

## THE BALKAN FLARE UP.

The attack of Nazi Germany upon the U.S.S.R. and the resultant Soviet-British alliance have ~~changed~~ ~~enormously~~ ~~completely~~ ~~altered~~ ~~the~~ ~~role~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~present~~ ~~war~~. Upon the outcome of this tremendous struggle depends the fate of the people of Europe. ~~whether they~~ ~~will~~ ~~remain~~ ~~slave~~ ~~to~~ ~~German~~ ~~Nazism~~ or whether they will be able to throw off their yoke ~~and~~ ~~of~~ ~~forward~~ ~~to~~ ~~peace~~ ~~and~~ ~~freedom~~ ~~and~~ ~~determine~~ ~~their~~ ~~own~~ ~~destiny~~.

No one realises more clearly the world-wide importance of the Soviet-German conflict than the people now under Nazi rule. They see the Soviet people pouring out its blood and treasure in defence of this land and freedom and see in that resistance their only hope, ~~to~~ ~~freedom~~. It is this resistance and sacrifice of the great U.S.S.R. <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ has tied up Hitler's ~~and~~ ~~hordes~~ in a war of unrelenting destruction ~~and~~ ~~that~~ has smuggled hope and revolt back into the despairing homes of ten European nations.

The Balkan peoples have not been slow in realising that the Soviet struggle is their struggle and in doing everything possible to harass the invader. With a ~~sublime~~ ~~record~~ ~~of~~ ~~struggle~~ ~~and~~ ~~heroic~~ ~~deeds~~ ~~and~~ ~~valour~~ ~~and~~ ~~only~~ ~~recently~~ ~~been~~ ~~crushed~~ ~~and~~ ~~enslaved~~ they have ~~been~~ ~~already~~

striking back against the conqueror. The Yugoslav and Greek guerrillas the Bulgarian and Rumanian saboteurs are fighting in a way that has proved ~~already~~ extremely embarrassing to the Nazis and ~~is~~ compelling the German High Command to immobilise a certain section of its forces and of those of its allies to keep the people down. This kind of war within war <sup>which hits in</sup> the dark and strikes at various points at once, secret, methodical and elusive permeating the whole people and fed by an unbreakable will for sacrifice and freedom, ~~exterminating a band of~~ ~~colours here attacking a garrison there blowing~~ ~~up bridges interrupting communications interfering~~ ~~with supplies and slowing up production~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~most~~ ~~to~~ Fell increasingly on the morale of the force of domination.

Hardly <sup>any</sup> news comes out of this <sup>east Balkan</sup> German prison-camp ~~of the Balkans~~: But when occasionally the veil is lifted we learn <sup>of the</sup> ~~of the~~ ~~people~~ ~~resistance~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~ ~~to~~ ~~German~~ ~~rule~~ ~~and~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~deliberate~~ ~~Nazi~~ ~~fraughtness~~ ~~and~~ ~~sublimity~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~them~~ ~~at~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~scale~~ ~~that~~ ~~goes~~ ~~on~~ ~~and~~ ~~where~~ ~~five~~ ~~quarters~~ ~~is~~ ~~given~~ ~~or~~ ~~expected~~ ~~who~~ ~~gives~~ ~~a~~ ~~expect~~ ~~no~~ ~~quarter~~.

The Italians have published figures showing that the carnalities they ~~to~~ suffer in Serbia during August 1941 were three times those of Italy.

In Yugoslavia the heroic Chetniki (guerrillas) have been extending their activities.

The Balkan states lost their independence in the space of few brief <sup>months in 1940 and 41:</sup> weeks. Rumania and Bulgaria were "forced" to let the invader ~~in~~ and take control, Greece and Yugoslavia were conquered by force.

