

# AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD THE SLOVENES IN TRIESTE, 1941-1974

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This article deals with two aspects of the American policy toward the Slovenes in Trieste. It discusses first the American military and diplomatic actions in regard to Slovene territorial claims and then, second, describes the role played by the American members of the Allied Military Government (AMG) toward the Slovenes living in the so-called Zone A of the Julian Region.<sup>1</sup>

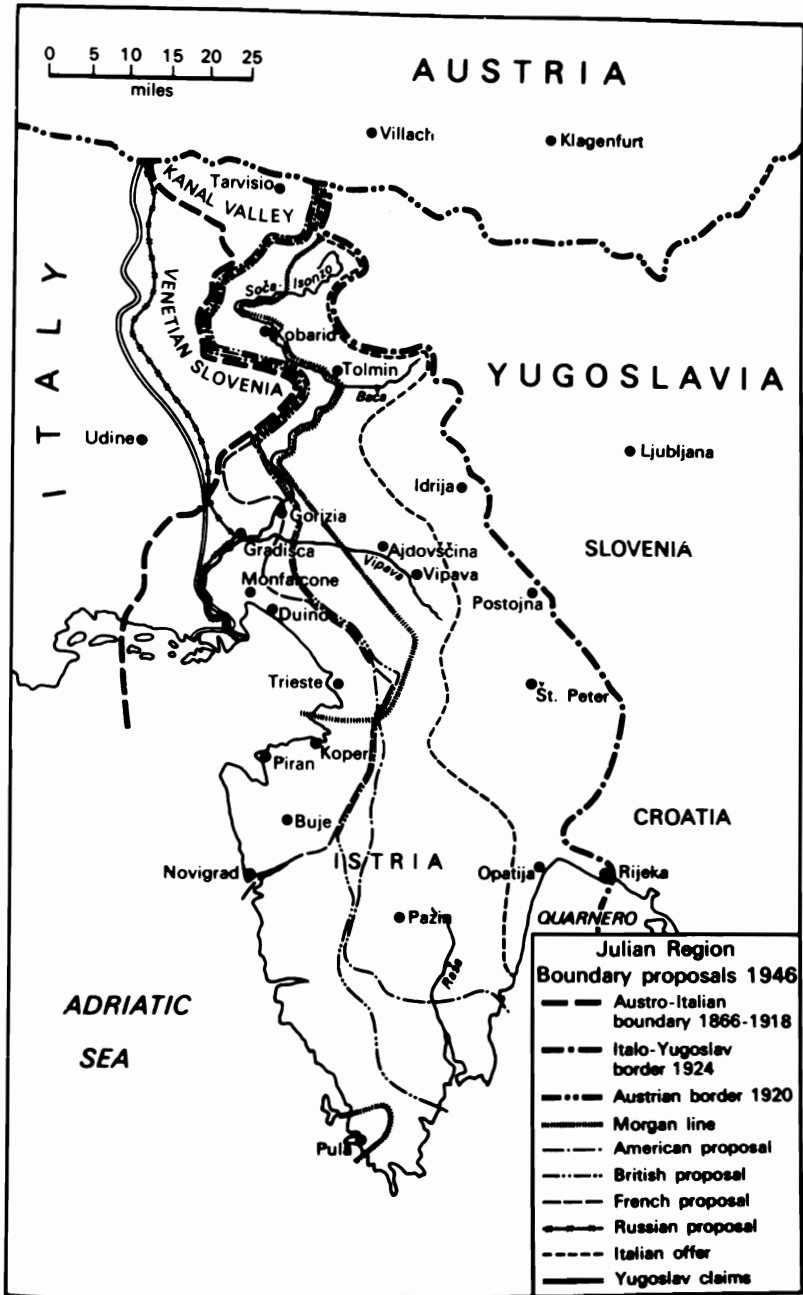
Initially, however, it is necessary to clarify certain geographical terms. In examining the Trieste problem we must distinguish between the Julian Region, the Free Territory of Trieste, and the Italian province of Trieste. Each of these geographical areas was different in size and had Trieste as the most important city and seaport. The Julian Region, also known as *Venezia Giulia* in Italian and *Julijska Krajina* (Julian March) in Slovene, was the largest of the three and encompassed all the territory between the old pre-World War I Italo-Austrian and the pre-World War II Italo-Yugoslav borders. In other words, these were Habsburg lands which went to Italy after World War I and were inhabited by Slovenes, Croats and Italians. The northern part of the Julian Region was Slovene, the southern was Croat, while in the cities of Gorizia (Gorica), Trieste (Trst) and in the Gradisca district, in the municipalities along the western Istrian coast and in Rijeka (Fiume) Italians resided. The northern part of the Julian Region was also called the Slovene Littoral, which can be subdivided from north to south into the Kanal Valley, the old Austrian county of Gorizia, the Trieste municipality, and northern Istria. West of the Julian Region was Venetian Slovenia, which went to Italy in 1866.<sup>2</sup> The Julian Region played an important role until 1947, when it was divided into three parts: the larger went to Yugoslavia, the smaller to Italy, while the remainder formed the newly created Free Territory of Trieste, or FTT. The FTT, with Trieste as its capital, lasted from 1947 until 1954, when it was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia. Since then Trieste and its environs have been part of the Republic of Italy.

In order to demonstrate the essentially harmful character of American policy toward the Slovene territorial claims concerning Trieste I shall proceed as follows: first by a chronological review of these claims and related events together with the American position on them and, second, to discover the reasons which led the United States to adopt this detrimental policy.

The Axis conquest of Yugoslavia in April 1941 forced the then Yugoslav Government to flee into exile. There, on May 1, 1941, it issued a document called *Memorandum on the Slovene Territorial Claims* which had been prepared by the Slovene members of the government.<sup>3</sup> In this statement the Slovene spokesmen demanded the unification of all the Slovene lands outside Yugoslavia with those which had been within the prewar Yugoslav state. From Italy, in particular, they claimed Venetian Slovenia and the Slovene Littoral, including the cities of Trieste and Gorizia. This Memorandum was handed to the British and other allied governments.

