THE BALKAN CALDRON

By KURT FISCHER

The events connected with and following upon the withdrawal of the German armies from the greater part of the Balkan Peninsula have put the Balkan states back into the limelight of political interest. The following study provides a coherent picture of the confusing developments in that corner of Europe. As regards the consequences of having come under Allied control, the Balkan Peninsula is even more interesting than Italy, France, or Belgium because, owing to its geographical, ethnographical, and historical features, it can, in a way, be considered as a minor edition of Europe.

SITUATED at the periphery of the great Roman, Frankish, Byzantine, and Ottoman Empires, the Balkan Peninsula was for centuries veiled in a twilight. With its rugged mountains, unnavigable rivers, and climatic contrasts, it has been the scene of countless invasions, migrations, wars, religious conflicts, tribal feuds, mass massacres, and fierce rebellions. Many different races have mixed here, and the profusion of tongues competes with a dazzling variety of cults and creeds. The few comparatively big states founded in the past by the Bulgars, Croats, and Serbs were short-lived, although they later served as a spur to national aspirations. Even during the period of emerging nationalism, during the gradual disintegration of Turkish rule, the Balkans remained an arena for foreign influences.

Although national independence, nominal or real, eventually took shape (Greece 1830, Rumania and Serbia 1878, Bulgaria 1908) the Balkan nations were slow to progress, as the various states—none too prosperous after five hundred years of vassalage—wasted their energies in endless wars. After the Great War, the situation was hardly improved. The Paris peace treaties of 1919/20, concluded under Allied supervision, only accentuated existing antagonisms. Externally, the division into the two camps of victors and vanquished was kept up through a redistribution of territory which created formidable new minority problems. Internally, the beneficiaries of the treaties found themselves taxed to the limit by the attempted assimilation of their heterogeneous acquisitions, under the strain of which democratic rule gave way to autocracy (King Alexander in Yugoslavia, King Carol in Rumania) or to an authoritarian regime (Metaxas in Greece). The vanquished, on the other hand, hard pressed politically and economically, just barely managed to drive out Bolshevism (Hungary and Bulgaria) or fought another war (Turkey) to eliminate foreign (Greek) elements from their territory and create a new national order (Kemal Atatürk). Financially, most of the Balkan states had to depend on France and England, and the depression of the early thirties revealed the weakness of their economic structure.

THE REICH AND THE BALKANS

Although the elimination of the influence of Vienna and Berlin in the Balkans had been one of the Great War aims of the Allies, the Reich, linked through German settlers and various economic and cultural ties with southeastern Europe, remained one of its most important trading partners. With the rehabilitation of the Reich, this partnership was rapidly strengthened on a sound basis of give-and-take. Foreign-trade statistics show Greater Germany (excluding the Protectorate) to have been in the lead by a wide margin prior to World War II.

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During the two years 1941 and 1942 together, in the midst of war, Germany's trade with southeastern Europe was active to the tune of almost 300 million marks, while her balance of payments was passive. This means that the
Balkan states were getting more goods from Germany than they were sending there and, moreover, being allowed long terms of payment for their purchases.

As a continental power intent upon building up European economic collaboration, Germany was deeply concerned in the political stability of southeastern Europe. Hence she supported all efforts at smoothing out differences. At Germany's instigation, the one-sided ethnographical divisions resulting from the Great War were mitigated during the post-Munich period by a number of settlements, viz., the First Vienna Arbitration of November 2, 1938, fixing the Hungarian-Slovakian frontier; the incorporation of Carpathian Ruthenia in Hungary on March 18, 1939; the Second Vienna Arbitration of August 30, 1940, readjusting the thorny Transylvania problem; and the Bulgarian-Rumanian Agreement of Craiova of September 7, 1940, on the Dobruja question (see map and Appendix). Considering the comparatively young nationalism in southeastern Europe and the overlapping of divergent interests which took recourse to a bewildering aggregation of ethnographical, historical, economic, strategic, geopolitical, and other arguments as the case would fit, mediation and counsel was an odious business. The entangled state of affairs permitted of no patent solutions. One German measure, the repatriation of German-speaking groups (44,371 from northern Bucovina, 55,250 from southern Bucovina, 90,050 from Bessarabia, 14,511 from Dobruja), stimulated an exchange of population between Bulgaria and Rumania; and Germany's agreements with Hungary and Rumania on the treatment of German minorities suggested another path toward the solution of the galling minority problem, the main evil of the states of southeastern Europe.

