized the indisputed Slovene majority in this region. It is therefore impossible to cut the Kanal valley, in spite of its partly German population, out of the Slovene territory. There are two main reasons which speak against such a solution:

1) in the first place the valley performs the function of the indispensable link in the framework of the Slovene territory with Trbiž (Tarvisio) as the internal traffic knot.

2) in the second place it lacks any connexion with continuous German national territory. The German communes in the valley represent only three linguistic islands, separated from one another. The Slovene character of the above mentioned communes asserted itself also in political life. At the close of the last century the Slovene People's Party enjoyed there a dominant position. I shall quote only the election in 1890. This party then carried the day and in the villages Lipalja ves (San Leopoldo Laglesie), Ukve (Ugovizza) and Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale) and the land-register commune Lužice (Lusnizza), which went to the polls separately from Naborjet (Malborghetto), all its candidates were elected.

Until the World War I there were no Italians at all in the Kanal valley. Some hundreds of them came to live in the valley during the decade from 1900 to 1910, allured by the timber business, but they all stuck to their Italian citizenship.

Administratively speaking the Kanal valley first belonged to the Slovene Littoral (the Julian March) but was later included into the Province of Udine. In the Slovene Littoral the Italians carried out only one census to consider also the national adherence of the population and this again on the basis of the language of intercourse. The census, however, was very unsatisfactory because for the greater part of the autochthonous population, which was counted among „foreign citizens“ it did not include the statement which language they spoke. The census showed the following results: among a total of 8224 inhabitants there were 4185 Germans, 1207 Italians, 1106 Slovenes and 1726 foreign citizens, 295 of them Yugoslavs.

A detailed analysis corroborates the inaccuracy of the census. For instance at Lipalja ves (San Leopoldo Laglesie), where until 1910 the Slovenes had possessed an absolute major-

riety, they should have now become a negligible minority. The same goes for Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale). According to these statistical data the Slovene population at Bela peč (Fusine in Valromana) decreased from 141 to 27, yet among the foreign citizens there were 184 more Slovenes, natives from the place, so that the census additionally demonstrated how the German census in 1910 had been partial. The Slovenes also increased in number in the commune of Trbiž (Tarvisio). Anyhow, the results of this Italian census are too deficient to be taken as basis for any investigation as to the nationality of the population of this region. There has been no such census in Italy since 1921. In 1933 Veiter estimated the Italian section of the population, not counting soldiers, at 11 per cent of the total, the German section at 63 per cent (i. e. about 5000 inh.) and the Slovene section at 26 per cent (i. e. some 2100 inh.). Veiter's estimate shows, although overestimating the German and underestimating the Slovene section, that the traditional national structure of the Kanal valley has remained mainly unchanged. Now as before the valley remains nationally mixed with the Slovenes representing a large section of the population.

The Italians left nothing undone to italianize the valley. All posts, public and semipublic, were accessible only to Italians. They seized, moreover, the economic enterprises (the Rabelj [Cave del Predil] mine, the iron plant at Bela peč [Fusine in Valromana], the manganese mine at Ukve [Ugovizza]) and installed a strong military garrison at Trbiž (Tarvisio). Exclusively Italian schoolmasters taught at schools, only at the school of the Slovene commune Žabnica (Camporosso in Valcanale) a German schoolmaster was allowed to continue his job. Not a single Slovene teacher was left. Among the rural population however, the situation regarding nationality and ownership, in spite of the economic depression in 1930 and the following years, remained essentially unchanged. The mountainous and cold regions proved no attraction for the Italian settlers. Only just before the World War II the Italians endeavoured to give a more substantial ethnical basis to their political grip upon the Kanal valley. In 1939 they concluded with Germany an agreement for the transfer into Germany of the whole of the German population of the Southern Tyrol and the Kanal valley. According to the provisions of that agreement

all inhabitants of non-Italian nationality, that in 1918 had been Austrian citizens, were now free to make their option for the transfer to Germany. The Italian gave the right of option not only to Germans but also to Slovenes of the Kanal valley and to Ladins in the Southern Tyrol.

According to the Italian official statement altogether 4576 inhabitants of the Kanal valley made their option for Germany, 337 inhabitants decided themselves for Italy whereas 690 inhabitants did not make use of the right of option. The option was concluded on December 31, 1939. The transfer set in immediately thereupon. Until April 1, 1940, according to official German particulars, 700 inhabitants left the valley, mainly artisans, workmen and agrarian proletariat. There are no official data for the subsequent transfers although they continued. Many of the inhabitants, however, changed their mind in view of the situation in Germany, and later on the German authorities themselves put off the transfer till the end of the war. Anyhow the Germans, by making their option for the return to Germany as it was becoming to followers of the Hitler régime, have given up, so to say, by this plebiscite all their rights to the Kanal valley. In accordance with German particulars 90 per cent of the German population of the Kanal valley voted for the return to Germany.

Some Slovenes too, to put an end to the Fascist terror under which they had been suffering all since 1918 when they came under the Italian rule, made use of the right of option, at a far minor degree, of course, than the Germans. Only in the small locality Ovčja ves (Valbruna) (271 inh. in 1910 and 223 inh. in 1931) nearly the entire population made their option (90 per cent) and barely 10 Slovene families have stayed behind. In the locality Ukve (Ugovizza), in the two remaining Slovene communes (Lipalja ves [San Leopoldo Laglesie] and Žabnica [Camporosso in Valcanale]), however, less than 15 per cent of the population declared themselves for Germany. The large majority of the Slovenes have, indeed, remained in the Kanal valley.