Hitler's technique of conquest, i.e. blackmail, the sowing of division, fifth column activities etc. have proved very successful <sup>as far as the Balkans are concerned.</sup> His master trump-card so far has been his ability to divide his enemies and then proceed to reduce them one by one. First he entered Rumania in the autumn of 1940 after Rumania having been compelled by the axis to yield Transylvania to Hungary and was left weakened and demoralised. ~~Once the German forces were installed in Rumania~~ <sup>the German forces began to</sup> ~~bring pressure to bear on Bulgaria and after few months she yielded.~~ <sup>P Bulgaria was</sup> ~~subjected to pressure and eventually had to yield.~~ With the capitulation of Bulgaria and left completely in the mercy of the aggressor. Yugoslavia was overruled, ~~and~~ Greece, fighting against the Italian army in Albania, was faced with a new and more formidable enemy from the north and east. The Nazi effort to win a bloodless victory over Yugoslavia ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> frustrated by the resistance of the people who overthrew their government.

- i.e. the government which under Prince Paul's <sup>leadership</sup> negotia-  
ted the Yugoslav-Axis Pact - and as a result  
Germany was compelled to fight for the control of both  
Greece. ~~by force~~

So ~~one after the other~~ <sup>after the other</sup> the Balkan states  
were crushed. ~~At no period~~ <sup>Germany was victorious.</sup> At no time  
did the Axis face the united resistance of the Balkan peoples, because  
the various governments refused to adopt a  
common policy of defense and played <sup>the last</sup> a  
low and often equivocal game. This is  
the more remarkable <sup>because there</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>already</sup>  
in existence the "Balkan Pact" signed ~~between~~  
Yugoslavia, Rumania, Greece and Turkey  
in February 1934, whose main object was  
the <sup>common</sup> defense of the Balkan frontiers of <sup>all</sup> the  
contracting parties.

In order to understand why the Balkan  
governments failed so miserably in the face  
of danger and that two of them <sup>even</sup> preferred  
capitulation to resistance it is necessary  
to trace - briefly and in sketchy manner -  
the causes that led to it. Why has  
Germany had such easy victory over a number  
of states aggregating more than 40 million  
people? Why was there such great failure to  
offer ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> united resistance to the  
invader?

The Balkan states have been, ~~and since their~~  
independence <sup>the</sup> ~~national~~ <sup>sovereignty</sup> ~~have~~ <sup>been</sup> ~~financially~~  
afflicted by ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~national~~ <sup>sovereignty</sup> ~~have~~ <sup>been</sup> ~~financially~~

Foreign imperialisms

~~deducted~~ to the Great Powers of Europe. ~~Only~~  
 Hundred and twenty ~~two~~ years ago the entire Balkan peninsula  
 was part of the Ottoman Empire. First Greeks  
 were the first their freedom. After a ~~series~~ <sup>series</sup> of  
~~successful~~ <sup>successful</sup> eight year revolt 1821-25 led  
 to the recognition of the independence of the ~~the~~ Greek state  
 was recognised in 1830. Serbia was partially liberated and  
 in 1845 and Rumania and Bulgaria in 1878.

But No sooner were they ~~free~~ free from the  
 foreign yoke that they began squabbling among  
 themselves. ~~Because~~ The inter-mixture of nations  
 lives, particularly in the Central Balkans and  
 the fact that three of the most nationally conscious  
 states, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, held sway  
 over these areas at certain stages of their  
 history led each one of them to claim them  
 as ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> ~~future~~ <sup>future</sup> ~~possessions~~ <sup>possessions</sup>. The fact  
 that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~central~~ <sup>central</sup> ~~regions~~ <sup>regions</sup> i.e. Macedonia, Thrace & Epirus  
 were still under Ottoman domination  
 did not detract from the fierceness of the contest.  
 In 1886 Bulgaria and Serbia fought a brief war  
 over this question.

And  
 from 1890 to 1910 bands of irregulars were  
 being sent by the three states into what is now  
 Greece, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Greece-Turkish  
 Thrace, and Northern Epirus, ~~then~~  
 under Turkish rule not only to excite  
 rebellion, and keep the nationalism of the  
 inhabitants ablaze, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> also to ~~counter~~ <sup>counter</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~efforts~~ <sup>efforts</sup>  
 of their opponents. who occasionally came into bloody conflict with  
 the bands of the other states, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> to the satisfaction

situation of the Ottoman rulers who were seeing their <sup>enemies</sup> ~~opponents~~ cutting each others throats and ~~its enemies~~ disunited.