The British responses to the Slovene claims, and subsequently the American answers as well, remained vague. Individual members of the British Government, for example, told Miha Krek, a Slovene minister in the Yugoslav Government-in-exile, that the Slovenes could be hopeful of obtaining from Italy after the war whatever Yugoslavia justifiably would demand. This cautious assurance, however, was given only in private conversation.<sup>4</sup> The American attitude was similar. On September 7, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt told the Yugoslav Ambassador in Washington, Konstantin Fotić, that injustices done in 1919 to Yugoslavia would be corrected after the present conflict was over.<sup>5</sup> Finally, in his August 1944 meeting with Marshal Josip Broz Tito in Italy, Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill explained that any territorial changes would have to be approved by the President of the United States, who was against such alterations in time of war.<sup>6</sup> Thus neither the United States nor Great Britain were willing to discuss Slovene claims before the end of the war or to indicate where the postwar Italo-Yugoslav border would run.

Closely related to all this was a plan according to which the British and American armies would occupy the entire Julian Region. They would then introduce their own military government to administer the area until a



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peace treaty would decide what part of the territory would go to Italy and what part to Yugoslavia. Both the American and British governments agreed to this arrangement but only the United States retained its position almost until the end of the war. This was shown in a declaration made by the State Department to Alberto Tarchiani, the Italian Ambassador in Washington, on April 19, 1945—only two weeks before the end of the war in Europe—to the effect that British and American forces, and not Yugoslav, would occupy the entire Julian Region up to the 1939 border.<sup>7</sup>

For its part, however, Great Britain began to change its position in the fall of 1944. Many reasons were responsible for this. Soviet troops by then were advancing into the Danubian flatland and this enabled Marshal Tito and his Partisans to install themselves in Belgrade and to rule over the eastern part of Yugoslavia as the newly recognized government. Moreover, Tito's Partisans came into control of parts of the Julian Region, which Tito claimed repeatedly as Yugoslav territory. To avoid any further misunderstandings, and any clashes between Allied and Yugoslav military forces, the British favored a line marking where the British-American and the Yugoslav troops would meet. It was to run north and south and to divide the Julian Region into two parts. Such a proposal was prepared by the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, for the Yalta Conference at the beginning of February 1945. The western part of the Julian Region with Trieste and a line of communications to Austria via Gorizia would be left in British-American hands, while the territory east of the line would go to Yugoslavia in accordance with the ethnic principle.<sup>8</sup> But the United States opposed this plan and it was not discussed at Yalta.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, Field Marshal Harold Alexander, the supreme allied commander for the Mediterranean, could not conclude an agreement on the demarcation line with Marshal Tito when he visited Belgrade during the second half of February 1945. Marshal Alexander had a map with him on which a line was drawn dividing the Julian Region into two parts, but he could not propose it because of American opposition. Instead he had to insist that British-American troops would occupy and administer the entire region, even though Marshal Tito explained that this was contrary to vital Yugoslav interests.<sup>10</sup> The

absence of a satisfactory agreement led to competition between the Allied and Yugoslav military forces in April 1945 over which of them would first occupy the Julian Region, particularly the city of Trieste. The contest was a very close one. The Slovene Ninth Partisan Corps and the Yugoslav Fourth Army entered Trieste on May 1, 1945, one day before a New Zealand division, the first Allied force, approached the city.<sup>11</sup> The Slovenes were especially eager that their troops enter Trieste first because of a lesson Italy had taught them at the end of World War I and which they had not forgotten: Whatever territory you occupy and have in your possession likely will remain yours, while everything else remains questionable and is dependent on the good will of other parties.

The Yugoslav forces which occupied the entire Julian Region introduced their own administration and demanded that the Allied military units in Trieste and Gorizia evacuate the area. This development changed the previous American position and the United States government now accepted the British idea of a demarcation line. Marshal Alexander sent his chief of staff, General William D. Morgan, to Belgrade, this time with full American support, to propose a demarcation line between Allied and Yugoslav occupation forces. The Yugoslavs refused to accede. Finally, however, the United States and Great Britain put diplomatic pressure on Yugoslavia and demanded the Yugoslavs evacuate the region west of the new line. To reinforce this attitude American troops crossed the Soča (Isonzo) river on May 21, 1945 and began advancing eastward. This step had the explicit backing of President Harry S. Truman.<sup>12</sup> The Yugoslavs had to accept the proposed solution in order to avoid a military clash. The agreement accordingly was signed in Belgrade on June 9, 1945 by Morgan and Yugoslav General Arso Jovanović. It divided the Julian Region into two zones, the western (Zone A) to be occupied and administered by the British-American Allied Military Government (AMG) and the eastern (Zone B) by the Yugoslavs. The line dividing the two zones was called the Morgan line—after General Morgan—and ran from north to south. Zone A included Trieste, Gorizia and a strip of land along the Soča river connecting the port of Trieste with Austria. The city of Pula in southern Istria was a separate enclave also belonging to Zone A. Yugoslav military units evacuated Zone A on June 12, 1945.<sup>13</sup> Although the majority of the

Julian Region went to Yugoslavia the Slovenes did suffer important setbacks. The two principal cities of Trieste and Gorizia along with the entire Slovene coast west of Trieste came under allied military administration, while Venetian Slovenia remained part of Italy.

It is clear to this author that official American policy demonstrated little understanding for Slovene territorial claims through the end of World War II. Moreover, subsequent events proved the British approach to be correct. The American government agreed to a compromise at the last moment, a compromise which turned out to be somewhat better for the Slovenes and Croats than the original proposal prepared by Anthony Eden in February. On the other hand, however, it did lead to considerable tension between Yugoslavia and the two western allies, and especially with the United States. The tension increased greatly during the peace negotiations in 1946 and in August of that year came to tragic consequences when the Yugoslavs forced one American plane to land and another was shot down.<sup>14</sup> These incidents were in part the result of the position taken by the United States at the peace talks, a position pointedly harmful to Slovene territorial claims.

