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WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

Heavy Artillery, Planes Dominate Action As British Strike at Rommel Positions; See 10½ Billion Farm Income for 1943; Baruch Urged to Make Manpower Study

(EDITOR'S NOTE: When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of Western Newspaper Union's news analysts and not necessarily of this newspaper.) Released by Western Newspaper Union.



The above radiophoto from Cairo, Egypt, shows one result of the initial Allied thrust against the Axis in the western desert. A member of Marshal Rommel's Afrika Korps lies dead in the dust following the capture of a forward strong point in the Nazi lines.

SOUTH PACIFIC

Costly Exchange

When Navy Secretary Frank Knox told his press conference that Jap fleet units had retired from the scene of action around Guadalcanal and that the "first round of the battle" was over naval experts began trying to figure out who got the decision in the encounter. U. S. citizens heard the bad news first: the navy had lost the destroyer Porter and an aircraft carrier. (This was in addition to the loss of the carrier Wasp, announced earlier.) This brought to a total of four plane carriers that have been destroyed by the Japs in this war.

Then came news of a bit brighter note: Before the Japs left the area to "lick their wounds" and return for more action, U. S. forces had damaged two aircraft carriers, two battleships and three cruisers. More than 100 enemy airplanes were destroyed and about 50 others probably destroyed in what the navy described as the greatest battle yet fought in the Solomons area.

But the most important result of this heavy sea and air fighting was that it brought at least temporary relief to the hard-pressed marine and army units holding their positions on Guadalcanal itself. The Jap objective in launching the big battle had been to dislodge these outnumbered units who in mid-August had pushed the Japs out.

Meanwhile, dispatches from U. S. headquarters in Australia revealed that land-based army planes had been slashing constantly at Jap positions in the areas of the Buin-Faisi harbor in the northern Solomons and at Rabaul, New Britain island. Forty Jap ships were reported hit in a ten-day period. All of this meant much-needed diversion of Jap strength which was directed at capture of the Solomons, and then pushing forward to cut supply lines from the U. S. to Australia.

DESERT WARFARE:

Allied Air Umbrella

Slam-bang warfare continued on the Alamein line between the Mediterranean sea and the Qattara depression in Egypt as Britain's eighth army struck sledgehammer blows at German and Italian positions.

Although Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's forces struck back savagely, the British infantry held on to early gains. Protected by hundreds of guns and a supreme Allied air umbrella, the infantry jolted enemy troops loose from another section of the Alamein line.

The great tank battles of previous campaigns in the desert were missing in the initial onslaught of the new British drive. Heavy artillery and planes played the dominant role. American fliers strengthened the drive, sweeping over enemy areas, shooting up troop concentrations, tanks and airfields.

Cairo reports to British newspapers said that Allied forces had "trapped several thousand Axis troops" in a narrow pocket west of El Alamein near the Mediterranean coast.

While it was the avowed intention of the British command to destroy Rommel and his army, some sources saw another effect: Germany might be forced to withdraw German planes and men from Russia to meet the even more critical threat on the desert.

FARM INCOME:

Increase to Continue

Estimating the net farm income for 1942 at \$9,800,000,000, including government payments, the department of agriculture forecast that next year's net income will total approximately \$10,500,000,000.

The 1942 figure is about \$1,000,000,000 above the previous record of 1919, the department said. Total agricultural production this year is nearly 12 per cent greater than the record set in 1941, and 40 per cent greater than in 1918.

The department stated "October estimates indicated, for the first time, that the corn crop this year may exceed the record set in 1920; and it is being grown on 12 per cent less acreage. Abundant feed supplies and good prices are expected to stimulate increased livestock production again next year. However, unless the weather is again exceptionally favorable it is unlikely that crop production will equal the volume of 1942, when per acre yields appear to be averaging 13 per cent above previous records."

The department reported that military and lend-lease food purchases next year are expected to be 50 per cent greater than in 1942 and will take one-fifth of current farm production. Civilian demands will continue to advance slowly and prices for farm products in 1943 under ceiling limitations will be about 6 per cent above the average estimated for all of 1942.

LABOR SUPPLY:

Untapped Source

Even as he disclosed tentative plans for the nation-wide registration of women for work in war industries, President Roosevelt stated that the administration has reached no decision on means of solving the critical man-power problem. He warned against premature conclusions that plans for nation service or "labor draft" legislation have been abandoned.

The President pointed out that legislation will be necessary before the registration of women could be ordered. He emphasized that plans call only for the registration of women (between 18 and 65), and that there are no plans for a labor draft of women.

He stated that his recent meeting with the AFL-CIO labor war cabinet followed this general line:

With approximately 6,000,000 men now in uniform, there are not very many remaining to fill future needs of war industries, which are expected to require from four to five million additional workers. Although the labor supply problem looks satisfactory for the immediate present, wisdom dictates that it be studied from the long-range viewpoint. The registration of women is concerned with these future war needs, it was pointed out.

Baruch Study?

