

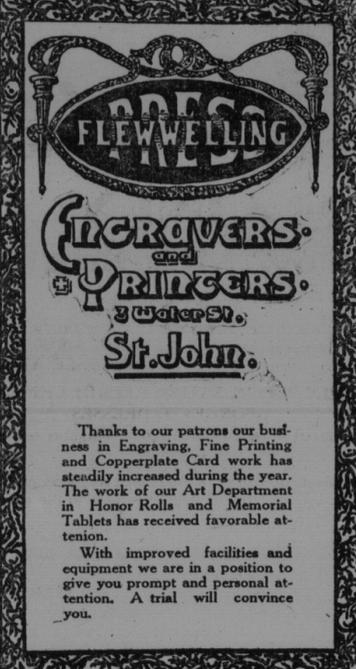


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# Bordeaux To Odessa

Another of Germany's Deep-Laid Plans for World-Wide Trade Has Come to Naught, and the Early Linking up of This Line from the Richest Provinces of France to the Granaries of Southern Russia is Expected to Develop Tremendous Business—Obstacles Yet to be Overcome, Which, However, Are Being Removed by Interested Governments.

(By Carroll K. Mischeuer.)  
Trade follows the flag of victory. Wars, so often waged for economic ends, usually result in readjustment of commercial highways. Germany had hoped for great advantages in the respect its trade routes were to reach like tentacles, sweeping away all obstructions, into the rich markets of the world: German routes, built with German gold, manned with German troops, sacred to German interests, and picared with "verboten."

This ambition, like the others making up Prussia's desire for world-dominion, has been humbled. Great trade-route changes have been effected, but as a further ironic retribution to Germany it is the allied nations which have fallen heir to the benefits they afford. "Hamburg to the Himalayas," "Berlin to Bagdad and beyond," "Bremen to Baku," these were some of the catchwords emphasizing the commercial conquests that appeared at uncertain periods of the war to have been gained by the German sword. They are shattered phrases now, and a multitude of substitutes are developing to the future profit of the allies. Among these is the no less attractive, although less alliterative, proposal of a "Bordeaux to Odessa" railroad.

This project is more than a phrase and is being actively considered. The roadway already exists, the rails are in place; all that is required is to give it incorporation as a trunk line, connecting up the established links and giving them commercial life. The French and Italian ministries of transportation are already engaged in working out the details of this arrangement.

Before the war, the central powers, because of their geographical position and the mountain features that give direction to the waterheds of Europe, controlled most of the continent's land transportation. The routes either lay wholly within the territories of Germany and Austria, or crossed them. For example, there was through land transportation between Paris and Petrograd, but considerably more than half of it was on German territory. Practically all of the plain falling away from the Alps toward the North and Baltic seas was controlled by Prussia. Routes farther to the south invariably encountered mountain barriers, where the passes running north and south were also almost entirely in Teutonic hands.

The opening of the shipping canal in 1906, connecting Paris by rail with southern Italy, by way of the Swiss Alps, somewhat disturbed this German monopoly, as has the tunnel through the French Alps, completed some time earlier. Serbian resistance, also, had checked Austrian and German schemes for a right of way through Serb territory to Salonica and Constantinople.

The war was to have rectified this matter for Germany however, it has in effect served to clear new trade highways for the victorious allies, extending through the whole of southern Europe and embracing the partly developed railroad systems of Asia Minor and the Arabian peninsula. Eventually the trunk lines from Paris and the important Atlantic ports reaching by way of Asia Minor to India and the Far East, and by way of Suez and the Cape to Cairo Railroad to South Africa. These roads were to have been Germany's spoils; they fall, unsought, to Germany's adversaries.

Important, however, as are the commercial interests based on the vast and principally undeveloped regions of Africa and Asia, the chief function of the Bordeaux to Odessa route will be that of reaching the granaries of Russia and serving the commercial needs of that unfortunate nation. Many economists have long been convinced that Russia's salvation must be economic rather than political.

The greatest material requirements of Russia, Serbia and Roumania will consist for a long time of machinery and the means of transportation. They must have cheaply and quickly, tractors, motor-trucks, reapers, binders, tractors, locomotives, freighters and steel rails. Formerly these would have come from or through Germany. Now they will come principally from Great Britain, France and the United States, and they possibly will go by new roads rather than the old. Ocean routes direct to Russian ports will carry most of the merchandise of America and England, but much of it will seek an overland route across Europe, particularly in the early years of the reconstruction period, while the international merchant marine is being recruited to point commensurate with the world's increased needs.