This detrimental American position was illustrated clearly for the first time in the spring of 1946. The substitutes of the foreign ministers of the four great powers—France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States—decided to send a commission of experts to the Julian Region to acquaint itself with the land claimed both by Italy and Yugoslavia and to make appropriate recommendations. The commission was composed of four delegations, one for each of the powers, and it visited the Julian Region in March, 1946. Because the experts could not agree among themselves as to the proper border their report, dated April 29, 1946, and addressed to the Council of Foreign Ministers, included four separate proposals.<sup>15</sup> The western powers basically supported Italy, while the Soviet Union backed Yugoslavia. However, the western powers disagreed as to how much of the Julian Region should go to Italy. The line proposed by the American delegation, headed by Professor Philip Mosely, was farthest to the east and therefore the most damaging to Yugoslavia. Next came the British line, slightly less harmful, while the French was a kind of compromise lying between the Soviet and American extremes.

With respect to Slovene territory, the fact is that the three lines as they ran from the Austro-Yugoslav border in the north to the bay of Trieste near Monfalcone (Tržič) in the south did not differ greatly. They began to diverge in the southern area, in Croatian Istria. The American and British lines were almost identical, while the French line allotted more territory to Slovenia north and south of Gorizia. However, all three lines cut Slovenia off from the three major urban centers of the Slovene Littoral, the cities of Gorizia, Trieste and Koper (Capodistria). Slovenia would also lose its entire Adriatic coast and thereby any independent access to the sea. The Kanal valley in the north and Venetian Slovenia were also lost.

Among all the territory in dispute the greatest diplomatic struggle at the Paris peace conference in 1946 was fought over the fate of Trieste. The first steps were taken in May of that year when the three western powers agreed to accept the French line as the future Italo-Yugoslav border. But the Soviet Union refused to accept this solution and continued to demand that Trieste go to Yugoslavia. Finally, however, a compromise solution was achieved and was made public on July 3, 1946. From the Austrian border to the Adriatic near Monfalcone the French line was accepted as the permanent border between Italy and Yugoslavia. The land south of this and west of the French line would form a new international body to be called the Free Territory of Trieste (FTT). The northern part of this region would include the city of Trieste and a narrow strip of land connecting it with the new Italian border.<sup>16</sup> This part of the FTT belonged to Zone A and was administered by a British-American military government. The southern part would be made up of two districts, Koper and Buje (Buie), which were part of Zone B and ruled by Yugoslav military authorities. These main decisions of the Council of Foreign Ministers remained unchanged and became part of the Treaty of Peace with Italy which was signed in Paris on February 10, 1947 and entered into force in September of the same year.<sup>17</sup>

The loss of Trieste further embittered the Slovene attitude toward America. The Slovenes were convinced that the United States, the most powerful and important of the western allies, contributed greatly to this disappointing solution. They could not understand why the

United States supported Italy, which not only had invaded Slovene and Yugoslav territory, burning and devastating the land and sending many among the native population to concentration camps, but also had fought against the western allies while, on the other hand, most Slovenes and Yugoslavs fought throughout the war on the allied side.

In spite of the 1947 peace treaty, however, the Trieste question was not resolved and instead continued to disturb the diplomatic atmosphere. Approximately during the period from September 1947 until March 1951 American policy remained friendly toward Italy and detrimental toward the Slovenes. Beginning in March 1951 the attitude of the United States changed toward a more neutral stance. The explanation for these events is curious.

The Peace Treaty with Italy stipulated that the northern part of the Free Territory of Trieste, which once was part of Zone A of the Julian Region, would continue to be administered by the British-American military government, and the southern part which formerly belonged to the Yugoslav Zone B was to stay under Yugoslav military rule. This provisional situation was to remain in force until the nomination of a governor by the Security Council of the United Nations.<sup>18</sup> Because of cold war antagonisms, however, the great powers could not agree on the person to become governor and so the military administration endured until 1954. Hence, the Free Territory of Trieste had two zones and was governed by two military authorities. The British-United States Zone, or Zone A, was in the north and the Yugoslav Zone, or Zone B, was in the south. The latter included the Slovene district of Koper and Croatian Buje. In order to avoid confusion it is necessary to distinguish Zones A and B of the FTT from Zones A and B of the Julian Region. The latter existed only until September 15, 1947, when the peace treaty came into force. After that time there were only Zones A and B of the FTT.

When it became evident that the great powers could not agree on a governor, France, Great Britain and the United States on March 20, 1948 issued a joint statement which postulated that the entire FTT should be returned to Italy.<sup>19</sup> This document was also called the Tripartite, or March Declaration. Formally it was a proposal addressed to the Soviet Union and Italy—but not to Yugoslavia—and asked them to join the western powers in



amending the peace treaty so that the Free Territory would return to Italian sovereignty. In connection with the Tripartite Declaration the United States handed Italy a separate memorandum, also dated March 20, 1948.<sup>20</sup> The documents were similar but not identical. It is illustrative for an evaluation of the American position to compare the national or ethnic arguments in both documents. The Tripartite Declaration said:

During the Council of Foreign Ministers' discussions of the Italian peace treaty it was the consistent position of the American, British, and French representatives that *Trieste, which has an overwhelmingly Italian population, must remain an Italian City.*<sup>21</sup> (Italics added.)

But the United States memorandum to Italy read:

It will be recalled that the Government of the United States has consistently maintained that the *entire area of the Free Territory is ethnically and historically Italian territory.* ...<sup>22</sup> (Italics added.)

The comparison is obvious. While the Tripartite Declaration limits itself to the city of Trieste, the American memorandum calls the entire FTT ethnically and historically Italian.

The tripartite proposal increased the Italian influence in the British-American Zone and in 1952 provided the basis for the participation of the Italian government in the administration of the Zone. For Italian statesmen it became a welcome instrument to remind the western powers, and especially the United States, that they had a moral obligation—if not a legal one—to fulfill Italian claims to the Free Territory of Trieste. For the Slovenes in Zone A, meanwhile, the Declaration marked the end of favorable AMG policy toward their national interests. And in the eyes of these Slovenes the Americans were again the main culprits.