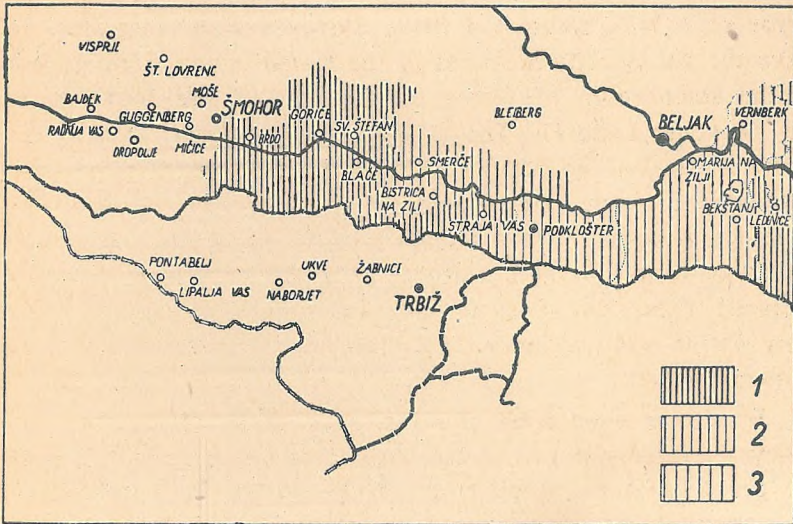
Speaking of the emigrants from the Kanal valley we must point out at the rôle they subsequently played in Carinthia. When they came to Carinthia the Nazi authorities installed

them in the properties of the Slovenes, that had been previously deported because of their national consciousness and assistance given to the partisans in the course of the war. This also proves that those Germans were fervent adherents to the Nazi ideology.

The Kanal valley has therefore remained a nationally mixed territory, although the described transfer business has helped the Italians to strengthen greatly their positions. It should be emphasized above all, when considering the results of the transfer, that the Italians, by means of their Fascist terror so to say compelled those Slovenes who emigrated, to leave the valley. The Slovenes in the Kanal valley were subject to the same reign of terror as the rest of the Slovenes in the Slovene Littoral. The Italians have never shown the least respect for the provisions referring to national minorities. Economic pressure, imprisonments, physical violence upon individuals were all matters of daily occurrence here. Anxious to get away from this hell, a fraction of the Slovene population declared themselves ready to emigrate to Germany and to leave their native soil, cultivated by their ancestors from the time immemorial.

Finally it should be stressed once more that the Kanal valley, nationally mixed still to-day, does not represent merely the problem of the population of the valley. It is moreover, the internal link connecting the entire Slovene territory. To leave the Kanal valley to Italy for the sake of a few thousand Italians and in this way to endorse the imperialistic steps taken by Italy in 1918 without any justification in the national structure of the local population, would mean to cut a few kilometres large breach out of the natural connexion between Ljubljana on one hand and the Slovene territory in Rezija (Resia) and the Slovene valley of the Zilja (Gail) river, between Šmohor (Hermagor) and Beljak (Villach), on the other. The incorporation of the Kanal valley to Austria has no moral justification in view of the plebiscite made by the Germans of the Kanal valley in 1939 and the rôle German emigrants played in Carinthia in the persecution of the Slovene minority. A frontier leaving Trbiž (Tarvisio) outside the Yugoslav territory would not only impair the connexion between the Slovene territory in the upper Sava valley and the upper Soča (Isonzo) valley, across

the Predil Pass, but would be a prejudice to a far greater degree: the entire territory between Šmohor (Hermagor) and Beljak (Villach) would in this way fall out of the future united Slovenia, where it already included itself to during the Liberation struggle in the years 1942 to 1945. The same goes for Rezija (Resia). But whereas in Rezija (Resia) there are only a few thousand Slovenes, matters are different in Carinthia. According to the data of the private Slovene statistics from



Share of Slovene children at elementary schools in the Zilja (Gail) Valley in 1933/34

1. above 90 per cent. — 2. 70—90 per cent. — 3. 50—70 per cent.

1934, fully confirmed by the official data on the percentage of Slovene children at elementary schools and on the national character of the parishes from the same time, there lived in Carinthia between the town of Beljak (Villach) and Šmohor (Hermagor) (in the Slovene part of the judicial districts of Šmohor [Hermagor] and Beljak [Villach] 3466 Germans and 17.103 Slovenes. The data of the share of Slovene school children at elementary schools, if the entire population is taken into account give us almost the same figures: 3.876 Germans and 16.728 Slovenes. Because of the Italian newcomers to the Kanal valley that established themselves in the properties of

the Germans and of the Slovenes whom the unheard of Fascist violence had driven out of the country, or because of the return of the Nazi-minded Germans, that had left the Kanal valley during the war, now some 25.000 Slovenes in Rezija (Resia), Carinthia and the Kanal valley should be denied their right to live within their own country! And to think that the entire Kanal valley counts no more that 8000 native people and that more than one quarter of them are Slovenes!