These <sup>essentially</sup> ~~activities~~ praiseworthy efforts of making the liberated states the bases for the <sup>emergence</sup> ~~liberation~~ of embroiled nationalities <sup>helped</sup> ~~also~~ to kinollet the flames of inter Balkan antagonism. ~~It is not necessary to say that the great powers fostered and exploited this disunity.~~

### The Balkan League

In 1910 Venizelos became Prime Minister of Greece. For twenty years previously he was the leader of the Cretan revolution <sup>preparations</sup> and spent <sup>a good</sup> ~~part~~ of that ~~time~~ as a guerrilla chief <sup>dwelling</sup> ~~in~~ the rugged mountains of Crete. Venizelos <sup>because of his</sup> ~~strong~~ <sup>revolutionary</sup> ~~national~~ <sup>activity</sup> ~~interest~~ <sup>evangelical</sup> ~~activity~~ brought a new vision into Balkan politics. He saw that the only way for the Balkan states to achieve independence, <sup>for</sup> ~~free~~ their oppressed nationalities was <sup>the adoption</sup> ~~the~~ of a common policy <sup>in which their unity</sup> ~~was~~. Due primarily to his <sup>unifying</sup> ~~unifying~~ efforts <sup>embracing</sup> ~~embracing~~ Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria (the "Balkan League" was formed) <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ in the misapprehension that followed - the first Balkan war of 1912-13 - the entire Balkan peninsula with the exception of eastern Thrace, was freed from the Turks.

But difficulties arose <sup>amongst</sup> ~~amongst~~ the Allies when the question of delimitation of <sup>the new</sup> ~~the~~ frontiers was being discussed. Bulgaria was embittered because Serbia refused to hand over territories which were accorded to Bulgaria during the preliminary negotiations. ~~It is not clear~~ <sup>Feeling herself the injured party</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>she</sup> ~~attained~~ <sup>to</sup>

her ex-allies Greece and Serbia in June 1913 only to ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~defeated~~ <sup>defeated</sup> and gave part of her new territories to the victors and part of Dobruja which ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> occupied ~~into~~ <sup>into</sup> Rumania.

The second Balkan ~~war~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~nothing~~ <sup>nothing</sup> ~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> or calamity. The Greek Socialist Party denounced it as suicidal and branded the peace that followed as ~~suicidal~~ <sup>suicidal</sup> vindictive. It split the peninsula into two camps. ~~Gradually~~ <sup>Gradually</sup> Bulgaria and ~~Greece~~ <sup>Turkey</sup> ~~gradually~~ <sup>gradually</sup> drew together and came to an understanding with the Central Powers, <sup>while</sup> Serbia and Greece ~~turned~~ <sup>turned</sup> ~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~definitely~~ <sup>definitely</sup> towards the Entente.

In the ~~first~~ <sup>first</sup> Great War the Balkans found themselves behind those powers to whose policy of encirclement they had subscribed. Serbia was in the thick of battle from the very beginning, deserted by her two neighbours. ~~Her~~ <sup>Her</sup> ~~allies~~ <sup>allies</sup> Greece and Rumania sided with Germany <sup>shortly</sup> <sup>after</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>possibilities</sup> <sup>commenced</sup> <sup>Bulgaria</sup> <sup>applied</sup> <sup>herself</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>cause</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>Germany</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>soon</sup> <sup>after</sup> <sup>she</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>first</sup> <sup>anxious</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>maintain</sup> <sup>neutrality</sup> <sup>exhausted</sup> <sup>as</sup> <sup>she</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>after</sup> <sup>two</sup> <sup>hard</sup> <sup>wars</sup>. King Constantine, brother in law of the ex-Kaiser was for neutrality, a neutrality however which benefited Germany in so far as it denied the allies the means of establishing a front against Germany in South-Eastern Europe. Venizelos, the Greek premier, was for direct participation in the war on the side of the Allies stating that only that way lie salvation

