

And now it was November. It was growing cold; temperatures were dropping into the low thirties and it rained much of the time. While Carlo spent the larger part of each day in their Mantua bottling shop, formulating their wine-grappa combination – their “caca cocktail” – Victor and Luigi kept themselves busy delivering the spiked wine to the still unsuspecting Wehrmacht.

As for the Germans themselves, they had now concentrated the major part of their remaining forces in the vicinity of Volargne, La Chiusa di Ceraino, and Dolcé. Thus, the last of the German lines of defense in Italy had withdrawn to the Alpine foothills of the Adige River valley. They are, therefore, close to their escape route via the Brenner Pass, where temperatures are now reaching sub-zero levels.

Plaguing the Germans still further, beyond the inexplicably communal diarrhea, other local citizens are courageously carrying out additional acts of sabotage. And these are increasing significantly. Nevertheless, and although retreating in defeat, in the Nazi mind there remains to be completed the executing of their Fuehrer's murderous orders. Like an insane clockwork, therefore, the deportation of Jews and other political prisoners is accelerated; it is still a priority. No opportunity is to be missed of capturing Hitler's victims before the Wehrmacht are forced from Italy altogether.

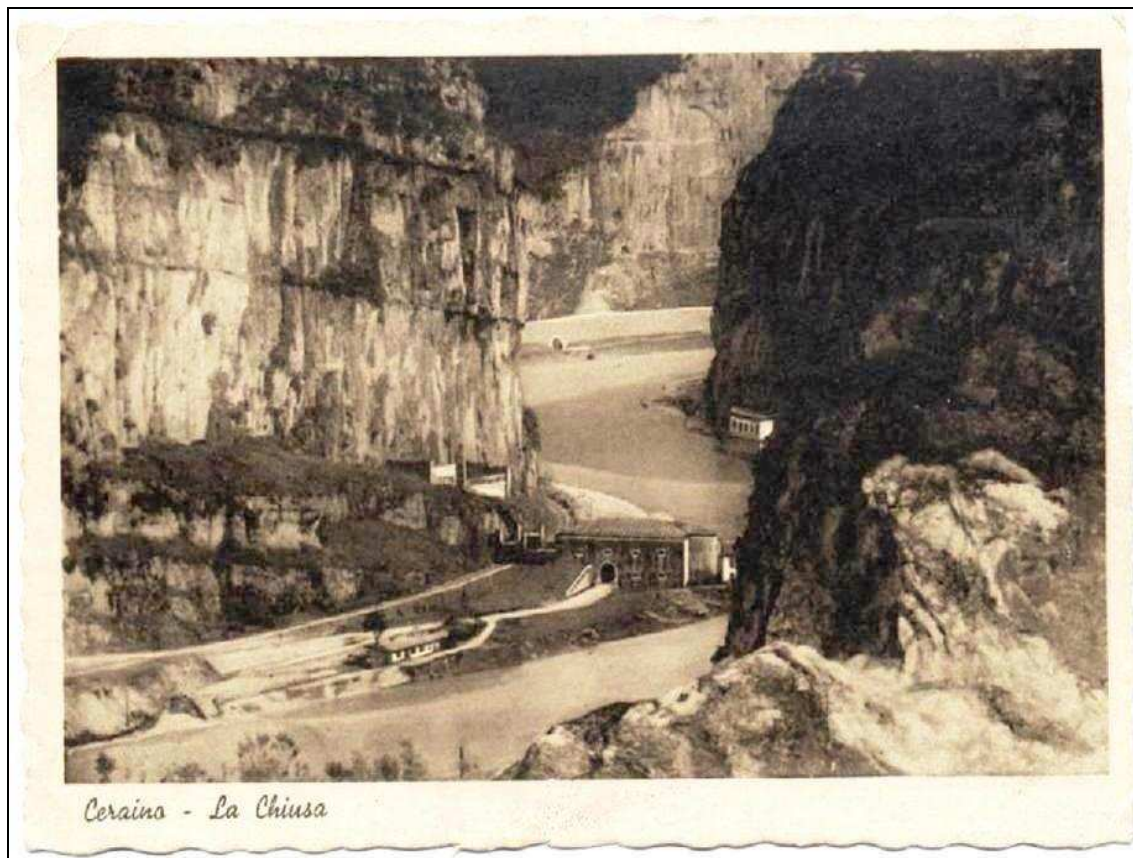
Hence the trains, the seemingly numberless trains transporting Jewish prisoners, are given precedence. Because deportations of Italian Jews were not conducted during Mussolini's regime, and now that IL Duce has been reduced to nothing more than Hitler's marionette, the Nazis are accelerating the deportations; they are endeavoring to make up for lost time.

Arrests are intensified, and from all regions of Northern Italy's RSI, the dispatching of deportation trains filled with prisoners is expedited. Clattering out of Volargne, their very sound as if a death rattle, the trains are headed north, through the Brenner Pass and into Germany. However, this unreasoning insanity of Hitler's is causing a near impossible snarl of traffic, aggravating the problem caused by an already excessive volume of German military rail movements. And all of this was converging at Volargne's railhead. The result is delay upon delay, officially inexcusable delays; long periods of time wherein local train station workers search for and find opportunities to assist numbers of prisoners to escape.

More to be concerned with, however, is the inexorable advance of Allied forces from the south. For while the Brenner Pass is a route of escape for the Germans, it is simultaneously an open doorway to Germany for their enemies. With that unacceptable reality thus in mind, the unthinkable was conceived by the German High Command.

Perhaps it was Hitler's architect, Albert Speer, or Herr Todt's engineers who suggested that they implode the beautiful *La Chiusa* foothills. Those great masses of rock, hovering high above the Adige River, would cascade down to block that river, flooding the valley and closing, perhaps forever, that ancient gateway into Germany. It would be the culminating defense of the German retreat: a cataclysmic, flamboyant – yes, a pyrrhic exit – worthy of being extolled in symphony by Richard Wagner himself. But it would require an explosion of Vesuvian proportions; something that would virtually parallel the extinction of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

It would then be mid November when the infamous train of 15 cars would roll into Volargne.



Click picture for details about the military bottleneck and destruction of Volargne
<http://www.leopolis.us/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/d-volargnelachiusa.pdf>