Yet only some three months after the Tripartite Declaration important changes occurred within the Soviet bloc. On June 28, 1948 the Soviet Union and its communist allies expelled Tito and his top aides from the Communist Information Bureau, or Cominform.<sup>23</sup> The consequent bitter split between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia represented a great diplomatic gain and strategic

advantage for the United States. So it is no surprise that American policy toward the FTT underwent change, although not immediately. It took a long time before the United States was convinced that the Soviet-Yugoslav split was real, and still longer before it altered its policy toward the FTT. Not until 1951 did the United States change its basic position that most of the FTT should be returned to Italy. From 1951 onward, however, the United States did accept the premise that the FTT would have to be divided more equitably between Italy and Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, America would continue to favor Italy and hesitate to put pressure on it.

In accordance with the new approach, in the spring of 1951 the United States and Great Britain began to encourage both Italy and Yugoslavia to come to a satisfactory agreement via direct negotiations.<sup>24</sup> When this recommendation proved fruitless Great Britain proposed a partition of the FTT along the existing zonal line and giving Zone A to Italy and Zone B to Yugoslavia. This plan was prepared by British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in September 1952 and provided for a British-American evacuation of Zone A and its transfer to Italian administration. Italy and Yugoslavia then could annex their respective zones, provided that Italy gave assurances for free port facilities in Trieste and that both countries gave guarantees of fair treatment for the respective national minorities.<sup>25</sup> Eden argued that the plan would work only if Italy and Yugoslavia were made to understand that it was final. But while Secretary of State Dean Acheson agreed with Eden's proposal he was unwilling to force it upon Italy as a final solution.<sup>26</sup> Because Italy refused to accept the plan voluntarily the United States—first via Acheson and then, in 1953, via the new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles—prepared several additional alternative solutions, all of which favored Italy. According to these proposals Italy would receive the entire coast of Zone A as well as the coastal towns of Koper, Izola (Isola), and Piran (Pirano), all of which were in Zone B. In return for these concessions from Zone B Yugoslavia would receive the Slovene municipalities in the interior of Zone A. These plans would therefore divide the FTT by a line running from north to south while the existing zonal division cut the territory in an east-west direction. Thus the American proposals of late 1952 and early 1953 would separate Slovenia from its seashore and provide only for a small port south of

Piran. Yet Italy rejected even these generous proposals. Italian Prime Minister Alcide de Gasperi demanded the entire coast of Zone A and most of that of Zone B. This would disjoin Slovenia altogether from the Adriatic Sea. In spite of this the United States accepted these Italian demands even though it forwarded them to Yugoslavia in May 1953 merely as a possibility for a future agreement.<sup>27</sup>

To ameliorate a strained situation which was brought about by Italian and Yugoslav political and military actions during the summer of 1953 the United States and Great Britain on October 8, 1953 issued a joint announcement which was of American inspiration. Secretary of State Dulles now accepted Eden's 1952 proposal but still refused to press it on Italy as final.<sup>28</sup> He would go no further than to say that "the two governments expect that the measures being taken will lead to a final solution."<sup>29</sup> Because Yugoslavia refused to accept this British-American initiative, and in the wake of bloody rioting in Trieste in November 1953, during which Italian and Yugoslav armed forces moved to the border, negotiations began between Yugoslavia and Italy in London, using the good offices of the United States and Great Britain. The talks proceeded in stages and lasted from February to October 1954. An agreement finally was concluded and a "Memorandum of Understanding" initialed in London on October 5, 1954.<sup>30</sup> In essence this was still the proposal made by Eden in 1952, albeit with some minor territorial changes and with an elaborate Special Statute which listed in detail the rights of the Slovene minority in Zone A and the Italian minority in Zone B. Yugoslavia obtained a small part of Zone A's territory along the zonal boundary and Italy had to guarantee Yugoslavia free port facilities in Trieste. The agreement was still not final in form, however, as both Italy and Yugoslavia extended only their civil administration over the new territory and nothing was said about their sovereignty. This was a concession to Italy, which was not prepared publicly to renounce its claims to Zone B, and without doubt was achieved with American support. Yet in order to obtain Yugoslav acceptance the western powers assured Yugoslavia that as far as they were concerned the solution was a final one. In compliance with this pledge American Secretary of State Dulles issued a special announcement on October 5, 1954, the same day the "Memorandum of Understanding" was initialed.<sup>31</sup> In his statement Dulles said:

The United States Government takes this opportunity to declare it will give no support to claims of either Yugoslavia or Italy to territory under the sovereignty or administration of the other.<sup>32</sup>

France and Great Britain issued almost identical statements.<sup>33</sup> Dulles' pledge has remained the American policy toward Trieste and was reaffirmed publicly in 1974 when there was a renewed dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia over the former Zone B.<sup>34</sup> This most recent reconfirmation of the American attitude was prompted by suspicions on the part of the Slovene and Yugoslav public that the United States again had given secret diplomatic and military support to Italian claims as evidenced by American participation in military maneuvers in the bay of Trieste during the 1974 crisis.<sup>35</sup> These Slovene suspicions came as no surprise to anyone familiar with the traditional pro-Italian policy of the United States.

Now it is necessary to turn to the explanation as to why the United States pursued the policy described above. While many factors were involved the single most important and overt was the need felt by successive American governments to contain the spread of communism. Many Americans regarded Tito's march on Trieste as a vanguard of communism and employing the same kind of aggressive behavior reminiscent of the Axis in World War II.<sup>36</sup> Once established in Trieste themselves, American representatives had ample opportunity to learn about the massacres committed by the communists of their anti-communist and Italian opponents all over the Julian Region. They also learned about similar massacres in nearby Yugoslavia.<sup>37</sup> These revelations helped shape American opinion to the effect that whatever was Slovene or Croat in the Julian Region was also pro-communist while, conversely, whatever was Italian was by definition pro-western and pro-democratic. Italian propaganda, not surprisingly, contributed substantially to the creation and sustenance of this image.

