

Walking Naples made me understand why the band didn't play as we manned the rail. There is a big red element in Italy. These folks are in a depression that never ends apparently. The papers had news of bombings here and bombings there. My partner and I found one establishment that looked to be a bank guarded by carabinieri with automatic weapons. Red posters were seen on many walls. At all times a lot of young unemployed congregated up a main street at a plaza. In the evening many would hangout on the lawn at the castle by fleet landing listening to music and playing instruments. On a different walking excursion which followed the Corso deUmberto around the hills around the harbor we came to the junkie steps. I call them that for lack of a better phrase. A block long stairway ascends a steep hill at the end of a street running from the harbor to the hill. The stairs split into a Y and join the high road. The block of steps was littered with disposable syringes. About all my partner could say was, "I guess this is what a drug problem looks like."

That evening we wandered into an area north of the fleet plaza called the gut. The gut is about six blocks by six blocks of old apartment of medium high rise. Big old tough women wave at you by the corners soliciting business. I couldn't imagine what I'd want any of them to do for me. Outside some of the houses people would congregate and cool themselves in the evening breezes, such as they were in those enclosed canyons. Apparently they were engaged in prostitution, but offered no come on. Young men would zip in in new cars and see the girls, so I guess we have a regular business that doesn't cater to whoever pulls into port. It seems that it would have been quite a bit of work to engage any of these women so we let it pass. The forbidden atmosphere was heightened by the Shore Patrol who walked the perimeter of the gut. We were told they would take us in if we entered the gut. That sort of of problem can make your enterprizes go limp. It could be a general caveat had been issued by the press about relations with the sailors as the gut turned out to be less than lively area for all the caveats we had about it.

The townspeople would shop until it got dark, then the sidewalks would be rolled up. Early in the evening people would be better dressed and walk. The promenade ritual was less distinct in Naples than other Italian townshower. Away from the strip area we had to stand and have a drink. Ouzo was a prime abjective for all the sailors. I don't think anyone found it. Most of the places would sell you ~~xinx~~anisette for a buck a shot hoping you would think it was the opium based liquer. Those who said it was all over the Med were wrong. The street markets closer to the base of the hills were interesting. I bought some peaches from a fat old peddler in a boxer undershirt who broke into some opera. He really bellowed some well known line and it sounded good. The peddlars up on that end would extend their arms and say "Prego." The scene was much like having a supermarket produce department spreadout on the street. Other covered stands handled a spectrum of goods, shoes, of course, tape players, some decorative junk, you name it. Meat was sold in outdoor fountains. It was fresh and kept by running water over it. The streets were canted and twisty and their surface worn broken as often as not so a liesurely stroll fit in well with the whole scenario.