In order to foster political stability, the Reich undertook substantial military liabilities such as its guarantee of Rumania's independence and integrity of August 30, 1940, in addition to the promise of military assistance to all signatories of the Tripartite Pact (i.e., among the southeastern European states: Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia). The refusal of the Soviet demands voiced by Molotov during his visit to Berlin in November 1940 concerning Rumania, Bulgaria, and the Dardanelles, when acquiescence might have bought Stalin's good will, proved that Germany was in earnest about her obligations.

The successful Balkan campaign in the spring of 1941, which had been provoked by the Yugoslavian coup d'etat, gave the Reich an opportunity to utilize its victory for further readjustments. Croatia, who had often kicked against her Serbian overlords, and Montenegro became independent states; and Hungary and Bulgaria—who had not participated actively in the fighting—were beneficiaries of frontier rectifications the object of which was to eliminate as much friction as possible.

As all the states of southeastern Europe are economically very much alike, being chiefly engaged in agriculture (nearly 80 per cent of the population) and possessing valuable mineral resources, there is no interstate trade worth mentioning (see Appendix). Their economy is, however, well supplemented by the Reich. A series of barter agreements not only freed them from erratic and often ruinous world-market prices, as Germany was paying on a basis consistent with production costs, but also—by the contracting in advance of fixed quantities at fixed prices—resulted in intensified production and thus in a higher national income. The Reich's scientific resources were put at the disposal of its southeastern partners in trade. They received breeding cattle for improving domestic stock as well as improved seed for their customary crops and for newly introduced ones. On the basis of experiments carried out in Germany and on the spot, novel methods of production were suggested. German capital investments were directed so as to expand production, for which a receptive market was guaranteed, and were to be repaid in kind, in contrast to investments by the Western powers made for cash dividends, which had the effect of draining the national economies.

The economic agreement between the Reich and Rumania of March 23, 1939 (see Appendix), illustrates the German ideas. It was all the more remarkable as it was concluded at a time of preponderantly Western influence in Bucharest, only three months after the assassination of Codreanu, arrested leader of the pro-German Iron Guard, in his cell and the subsequent mass shooting of his followers, and a few days prior to Britain's guarantee of Rumania's independence.
ALLIED AIDS

Moscow, in the footsteps of Tsarist imperialism, and London meanwhile continued the old game of power politics in southeastern Europe. On June 26, 1944, the Soviets presented Rumania with an ultimatum demanding the cession of Bessarabia and northern Bucovina, with which Rumania was forced to comply. Incidentally, although Bessarabia had once been Russian territory, this had never been the case with Bucovina. In the spring of 1941, Stalin was one of the wirepullers in the Yugoslav coup d'état instigated by Great Britain, who had previously busied herself in Greece. In the ensuing hostilities, both Yugoslavia and Greece were left in the lurch. It must be recalled in this connection that southeastern Europe has no vital interests linking it with either Great Britain or the USSR. This is perhaps best illustrated by foreign-trade statistics.

Table II

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In the years that ensued, both Moscow and London had to confine their activities to organizing and arming bands in Greek and former Yugoslav territory and supporting emigrant governments and committees, with a marked antagonism soon making itself apparent between the groups supported by the Soviets and those supported by the British. When political opportunism made it advisable to Downing Street to please the Kremlin, the Chetniks under General Mihailovich were abandoned and Tito’s “National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia” gained ascendancy over King Peter’s refugee government. In Greece the radical “ELAS” (“Greece”) partisans and “EAM” (Enaion Amyntikon Metopo = United Defense Front) group—the latter being a combination of the Communist party with the Union of Popular Democrats (known as the “ELD”), the Socialist Union, and some minor groups—were at loggerheads with the “EDES” (Ellinike Demokратike Enosis Synetritikon = Greek Democratic Union of Conservatives) with its Western sympathies.