If the old highways through Germany are to be used, and if the victorious allies are to keep their commerce with Russia flowing across their own or friendly territories, a railroad route must be sought in southern Europe; another, of course, will be possible through Poland by way of Dantzig.

There is nothing more logical than the proposed southern-European lines, although there are some natural difficulties due to the nature of the country that must be crossed. The spurs of the Alps projecting southward, forming the backbone of southeastern France, of Italy, the Balkan peninsula, and a portion of Bessarabia, make impossible a smooth and level road such as that following the open spaces of the northern plains.

The Cevennes Mountains, projecting north and south across southern France, are a difficult barrier, and no direct line east from Bordeaux has yet been constructed. However, a practic-

able, although circuitous, road is in existence, and this could be improved at will by additional construction to straighten and level its links. The passes of the Alps near Modane and Vignella, at the Franco-Italian frontier, offer a suitable outlet to the east and south, but doubtless it would be found expedient to reduce considerably the grades and curves on this section of the line.

Beyond Trieste the railways are in doubtful condition at present, and probably would require considerable rebuilding and improvement of roadbeds before being capable of carrying heavy transcontinental freight. The valley of the Save, however, directs one line almost straight into Belgrade. Now construction very likely would be necessary east of Belgrade in order to obtain a short route into Roumania, and to make available the Roumanian roads.

In view of the great political and economic importance of the proposed trunk line, these difficulties do not appear insurmountable, and the French and Italian governments are considering them in that light. As preliminary measures they are endeavoring to clear away some of the delays and annoyances to passengers and shippers which made the route rarely used before the war, these troubles being due principally to lack of coordination on the various national systems and at the several frontiers.

The rails of this new road stretch 2—THE BORDEAUX TO ODESSA, over a distance of about 2,500 miles, and embrace many thousands of miles of fertile tributaries. There would be stations at large ports and four important inland cities. Scientific ally the line offers a new and interesting avenue to the tourists of the world. At its western end ocean-going vessels do not far inland on the Garonne River, utilizing the huge wharves and docks which were improved and enlarged for war purposes. Bordeaux, the western terminus, is one of the finest and most extensive cities of France. It is situated on the Garonne, about 60 miles from its mouth, and lies in a plain comprising the wine-growing district of Medoc. Looking west from the Pont de Bordeaux, a fine stone bridge of the early nineteenth century, the view embraces a crescent of busy quays, with a background of warehouses, factories and residence, behind which rise towers and steeples.

Outside this quarter, which contains the largest and most important buildings, the streets are narrow and bordered by the low, white houses that take the place of the high tenements common to other French communities. The entire city is surrounded by boulevards; the promenade being close to the centre of the metropolis, comprise the public gardens, the allées de Tourny, and the Place des Quinconces.

The city is a great court centre, has a flourishing chamber of commerce and boasts a branch of the Bank of France. Its educational institutions include colleges of law, science, letters, medicine, pharmacy, theology, commerce, agriculture, and fine arts. The trade of Bordeaux previously has been principally with the sea; the transcontinental route, of course, would alter this situation, and make the city one of the greatest distributing points in Europe. It is the chief exporter of Bordeaux wine, and the wine cellars of its quays are among its principal sights. The most important local industry is shipbuilding and repairing, although there are many and varied factories.

From Bordeaux the proposed route leads upward along the Garonne valley, then turning north and tracing a course between the Auvergne Mountains and the western slopes of the Cevennes to Lyons, which is second only to Paris in commercial importance. The population in 1915 was slightly more than half a million, whereas that of Bordeaux was half that figure.

Leaving Lyons, the proposed transcontinental line would run east and south, crossing the Alps at Modane, and pausing at Turin, a great railroad centre, and thence to Milan. This is the chief financial centre of Italy, and the wealthiest manufacturing and commercial town in the country. It stands on the little river Olona, near the middle of the Lombard plain, an extremely fertile and well-irrigated region.

Proceeding across the northern plains of Italy, the line would then descend to the Adriatic basin, passing through Vicenza, important for its silk manufactures, and completing direct rail connection between Bordeaux on the Atlantic and Venice on its arm of the Mediterranean.

