

Newsweek

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The Opinion Patient

Public Pulse Beats for Russia
but Throbs Opposition to War



American public opinion had its pulse felt so often last week that there seemed to be more doctors than patients, and as many diagnoses as doctors.

Analyzing opinion on the German-Russian war, Dr. George Gallup found 72 per cent desiring a Russian victory, against only 4 per cent wanting Germany to win, but also found 47 per cent predicting a German victory, as opposed to 22 per cent expecting Russia to win. Of the 12 per cent whose attitude toward aiding Britain was changed by the Nazi-Communist struggle, two-thirds desired increased aid to Britain. Sentiment for declaring war fell from 24 to 21 per cent after Germany's invasion of Russia, but simultaneously the percentage urging American convoys of war materials to Britain rose from 55 to 56.

On the question, "Shall the United States enter the war to help Britain defeat Hitler?" The New York Daily News and The Chicago Tribune found war sentiment ranging from 3 out of 10 voters in New York State to 2 out of 11 in Illinois. Encouraged by these polls, Gen. Robert E. Wood, the America First Committee's chairman, asked the Administration to take a nationwide advisory referendum on the question and dared President Roosevelt to seek a Congressional declaration of war.

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Public Pulse

Sen. Burton K. Wheeler also challenged President Roosevelt to ask Congress to declare war as "the honest thing to do." Thereupon, without mentioning the isolationist generalissimo's name, Postmaster General Frank C. Walker, in a radio address from Butte, Mont., his former and the Senator's present home, declared: "You who proclaim . . . that an attack on these shores is fantastic . . . speak the language of Hitler himself."

Lunching at the White House, Wendell L. Willkie assured Mr. Roosevelt that the American people, like the press, overwhelmingly approved the occupation of Iceland and would follow the President's leadership "in any necessary moves . . . to the extent of getting aid to England."

Meanwhile, a NEWSWEEK analysis found that the mail of 30 senators, evenly divided between isolationists, interventionists, and middle-of-the-roaders, had dwindled to apathetic proportions, with few senators receiving more than one-fifth of the mail which deluged them during the Lend-Lease debate. Noninterventionist letter writers apparently were taken aback by the *fait accompli* in Iceland, and the anti-Russian uproar on which isolationists had counted failed to develop. What letters were still being received on foreign policy were predominantly isolationist, ranging from about 10 to 1 for noninterventionists like Wheeler, Walsh, Nye, Brooks, La Follette, Taft, and Tobey, to a 50-50 division reported by the offices of such interventionists as Pepper, Lee, and Barkley. Much of the mail appeared to be inspired, especially by America First's Chicago and New York City chapters.