WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS BY JOSEPH W. LaBINE

European War Gathers Steam After Preliminary Skirmishes; Polish Resistance Is Expected

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper.)

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THE WAR:

Lineup

As day after day passed into history, the War of 1939 engulfed more nations and brought more millions face-to-face with dread actuality. On Britain's side came the Union of South Africa, one-third of whose 30,000 European population speaks German. A few days later Canada's Prime Minister Mackenzie King ordered a declaration of war published in the Canadian Official Gazette. After 10 days of fighting, the lineup found Germany and her ally, Slovakia, with 90,600,000 population against a total ally population of 505,556,000. The figures:

Nation	Population
Germany	86,600,000
Slovakia	4,000,000
VERSUS	
Poland	32,348,000
France	43,000,000
Great Britain, including:	
United Kingdom	48,000,000
Australia	8,000,000
New Zealand	1,600,000
Union of South Africa	10,000,000
Canada	11,209,000
India	351,399,000

Still aloof were the imponderables. Egypt, treaty-bound to Britain, had severed diplomatic relations with the Reich. Turkey, also treaty-bound, called up her reserves as France's Gen. Maxime Weygand reached Ankara. But the greatest imponderables were Russia and Italy, both leaning Germany-ward, whose jump to Adolf Hitler's assistance could place France and Britain in an extremely uncomfortable position.

War of Words

Past-master at the art of propaganda is Germany's Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, whose technique after one week of war was obviously taking better hold than the ironclad censorship of France and Britain. The allies' first mistake was to confine announcements to useless official communiques, opening the way for nervous conjecturing. Ministries of information worked at such a snail's pace that the London Daily Mirror commented: "The mills of the Gods grind slowly, but seemingly those of the air ministry are geared even more slowly." Soon radiophotoing of news pictures was banned by London, leaving U. S. readers with nothing but German propaganda photos. Meanwhile the British propaganda office gave correspondents such patently cooked-up stories as one that the ex-Kaiser had warned Hitler he faces disaster.

GEN. GOERING
He wooed France.

Herr Goebbels was smarter, if more unethical. His radio stole a Warsaw wave length and warned the Poles to evacuate. But he did allow U. S. correspondents to visit the front and released announcements which were acceptable to the press because they were partly true, and more damaging for the same reason.

But the major war of words came from Germany's Field Marshal Hermann Wilhelm Goering, who swore at Britain and cooed at France, renewing the well-substantiated rumor that Germany will be ready for peace when she has conquered Poland. Sample:

WESTERN FRONT
Italians chuckled at France.

"We want nothing of the French . . . It is the English government which incited people. We know England will fight till the last Frenchman—remember that, you Frenchmen!"

Next day Britain reiterated: No peace talks if Germany stays in Poland.

Western War

In 1914 it took two weeks to start a real dogfight on the western front. The War of 1939 proved no exception. In the first seven days allied troops made steady gains, "feeling out" the enemy on all parts of the front. But not until the allies had dug in almost to the recessed Siegfried line did Adolf Hitler withdraw several divisions from Poland and rush them westward to the rescue.

As the second week got under way, two salients and counter-offensives seemed brewing into two major battles. *(See Map).* The first was near Saarbrueken, where a French offensive pointed eight miles into German territory. To the west, Nazi troops sought to relieve this pressure and possibly reach France's highly touted Maginot line.

Meanwhile, just north of Switzerland, French troops pushed into the Black forest hoping to open a path via Austria to sorely pressed Poland. In Rome military observers chuckled over this offensive, knowing full well that France had originally intended to aid Poland via highly vulnerable Italy, which decided instead to stay neutral.

Eastern War

As war in the east reached its second week, Adolf Hitler released a masterpiece of understatement: By decree, Germany's far eastern frontiers were restored to their 1914 positions *(See Map).* Since Germany had already regained about twice the area she lost in 1919, some naive observers may have wondered why Der Fuehrer continued his march to Warsaw. But while he was about it, Hitler had evidently decided to take a little more, plus all the land Poland got from Austria-Hungary in 1919.

EASTERN FRONT
Losses regained, and then some.