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and the possibility of liberating the Greek  
of Eastern Thrace and Asia Minor from Turkish rule.  
~~from the Turkish yoke.~~ After three years  
of internal strife between the ~~anti~~ Veni-  
zelists and the Royalists, the allies  
intervened - they were already established  
in Salonika since 1915 - deposed the  
king, overthrew the government and installed  
Venizelos as dictator of Greece. Greece  
entered the war at last, in 1917, <sup>in spite</sup> of  
under Russian pressure was compelled to  
join the allies <sup>several months earlier.</sup>  
With all the state <sup>drawn into the war the</sup> ~~permeated~~ <sup>eastern</sup> ~~became~~ <sup>part</sup> a battleground  
and the volume of slaughter and suffering  
was exceptional. Serbia and Rumania were  
completely overrun by the Austro-German  
forces and part of Greece fell to the  
invader.

But by the summer of 1918 the imposing Balkan  
front of the central Powers was in rapid  
dissolution. The Bulgarian soldiers, ~~mobilised~~  
~~to~~ fighting not for their interests but to  
serve German imperialism began to grow  
restive. The <sup>anti-war</sup> propaganda of the Bulgarian Social  
Democratic Party and the example of the Russian  
revolution had considerable <sup>influence</sup> among the mobilised  
Bulgarian peasantry. The soldiers ~~of a number~~  
of ~~units~~ <sup>grew weary of the slaughter</sup> ~~refused to carry on~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the slaughter~~  
a number of units mutinied, and the Bulgarian  
front collapsed. Turkey and Bulgaria were <sup>soon</sup> out  
of the war. The unshakable Austro-Hungarian

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Empire under the <sup>double</sup> blow of the allied advance <sup>through the Balkans</sup> and the revolt of the oppressed nations under its control, began to disintegrate, and Germany exposed <sup>now</sup> to an attack from the south via the Danube valley, already weakened enormously by the blockade and steadily losing ground in the west sued for an armistice on November 11 1918. (follow on p. page 9).

### Post War Settlements.

The Treaty of Trianon, ~~and~~ St. Germain of 1919, altered radically the composition of the Balkan state. Bulgaria lost a strip of territory between the rivers Mesta and Maritza to Greece, and part of western Macedonia to Serbia. Greece was goaded to a war of conquest in Asia <sup>minor and</sup> defeated <sup>eventually</sup> by the Turks in 1922 <sup>was</sup> and thrown back almost to her pre-war frontiers. Rumania was considerably enlarged with the incorporation of Transylvania from Hungary and the grasping of Bessarabia from a weakened Soviet Russia. Serbia, joined up with Croatia and Slovenia, in the "Triple Kingdom" renamed later Yugoslavia, and in addition annexed territory ~~being~~ inhabited by Hungarians and Germans.

The enlarged states of Rumania Balkan states as constituted in the post-Versailles settlement were: -

Rumania	Area	Population (in 1938)
	122,200 sq. miles	18,925,000
Yugoslavia	96,100 "	15,250,000
Greece	50,300 "	6,908,000
Bulgaria	39,800 "	6,290,000
Albania	10,600 "	1,103,000

~~As a result of the Balkan wars and the world war the Balkan countries were liberated. But unfortunately as a result of the peace settlement two of the Balkan states - Yugoslavia and Rumania - which became dominant nations ruling over a number of other nationalities and national minorities which were included within their state frontiers. All of a sudden the erstwhile subject nations, became masters of others.~~

Serbia Croatia and Slovenia were constituted as the Triple Kingdom. In addition there were Albanians, Greek, Hungarian, German and Macedonian minorities and the Macedonian nationality <sup>under Serbian rule.</sup> In Rumania there were Germans, Hungarians (mostly inhabiting Transylvania and the Banat) Bulgarians, inhabiting the province of Dobruja and the Boudjac of Bessarabia, Russians, Poles, <sup>and</sup> Ukrainians in Bessarabia as well as Jews, Greeks

Turks, Magyars, Serbians, etc. In addition there were a number of small national minorities in Greece and Bulgaria.

