

# OIL FOR EUROPE'S BURNING

**Cabled from Athens by Frank Gervasi**

**Balkan oil may win or lose the war. But not for the Balkans. Once more in their tragic and blood-soaked history Europe's poorest and most peaceful people, caught in the gears of machine war, await the worst**



EUROPEAN

**A Bulgarian Turk brings a pair of oxen to market. He is the plowman of Balkan peasantry with his income of from \$50 to \$65 a year**

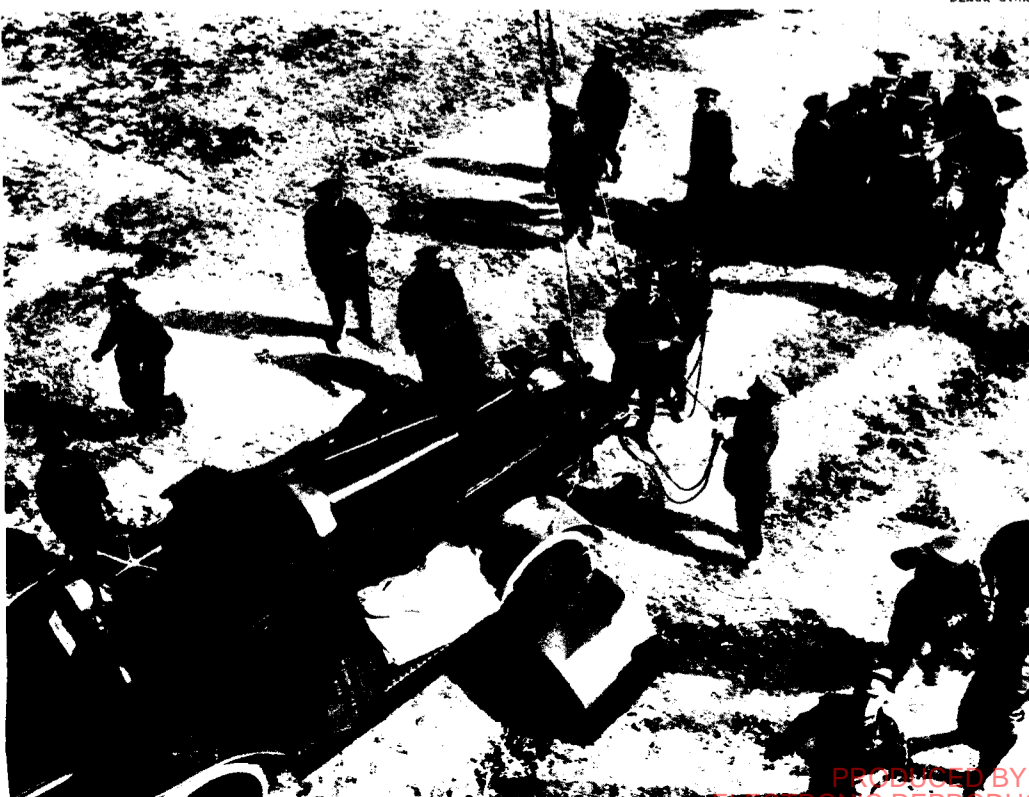
**An observation balloon unit of the small Rumanian army, which, even if Rumania resisted, could not hold off Germany for more than a few weeks**



BLACK STAR

**Rumania's oil industry, largely foreign-owned, is of little benefit to the poverty-stricken peasants but is a first-class military prize**

**France's General Maxime Weygand is poised in Syria with a huge Allied army, ready to move in the moment Germany invades the Balkans for oil**



BLACK STAR



PIX

THIS is the story of fifty million peasants who want peace but cannot have peace. It is a story, too, of seven gentlemen from Texas and of jealous-eyed old General Maxime Weygand and his Syrian armies. Here enters the tale of Germany's hunger for the oil of Rumania, the oil Adolf Hitler needs to keep life in his war motors. The seven Texans and Weygand may prevent Hitler from obtaining that oil—the gentlemen from Texas with nitroglycerin and the general with his horde of soldiers. But mostly this is about those peasants.

The peasants live in the Balkans. They are therefore Europe's "People of the Mountains," for "balkan" means mountain. You knew them as Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians. They are now Yugoslavs, Rumanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians and Turks.

Their desire for peace is almost pathological. In this they have something in common with Britons, Germans and Frenchmen. One of the strange things about this war is that if you ask any man of any nationality whether he wants or wanted the war he says "No." Among the belligerents the "No" is always accompanied by a defensive "But." Among the neutrals the "No" is lullied, but clean-cut.