This was no easy job. Blustering and boasting of the war's first days was silenced as Poland lived up to her promise. The retreat had really been strategic, after all. Moreover, Marshal Edward Smigly-Rydz really had about 1,000,000 unused troops. As the Poles dug in behind the Bugg and Vistula rivers, London heard that the eastern front's greatest battle was growing on a 250-mile front. Even Berlin communiques admitted "fierce battles."

Biggest of Poland's unspoken worries was the juggernaut at her back door, Russia. Thousands of reserves poured through Moscow bound for the west after mobilization was decreed "in connection with the German-Polish war." Was the Red bear about to strike, too?

Next day Moscow's *Pravda* said no. Russia was merely preparing to disarm and interne eastward-fleeing Poles when the war was over.

War at Sea

Still a mystery was the whereabouts of Germany's giant Bremen, which left New York one day before war was declared. Reports placed her variously at Iceland, Mexico, South America and Russia, but she was probably snug in a Spanish harbor. Manhattan's waterfront still housed the French Normandie and British Queen Mary, probably there for the duration. Though British and French lines no longer announced their schedules, the Ile de France sneaked into New York. Two British boats, the Georgic and Samaria, sailed in darkness.

This was fool's fun unless convoys awaited the allied vessels when they left neutral waters. After one week of war 12 British-French boats had reached Davy Jones' locker as the Reich's submarine campaign began gathering force. Small victory for Britain was the fact that all German shipping had run to cover; unless allied boats could sail the seas there might be a repitition of 1917's near tragedy. In that year convoys were perfected.

War at sea could not fail to touch U. S. shipping. The Manhattan and other boats left for Europe with giant flags painted on their sides. New York brush wielders did a landoffice job camouflaging allied vessels. Off Cobh, Ireland, the liner Washington rescued 33 crewmen from the torpedoed British freighter, Olivegrove.

But U. S. shipping was a breath-holding business. Painted flags meant little in mined waters. Besides, other neutral nations were beginning to suffer: (1) A Dutch mine sweeper hit her own mine and sank with 33 aboard; (2) a Greek freighter, Kosti, was reportedly destroyed by a German mine in the Baltic; (3) Danish fishermen, fearing mines, clung ashore.

NEWS QUIZ

Are you reading anything except war news? Subtract 20 for each of the following questions you miss. Score of 100 is perfect; anything under 60 isn't so good.

1. Who is this Baltimore lady, and where has she just gone with her husband?

2. Selection: Father Divine has just bought a new five-story "heaven" at (1) Walla Walla, (2) Philadelphia, (3) Chicago, (4) Newport, (5) Bombay.

3. While war waged in Europe, what disaster overtook the U. S. navy air force?

4. True or false: The U. S. justice department has closed its anti-trust suit against the American Medical association.

5. Why did this alleged remark start a rumpus: "We cannot allow workers to lose a strike even though it does cause bloodshed."

(Answers at bottom of column.)

DOMESTIC:

Backfire of War

As Europe's military machines got up steam, Franklin Roosevelt found himself puzzling over two conflicting problems: (1) How to keep out of war and preserve U. S. business-social normalcy; (2) How to prepare against war, yet be ready for it when and if it comes.

Neutrality and Normalcy. Paradoxically, commodities, stocks and bonds soared despite food surpluses and the present neutrality law, which automatically clamps an embargo on arms shipments to belligerent nations. Reason: Wiseacres of Wall street, most of them anti-Rooseveltian, were pretty sure the President would summon congress to repeal the present neutrality law and substitute "cash-and-carry."

After a week of mildly effectual warnings to profiteers, the cause of normalcy was still suffering. Meanwhile the White House played a waiting game, holding a congressional summons in abeyance until public opinion had crystalized. When housewives began complaining of rising prices, when politicians began debating the merits of a neutrality that barred shipment of bullets but permitted highly vital oil to go abroad, the President was apparently ready to act. Washington expected congress about October 2, but Idaho's Sen. William E. Borah warned there would be no hasty change in the law.

SECRETARY WOODRING
If war should come . . .

'Emergency.' To most citizens' surprise, the White House revealed that U. S. military strength is far below the 937,000-man peacetime level authorized by congress. Ordered, therefore, was a 104,500-man increase in armed forces and a 150-man boost in FBI under an executive decree declaring a "limited national emergency."

