



MARINE BULL PEN



A PAPER ISSUED IN THE INTERESTS OF
SEA-GOING COWBOYS (CPS RESERVE)

No. 5

22 S. State St., Elgin, Ill.

May 24, 1946

TRIESTE: DYNAMITE ON THE ADRIATIC

SORESPOTS OF EUROPE Among the seaports of Europe where cowboys are now landing livestock, two stand out as historical trouble spots on the map of Europe - Danzig (now called Gdansk) and Trieste. This role of trouble-maker is nothing new for these cities. They have been the center of plotting, intriguing and diplomatic wire-pulling for centuries. But the present unrest in Danzig and Trieste, particularly in the latter, is especially ominous for the future. We will do well to remember that World War I began in 1914 with a pistol shot at Serajevo, not far from Trieste, and World War II began with a revolution in Danzig in 1939. Trieste - a pawn in the game of power politics; it may well be that the solution of the problem of Trieste is the key to the future peace of Europe. Failure of solution in regard to Trieste may set off a new war in Europe and the last war in the world as we know it.

BACKGROUND Trieste, with a pre-war population of some 250,000 people, has had a long and involved history. Briefly, before World War I it had been under Austrian rule for centuries, although a large proportion of the city's population was Italian. From the time of Napoleon to 1891 Trieste was a free port - that is, no customs duties were levied on incoming goods. In the early 20th century agitation by Italy to gain control of Trieste increased tremendously the rivalry between Italy and Austria. In 1919 when the new country of Yugoslavia was created by combining the peoples of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and other areas, the Yugoslavs hoped to get Trieste. The Yugoslavs, however, were outmaneuvered by Italy's superior skill and greater influence at the Paris peace conference. Yugoslavia hoped then to develop Fiume in a good harbor, but was foiled in this hope when in 1920 D'Annunzio and other Italian adventurers seized the city for Italy.

SETTING Why all the rumpus over Trieste? Several reasons: (1) it has one of the most strategic and valuable locations on the Adriatic Sea; (2) it has the best harbor on the Adriatic at the end of a deeply indented gulf, superior even to Venice and more accessible for large vessels; (3) it serves as the outlet for trade from the hinterland of Yugoslavia and other European countries.

THE CITY Trieste is a city of two parts - the old town and the new town of pre-war days. The old town, built on the slopes of a hill crowned by a castle, has narrow, crooked, steep streets, while the new town to the west, built on the flat expanse adjoining the water has large, wide, regular streets. The broad street, Via del Corso, runs between the old and the new sections. The Cathedral of San Giusto stands on the slope of Castle Hill. On the Piazza Grande (Great Square) splendid municipal buildings were built in pre-war days. The Museo Lapidario is an open air museum displaying Roman antiquities. The Chateau of Miramar, four miles northwest of the city, was occupied by the Hapsburg Prince, Maximilian, who became emperor of Mexico for a brief time during the 1860s.

IMPASSE Trieste is now a divided city politically under Allied control. The Italians are struggling desperately to hold on to it and the Yugoslavs are working just as desperately to gain control of it. Supporting the Italians are Great Britain and the United States, with troops now stationed in a section of Trieste

May 24, 1946

Upholding the Yugoslavs, on the other side, are the Russians. The New York Times recently reported that there is "no evidence to support Italian stories that Russian troops have been moved into Yugoslavia to back up the Yugoslavs" in Zone B of Trieste. However, behind the Yugoslavs stand Marshall Tito's forces of over half a million men, while total Allied forces in Italy probably number less than 300,000. The recent Paris conference of foreign ministers which split over Trieste shows the toughness of this problem.

PROPOSALS The question of the Julian March (Venezia Giulia, as the Italians call it) has not been discussed here, but it is inextricably bound up in the question of Trieste since this is the immediate hinterland of that port city. It is difficult to get facts on such controversial issues as these, but apparently the population inland is pretty heavily Yugoslav, while the population of Trieste is mainly Italian....A recent Yugoslav proposal suggests that the hinterland (some 700,000 people of whom only 15% are Italian, the Yugoslavs say) be awarded to Yugoslavia. The city of Trieste be given full self-government within Yugoslavia. And the port of Trieste (immediate dockside area) be placed under an international regime since the port serves Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia as well as Yugoslavia and Poland.

SOLUTION Perhaps Trieste is the logical place for the United Nations to begin its operations in the field of world government. Here is an admittedly difficult question with world wide implications. Let the UN place Trieste under UN control as its first venture in government. It will be far from easy to administer, but what worthwhile objectives are gained easily.

"TRAGEDY IN TRIESTE" "But it was not amusing when we arrived in Trieste. . . to see the men and officers breaking into the holds and stealing UNRRA food and relief supplies. In order to get ashore, you had to cross a long railroad bridge, at one end of which was a guardhouse with an American MP, an English MP, and an Italian Civil Policeman (trained by AMG). At the other end of the bridge was the black market crowd, equipped with shopping bags, briefcases and Made in U.S. thousand-lire notes. . . The black marketeers were ordinary people. They represent the kind of cross-section that you'd get if you emptied out a subway train. . . They learned how to slit the corners of cigarette cartons to make sure they weren't being gyped, and they know how to conceal the fact that in Italy today an old work shoe brings a better price than a new dress shoe. . . It must be noted that everything was paid for in occupation paper, which is valueless in the United States (and nearly so in Italy). Since there is little to buy in Italy. . . the sailors found that their pockets were stuffed with money which they had to get rid of. . . The European needs no defense. . . But what is one to say of these merchant seamen? What has happened to these good Americans, who have not yet lived thru fascism, that they must steal from the hungry to buy things that they do not even need? . . The Swiss watches that they bought with their European brothers' food will leave marks not only on their wrists." (from Politics)