There is a difference, however, between the people of the mountains, these shepherders and goat keepers and farmers, and the people of industrial Britain and bourgeois France and imperialistic Germany. No matter who wins the current war, the Balkans, now as always, lose. Their oil fields will be blown to hell, their fields of tobacco and hemp and their olive groves will be ravaged, their huts will be used to stable the horses of foreign cavalry and their roads will become rivulets of tractor-churned mud. Their cities will be shelled and bombed and when the next hasty peace is made the big powers who fought the war on Balkan soil will be too tired and too hurried to settle the intramural disputes among the Balkan nations, which if ever solved would unite the people of the mountains and then never again could the foreigner use the Balkans as his battlefield.

Practically every nation has a stake in the Balkans except the Balkanites themselves. In Rumania seventy-four per cent of the capital invested in the oil fields is held by Dutch Shell, France, the United States, Belgium, Italy and a small section by Germany. Germany, Britain, France, Switzerland and Italy in that order control Yugoslavian capital. Two thirds of the foreign capital in Greece is controlled by the British. Albania is totally Italian. Under the great Kemal Ataturk, Turkey rowed its own financial boat but Kemal is dead and one British loan alone to Ankara amounts to more than \$350,000,000 in gold. There have been several. The Balkanites are the world's least known and least understood people, considering they live in that part of the world charted and mapped as "civilized." White-maned Lloyd George himself, years after he had helped redraft the map of Europe, once referred to Yugoslavia as "Yugoslavakia." Then there was the American big businessman, one of the pillars of Wall Street today, who wanted to "go down the Danube to Athens." And they tell the story of the American diplomat who dictated a dispatch to "Budapest or Bucharest—you know some people call it one thing, some call it the other."

The Balkans are the territorial bridge between the East and the West. From Berlin to ancient Bagdad you can draw a winding line that never rises more than one hundred feet above sea level and so trace a classic furrow for war and expansion. The Balkans for 2,500 years, and perhaps for more beyond that, have

been tortured by the tramp of foreign soldiers.

And now as surely as spring follows winter the old pageant is to be repeated. Perhaps this spring, maybe next spring. It will come, the peasants say; whenever Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier, Mussolini or Stalin decide to light the torches and move their tanks and cannons over the plains and through the mountain passes. Whatever comes, and this the peasants know so well, the powers who have to clash on Balkan soil will seek Greeks, Rumanians and Bulgarians to do some or most of their fighting for them.

#### An Instinct for Politics

For the peasants know all. They have "studied" history for thousands of years and they know its geometry as you know the contours of your face. They can stand on the Acropolis and point to Salamis, blue in the distance, and describe to you every move of the ships of the Greeks and the Persians and likely as not the tellers can neither read nor write. They can stand at Thermopylae and show you the rocks where the soldiers of Leonidas sat to comb their long hair.

The generals won't talk because they are too busy drilling their soldiers and awaiting the orders of the politicians. And these won't talk because they are too busily engaged in the job of waiting to see on which side their bread is to be larded the thickest. But the peasants know. They can read the stars at night

as they tend their sheep on the crags of the Carpathians. And the stars tell them and there is blood on the moon and the peasants say there is a smell of war on the soft night wind. Not only are they mystics, but these Balkan peasants have a sublime kind of common sense and an instinct in politics. It's more fun to talk to a Greek schoolteacher in an Athens café than it is to argue "the situation" with a professor of political philosophy at a Fifth Avenue cocktail party. King Boris of Bulgaria sits on a chopping block in a peasant's back yard to obtain the answer to his most difficult equations. The evaluation of the military and diplomatic strength of Italy, Germany and the Allies and Russia by a Macedonian tobacco farmer is more precise than that of an expert in London or New Rochelle.

With this instinct for politics the Balkan peasant reasons that his days of peace are numbered. The snow is melting in the mountain passes and the fateful Danube is free of ice. The peasant doesn't have to be told this any more than he has to be told that the passes in the ancient river are the arteries that carry to Germany the products of the Balkans. Neither does he have to be told that it will be the task of the Allies to see to it that Germany does not obtain the meat, grain, hemp, tobacco, olive oil, fruits and vegetables and lumber of the Balkans.

Most important of all these raw materials of war is petroleum. Rumania has it. Germany wants it. The Allies must see to it that Germany does not

obtain it. It is because of Rumania's oil and its importance to Germany that the Balkans quiver with fear. The new World War may be won and lost in the shadows of the shell-shattered derricks that rise cracked and gaunt on the fields of Ploesti in southern Rumania. In the drama that may be enacted any day at Ploesti the seven Americans have an important role.

#### Weygand's "Defensive" Army

These seven Americans are from places like San Antonio and Dallas. They were eight men when they sailed some weeks ago from New York. The eighth man left the contingent in Italy, through which the train passed en route via Yugoslavia and Hungary. This man realized, long before the party reached the Italian Alps, the enormity of the role history and his oil company had assigned to him. You see, the seven gentlemen from Texas are expert in the handling and efficient application of a substance known as soup, or, more explicitly, nitroglycerin.

These leather-palmed gentlemen—in the jargon of the oil fields they are known as drillers—have their orders. Their assignment is to blow up every single well owned by the Allies and America and perhaps a few others that may be lying about the moment Hitler's armies storm into Rumania.