Anti-communism also was the principal reason for publication of the Tripartite Declaration of March 1948, in which the three western powers accused Yugoslavia of virtually incorporating Zone B into its state and of extending the communist social order into the zone.<sup>38</sup> A further irritant to the western powers was the fact that Yugoslavia was one of the main supporters of the commun-

ist Greek guerillas during the Greek civil war of the late 1940s.<sup>39</sup> The American government interpreted this as part of a general design to spread communism further into western Europe. When the previously democratic coalition government in Czechoslovakia fell in February 1948 and was replaced by a communist regime, President Truman decided the United States should act vigorously to prevent any further spread of communism. The Tripartite Declaration was a characteristic expression of Truman's containment policy.<sup>40</sup> The Declaration was also the result of grave American concern that the Italian Communist party might defeat the pro-western Christian Democrats in the Italian parliamentary elections scheduled for April 18, 1948.<sup>41</sup> This American fear about a possible Communist victory in Italy subsequently was exploited successfully by the Italian government when it emphasized that any concession to Yugoslavia in the Trieste dispute could cause a defeat of the democratic forces in the country and bring victory to the communists.<sup>42</sup> Finally, the fact that the United States changed its attitude toward Yugoslavia, and also on the Trieste question after the Yugoslav expulsion from the Cominform, further confirmed the validity of the aforementioned anti-communist arguments.

A second persistent feature of American policy was the supposition that Gorizia, Trieste and the Slovene Adriatic coast were parts of Italian territory. The explanation for this misconception lies in the greater familiarity of an educated American with Italian civilization. In his eyes Italy represents the continuation of the esteemed Greco-Roman tradition enriched by the works of Dante, Petrarch, and the great Renaissance artists. But what does such an educated American know about the Slovenes? Very little, if indeed he is cognizant of their existence at all. In view of this it is not surprising to discover similarly deficient knowledge, if not outright ignorance, about the history and geography of the Julian Region. Just one example to illustrate the problem. Trieste was referred to in the American memorandum of March 20, 1948 as being historically an Italian city, this despite the fact it belonged to the Habsburgs from 1382 until 1917, with only a brief interruption during the Napoleonic era when it was part of the so-called Illyrian Provinces.<sup>43</sup> Trieste became part of Italy only in 1918, at the conclusion of World War I.

Closely connected with this educational aspect was

the American assumption that the countryside belonged to its town or city, a view reminiscent of Italian municipal traditions. In contrast the Slovenes, as well as the peoples of agricultural central and eastern Europe, asserted that towns and cities belonged to the land because they represented islands of the foreign dominant class which had exploited the agricultural native population. According to the municipal theory Gorizia, Trieste, Koper, Izola and Piran with their adjacent hinterland should go to Italy because the cities had an Italian majority. The Slovenes, however, insisted these cities should belong to Slovenia because ethnically they were isolated islands encircled by Slovene territory.

Another source of difficulty was American unfamiliarity with the European concept of what constitutes a nation. People who for centuries have lived on their own continuously settled territory, with their own literary language, who have common historical, cultural and economic traditions, as well as their own national consciousness are regarded in Europe as being a nation. This is so whether or not they also possess their own independent national state. Thus there are the Slovene, Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian nations, but not states. On the other hand there is a Yugoslav state but not a Yugoslav nation. The same is true with the Czechs and Slovaks, and with Czechoslovakia. The misunderstanding of this concept had grave consequences for the Slovenes at the Paris peace negotiations, where the great powers tried to find a balance between the size of the Italian and Yugoslav minorities to be left outside their mother country. The formula adopted was to compare the number of Italians to remain in Yugoslavia to the number of Yugoslavs to remain in Italy. Slovenes and Croats were grouped together as Yugoslavs. This meant in actual practice that while many Italians went to Croatia no Croats went to Italy, while many Slovenes were left in Italy but almost no Italians in Slovenia. In other words, the Slovene minority in Italy had to counterbalance the Italian minority in Croatia, that in effect the Slovenes had to pay for the Croatian gains.

Finally, there is the question of the role played by Italo-American and Slovene-American influences on the course of American policy toward the Trieste issue. Many well known Italian anti-fascist intellectuals and political leaders lived in the United States during the

Mussolini era. During the war they conducted an anti-fascist but also a pro-Italian propaganda. Gaetano Salvemini, for one example, published many books and pamphlets in the United States and these may well have exerted a degree of influence on American policy.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the role played by the many Italo-American cultural organizations still awaits systematic analysis. For their part, of course, Slovene-Americans also were active, especially during the war. On December 5-6, 1942 a Slovene National Congress held in Cleveland, Ohio, constituted and elected the *Slovenski ameriški narodni svet - Slovenian American National Council*, or SANS. The president of the Executive Committee was the socialist Etbin Kristan and the secretary was a Franciscan priest, the Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek.<sup>45</sup> The famous-American writer Louis Adamic was the soul of the movement. The principal task of SANS was:

to do all possible towards realization of the most cherished aspirations of the Slovenian nation—the ultimate unification of all the Slovenes, including those under the cruel yoke of Germany, Italy and Hungary prior to this war,—in a United Slovenia which shall become an autonomous part of a new, democratic, federative Yugoslavia.<sup>46</sup>

While in the beginning SANS represented a coalition of all Slovene-Americans concerned about the fate of Slovenia, in October 1943 and later many began to abandon the organization because it became apparent that SANS in effect was supporting the communist controlled Partisan movement led by Tito.<sup>47</sup> The split in SANS—and among Slovene-Americans—occurred just when an active support for Slovene claims was needed the most. The anti-SANS forces were unable and unwilling to support claims advanced by the Partisans and, after 1945, by Tito-led Yugoslavia. Moreover, agile SANS propaganda had some success in discrediting its opponents by labelling them as reactionaries and fascist sympathizers. Because of its de facto support for Tito and his communist system, however, SANS was placed on the United States Attorney General's list of subversive organizations and also lost any chance to intervene in behalf of Slovene claims with the American government. In reality this was a major tragedy for Slovene-Americans and for all Slovenes. Throughout the war Slovene-Americans sacrificed and sup-

ported the allied efforts and yet by the end of the war they disqualified themselves and could make no substantial contribution in support of Slovene national claims.

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The second and final part of this article deals with the positive aspects of American policy on the Trieste question. Albeit in condensed form it seeks to outline the American contributions toward recognition of Slovene national rights in the former Zone A of the Julian Region.

