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Trieste: Italy to Get 'Zone A'; Other Developments

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Yugoslavs Resist Allied Move

A new crisis in the 7-year dispute over the Free Territory of Trieste arose this week after the U.S. and Britain announced they would withdraw their occupation forces and let Italy take over administration of Zone A. Reactions to the Allied plan:

- Yugoslavia opposed the plan but promised to abide by UN principles in eliminating "a rising dangerous situation." It urged an immediate 4-power conference to reconsider the Anglo-U.S. decision. Violent anti-Western demonstrations occurred in Belgrade.
- Italy welcomed the decision although it fell short of a 1948 Allied pledge to return all of Trieste Territory to Italy. [See 1948 [Western Europe: Union and ERP; Other Developments](#)]
- The UN Security Council was called into session to consider a Russian counter-proposal for permanent neutralization of the Trieste area.
- Trieste was added to issues to be discussed in London October 16-17 at a meeting of U.S., British and French Foreign Ministers. [See 1953 [World News: Churchill for Big 4 Talks: Other Developments](#)]

Allies Reveal Plan

The Anglo-American statement October 8 said: The Allies were "no longer prepared to maintain responsibility for administration of Zone A" and would transfer authority to Italy "at the earliest practicable date." They had tried to conciliate both Italy and Yugoslavia but "it was not possible to find a solution acceptable to both sides." There was "no alternative" but to end "the present unsatisfactory situation." The decision to end Allied Military Government in Trieste would stabilize and improve Italo-Yugoslav relations and lead to "a final peaceful solution." [See 1953 [World News: ANZUS vs. Communist China: Other Developments](#); 1953 [Trieste: News in Brief](#)]

Tito Asks Direct Talks

Yugoslavia, which reacted immediately against the Anglo-U.S. decision, called October 12 for a conference with the U.S., Britain and Italy to avoid action which would force the UN to take up the Trieste issue. At the same time, Yugoslavia protested to UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold that the Allied decision violated UN principles of sovereign equality of states.

In notes to Britain and the U.S. October 9, Yugoslavia demanded reversal of the "unjust and dangerous" decision, warned it would increase Italo-Yugoslav tension.

(Yugoslavia rejected any international talks on Trieste September 28, turning down an Italian proposal for a plebiscite in Trieste and a 5-nation conference. Instead, Yugoslavia offered October 4 to settle the dispute in bilateral talks with Italy.)

Yugoslav President Tito proposed October 10 that Italy receive sovereignty over the port of Trieste "for 10 years or more" in return for Yugoslav rule over the rest of the area. [See 1953 [World News: Tito Plan on Trieste: Other Developments](#)]

Tito threatened October 11 to send troops into Zone A "at the moment" Italian forces entered the area. But in official notes Yugoslavia limited itself to "use of appropriate means" under the UN Charter. Yugoslav tanks and troops were reported October 14 to be moving toward the borders of Italy and Zone A.

Russia Asks UN Debate

Russia requested a Security Council meeting on Trieste October 13, renewing an old proposal for UN administration of the area. The Yugoslav Government rejected Soviet intervention October 14, asserting that Russia cared "no more about the protection of Yugoslavia's interests" than it did in 1948 when Tito broke with the Cominform.

The Soviet plan: formation immediately of a provisional government under a UN-appointed governor, to be followed in 3 months by the establishment of a permanent, neutral, independent and demilitarized Free Territory of Trieste. The Security Council began deliberations October 15. [See 1949 [Western Defense: U.S. Debates Atlantic Role: Other Developments](#)]

(Russia charged October 12 that the U.S. and Britain had turned Zone A into an illegal military base and had violated the Italian peace treaty.) [See 1952 [Yugoslavia: News in Brief](#)]

Belgrade, Trieste Riots

Anger at the Allied decision was expressed by thousands of Yugoslavs in protest meetings and riots in Belgrade October 9-13. U.S. and British information offices were invaded and some Americans beaten up. The anti-Western demonstrations subsided by October 14. In Trieste City, where Allied military commanders had banned public meetings and demonstrations, territorial police battled 2,000 pro-Titoists October 14 as they demonstrated against the transfer. Later same day, 200 pro-Italian youths raided the offices of a Yugoslav economic mission.

Facts on Trieste

Trieste Territory covers 320 sq. mi. on Yugoslav side of Adriatic. Population totals about 341,000 (85% Italian, 10% Slovene and Croat) of which 237,717 is in Trieste City. Predominantly Roman Catholic. Currency: Italian lira.

Trieste seaport was under Austria from 1382 until World War I, became major outlet for central Europe and Danube Basin. Treaty of Rapallo (November 12, 1920) gave Trieste and all Istrian Peninsula to Italy. Tito's forces moved in May 1945 after German collapse to take it for Yugoslavia. Tito agreed in June 1945 to temporary Allied occupation of Trieste, Yugoslav occupation of the rest of Venetia Giulia.

Italian peace treaty established Free Territory September 15, 1947. U.S.-British forces retained administration of northern Zone A, including city; Yugoslavs occupied southern Zone B. Plans called for a Territorial governor (neither Italian nor Yugoslav) appointed by UN Security Council, a popularly elected unicameral legislature.

Establishment of permanent Government was prevented by Soviet-Western disagreement in Security Council over choice of a governor. U.S., Britain and France proposed May 20, 1948 (before critical Italian elections and before Tito's break with Moscow) the return of all Trieste Territory to Italy. The U.S. and Britain added an Italian adviser to their Zone A Admin. last year.

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