Meanwhile, the board of directors of the United States Chamber of Commerce proposed that the Baruch committee, which studied the rubber problem, now turn to a study of the man-power shortage. The board's statement said that "of the many serious problems now confronting this nation and its people, the problem of the proper use of man-power is undoubtedly paramount."

RUSSIAN FRONT:

Initiative Reversed

While the Germans continued to grind forward across the Nalchik plains in the Caucasus sector the Russians had taken up the initiative in key regions further north. Stalingrad communique were often similar in their content. This was typical of Russian announcements: "Soviet troops repulsed enemy attacks. In certain sectors our troops counterattacked and forged ahead somewhat."

Neutral military observers saw in the news from Russia that the Nazis had shifted the main weight of their drive to the Caucasus mountains. There the fury of the attack was unabated. Definitely the Russians were fighting defensive actions all along this front. Always the Soviet claimed the infliction of heavy losses of Nazi men and machines as they retreated before the furious, continuous onslaught.

IDLE DOLLARS:

Are Slackers

Attributing the rise of money in circulation to the demands of war financing and huge wartime payrolls, Federal Reserve officials in Washington at the same time declared in effect that "idle dollars are slacker dollars." Yet there are "comparatively few" dollars being hoarded among the more than \$14,000,000,000 now in circulation.

Treasury department and Federal Reserve experts have been carefully watching for signs of hoarding but there is no indication that it is widespread among U. S. citizens throughout the country.

A chart showing both money in circulation and wages paid shows that the upturn in the total money in circulation exactly parallels the rise in wages. While the 14 billion dollars is the largest amount ever in circulation in U. S. history government officials explained that any upturn in business as widespread as the present war spending always increases the demand for currency because it places cash in the pockets of those people without bank connections.

FOOD PROBLEM:

Gets Attention

Although little official news came from Washington, it was reported that President Roosevelt is studying an urgent proposal for the appointment of an over-all administrator to stabilize the nation's confused food situation.

The recommendation, made by Donald M. Nelson, WPB chairman, with the approval of Secretary of Agriculture Wickard, named no specific candidate for the job. However, two frequently mentioned candidates are Milo Perkins, executive director of the Board of Economic Warfare, and Lee Marshall, food consultant to Nelson. Perkins was director of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration's surplus commodity food stamp plan during the depression.



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POSTWAR CHINA:

To Need Billions

China must have from five to ten billion dollars in foreign credits for postwar reconstruction, Foreign Minister T. V. Soong has reported to the People's Political Council in Chungking.

The foreign minister, according to authentic reports, made the following points:

The outcome of India's demands for independence from British rule is of deep concern to China. "The future of India is closely connected with the future of China," Soong said.

Germany will be defeated by England and the United States with gigantic land forces in Europe. Japan will be defeated with overwhelming naval forces in the Pacific.

Following the war, Japan will be forced to evacuate Manchuria, Korea and the Liukiu Islands. The latter areas will become sovereign states.

Washington Digest

War Man Power Problem Is Still Far From Solution

National Service Act Held Back; McNutt-Hershey Conflict Complicates Situation; Competition Keen as Ever.

By BAUKHAGE
News Analyst and Commentator.

WNU Service, 1343 H Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.

"Sorry, sir," said the waiter on the dining car, "we can only serve you one cup of coffee."

"Sorry, sir," said a somewhat weary voice of the hotel room service, "we can't serve you ham with your eggs, this is a meatless day."

And so a simple, wandering Washingtonian, who had stepped outside of the capital for a brief interlude, found out there was a war going on. Back in the shadow of the Capitol dome, I began to wonder whether, before long, when Uncle Sam passed his plate for a second helping the farmer would say: "Sorry, sir, this is helpless day on the farm, we aren't furnishing food any more."

When that happens, perhaps we'll get that national service act.

Behind the delay in settling the farm-labor problem and the other problems which have arisen because the government hasn't had the nerve to tell anybody but the soldiers where to go, what to do and when to do it, is a lot of honest uncertainty, some inter-departmental friction but chiefly plain fear of stepping on the public's toes.

Many believed that the public aren't afraid of their toes and are only waiting to be told what to do and the real solution may be the one offered by Wendell Willkie when he said in his report to the nation that "it is up to us to make our leaders give us more to do."

Distribution Problem

We have plenty of people to "do," but we are not distributing them properly, not giving the right people the right jobs. We are still letting people decide themselves what they are going to do, not telling them what is the thing they must do to win the war. When I reported last on the man-power problem I felt sure that by this time a national service act would be before congress. Congress has drawn up several of these acts but administration spokesmen have told them "not yet"; meanwhile piecemeal measures are offered.

The story behind the conflict between Paul McNutt's Man-Power commission and General Hershey's Selective Service system is an example of how sand gets into the gear-box when the President doesn't clamp down the lid and give orders.

Some of the New Dealers began to worry about the danger that McNutt might grow too big politically and it might be a harder job to sidetrack him at the 1944 Democratic national convention than it was last time. And goodness knows it was a painful process then. So they contrived to hand him the hottest potato, the job that would make more enemies than any other, head of the Man-Power commission. The presumption, according to these not altogether nonpartisan friends of McNutt, was that he would either fall down on the job or do it so well nobody would like him.