These changes in the national composition of the states - the oppressed nationalities have been struggling from the very outset for autonomy - coupled with <sup>the</sup> economic impoverishment ~~produced~~ <sup>resulted</sup> by the war and the rise of the <sup>workers and</sup> revolutionary peasant movement, ~~progressively~~ <sup>gradually</sup> altered the form of administration ~~towards~~ <sup>to</sup> absolutism. As long as the Balkan states bore the character of national revolutionary entities, the form of government was of a liberal, progressive, character. In the post war years this gave rise to centralised authority and ultimately dictatorship.

~~Yugoslavia?~~ The first action of the Triune Kingdom was the suppression of the Communist Party and the dissolution of all militant trade unions. The state was subsequently renamed Yugoslavia and assumed more and more <sup>the character</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> Serbian supremacy. Parliamentary democracy lingered on <sup>till 1929</sup> with Croatia and Slovenia fighting <sup>meanwhile</sup> ~~against~~ the authoritative rule of Belgrade - when the Constitution was abolished, King Alexander proclaimed himself dictator and handed over the reins of power to Serbian militarists. Croatia and Slovenia were reduced to subject races and ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> vicious persecution against the minorities was inaugurated for the purpose of Serbiansing them. From 1929 till the

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people's revolt on March 26, 1941 Yugoslavia  
was ruled in one form or another by dictatorship.

Romania inaugurated her new <sup>historical epoch</sup> ~~epoch~~ by  
actively assisting in the suppression of the Hungarian  
Socialist revolution. The national minorities ~~were~~  
were denied representation and a policy of steady  
denationalisation was adopted from the very  
beginning. The sham Parliamentary democracy  
began to wane since Carol's ascent to the  
throne in 1930 and since 1933 Romania has  
been <sup>under</sup> martial law. In 1938 Carol established  
his personal dictatorship.

Bulgaria ~~although~~ mutilated by the  
peace treaties was left as the only, practically  
homogeneous state in the Balkans. The revolt  
of the army and people <sup>really a mass revolt</sup> ~~which~~ precipitated the  
collapse of 1918 was followed later on by  
the establishment of the Agrarian Government  
of Stambuliski. Though the ~~Stambuliski~~ <sup>Stambuliski's</sup> Government was  
representing the interests of the rich farmers  
and the ~~four~~ <sup>middle class</sup> ~~bourgeoisie~~ it nevertheless carried  
through <sup>good</sup> ~~progressive~~ <sup>number</sup> ~~measures~~ of social and  
land <sup>or agrarian</sup> reforms. But the reactionary officers  
of the military league with King Boris at  
the head could not stomach even Stambuliski's  
mild reforms and in 1923 ~~they~~ overthrew  
the Government ~~shot~~ Stambuliski, and under  
~~Stambuliski~~ Tsankov's <sup>leadership</sup> nicknamed the butchers-  
launched a campaign for the extermination of  
the Communists and other progressives. Since

then Bulgaria has been under the heel of King Boris and the military, which is leading the Bulgarian people to catastrophe to day.

Greece defeated in the war with Turkey in 1922 and having to wrestle with the titanic problem for the resettlement of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million of refugees from Asia Minor became the prey of military and political adventurers. From 1924 to 1934 Greece under a Republican Constitution enjoyed a certain measure of parliamentary democracy. <sup>In 1935 the Royalists were restored and King George II appointed Metaxas as dictator.</sup> ~~the Republic was not restored the monarchy.~~ <sup>one year later King George appointed Metaxas as dictator.</sup>

~~The Balkan~~ As it can be deduced from the above the Balkan states during the twenty years of "truce" were seething with unrest. ~~Administration~~ was based on violence. The treatment of minorities, the territorial readjustment imposed by the treaties of peace left a legacy of hatred and antagonism between them.