Venice still merits much of its traditional renown. Its population is small; in 1911 it was 160,000, practically the same as it had been throughout the preceding half-century; but as a port it has enjoyed considerable modern development. Its commerce, as has been the case throughout the city's history, is still mainly a transit trade. Wheat, coal, cotton, petroleum, wood, lime and cement are brought into Venice for shipment to the Levant or for distribution over Italy and Europe.

Trieste, as well as Venice, has gained much notoriety during the war, and will figure largely in the days of reconstruction. It was the principal seaport of Austria, and will constitute a large factor in the commercial future of the nation to whose sovereignty it

has been restored. From Trieste the transcontinental line would debouch upon the newly outlined territory of the nation Jugoslavie. Agram is the first important point touched, and then Belgrade, the Serbian capital, which has suffered severely from the war, but should have a prosperous reconstruction. Situated on the Danube, and constituting an important point on the new overland route from east to west, it will become the market and commercial centre of a wide district. It will gain importance, also, as a junction with the present railroad to Constantinople.

After 1866, when Belgrade was lost to the Turks, the city was rapidly transformed into a modern European metropolis, with wide avenues, street cars, and electric lights. Only the multitude of small gardens, planted with limes, acacias and lilacs, and the bright costumes of the Serbian and Hungarian peasants, remain to distinguish it from western cities.

Belgrade boasts a national bank, stock and produce exchanges, and a large number of insurance companies. Its principal industries are brewing, iron-founding and the manufacture of cloth, boots, leather, cigarettes, matches, pottery, preserved meat and confectionery.

Bucharest, the capital of Roumania, has a population of about 330,000. With its outlying suburbs, it covers more than 20 square miles. A range of low hills affords shelter on the west, and south-west, but on every other side there are drained, although still unhealthy, marshes, stretching away to meet the central Walkachian plains. From a distance, the multitude of its gardens, and the towers and gilded cupolas of its churches, give

it a home-like appearance. The harbor is a wanderer stood in the darkened street, looking through the window at a happy family within. The scene pictured—the longing in his soul for the home he did not have.

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Bucharest great picture squares. The gipsies and Roumans, wearing their brightly colored native costumes, the peddlers with their dulcet sweet cries, and the motley crowd of intermingling east and west, make the city unlike any western capital. Nevertheless it has many modern aspects, and it is often called the "Paris of the East," partly from a supposed scenic resemblance, and partly from the number of its boulevards and avenues.

Galatz, near the Russian border of Roumania, is another important commercial city, approached by three waterways, the Danube, Sereth and Pruth, down which there is a continual volume of traffic, except in midwinter, and by the railways which intersect all the richest portions of the country. Textiles, machinery and coal make up the bulk of its imports. Timber, petroleum and grain are exported. There are many sawmills, paper mills, flour mills, ropewalks, chemical works and petroleum refineries. The shipping is largely in British hands.

Odessa, the eastern terminus of the proposed all-rail route, yields only to Petrograd and Moscow in population and the extent of its foreign trade. The census of 1911 credits it with 600,000 residents, and it is growing rapidly. Whatever the political fate of the Russian people, it is certain that this metropolis will prosper. At present the Ukraine is not wholly unfriendly in a political way to the victorious allies, and certainly of a pliable disposition with regard to seeking the commercial favors of the world so long withheld from it by the war.

By rail Odessa is 1,600 miles from Moscow and 600 from Kiev. It is the seaport for the basins of two great rivers, the Dnieper, with its tributary, the Bug, and the Dniester. The narrows to the mouths of these rivers offering many difficulties for navigation, trade from remote times selected this spot, which is half way between the two estuaries. The level surface of the neighboring steppe allows easy communication with the lower reaches of both streams.

The bay of Odessa, which has an area of 14 square miles and a depth of 30 feet, is a dangerous anchorage on account of its exposure to the easterly winds; but inside it are six harbors with ample capacity and modern shipping conveniences. The harbors are



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icebound for a few days in winter. Commercially, Odessa ranks first among all the seaports of the former Russian Empire. The chief imports are raw cotton, iron, agricultural machinery, coal, chemicals, jute, opium and lead. Grain, principally wheat, is the leading export.