Three Years of War

The war is three years old on Sept. 1st or Sept. 3d, depending on which you believe it began, when Hitler tore into Poland Sept. 1, 1939, or when England and France declared war on Germany Sept. 3, 1939. How is the United Nations' balance sheet at the end of the third year?

Far be it from us to add to anybody's store of complacency. We do feel, however, that there are grounds for cautious optimism, despite the fact that the summer of 1942 was generally gloomy for our side.

We base our optimism mainly on the fact that the war is still going on at all. It was said often in the first year or so that Hitler had to win quickly if he was to win at all. Lacking an early break-through to big supplies of raw materials, he was expected to exhaust himself.

There was no such early break-through. Hitler swiftly conquered all of Europe that he wanted, except European Russia. But Europe was in fine fettle after their winter. The general belief still was that the war is still going on at all. It was said that the Germans would invade England before the moon waned.

Things don't look too bright for our side for the near future. Japan dealt us a staggering blow at Pearl Harbor, and followed that up by grabbing a Pacific empire which will probably last into the full moon kept Allied sympathizers all over the world on tenterhooks, wondering whether the Germans would invade England before the moon waned.

Don't Worry Your Soldier

We'd thought about this matter several times, but hesitated to say anything about it, on the theory that probably 90% of soldiers' families and friends had already figured it out for themselves. Now, however, the American Red Cross and the British government have seen fit to utter on the subject, so it would appear to be important.

It's simply this: Don't write any more bad news than absolutely necessary to the soldier(s) in whom you personally are interested. Specifically, soft-pedal family fights, financial pinches, wartime privations. Omit them entirely from your letters, unless there is something your soldier can do about them without hurting himself. Don't tip him off that his girl is dating somebody else, even if she is; or that his wife is not devoting quite 24 hours per day to pining piously for him; or that his young brother is feeling his oats and ought to be "spoken to" by mail from Australia, India or Iceland.

Letters bearing such tidings have driven far too many of our men on our 31 fronts to melancholy, chronic worry, or occasional inefficiency—any one of which is bad for the total fighting effectiveness of the Armed Forces. By just not writing such letters, you can contribute heavily to your own soldier's prowess.

Arnold's Patent Medicine

THURMAN ARNOLD, Assistant U. S. Attorney General in charge of antitrust legislation, is asking Congress to give him some fancy new laws relating to patents and patent rights. Mr. Arnold wants the Attorney General given power to cancel any patent which is being used "unreasonably" to limit "the supply of any article moving in interstate commerce."

That is, Mr. Arnold wants an executive department of the government given the powers of a court, plus. The "plus" comes in by virtue of the fact, as we read Arnold's recommendations, that the Attorney General would have the power of economic life and death over patents and patent holders, but would not have to give them the safeguards which surround real lawsuits in real courts. The Attorney General, as we get it, would decide whether any patent was being used "unreasonably."

It is all an aftermath of the terrific uproar kicked up by Mr. Arnold a few months ago in the matter of the Standard Oil-I. G. Farbenindustrie pre-war agreements on synthetic rubber and related products. In that excitement, Mr. Arnold made a record for frivolity, recklessness and exaggeration which we have seldom seen equaled by a supposedly responsible public official.

We think it would be a grave mistake for Congress to legalize the patent medicine offered it by this public official. Judicial power over patents and patent owners is too great a power to give to any executive department of the government. Especially is it too great a power to give to any department inhabited by Thurman Arnold.

The Attorney General's office already has power, anyway, to crack down on persons or firms using patents to buttress monopolies. All that the Attorney General need do is to invoke our ancient antitrust laws, draw up a proper complaint under them, and fight a lawsuit to victory in the courts, giving the defendant as well as the government a fair show. Isn't that enough? It is certainly in the American spirit.

On the chance, however, that our patent system could be improved, the President has appointed a Patents Planning Commission, under the chairmanship of Charles F. Kettering, to study the whole question and report on it. We'd suggest urgently that Congress wait for the Kettering committee's report before monkeying with the patent laws. More than enough people have now taken more than enough of Mr. Arnold's bum steers and wild accusations at face value.
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