This act of what might be called defensive sabotage is to deprive Germany of the 6,200,000 metric tons of oil a year (Continued on page 67)



## ESCORT

DRAWN BY LOW FOR COLLIER'S AND SENT FROM LONDON BY RADIOPHOTO





## Step Lively!

By Ruth Carson

Here's the lineup of new play shoes. They're bright with color, high on style and low in cost. Just wearing them ought to make you feel gay

THE girls are giddy with a rush of color to the feet. But steady on their feet for all that. The new breed of shoes romping onto the landscape in increasing numbers these past few seasons is strong on color, and sturdy. They would look clumsy if they weren't so gay. Play shoes, they're called, but they need another name, because they circle the clock with you, and how to tell a beach shoe from a house slipper or an evening clog is fast becoming impossible.

They are like no shoes you wore a few years ago. Some of them look Chinese, with thick-padded soles or high wooden ones, fancifully carved into openwork. Some are Grecian—flat leather sandals held on by thongs. There's the moccasin, which started out being the true beaded Indian item, worn in ski lodges. It went into soft-soled house slippers, but now sports a leather bottom because you like it so much with your slacks, out-of-doors.

Wedge heels are everywhere. They first appeared three or four years ago. Then you would have none of them. Too clumsy. But something has changed your mind. Remember the wooden shoe? It was finally banned at Smith College because its clattering noise wasn't conducive to higher learning. You dropped it for another reason. It wasn't comfortable. But it helped convince you that there can be something very young and gay about bulky footwear—provided comfort comes with it.

Maybe that's why the wedge is back supporting you. Flat, for those who like flats. Tilting you as much as two and a half inches if you're fond of the way your ankle looks in a high heel but want the steady balance the wedge will give. Wedges are out to please with all heights, with faceted heels for those who like a slimmer look, portholes for fantasy and lightness and layers of color like a three-decker sandwich.

Why all this rush of gaiety to our feet? Some say it's because our hats are simpler and we want our fun and lift of spirits somewhere. Some say it's because our play clothes, younger and more varied by the season, require a special kind of footwear. Some say it's the life we lead. Padding around the house one minute, off to market the next, so that we need a house slipper that is comfortable but not bedroomish. Walking on pebbly beaches. Gardening. Midnight parties, beside a pool, that involve a bathing suit and a long evening skirt and certainly nothing resembling routine beach or evening slippers.

It began some ten years ago on beaches, West Coast and East. Bill Joyce (William H., Jr.), a restless and rebellious young banker, was reclining on a California beach. A girl skipped by in doeskin dancing sandals. It gave him an idea. Why sneakers for everything? So he started making shoes—not to resemble any known shoe shapes, but footwear for your casual, lounging moments. It must have been a good idea.

From one room, he's had to move seven times to expanding quarters. Business increased one hundred and twenty-five per cent last year. A fifty per cent increase is the best he can manage this year—that's the plant capacity.

At about the same time, in the East, Mr. J. Mackey was making chin straps and visors for the Army. Not a profitable business in those nonmilitary days. His eyes, too, turned to the beach. Cork beach shoes. He did a \$350,000 business the first year, and has been going steadily up from there. Cork is still a stand-by, but the trend is now to cloth-covered shoes, wooden clogs, leather sandals. One of America's leading sportswear designers consults with him, and they concoct between them shoes to complete her costumes . . . high felt boots, zippered up the back, for after skating; gold kid sandals with fantastic rounded wedge heels for dinner pajamas; any kind of leisure shoe that makes a point of zest, imagination and comfort.

Even the makers of regulation shoes have caught the fever. At the Chicago Shoe Fair, the wholesale selling meet, this year 4,000 of the 5,000 exhibitors displayed play shoes. Even very conservative manufacturers ventured four or five models.

It's a year-round business now, with stubby sheepskin boots, peasant shoes for after-ski wear and moccasins making the most of wintry weather. Even the men are falling for colorful footwear, and you'll see them this year, the bold fellows, strutting about, proud of contrasting lifts on colored monk shoes and sandals.

All this big business doesn't mean you're going to wear nothing but play shoes, even for play. Your golf and tennis shoes are still regulation. For hiking your sturdy oxfords and boots can't be bettered. For street wear, pumps and step-ins—with occasional shots in the heel via the wedge—will be with you. But your shoe shelves will no longer be a study in black, brown and white conservatism. These giddy young shoes, sporting names like Barge, Sundecker, Capers and Sidekick to acclaim their carefree life, in colors like cherry pop, sawdust, prancing pink, to prove they're not serious, are out to see that even when your heart is in your boots it will be a light heart. They're low on cost—a good eighty-five per cent of them are priced under six dollars a pair—but they're high on fun and spirits. And there's not a shoe in the lot you'll kick off under the table. ★★★