In the interval between the spring campaign of 1941 and the Soviet advance in the summer of 1944, the Balkan countries had little to feel in the way of direct effects of the war except for Allied air raids on some of the major cities. Although Bulgaria was a signatory to the Tripartite Pact and bound to Germany by a military alliance, the Reich did not interfere with Bulgaria’s diplomatic relations with the USSR.

RUMANIA’S DEFLECTION

On August 23, 1944, three days after the beginning of the Soviet offensive between the Carpathians and the Black Sea, the treason of King Michael of Rumania became known. One of the reasons contributing toward this treason was probably the latent tension between Hungary and Rumania, one of the unfortunate legacies of the past, which the Reich had been able to restrain but not yet to efface. Marshal Ion Antonescu, who had stoutly adhered to his pro-Axis policy and refused to give in to the Soviets, was removed by a ruse, and a new government was set up headed by General Constantin Sanatescu, after Prince Barbu Stirbei had in the spring of 1944, during a trip to Turkey, established the first contact between the Rumanian opposition and the Kremlin. An armistice was concluded in Moscow on September 12, the signatories being on the one hand the USSR, Great Britain, and the USA, and on the other Rumania (see Appendix).

Rumania was now to become virtually part of the Soviet Union, retaining no semblance of sovereign rights. Quite aside from the fact that Rumania had to continue fighting, she had
to do so under orders of the Soviet High Command. All her civil authorities were held to obey Soviet instructions, just as her entire economic system was placed unconditionally at the disposal of the Red Army. Rumania promised to re-establish the economic rights of Allied citizens, which involved the suspension of the nationalization of important natural resources that had been effected during the past few years and opening them up again to foreign exploitation. She had to restore the civil rights of people who had lost them for acts committed against the common weal, and to rescind the laws governing the position of the Jews. Theaters, movies, radio, press, and literature had to be subjected to the control of the Soviet Command. In addition to paying an indemnity of US $300 million in kind plus damages to Soviet, British, and US private interests, she has to bear the cost of Soviet occupation and of all Soviet operations carried out from Rumanian territory against other countries.

Even the reincorporation of Transylvania, to which the clique around King Michael has pointed as justification of its policy, was conceded only with reservations. Certain additional terms later revealed though not contained in the armistice add the finishing touches to the picture of a nation completely under Soviet control: the Rumanian railway gauge is to be changed to the Soviet standard; her foreign policy is to be conducted under the supervision of the Red Command; she is to redeem all means of payment issued by the Soviets; Rumanian workers are to be placed at Moscow's disposal for labor in the Soviet Union.

The British press waxed enthusiastic over the mildness of these terms, and Reuter and Associated Press extolled this armistice as a model for similar agreements in the future. Yet Britain and the USA had few benefits to expect as partners of the USSR. US military police arriving by air in order to take a hand in Rumania were promptly evicted by the Red forces. American oil companies with large investments in the Ploesti fields tried in vain to send representatives there to investigate conditions. When London and Washington inquired at the Kremlin as to what had been done with certain of their installations which have disappeared from Ploesti, the Soviets replied that the major part of the installations removed to the Soviet Union had been German property. Even the American representatives in the Allied Armistice Commission in Rumania were refused permission to inspect the oil fields.

While thousands of people were being arrested and prosecuted, some of the more prominent men were handed over to the Soviets as "war criminals." The Sanatescu government was replaced in December by the cabinet of General N. Ratecescu.