Although the British and American civil affairs officers who comprised the Allied Military Government (AMG) had to follow the policy lines laid down by their respective governments there was always some room left for individual actions. Therefore, while still remaining in compliance with such general directions, individual senior officers could contribute substantially to the local population on their own initiative. Two Americans, Colonel Alfred Connor Bowman and Captain John P. Simoni, were such concerned persons who helped the Zone A Slovenes considerably. Colonel Bowman was the Senior Civil Affairs Officer of the AMG and thus the administrative chief of Zone A, while Captain Simoni was in charge of the AMG department of education.

With the support of these two sympathetic officers the Slovenes obtained their most important institution, a state school system with Slovene as the language of instruction. A Slovene elementary school was organized in every community where there were twenty-five pupils in a radius of four kilometers. A network of kindergarten schools also came into being. In the two cities of Gorizia and Trieste a number of secondary and other advanced schools were permitted; a high school (gymnasium) and a teacher's training school in Gorizia, a high school, a commercial academy, and a teacher's training school in Trieste. In Trieste, Gorizia and other towns vocational schools were formed. As there were no Slovene textbooks available in Zone A and the Slovene books published in Yugoslavia contained communist propaganda, the AMG financed the publication of new Slovene language textbooks for all levels of schools.<sup>48</sup>

With respect to the adult Slovene population of Zone A the AMG published the daily *Glas zaveznikov* (The Voice of the Allies) in the Slovene language and also permitted



the publication of numerous other privately owned and independently edited newspapers, journals and reviews, among them the pro-Tito *Primorski dnevnik* (Coastal Daily). In the realm of public communications the Slovenes obtained a radio station in Trieste for broadcasting the news in the Slovene language as well as cultural and other programs. In the same vein, the AMG permitted the organization and operation of Slovene cultural, religious and political organizations of all ideological persuasions, including the communist. For all of its proclamations and decrees the AMG used English, Slovene and Italian, and the official *AMG Gazette* also appeared in all three languages. Slovene could be used in the AMG courts and Slovenes were accepted in the police force and in AMG offices. Finally, Slovenes were permitted to petition the AMG authorities for readoption of Slovene first and last names which had been Italianized forcibly during the fascist regime.<sup>49</sup> For example, Jože Vodopivec had been changed to Giuseppe Bevilacqua, which was a translation of both first and last names into Italian. In some cases only the first name was translated and the surname Italianized, as with Ivan Pogačnik becoming Giovanni Pogassi.<sup>50</sup>

The Zone A Slovenes could have obtained many more rights from the AMG but this was prevented by the behavior of the Slovene-Italian communist bloc in the Zone, which adopted a policy of no cooperation with the AMG. When the Yugoslav military forces had to retreat from Zone A in June 1945, the local Slovene-Italian communist elements demanded that the AMG accept the National Liberation Committees and Councils as the established civil administration. The AMG indicated its willingness to cooperate with the communists but required that other political parties also participate in the civil administration. This proposal was rejected by the communists, who thereupon engaged in outright opposition to the AMG. Colonel Bowman, in his monthly report for August 1945, accurately described the communist position:

The attitude of the Regional National Liberation Council can be summed up as follows:

We will willingly cooperate if the Allied Military Government will govern in accordance with our views and through our institutions, but we will not cooperate otherwise, as any other form of government is considered to be

Fascist and non-democratic.<sup>51</sup>

In consequence, during July and August 1945, the Slovenes lost a great opportunity to participate in the regional civil administration and in the administration of Trieste, Gorizia, and Monfalcone.

Yet even this was not enough. The communists also sought to prohibit other Slovenes from participation. They launched a propaganda of slander against any such Slovenes. Those few Slovenes who dared to cooperate with the AMG and thereby save what could be saved in behalf of Slovene national interests were labelled as fascists and collaborators with the imperialist western powers. Moreover, the leaders among these Slovenes were threatened with death, and these were not empty threats. While Srečko Baraga, the head of Slovene schools in Zone A, who was condemned to death by the Tito regime, survived, Slavko Uršič, the founder of the first Slovene democratic weekly *Demokracija* (Democracy), was not so fortunate. He was kidnapped and taken across the border to Yugoslavia where he disappeared and has never been heard from since. Some Slovene teachers in rural districts were also kidnapped and a few were killed in order to frighten the others and discourage their further cooperation with the AMG.<sup>52</sup> Given these conditions few Slovenes were willing to participate in civil administration in Zone A. The result was that the AMG formed new area and municipal councils composed of members of various Italian non-communist political parties, which were quite eager to take all the administrative positions into their own hands.

\* \* \*

In conclusion, I wish to recapitulate what has been ascertained in this article. First and foremost, American military and diplomatic policy toward the Slovenes in Trieste was unfavorable, if not downright detrimental, for the period 1945-1951. After 1951 the attitude was somewhat more friendly, but the United States continued to favor Italian claims until 1954. Since 1954 the American position has been relatively more neutral. While anti-communism was the principal justification for this unfriendly policy there were numerous other factors present including, as has been shown, simple ignorance as to the true situations, ethnically and historically, in the Julian Region.

At the same time, however, the Slovenes in Trieste did obtain confirmation of their basic national rights during the first two years after World War II, when the AMG was headed by Colonel Bowman. The Slovenes in Trieste still enjoy these same rights today. Italy was compelled to recognize them in 1954 when it took over the Trieste area; no new rights of any importance for the Slovene minority have been granted by Italy since 1954, however.<sup>53</sup> To some degree the Slovenes themselves were responsible for many of the setbacks they received. It is unlikely they could have done very much to alter the basically unfavorable American diplomatic and military policies, but certainly it would have been possible for them to adopt a more responsible attitude toward the AMG.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For some works which discuss the Trieste problem since World War II see: Diego de Castro, *Il problema di Trieste: Genesi e sviluppi della questione giuliana in relazione agli avvenimenti internazionali, 1943-1952*, 2nd ed. (Bologna, 1953); Jean Baptiste Duroselle, *Le Conflit de Trieste, 1943-1943*, vol. 3 of *Études de cas de conflits internationaux* of the Centre européen de la dotation Carnegie pour la paix internationale (Brussels, 1966); Janko Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje po drugi svetovni vojni: Tri faze diplomatskega boja* (Ljubljana, 1961); Vladimiro Lisiani, *Good-bye Trieste*, 7th print. (Milan, 1967); Bogdan C. Novak, *Trieste, 1941-1954: The Ethnic, Political and Ideological Struggle* (Chicago, 1970); and Mario Pacor, *Confine orientale: Questione nazionale e resistenza nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia* (Milan, 1964).