As it can be deduced from the above that the Balkan states during the twenty years of "truce" were seething with unrest. Administration was based on violence. It ceased to represent the interests of the people and ~~became~~ became the means by which military and financial cliques wielded power for their own enrichment. <sup>In addition to this</sup> The treatment of

minorities and the territorial legacies of the Peace Treaties helped to ~~exchange~~ <sup>keep</sup> the different states and ~~keep~~ them at loggerheads.

In short the Balkan rulers, ~~are~~ <sup>while</sup> sitting on an <sup>active</sup> social volcano, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> were facing hostility across their frontiers. Hence lacking home support and inter-Balkan solidarity they became more and more dependent upon the big Powers of Europe ready to ~~sell~~ <sup>barge in and</sup> forfeit ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> independence of their people to maintain their regimes and themselves in power.

### Economic questions

In the main ~~the~~ <sup>which</sup> Balkan states ~~became~~ <sup>in the main</sup> financially dependent ~~and~~ <sup>with a</sup> recent creations ~~and~~ <sup>with a</sup> contemporary ~~independently~~ <sup>history of independence</sup> have ~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> the heirs of the antiquated economic system of the Ottoman Empire and ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> methods of agriculture which have not changed since the Byzantine times. No development was possible ~~in the new states~~ <sup>because</sup> of the complete lack of capital. ~~For~~ <sup>For</sup> this reason all these countries have been forced to a lesser ~~the reason which has forced them~~ <sup>to a lesser</sup> ~~or~~ <sup>or</sup> greater degree ~~to borrow~~ <sup>to borrow</sup> abroad at heavy rates ever since the first days of their independence. "Greece's career as a debtor country has started as far back as 1824 on the proclamation of independence. The country after failing to receive anything like the total nominal amount of the loans raised, mainly in Great Britain, for the issues were priced at low figures; and by the end of the century she

had defaulted three times. In 1898 the revenues in which the various loans were secured were placed under the control of an International Financial Commission. Bulgaria, Serbia, and Rumania also borrowed heavily - mainly from France, Germany and Austria - after the time of their liberation from Turkish rule" (The Balkan States I. Economic p. 38). Bulgaria, like Greece, defaulted and was subjected to a measure of control on the part of foreign creditors. Serbia's overborrowed condition led to the direct utilisation of certain of her revenues by the creditors - mainly French and German in accordance with an agreement signed in 1895. Rumania, although heavily indebted did not suffer any actual foreign financial control.

~~Apart from loans there were two investments of foreign capital~~

The principal objects of these loans were the increase of armaments, the building of harbours and railways, the stabilisation of currency and the covering of budget deficits. But loans were not granted indiscriminately by individual financial groups to the states concerned simply on the criterion of their economic soundness or unsoundness. The crucial question was the political affini-

ties of the world be debtor and how far the Foreign Office of the creditor country concerned, was satisfied as to the beneficial results of such loans.

Apart from <sup>state</sup> loans there were the investments of foreign capital. Practically every domain of national economy was <sup>by the</sup> ~~beginning of the present century and of the last war~~ in the hands of one foreign group or another and any new move for economic penetration was arousing the hostility and reaction of other groups and states. Financial operations <sup>usually</sup> ~~ran~~ hand in hand with political <sup>considerations</sup> ~~expectations~~ and as far as the Balkans were concerned it was both political and strategic motives which governed the financial and economic <sup>of the great Powers</sup> ~~manipulations~~. In this light it can be understood how the German attempts since 1933 to dominate the economy of the Balkan states led to conflict with the Anglo-French financial groups.

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~~The Nazi Drive.~~

The Agrarian ~~Problem~~ Problem.

As is usual in areas controlled economically by foreign capital industrial development is restricted so happened with the Balkan states. In consequence these countries remained chiefly

agricultural areas with the peasantry constituting over 80 per cent of the population in Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and 69 per cent in Greece. Holdings are small, ~~unimproved~~ uneconomically so and the standard of living the lowest in Europe.