BULGARIA FOLLOWS SUIT

Their country's volte-face may have commended itself to some Rumanians because the Soviets had invaded Moldavia and because there was at least a chance of regaining a part of northern and eastern Transylvania previously ceded to Hungary. But the government of Bulgaria, the next victim of the Red flood, could advance no excuse, however lame, for its defection. The country had derived substantial benefits from its adherence to the Tripartite Pact, and Germany had helped to reintegrate a Greater Bulgaria as nearly in accordance with ethnographical principles as the mosaic of peoples in southeastern Europe could permit. Her territory as delimited by the Treaty of Neuilly had been increased by 47 per cent (see Appendix). On the other hand, Bulgaria had contributed very little to the Axis war effort; she was only nominally at war with Great Britain and America, her active share in the struggle not exceeding defense against Anglo-American air raids.

The death of King Boris on August 28, 1943, had robbed the country of a ruler who commanded respect both at home and abroad, at a time when the nation needed unity more than ever. A regency council, consisting of Premier Filoff, War Minister Michoff, and Prince Cyril, which tried to continue the late ruler's policy, appointed a new cabinet under Boshiloff. This cabinet resigned in May 1944, Turkey's yielding to the Allies being one of the causes, and was succeeded by the Bagrianoff government. For some time prior to the crucial month of August 1944, this government had ordered various measures contrary to the spirit of the country's alliance with the Reich. At the end of August it took the plunge and despatched emissaries to Cairo to negotiate an armistice while proclaiming Bulgaria's neutrality.

This was by no means in accordance with Moscow's desires. Under the Kremlin's pressure, Britain and the USA informed the Bulgarian commissioner who had requested recognition of his country's neutrality that a decision on this question could be made only in agreement with the Soviet Union. The Bagrianoff cabinet resigned. But, although the newly formed Muravieff government was even more submissive, the Soviet Union, not to be outdone by its allies, declared war on September 5. Sofia answered with an immediate request for an armistice, at the same time severing diplomatic relations with Germany on September 6 and two days later declaring war on her. Thus the Bulgarian Government gave away the country's independence and its newly won territories to boot, without actually gaining peace. It accepted Bolshevist occupation and the subordination of the Bulgarian Army to Soviet
command, under which, for the first time during the present conflict, it was made to fight.

Meanwhile, Stalin was in no hurry to conclude an armistice. He first presented terms to the Anglo-Americans which were to secure exclusive Soviet domination of Bulgaria and the long-desired access to the Aegean Sea. In this latter respect, the British were particularly sensitive. It took almost two months to arrive at an understanding, and unless Churchill had flown to Moscow it might have taken even longer. The compromise solution saved the face of the Anglo-Americans, but in actual fact it represented a concession to Stalin. For, although Bulgaria was asked to evacuate Macedonia and Thrace, there was no word mentioned as to what formations were to replace these troops, nor about the Soviet forces which, by the end of September, were reported to have entered western and eastern Thrace. It was only now that the Georgiiff government, which had succeeded the Muravieff cabinet on September 9 by a Soviet-manipulated coup d'état, was asked to despatch delegates to Moscow. The armistice, similar to that concluded with Romania, but leaving all territorial questions open, was signed on October 28.

Under Red pressure, the Sovietization of that country was fostered by every possible means. The administration was purged, and potential leaders against the regime were arrested. In opposition to the policy pursued in Sofia, a National Bulgarian Government was formed abroad under Professor Zankoff, one-time Premier of Bulgaria who, during his tenure of office (1923-26), had succeeded once before in banning the Bolshevik threat from his country. In mid-November the organization of "Bulgarian Forces of Liberation" was announced in a proclamation addressed to all Bulgarians residing in Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, northern Italy, and Croatia.

GREEK CONFUSION

The evacuation of Greece by the German Army meant the beginning of a new phase for that country, too. Here it was not Soviet but British troops which followed on the heels of the Reich divisions. We have already mentioned that there was a rift among the pro-Allied Greeks, so much so that the Germans never had any serious difficulty in maintaining order during their occupation of Greece. Trouble had also been brewing in Greek emigrant circles. The Communist-inspired mutiny of Greek sailors at Alexandria during April, which had to be quelled by force, was symptomatic of the underground struggle going on between Moscow and London. Early in April, the Tsouderos Cabinet resigned and was replaced by Colonel Sophocles Venizelos, former Navy Minister, as Premier. At the end of the same month, the premiership changed hands again, going to George Papandreou, who made an attempt to form a government embracing all parties. At the end of May there was a new reshuffle, following which Colonel Venizelos took the vice-premiership. Despite their clamoring, the Communists were at that time not yet included in the government. It was only in August that another reshuffle resulted in five members of the EAM organization being given the ministries of Agriculture, Finance, Communications, Economics, and Labor.

