



LIFE

**WHO WAS
HARRY
DEXTER
WHITE?**

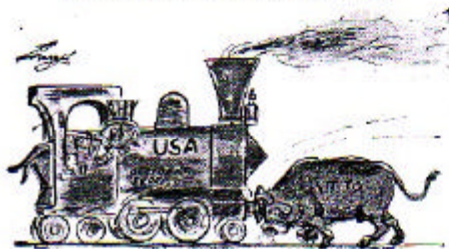
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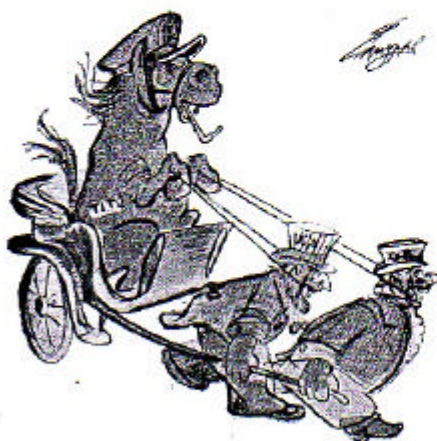
NOVEMBER 23, 1953

TRIESTE IS MORE THAN A CITY

EXAMPLES OF HOW ITALY FEELS



Something of the best engendered by the crisis over Trieste in normally pro-American Italy is reflected in the cartoons of Giovanni Guareschi. This gifted cartoonist, equally gifted as a writer, is best known in the U.S. as the author of the bestseller, *The Little World of Don Camillo*. Inside Italy he is regarded as the most adroit and effective journalistic foe of the Italian Communists. Against them he has waged a devastating campaign of ridicule in the columns of the satirical weekly *Candido* of which he is chief cartoonist as well as editor in chief. Like so many Italians, Guareschi has never ceased to regard Tito as a Communist and he remains skeptical of the Yugoslav dictator's conversion to the West. He sees Tito determined to reverse U.S. policy toward Italy (above). And he is afraid that the Yugoslav dictator has bamboozled both the U.S. and Britain into believing that he has yielded while in reality he remains in the driver's seat (below).



A few days ago a LIFE correspondent in Italy had a meeting with a leading Italian economist to discuss economic questions. They discussed the slump in cotton textiles, the boom in natural gas and in scooters, the general prosperity, the poverty of the south, the liberalization of trade, etc. etc. After an hour or so somebody mentioned Trieste, and in a moment it became clear that all the previous talk was academic. For everything depends on Trieste.

To the average American this seems entirely out of proportion. What does Trieste amount to, anyway? Are there not many more serious problems for Europe and even for Italy itself? Nevertheless the economist explained quite calmly that the whole of the Italian economy was "in suspension" pending a "Trieste settlement." And indeed the whole future of Italy. This became clearer when the economist remarked that he had fought for Trieste in his youth, and one of his brothers lay buried in Redipuglia cemetery on the hillside above Trieste.

One thing was more important to the economist than all the balance sheets of all the businesses of Italy—Trieste. And what is true of him is true of millions of Italians, old and young, rich and poor, the heads of vast industries, the bearers of famous names.

There is—unfortunately for the course of international understanding—no analogy to Trieste in American life or history.

More than the flag itself, Trieste is the symbol of the integrity of Italian nationhood. It was the first thing Italy fought for—and won—after having become a nation.

Integrity: that's a big word but it is perhaps the best word to summarize both the problems and the aspirations of the Italian people. By integrity is meant a national unity that transcends party politics; by integrity is meant self-respect and the decent respect of others. Only as that integrity is achieved is there hope of establishing at last an enduring democratic system in Italy.

What, in fact, are the chances of Italy becoming a stable democracy? That, from the American point of view, is the most important question. And the answer, in a word, is that the chances are excellent.

The elections last June were disappointing. The "democratic center" governs Italy today. Communists and their left-wing Socialist stooges got 35.3% of the vote. How could so many Italians vote Communist? Much has been written on this subject, including the fact that most of the Italians who vote Communist do so for the same reason that tens of millions of Englishmen and Frenchmen and Germans and Scandinavians vote Socialist. But the biggest single fact is that in Italy the Communists control the big labor union federation.

But despite the awful incubus of Communism, consider Italy's record from 1945 on. In 1947 the Communists were thrown out of the government. From 1947 on, Italy

has had a stable government and, almost equally remarkable, a stable currency.

In 1945 Italy was an appalling mess—vast physical destruction plus social disorganization after years of fascism and war. LIFE readers will remember pictures of children searching in garbage dumps for a bit to eat.

What has happened since? The country has been largely reconstructed. The Italian economy is today more productive than ever before in Italy's history. All the great cities are bustling with traffic and trade. And this year Italian farmers have harvested nearly all the wheat Italians need, thus winning the "Battle of the Grain" which Mussolini for all his years of bombast never won.

While all this was being done, democratic processes have been maintained in full vigor. Indeed the De Gasperi government is now criticized for having been "too democratic" towards Communists. Land reform and social welfare have gone forward; again the democratic center can be criticized for having been too sweeping in land reforms, too "socialistic" in social welfare.

In its foreign policy, the republic of Italy has been, of all the countries in Europe, one of the most loyally pro-American or "pro-West." They have done their part in rearmament and defense—with Naples the "home port" of the U.S. Mediterranean fleet. And Italy has consistently acted for the economic unity of Europe and freer trade. Indeed, again, the democratic center is now criticized for having been "too good" a neighbor.

Much yet remains to be done. Italian leaders are eager to get on with constructive tasks: more tax reform, more stimulus to profitable employment, less restrictionism and, above all, a more vigorous campaign against Communism in all its deceitful guises. All this can be done if a stable government based on a broad democratic consensus can be continued even for a few years. If so the chances are excellent that the republic of Italy will live on for decades as a nation of free men under law.

This is the integrity for which Italians strive.

But no democratic prime minister and no democratic government can face an Italian parliament or the Italian electorate empty-handed in the matter of Trieste. It is not a question simply of this or that party; faith in democracy itself will be severely shaken if democracy cannot give to the Italians a sense of national integrity.

The U.S. has promised to restore to Italy the administration of Zone A which includes the city of Trieste. It is a promise which recognizes the essential Italian character of Trieste while leaving the way open for negotiations on various other arrangements. It is a promise well worth keeping, not only because it is inherently right but also because it could be the inspiration for even greater efforts to make a better Italy—and a better, stronger, democratic Europe.