In most of the countries legislation has been passed involving a considerable measure of agrarian reform. In Southern Greece, in Serbia and the old Kingdom of Rumania steps were taken even during the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the abolition of feudalism and the division of large estates. In 1917 ~~all the laws~~ throughout Greece all the land belonging to monasteries and other corporations were divided up and allotted to the propertyless peasants who cultivated them. In Rumania by a series of laws in 1918 reduced the share of the big estates from over 40% to 10% of the privately owned area. The Yugoslav constitution of 1921 provided for the abolition of feudal rights and the partition of the large estates in the areas ceded to Yugoslavia by Hungary. In Bulgaria the Agrarian Government of Stambulisky limited the land which might be owned by one proprietor to about 35 hectares.

Although these reforms helped to diminish the number of absolutely propertyless peasants

it left a small number of landowners with vast tracts of land in their possession. For instance in Rumania just over two score proprietors were left with 10 per cent of the entire land. In Albania the feudalistic system still persists. In Yugoslavia and Greece there are still considerable areas in the hands of individual proprietors.

The <sup>necessity of</sup> settlement of 132,000 families of refugees on the land in Greece and of 30,000 in Bulgaria led to ~~an even result~~ a reduction of small holdings. For the governments instead of parceling up the remaining fairly big estates preferred to settle the refugees in villages and grant them land <sup>often</sup> at the expense of other peasants who could not afford to lose it. Holdings are small.

"There is, of course, much variation in the size of holdings, not only from county to county but also from district to district. At the one extreme are the peasant farmers of Albania, Bulgaria and Greece, with perhaps little over an acre of land, an animal or two and wooden plough. As an illustration may be quoted a recent estimate (Department of Overseas Trade, Report on Bulgaria p. 35) that the annual average monetary needs of a peasant household in the Varna district do not exceed 2,000 leva or about £6 at current rates. At the other extreme are the

the comparatively large and well run  
 those parts of Rumania and Yugoslavia which  
 formerly belonged to the Austro-Hungarian  
 Empire" (The Balkans I. Economic. p. 21).

In addition to the smallness of holdings  
 which make of the typical Balkan farmer - ~~the~~  
 there are other considerations to be borne in  
 mind. For example methods of cultivation  
 are very backward and often primitive.  
 Mechanisation is often unknown. The irrigation  
 system in the majority of cases dates back  
 to the Turkish methods of the Middle Ages.  
 Fertilizers are rarely used because the  
 peasants cannot afford it. Development has  
 been held back because of the lack of  
 capital and the failure of the Governments  
 to ~~afford credits~~ provide agricultural credits,  
 to ameliorate the plight of the peasantry.

It is true to say that the typical Balkan  
 farmer is the peasant who owns, works and barely  
 lives from a very small piece of land. These  
 conditions resulted in extremely low standard  
 of living shared both by workers and peasants.  
 Indeed the lot of the workers is in no way  
 better than that of the peasants. Calculations  
 of level of wages made by the International  
 Labour Office in 1930 were: - Great Britain 100;  
 U.S.A. 190; Denmark 113; Yugoslavia 45; Rumania  
 39; Bulgaria and Greece 33; It was estimated  
 that during the period of the world economic

crisis 1931-34 that in Greece and Bulgaria the average rate of a worker's wage in a typical number of industries did not exceed £20 per annum.

Because of this deplorable state of affairs the peasants strove to organise themselves into producers associations to defend their interests and save themselves from ruin. In the teeth of governmental opposition (which was looking upon every peasant association as a hotbed of Communist activity) the current and tobacco growers of Greece, the tobacco and fruit growers in Bulgaria formed organisations for the defence of the interests of the producer. In Yugoslavia a co-operative agricultural system grew up and there as well elsewhere attempts were made to reorganise agricultural credit.

Although the plight of the Balkan peasantry could have been made a lot easier by the partition of the country's big estates, the provision of ~~the~~ credit facilities for fertilisers <sup>with</sup> and the adoption of new methods of agriculture and the existence of a steady market, it cannot be fundamentally solved save on the lines of mechanisation and collectivisation shown us by the Soviet Union.

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The Nazi Drive.