At the end of August, i.e., before the Soviet declaration of war on Bulgaria, demands were voiced by the Greek exile government for frontier revisions at the expense of Bulgaria and for an Allied occupation of that country. The Soviets considered this a threat at their own aims. Subsequent discussions of territorial adjustments continued this game of move and countermove such as Tito's proposition of a Macedonian state and the Greek Premier's plea for the cession of a part of southern Albania and southern Bulgaria (east Rumelia). Behind it all stood the grim struggle between the Kremlin and Downing Street for the expansion of their spheres of power.

In mid-October, after the landing of the first British troops on Greek soil, reports of the participation of these troops in the street fighting between the two rival Greek factions in the capital coincided with the arrival of the Greek exile government in Athens from Cairo. The November decree ordering the disbanding of all partisans and the surrender of all arms only increased the confusion. Although Generals Zervas and Sarafis, commanders of the EDES and ELAS respectively, formally agreed to the dissolution of their forces, the partisans did not comply with the order. In December, after the police had fired on demonstrators, the Communists called for a general strike and started an armed uprising against the Government troops, trying to gain control of the capital. British troops joined in the battle when an ultimatum presented by General R. M. Scobie, British Commander in Chief in Greece, had yielded no results. On December 8, Churchill made it clear that he had ordered the clearing by force of Athens of all rebels, and that he would persist in this policy. In the same speech he called the men whom, a few months earlier, he had described as "noble fighters" against the Germans, "criminals, robbers, murderers, and gangsters." Meanwhile, the battle in Athens continued and spread even to the provinces.

After the dispatch of Marshal Alexander, Allied Commander in Chief in the Mediterranean, to Athens, whose mediation attempts came to nought, Churchill and Eden flew there during Christmas in an effort to halt the civil war. Moscow's attitude has been noncommittal, while Edward Stettinius, Cordell Hull's successor in the US State Department, denounced British interference in the "liberated countries."
By year's end, the only visible accomplishment of Churchill's visit was a general agreement on the formation of a regency for King George in the person of Archbishop Damaskinos, who instructed General Plastiras to form a new government. But the civil war was still on.

Meanwhile, a Greek National Committee has been formed on German soil, with Hector Ticornikos, Deputy Premier of the last Greek Government, and Konstantin Goulas, the leader of the Greek National Movement.

TITO IN YUGOSLAVIA

Yugoslavia had been founded after the Great War with Serbia as the core and with territorial additions from Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, as well as the whole of Montenegro. It was the only state in southeastern Europe apart from Czechoslovakia in which the ruling nationality was in the minority. After the German Balkan campaign of 1941, Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro were reconstituted as sovereign states. Croatia covered the main portion of the territory which Yugoslavia had taken over from Austria and Hungary. The frontiers were drawn as best as they could be according to ethnographical and cultural considerations; yet it was clear that, in this complicated area, it was impossible to satisfy everyone. Time and peaceful conditions were needed for the adjustment and healing of ancient sores. The prolongation of the war and the propaganda issuing from Moscow and London did not facilitate consolidation, all the more so as Italy had insisted on certain concessions which caused resentment. Badoglio's surrender permitted a readjustment (such as the incorporation of Fiume and the Dalmatian coast in Croatia) but could not wipe out all ill feeling.