While Secretary of War Woodring mulled over his immediate expansion problem, his mind's eye might have looked to the future and an even greater problem should the U. S. get its feet in Europe's mud. Within 90 days after a declaration of war, an army of almost 1,000,000 men could be drafted. Since the subject popped into headlines, the joint army and navy selective service committee announced there are about 41,000,000 males between 18 and 64 of whom about 26,000,000 are between 18 and 45, the "normal" military age.

News Quiz Answers

1. The duchess of Windsor, who, with her exiled husband, has just been repatriated by England.
2. Philadelphia.
3. Six fliers were killed when a patrol bomber crashed near San Diego.
4. False: The U. S. Supreme court has been asked to review a decision by the District of Columbia federal court dismissing the indictments.
5. Chairman J. Warren Madden of the national labor relations board allegedly made the remark. Source of revelation: The senate labor committee's hearing on NLRB.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

Crooks Take Advantage of War To Bleed Consumers of Nation

Without Justification Prices Are Boosted and People Scared Into Hoarding; Public Sentiment Is Only Force That Can Correct the Racketeering.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART

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WASHINGTON.—My faith in the soundness of the profit system as the basis for people to make a living always has caused me to lean somewhat to the defense of business practices when there had to be a choice between theories. Every fair minded person knows that business—agriculture, manufacturing, banking, transportation or any other—has had a terrific onslaught of cock-eyed arguments to meet in the last few years. To me, it is a distinct tribute to the profit system that we have seen as many businesses survive the last five or six years as there are still operating.

But, calling upon the record of these columns, I have contended without exception that there are crooks in business, and that the present administration ought to direct some of its venom at the crooks, rather than at business as a whole. And, so, this week, I want to write about this situation that has come to the surface as a result of the burst of flame that has engulfed Europe; they have shown again the true colors of their makeup and they have taken advantage of a situation in world affairs, without any justification, to bleed the consumers of the United States.

Almost with the crash of the first gun on the Eastern front, a small minority of business interests rubbed the palms of their hands together and began to count additional dollars they could gain in profits by boosting prices. And to cover up their perfidy, their treachery and their characteristics of a water snake, they have spread a counterpane of lies that will react against all business, including the growers of raw materials such as the crops of the fields. It is so easy to blame things on the war; it is being done by government officials as well as the brigands of business, but the latter class is collecting an unseen (but deeply felt) tax from all of us who buy food to eat or clothes to wear.

Hoarding and High Prices Due to Greed, Crookedness

I have interviewed a lot of people in the field of business in the last few days in an effort to ascertain where the cheating is going on. Moreover, I have investigated a number of business practices with the thought that these would provide a clue to some of the price increases, and reasons for them, with the results mentioned in the paragraph above. There must be added, however, one additional conviction: hundreds of thousands of consumers have become frightened and have started hoarding — buying excess supplies because of fright. I still can not believe, however, that these hoarding tactics are completely responsible for the kiting of prices that has taken place. Ruthlessness and greed, faithlessness and the ordinary, garden variety of crookedness among certain elements of business must accept responsibility; for, from these things together with the campaign of misrepresentation which those elements have engineered come the fright of the average consumer. Hence, hoarding.

In my study of the price situation on the regular purchases of a household, I have sampled quotations and advertising in Washington and Baltimore. Washington is somewhat different than any other city in the United States, but Baltimore is a large industrial area, fairly reflecting normal reactions of buyers. I have observed the prices of chain stores and traced them back to wholesalers and jobbers, and to the manufacturers in some instances.

Guilt attaches to a small percentage in the retail lines, the average store. There were instances found where the prices were boosted on commodities that had been on the shelves three months, articles that could not have been affected in any way by any possible change in manufacturing costs, added expenses due to higher labor payments or increases in transportation and distribution. And, incidentally, there is almost no record of any increases in those items of manufacturing and distributing costs. The department of commerce figures do not reflect them, nor do the reports in the hands of the department of labor show them. But the beady-eyed rats behind the counters of a small percentage of retail stores will blandly tell you these things have happened.