<sup>2</sup>Duroselle, pp. 19-50; Novak, pp. 3-7, 260-62. Also see attached map.

<sup>3</sup>Royal Yugoslav Government-in-Exile, *Memorandum on the Slovene Territorial Claims at the Moment of the Establishment of the New Boundaries of the Yugo-Slav State* (At the Seat of the Royal Yugo-Slav Government, May 1, 1941); for a list of other publications of the Yugoslav Royal Government or by individual Slovene experts working for the government, see Novak, note 1, pp. 120-21.

<sup>4</sup>For an English translation see Novak, p. 130. The Slovene original is in the author's possession.

<sup>5</sup>Constantine Fotitch [Fotić], *The War We Lost: Yugoslavia's Tragedy and the Failure of the West* (New York, 1948), p. 212.

<sup>6</sup>Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, 6 vols. (Boston, 1948-1953), vol. 6, p. 91.

<sup>7</sup>Alberto Tarchiani, *Dieci anni tra Roma e Washington* (Verona, 1955), pp. 54-55; De Castro, pp. 108-110.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, *The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington, D.C., 1955), pp. 888-89.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*; C. R. S. Harris, *Allied Military Administration of Italy, 1943-1945*, a volume in *History of the Second World War*, ed. by J. R. M. Butler, United Kingdom Military Series (London, 1957), pp. 332-333; Duroselle, pp. 153-154.

<sup>10</sup>"Background Statement on Alexander-Tito Talks," released by Allied Military Headquarters, Rome, May 19, 1945, and reprinted in the *New York Times*, May 20, 1945; Metod Mikuž, "Julijska krajina in Trst, 1947-1954," serialized in the daily *Delo* (The Work) (Ljubljana, November 2 to November 18, 1974), November 4, 1974. Mikuž' serialized article was rewritten, with additional footnotes, and published under the revised title "Vprašanje Julijske krajine in Trsta 1947-1954," in *Zgodovinski časopis*, vol. 29 (1975), pp. 3-44.

<sup>11</sup>For a British account about the advance of the New Zealand division see Geoffrey Cox, *The Road to Trieste* (London, 1947). For a Yugoslav version see Pavle Jakšić, *Oslobodilački pohod na Trst četvrte jugoslovenske armije* (Belgrade, 1952). A Slovene account is Stanko Petelin, *Osvoboditev Slovenskega Primorja* (Nova Gorica, 1965). Cox was senior intelligence officer of the New Zealand division and Jakšić was the chief of staff of the Fourth Army.

<sup>12</sup>Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1: *Year of Decisions* (Garden City, N.Y., 1955), pp. 246-252; Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945*, ed. by Walter Johnson, vol. 2 (Boston, 1952), pp. 1478-85; Churchill, Vol. 6, pp. 551-559; Mikuž, *Delo*, November 5 and 6, 1974; De Castro, p. 148.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Department of State, *Provisional Administration of Venezia-Giulia: Agreement between the United*

*States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Yugoslavia, Signed at Belgrade June 9, 1945*, Executive Agreements Series 501, Department of State publication no. 2562 (Washington, D.C., 1946); Harris, pp. 342-344; Mikuž, *Delo*, November 6, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> "Protests against Yugoslav Attack on American Plane and Detention of American Personnel," *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 15 (September 1, 1946), pp. 414-15; "Facts Relating to Flights of American Planes over Yugoslav Territory," *ibid.*, vol. 15 (September 15, 1946), pp. 501-505; Jeri, pp. 174-75.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, vol. 2: *Council of Foreign Ministers*, Department of State publication no. 8497 (Washington, D.C., 1970), pp. 140-45, 148-152. A map with the four lines is attached between pages 152 and 153. Other members of the American delegation of the commission of experts, in addition to Professor Mosely, were Dr. Leonard Ungar, economic adviser of the Division of Southern European Affairs in the State Department, and Dr. Otto E. Guthe, Chief of the Division of Map Intelligence and Cartography, also of the State Department.

<sup>16</sup> For the proposals and the decisive discussions of the Council of Foreign Ministers, see their meetings of June 29, 1946, in *ibid.*, pp. 689-691; of July 1, 1946, pp. 703-712, 714-15; of July 2, 1946, pp. 715-25; and of July 3, 1946, pp. 731-38, 751, 752-3; see also Duroselle, pp. 223-230.

<sup>17</sup> *Treaty of Peace with Italy*, *Treaties and other International Acts Series 1648*, Department of State Publication no. 2960 (Washington, D.C., 1947). See articles 3, 4, 11-13, 21, 22, and annexes V-X.

<sup>18</sup> See article 21, paragraph 3, in *ibid.*, pp. 136-37, and annex VII, *ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>19</sup> "Statement by the Governments of the United States, United Kingdom and France," issued March 20, 1948, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 18 (March 28, 1948), p. 425.

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum of Department of State to Italy, dated March 20, 1948, *ibid.*, Vol. 18 (April 4, 1948), p. 453.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, (March 28, 1948), p. 425.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, (April 4, 1948), p. 453.

<sup>23</sup> "Resolution of the Information Bureau Concerning the Situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia," and the Yugoslav reply, "Statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia on the Resolution of the Information Bureau of Communist Parties on the Situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia," are both reprinted in *The Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute: Text of the Published Correspondence*, ed. by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (London, 1948), pp. 61-70, 71-79.

<sup>24</sup> For more details see Novak, pp. 353, 355-63; and Duroselle, pp. 298-340.

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Eden, *Full Circle: The Memoirs* (Boston, 1960), pp. 200-203.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

<sup>27</sup> Tarchiani, pp. 215-283; also Novak, pp. 415-17.