Partisans were active in the less accessible parts of former Yugoslavia from the very start. They were supported with arms, ammunition, etc., by the Anglo-Americans and the Soviets, on top of which came the assistance rendered them by some traitorous Italian generals. Step by step, the Communist partisan leader Tito gained ascendancy over King Peter's exile government (see *The XXth Century*, April 1944). General Mihailovich, who held the post of War Minister in the exile government for three years, was dismissed by a decree published in London on August 26, his post being given to Tito. One month later, English and American reports had it that the Allies were about to land an army on the Albanian coast. But suddenly no more was heard about this, while a declaration came from Moscow to the effect that the Soviet Government had requested and obtained Tito's consent to the entry of the Red Army into Yugoslavia. It was obvious: Stalin had made it clear that Yugoslavia belonged to his sphere of influence, and that the Anglo-Americans were to keep out. Incidentally, it is significant that the Kremlin's request was addressed to Tito and not to King Peter, although Tito merely ranked as the King's Minister of War.

At about the same time, Tito notified the UNRRA that its deliveries were only welcome if they could be distributed by the local authorities. He also asked the Anglo-American military mission to leave the country. Exile Premier Subasich, who had gone to Tito's headquarters early in November for purposes of discussion, significantly enough went straight on to Moscow. In his Moscow talks, a provisional administration was agreed upon in which Tito would hold the premiership while Subasich would become regent, thus playing the power into Tito's—or Moscow's—hands. This "United Yugoslav Government" has already announced plans of creating a so-called autonomous Macedonia within a Yugoslav federation. Incidentally, King Peter protested against the establishment of the regency.

There has been hardly any news about conditions in Albania, which has been evacuated by the Germans. Ex-King Zog I, in exile in Britain, has applied—as yet in vain—for permission to return to Albania.

Meanwhile, there are still national forces at work in this corner of Europe which do not intend to become British or Soviet puppets. The Croatian Government, allied to the Reich, is preparing to defend the newly won independence of its country, while the National Serbian Government under Premier Nedic and the National Albanian Committee under Harapi are continuing to resist the Bolshevization of their respective countries.

IDENTICAL TREND

The political developments in Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia since the entry of the Red troops show a number of characteristics identical in all three countries.

The persecution directed at first against the leading politicians of the period preceding the Red entry is acquiring more and more the nature of a spreading wave of terror against the majority of the intellectual class. Here the postulate of Soviet politics is being applied according to which it is not any given political trend but the representatives of a certain ideology which have to be combated. This political terror is combined with extensive expropriations of the property of all undesirable elements. As a result, the latter are ruined, while the state is acquiring a growing reserve fund of estates. Since these estates are legally ownerless, they will probably be used later for the establishment of "socialist model enterprises," similar to the sovkhozy in the USSR in their economic and political significance as the jumping-off places for collectivization.

And all this is happening at the "desire of the people." The Bolshevik occupation authorities are "strictly refraining from any
interference" and are only being drawn into this process by the "friendship for the Soviet Union" inspiring the Rumanian, Bulgarian, and Yugoslav peoples. This sudden affection of these nations for the Soviet Union offers the Red occupation authorities the finest opportunity to look after the welfare of the people. They are not interfering in the domestic affairs of the country, even if they succeed in getting rid of one ministry after another: no, they are only "helping the people to show their friendship to the Soviet Union."

Nevertheless, this policy is meeting with great difficulty. The swing-over in these states had not been sufficiently prepared; the driving forces of the new development so to speak "among the natives" are still pretty weak, they lack authority and experience. Hence it is up to the Soviets to see that the proper elements get to the top.

One method employed is the founding everywhere of "Societies of the Friends of the USSR." It is here that the work of education is being carried out and the disorganization of all existing institutions in the country is being prepared. Moreover, the Bolsheviks are not appealing directly to the workers as such, for the Party no longer believes in the Bolshevist million of the proletariat. On the other hand, they are striving for the re-establishment of all rights of the inhabitants, especially the granting of all kinds of "freedom": freedom of the press, of assembly, of speech, etc. In this way, too, conditions in these countries are being made similar to those in the Soviet Union: after all, we all know that the people of the Soviet Union enjoy "the most perfect liberty and democracy." This means that in the name of the welfare of the people, in the name of the intimate friendship with Moscow, those persons convenient to the Bolshevist authorities may move in complete freedom and resist all opposition to themselves as being crimes against the liberty of the people.

