

Minority Resort

The First World War is known not to be as devastating as the Second World War which in turn fully employed aircraft warfare. Casualties in the former war were mostly counted among soldiers and civic targets were limited to particular geographical areas mostly located at the borders. In the former Italian border, the most East one is recalled and remembered as the place where Austrian stormtroopers in 1917 successfully infiltrated with what is known to be the Battle of Caporetto, a massive breakthrough, which was barely contained by the Italian a most discontented army at the river Piave. The latter event has been highly commemorated, particularly during the fascist regime of the following decades with many a patriotic anecdotes and songs, only carriers for more unnecessary heroism leading to the Second World War.

There are however less talk of events which impacts are still present today, events which national and continental history have selected out, appendixes that are barely addressed and yet still bare its strong mark. One such event was the Strafexpedition, the Austrian attempt to break through a year earlier in the more central highlands of Lavarone, Folgaria and Asiago, the biggest complex of highlands in the Southern Alpine region, a complex which has been always isolated due to its morphology, sliced in a triangle by the Adige River and the Brenta River. Ever since the decaying of the Roman empire these highlands have been a refugees place for different groups of defeated "barbarians" attempting to settle south. Included in the Venice Republic for hundreds of years these highlands were given full autonomy, and their people, mostly woodmen and shepherds, came to constitute the minority group known today as "Cimbri".

The events that followed the French Revolution and Napoleon's seizing of most of Europe has placed these highlands in a period of miserable disgrace. Throughout the 19th century, under the Austrian imperialism, the land was turned into pasture for cows, some of its people turned into coal making and some other resorted to smuggling tobacco as a mean to survive. The liberation of the Veneto region from Austria in 1868 and its adjunction to the new Italian state was much of a liberation however after only a generation a drastic italicization was taking place, the Cimbrian language and identity was threatened.

At the time of the Belle Époque the newly born Italian empire was now starting to be more confident and built a railroad connecting these mountaineers to the lowland but in reality connecting the lowland with the high mountains were many dozen fortifications were built and many ammunitions and armies moved to the location.

Likewise the Austrian did the same on their side of the highlands. At the starting of the war in 1915 it only took each side 2 weeks of bombardments to make these well engineered forts completely unusable. The war became a war of trenches, the town were completely destroyed and its people had to be evacuated.

History is very much concerned with these events yet here we find a struggle that still last to these days. Ever since the war, despite the "italicized" reconstruction of the Cimbrian highlands and the imposition of even more "Italian" fascist monuments (which force construction killed many a local), ever since the 1920s the entire population has lived in a complete state of diaspora, fathers leaving the family to seek fortune in for instance Australia but never returned, other attempting to make a few lire by recovering war relict and selling the iron but risking to be mutilated by unexploded bombs.

Since the 1970s the local population has certainly revived of an economic boom brought forward by tourism. Most family have their "bottega" (shop) or some relative who earns his money as a ski teacher. Looking carefully though, there is still much violence among the young generation, the level of alcoholism is quite high and this cannot get better now that global warming is bringing far less snow and thus considerably less tourists, not to mention the rainy summers and the economic crisis setting in. The highland has to soon rediscover a mean of self sufficiency and local autonomy before the situation precipitates. How can this happen though if they do not even have a sort of identity of understanding of who they are?

In short, the Cimbrian population, is one of these minorities in Europe and for this respect in the world, which the official history has never really considered (Italian authorities would rather send aids to the more official Eritrea). With their culture being totally wiped out with the Italian unification and nationalistic ambitions, are we know really serious in once again imposing them a foreign design plan to rescue their war heritage and under a Europification context? Most picks of these much bombarded highlands already bare indelible signs of the war with destroyed forts and different monuments that cannot but remind and commemorate the idiocy of human beings and its sovereigns. What else is left to be done but give these very people a platform to recuperate their identity?

These very picks were once utilized by the local population to perform certain rituals which the Italian church, setting in more and more from the 16th century, considered too pagan and lastly either converted to Christian ones ("la rogazione" etc) or completely abolished. We thus propose to redesign these rituals and redesign

temporary platforms to host anything that might enhance the local to recuperate their lost identity (e.g. Joseph Beyus shamanic act or also some sort of Celtic rituals in modern key).

The temporality of this platform building and performing, is a way to regain new meaning to places that are still under-shadowed by the war event, they are meant as cathartic forms of regeneration disconnected from any bellic allusion. The platform, if necessary will be constructed adopting the rough architecture of the pre-fascist reconstruction. As pointed out by Agostino Dal Pozzo, an 18th century intellectual from the era and also the one who discovered the Bostel, an ancient settlement, the Cimbri have always considered the highlands as more of a temporary place. Deferring from all the other alpine neighbours like the Tyroleans, they have never got any sophisticated but have always maintained a level of roughness. In this respect, a construction of prototype-like platforms for the younger community of locals to manifest their ego is most suitable.