Meanwhile the theory was that he was bound to come into conflict with General Hershey. One or the other had to select the men for service: either McNutt would be given the power to tell Hershey whom he couldn't take for the army or Hershey would be given power to tell his draft boards whom they could take. So the battle was on.

No Separate Systems

Since then McNutt has come out and stated that he did not believe it was necessary to set up a separate system of selection—one for military, which already exists in the draft boards, and another to classify civilian service. But, under White House orders, he made it plain that he had no bill to submit to congress. His labor-management committee submitted its report directly to the President.

While all this has been going on the Selective Service system has been pacing the floor outside the Man-Power commission's door. The commission is supposed to advise Selective Service but for many months it refused to say aye, yes or no.

According to Selective Service officials the moment they had the opportunity they submitted a plan to take care of the one sore thumb of the man-power problem that threat-

ens to interfere with our eating, farm labor. The plan would:

1. Tell the farmer boys their patriotic duty is on the farm, that they must stay there. If they leave they would immediately be drafted.

2. Stop all voluntary recruiting. That, according to General Hershey, would at least stop the drain of farm labor and save the boys from the stigma of remaining in civilian clothes when other boys in non-essential jobs were joining up.

According to the Selective Service officials that proposal was sat on for six months while the cries of the farmer rose higher and higher.

Complaints to Hershey

Most of the complaints were directed at General Hershey. But his aides point out that Selective Service has taken far less men from the farms than the other two sirens that lure the men away from their prosaic jobs: One is the recruiting sergeant and the other is industry. The recruiting sergeant offers adventure with a patriotic background. Industry offers big pay and bright lights.

And to show how the competition for manpower still goes on among government agencies itself, Selective Service officials charge that the United States Employment service, which recruits men and women for industry, has been just as energetic as those handsome army, navy and marine sergeants, in recruiting the boys on the farm.

When, just before the elections, both Man-Power Commissioner McNutt and Selective Service Director Hershey both testified that there was no immediate need for a man-power bill they were probably glad that they could do so—which meant that it had probably been strongly indicated from higher up that they had better do so. For neither gentleman would care to make a blanket recommendation for a measure which might give the other the real authority in administering.

The measure will probably remain something to do tomorrow until it becomes clear that tomorrow's ham and eggs may depend on action today.

OWI Proves Boon

To Capital Writers

A stranger coming to Washington and watching the men and women filing into the White House executive offices for the semi-weekly press and radio conference with the President; or visiting the senate or the house of representatives on a day when important news is breaking when the press and radio galleries above the respective rostrums are filled, would think that Washington is pretty well covered for news.

There are more than 600 members of the press and radio galleries. There are many, many more reporters and broadcasters whose duties do not make them eligible for these groups.

But in addition to these men and women whose job it is to write about what is happening in your capital, 4,000 people who are spending between a million and two million dollars a month are hired by the government to disseminate information. The Office of War Information has 3,500 employees.

There are some 200 persons in the army public relations bureau and a hundred or so in the navy public relations. The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Nelson Rockefeller, has more than a hundred members in its public relations department. The persons doing similar work for the War Production board and the Office of Price Administration have a hundred and fifty more.

Of course, the old line agencies have their public relations staffs but we are just talking about the war news agencies.

As far as my own contact with the Office of War Information goes I must say its members have been a great help to me. If I run into a snarl of official dispatches, questionable rumors, I do what other news men do, call up the OWI and I usually get a very straight and satisfactory story.

But nursing us newsmen along is only half their job—the rest is disseminating information abroad—where it will do the most good—and don't ask who and when and where—that's not for publication.

Navy Photographers Compile Records of Operations on 7 Seas

Compiling a permanent record of tactics and training, photography has assumed new dimensions in the U. S. navy. The camera, still and motion, records test flights, such as shown in the picture below, and accurately shows mistakes and possibilities for improvement. In addition, photography long has been known for its value in reconnaissance, and is rapidly becoming one of the most highly desired mediums for the training of personnel.

U. S. navy photographers are scattered all over the world, compiling this day by day record of operations, training, and battle heroism. Through their skill and bravery the public, too, is getting a graphic first-hand account of front line action in which American fighting men are participating. These photographs are typical of what is being done with the camera by U. S. navy photographers.



The sober expression on the faces of these young parachutists indicate that it is the final inspection before going aloft. These students at the Lakehurst (N. J.) naval air station have spent 16 weeks learning how to inspect, pack and maintain 'chutes. They will now jump from the 'chute they have packed.



All is O. K. so far with this student parachute rigger (above, left). Lower left: One-man rubber life rafts are standard equipment in all navy single seat fighters. CO2 inflates raft in a minute.

Circle: Safe! With a small store of concentrated food and water, pilot can stay afloat until rescued.

Below: A coastguardsman inspects derelict before it is destroyed.