Meanwhile, these same Soviet authorities are seeing to it that all important positions in the economic life of these Balkan countries are filled with their own men who marched into Europe with the Red Army. Tens of thousands of Soviet technicians, railwaymen, and qualified workmen have been given jobs in this way. Thousands of agitators and propagandists in the USSR suddenly developed an amazing interest in learning the Balkan languages. No literature except the Soviet or pro-Soviet kind may be published.

Just as all the peoples of former Russia were isolated from the rest of the world after the October Revolution of 1917, so the Balkan peoples are now slowly but surely being isolated from the rest of the world, even from the Anglo-American members of the Allied Control Commissions.

WHOSE INTERESTS?

Wherever we look in Allied- and Soviet-occupied southeastern Europe, there is oppression, mutual distrust, anarchy, starvation, fighting. Torn by two rival powers, neither of which is in the least concerned with the fate of

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By SAPAJOU

The Double Trojan Trick
the peoples themselves, southeastern Europe has again become what it was for long centuries prior to its tortuous emancipation.

Its nations are, in the name of liberty, democracy, and security, engaged in an internecine struggle to help secure British lines of communication and Soviet frontiers. No territorial demands are too grotesque to be raised, demands which complicate a problem not easily solved even if only considering the interests of the Balkan peoples.

The conflicting proposals for federations of one kind or another equally disregard actual Balkan interests. In the case of such former federations as Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia the strongest people—the Czechs and the Serbs respectively—usurped the rule contrary to the spirit of a federation. Any new federations, however, would play into the hands of Stalin, who could maintain his influence within a federation by a policy of divide et impera. Apart from this consideration, a sound federation would presuppose a prevalence of characteristics that bind together more than those that separate. We have already mentioned the divergence of cultural influences, historical associations, race, language, and creed, all of which show a tendency to assert rather than subdue themselves. One need only look at the topography of southeastern Europe, which cuts up its entire territory and offers few facilities for communications, and at the interstate trade there during the last prewar year (see Appendix). In short, the Balkan federations recently suggested would represent mere additions, not integrations.

Nature herself has suggested a solution at least to the economic problem. The Danube, which forms the only link among the states of southeastern Europe, also joins that region with central Europe. Thus, although not a unit in itself, it is part of a greater unit whose integration requires no military, political, cultural, or economic coercion but only the neutralization of extraneous forces with aims not even remotely connected with the rightful interests of the Balkan peoples. In the common sphere comprising central and southeastern Europe, any cultural or political repression would be destructive; nor could there be any sense in restrictions being imposed on the development of any state in a particular field, whether agriculture, industry, or communications. In a community of interests supplementing each other as well as in the case of central and southeastern Europe, it would be suicidal. Indeed, in their mutual relationship, variety, instead of being an obstacle, would make for a richer and fuller life.

By ROLF MAGENER

Dr. Magener, a young German business executive, arrived in India in August 1939. A few weeks later the war broke out and he was interned. After almost five years of life behind barbed wire, he and his friend H. von Have managed to escape and reach the Japanese lines in Burma. His penetrating essay on the mentality of men in prison camps, written during a visit to Shanghai, is of particular interest at a time when more people the world over are being kept behind barbed wire than ever before in history.

HUMANITY has been seized by a strange mania to lock each other up. The age of world-encompassing wars has made imprisonment a mass experience, millions of people spending many years of their life in forced seclusion. As a mass phenomenon, the experience of internment represents an innovation of our century; the fact that one must reckon with increasing probability on having to spend part of one's life in internment camps is doubtless a new feature in modern life expectancy.

Imprisonment is one of the most serious mental strains human beings can inflict upon each other. But while everything is done to prepare the human being for other great tests in life, for his profession and marriage, for death at home or in the field, imprisonment finds him completely unprepared. Not only has he not been recommended to behave in any particular way: he does not even have the vaguest idea as to what experiences are waiting for him behind the barbed wire. Hence internment comes like a bolt from the blue and with a corresponding shock effect. Obviously there is a gap here in the system of our education.