<sup>28</sup> "U.S., U.K. to Cease Administering Zone A of Trieste," announcement made simultaneously by the United States and the United Kingdom on October 8, 1953, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 29 (October 19, 1953), p. 529.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; Eden, pp. 204-205.

<sup>30</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States and Yugoslavia Regarding the Free Territory of Trieste*, London, October 5, 1954, Treaties and other International Acts Series 3099, Department of State publication no. 5723, *United States Treaties and other International Agreements for 1954*, vol. 5, pt. 3 (Washington, D.C., 1956), pp. 2386-99.

<sup>31</sup> "Announcement of Agreement," *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 31 (October 18, 1954), p. 555.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> For the French "Declaration du gouvernement français," dated October 4, 1954, see *Accord sur le Territoire Libre de Trieste*, in *La Documentation française*, Notes et études documentaires, no. 1950 (November 19, 1954), p. 10; and for the British "Text of Statement issued by Her Majesty's Government on October 5, 1954," see *Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Italy, the United States of America and Yugoslavia*

*Regarding the Free Territory of Trieste*, London, October 5, 1954, Comd. 9288, Miscellaneous no. 30 (1954), *Accounts and Papers*, vol. 15, State Papers: General and International Treaties 13, *British Sessional Papers* (London), vol. 32 (Session November 3, 1953–November 25, 1954), pp. 6–7.

<sup>34</sup> Department of State, "Transcript of Press, Radio and Television News Briefing, Thursday, April 4, 1974," DPC 58, pp. B-3 to B-7 (mimeographed).

<sup>35</sup> *Gospodarstvo* (Economy) (Trieste-Trst), April 4, 1974; *Politika* (Politics) (Belgrade), April 4 and 5, 1974.

<sup>36</sup> The reference to the Axis' methods was made in Truman's cable to Churchill on May 11, 1945, See Truman, vol. 1, p. 247. Duroselle gives the date as May 12 (p. 177, n. 141).

<sup>37</sup> See Grew's private memorandum of May 19, 1945, in Grew, vol. 2, pp. 1445–53; and on Trieste, *ibid.*, pp. 1478–79; Truman, vol. 1, p. 246; Cox, pp. 227–229, 231; S. S. [Sylvia Sprigge], "Trieste Diary," *The World Today: Chatham House Review*, New Series, 1, no. 4 (October 1945), pp. 168, 184; Ennio Maserati, *L'occupazione jugoslava di Trieste, maggio-giugno 1945* (Udine, 1963), pp. 122–25; Novak, pp. 155–6, 179–85.

<sup>38</sup> *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 18 (March 28, 1948), p. 425.

<sup>39</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2: *Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, N.Y., 1956), p. 298.

<sup>40</sup> See for example Truman's speech to the Congress on March 17, 1948, "Toward Securing the Peace and Preventing War," *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 18 (March 28, 1948), pp. 418–420; and the speech of Secretary of State George C. Marshall at the University of California at Berkeley on March 19, 1948, entitled "World-Wide Struggle between Freedom and Tyranny," *ibid.*, pp. 422–25. See also Truman, vol. 2, pp. 240–43.

<sup>41</sup> Marshal, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 18 (March 28, 1948), p. 424; Duroselle, p. 278.

<sup>42</sup> See Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, 1969), pp. 571–2, 638.

<sup>43</sup> See above, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> See for example "Trieste and Trst," *Free Italy*, Vol. 1, no. 4 (April 1945), pp. 6-9, and other articles in the same journal.

<sup>45</sup> *Slovenski ameriški narodni svet and Slovenian American National Council*, a pamphlet in both the Slovene and English languages, signed for the Executive Committee by Etbin Kristan as President, Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek as secretary, and Mirko G. Kuhel as administrative secretary (Chicago, no date). Probably printed in December 1942. (From the archives of Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek.)

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Izjava za odstop od SANSa*, pamphlet signed October 21, 1943 by Rt. Rev. John J. Oman and Rev. Alexander Urankar (No place) (From the archives of Rev. Kazimir Zakrajšek).

<sup>48</sup> For the various AMG decrees see *The Allied Military Government Gazette*, published by the Allied Military Government, 13 Corps, Venezia Giulia, 2 vols. (Trieste, September 1945-September 1947). See also Mary E. Bradshaw, "Military Control of Zone A in Venezia Giulia," *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 16 (June 29, 1947), pp. 1257-72; Novak, pp. 215-18.

<sup>49</sup> Alfred C. Bowman, "Venezia Giulia and Trieste," *Military Government Journal*, vol. 1, no. 8 (June 1948), pp. 12-14; Novak, p. 218.

<sup>50</sup> See Ubald Vrabec, "O naših priimkih," *Zaliv* (The Bay) (Trieste-Trst), no. 42-43 (September 1973), pp. 193-203; no. 44-45 (December 1973), pp. 426-32; no. 46-47 (June 1974), pp. 56-63; and no. 48-49 (December 1974), pp. 247-57.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of the Military History, *United States Army in World War II*, Special Studies: Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers become Governors* (Washington, D.C., 1964), p. 610.

<sup>52</sup> Bowman, "Venezia Giulia and Trieste," p. 13; "Protest against Yugoslav Obstruction to Allied Military Government," *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 15 (September 1, 1946), pp. 409-11; "Reply to Yugoslav Notes Alleging Improper Treatment of Yugoslavs in Venezia



Giulia," *ibid.* (September 29, 1946), pp. 579-81; Novak, pp. 228-30, 266.

<sup>53</sup>This article was prepared before the final treaty between Italy and Yugoslavia was signed in Osimo on November 10, 1975. For the text of this treaty see *Medjunarodna politika*, no. 615 (November 16, 1975), pp. 13-18. It should be noted that the carefully prepared clauses for the protection of the national minorities contained in the Special Statute of the London Agreement of 1954, clauses to which Italy had agreed only reluctantly (see John C. Campbell, ed., *Successful Negotiation: Trieste 1954* [Princeton, 1975], pp. 102-103), were terminated and replaced in the new treaty by merely general statements.