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SUBJECT Main Points of Conflict between the Italians and South Tirolese on the Autonomy Question

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The three main points of conflict between the South Tirolese Volkspartei and the Italians on the autonomy question are reported to be the police, rights of residence and franchise, and the name of the autonomous territory.

I. The Police.

1. The SVP claim that the police in the autonomous territory should be placed under the autonomous authorities is opposed by the Italians.

2. The SVP arguments may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The Paris Agreement guaranteed to the South Tirolese autonomous legislative and executive power. Since the police is the most important organ of this executive power, autonomy would be a farce if the South Tirolese had to rely on the goodwill of the Italian police (over which they have no control) for the enforcement of their legislative and administrative measures.
- (b) Ninety per cent of the present Italian police in South Tirol do not even speak German, and have no understanding of the local population. This undermines confidence in the police and so hinders the prevention of crime.
- (c) The Italian police have far more extensive powers than in most other countries. During the Fascist period, and still today, the Italian police abuse these far-reaching powers to suppress the Tirolese politically. Under the cloak of these powers they interfere in matters which in no way concern them, and the local chief of police has become the most powerful, and feared, official in every village.

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In the opinion of the SVP, the creation of an autonomous police, as a security and not a political organ, is vital to the autonomy, and to the equality of rights and freedom of the South Tirolese. Furthermore, the population would have confidence in its own autonomous police, which would lead to a considerable improvement of local security conditions.

To make certain that the autonomous police would not suppress the Italians, the SVP are prepared to vest police powers in the joint Diets of South Tirol and Trentino, in which the Italians have the majority.

- (d) An autonomy without an autonomous police force is nothing more than one under the supervision of the Questor, or Chief of Carabinieri, and therefore the opposite of a free self-administration.
- (e) Unless the population's present fear of the police is removed, the Questor will in practice be more powerful than the autonomous government.

II. Rights of Residence and Franchise

- 3. It has always been one of the main concerns of the SVP to prevent the slow "Italianization" of their Province by means of a steady influx of Italians from Italy proper and assumption of all key positions in the local administration by Italians. If this "Italianization" continues, the Italians will in time gain the majority in the Province and the autonomy will become valueless.
- 4. The SVP consequently is demanding that rights of residence and franchise be effectively restricted and the Italians are offering stiff resistance. For the first elections in particular, the SVP proposes that only natives and residents of South Tirol or persons who have lived there for at least ten years be entitled to vote. This is even more important to them since, by the time the first elections are held it is unlikely that the position of the optants will have been clarified and consequently many thousands of South Tirolese may be unable to vote.
- 5. In support of their case the SVP points to the franchise provisions in the Aaland Islands statute.

III. The Name of the Autonomous Region.

- 6. Naturally the SVP is extremely anxious that they be allowed the name of "Tirol" in some form. The Italians insist that the name of "Alto Adige", forced on the South Tirolese by the Fascists, be retained.
- 7. The SVP argues that it is the most primitive right of every people to retain the traditional name under which they have lived for centuries. Only once since the thirteenth century has the Province been

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known by any other name than South Tirol, and then only for a few years when Napoleon divided the Province and christened the southern part (by no means the South Tirol of today) "Alto Adige". The Italian assertion that the name Alto Adige is historically founded is therefore, utterly false.

8. For the great majority of the South Tirolese the Paris Agreement will lose all meaning if they are denied the right to use their name. The SVP asks what member of the Allied Delegations in Paris referred to the problem by any other name than that of South Tirol?
9. When the Italians argue that the name South Tirol draws attention to the Province's historical ties with North and East Tirol, and therefore strikes an "irridentist note" the SVP replies that a possible irridentism will not be avoided by forcefully suppressing a traditional name. Moreover, the SVP is prepared to drop the "South" and accept "Tirol" alone or "Tirolo cisalpino".
10. The SVP also dismisses the Italian suggestion that Alto Adige be the official name, and that the South Tirolese should be free to use the name of Tirol unofficially. They consider this an absurd quibble, calculated to give rise to suspicions that one day the Italians, like the Fascists, will ban the name.
11. The SVP further stresses the goodwill, from an economic point of view, attached to the name of South Tirol. The Province's products, especially its wine and fruit, are renowned. Nobody speaks of them as emanating from Alto Adige, despite the twenty years ban of the name of South Tirol. Furthermore, the thousands of tourists who come to the Province, visit South Tirol and not Alto Adige.
12. If the Italians insist that the name of South Tirol be discarded, despite the goodwill attached to it, this is proof that they are inspired by purely political motives.

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