Some Wholesalers Are as Guilty as Sneak Thieves

There are certain of the wholesalers who are as guilty as sneak thieves in the night, but, like the retailers, not all of them are resorting to price increases for plain profit. From my own inquiries and from all of the information that has been made available to me, I am inclined to believe there are more wholesalers—a larger percentage of them—who have taken advantage of the perils of the times than can be shown among the retailers. Instances of actual sales and cancellations of contracts and refusal of deliveries and delays in handling shipments were related, where added profit accrued to the wholesaler or jobber, that almost seemed too fiendish to believe. And worse, those fellows were constantly offering new suggestions that had no basis in fact in justification of their acts. We heard every one of the alibis offered during the days of 1917.

And the manufacturers. A flock of those fellows, again, not a large percentage, were found to be hiking their prices on goods already manufactured and ready for delivery. Now, I ask how on earth the prices on a finished product can be influenced by conditions that did not arise until after the work was done. The only answer I obtained to the question anywhere was that replacements would cost more, and there must be an inventory of sufficient size maintained to meet the demand. In other words, that limited group was taking the profit while the taking was good.

One can not examine the situation, as now presented without considering the stock market—the buying and selling of securities. It is not news to hear that quotations have boomed on every share of stock of a corporation that may sell an added cargo overseas. I believe it is fair to state, however, that this condition is one of pure gambling, and this speculation has added to the fright of consumers whose household budgets are limited.

People Are Frightened And Commence Hoarding

In discussing the situation around Washington, I found another influence, or what might be called another basis for excitement. It is quite unjustified, of course, but people nevertheless were swayed by it.

President Roosevelt has been talking about the dangers that exist, and how we must avoid them in order to stay out of the European cataclysm. Heads of government agencies everywhere have been echoing the sentiment. There can be no argument: this nation must stay out and must help to keep all of the nations of North and South America out of the stream of molten lava that is spreading through the belligerent nations. It may be a necessary evil then, an unavoidable phase of world affairs, that people are frightened and seek to hoard. The tragedy of it is that the unprincipled element I have referred to is in a position to capitalize upon such a circumstance.

But to get down to cases, let me repeat that there has been no increase worth noting in wages, in the costs of raw materials. There has been no increase whatever in transportations costs. There has been no increase in overhead expenses of grower or producer or manufacturer or wholesaler and jobber or retailer. All of these may come, and probably will come some time, but they have not arrived and when anyone attempts to justify profiteering prices, that individual should be asked to show how and where those increases have had their origin. My guess is that, for the time being at least, most of these price increases are due largely to racketeering.

Public Sentiment Is Only Force to Work Effectively

And what will be the result of all of these things? I said early they would react on all business, good business as well as the rats. The government can not do anything about it. Public sentiment is the only force that can operate effectively, and public sentiment ought to exert its pressure.

There will be a lot of talk about government control and there will be half-baked, and even quarter-baked schemes offered in abundance—all with a serious desire to break the grip of the small element that has started this wave of fright, higher prices and more fright. Of course, it is unlikely that there will be any legislation result, because as far as I can find out there is no sound and workable method by which government can reach the scoundrels responsible. Yet, there will be efforts made and there will be investigations, and the demagogues without any more idea of what to do than your runt pig will shout and harrangue and create new doubts as to any and every kind of business practice. And having as many crackpots in places of responsibility as we now have in the federal government, you can be sure that those boys will give birth to ideas in quintuplet quantities.

So, when one sums up all of the data, it is made to appear that all honest and fair-minded business men had better get together and use their own type of blackjacks on the elements within their ranks that constitute a cancer on trade.

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"Let me see now," replied the landlady; "which room did I promise you?"

"You said it was the room with the heavenly view."

"Ah, yes! Jane, show this gentleman the room with the skylight."

Obliging Fellow

"Does your company allow you to take tips?"

"No, lady, but if they asked if you gave me one, I'd lie like anything to save you."

It takes a man, on an average, 10 minutes to buy a hat. A woman may hunt for three weeks before she finds one to suit her. And then—hats being as they are nowadays—it won't.

Willing to Pay It

"How much do you still owe on your car?"

"Only a grudge against the man who sold it to me."

Wrong Number

"Jones isn't too pleased he's got twins. He only wanted one child."

"Well, what do you expect? He married a telephone girl."

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