

The World Observer

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Russian attack on Finland

Karelian Isthmus conquered. Finns driven back to Wyborg.

Helsinki. Not without surprise, Russia made her threats to the ex-Duchy of Finland real. On 30th November the first Russian troops crossed the border, and on 1st January Russian forces launched an assault all along the front, prepared by intense shelling by artillery, naval ordnance in the bay of Leningrad, and bomber aircraft. After the battle in the sky went fortunate for the Russians, the bulk of Russian armed forces concentrated in the 1st Tank Army pushed through the Finnish defenses at the Karelian Isthmus. The thrust could only be stopped short before Wyborg, where strong Finnish reserves had been prepared behind the so-called Mannerheim Line, a line of fortifications with infantry bunkers and shelters that have been secretly installed during the last three months.



Finnish patrol at the Mannerheim Line

France votes for People's Front Government

Paris. A coalition between the Communist faction and the Socialist faction, the so-called People's Front, form a new Government under Prime Minister Maurice Thorez. The last two people's front governments under socialist leader Léon Blum were of short lasting (1936-37 and 1938) due to inner-

political struggles that have shaken France since the world economic crisis. This time the communists under Thorez form the largest faction in parliament. The communists started their campaign under the motto 'peace and freedom for all people'. As his first official act, Thorez asked the British Expeditionary Force to leave French soil, expressed the friendship of the French people with the Russian brothers and demanded excuses for the German aggression. 'We thought that Herr Hitler had promised us to keep Alsace-Lorraine for all times. If he is a man to be trusted, I call him to sign a peace treaty with the Republic of France', said new Foreign Minister Léon Blum after his office oath.



Left: Prime Minister Maurice Thorez. Right: Foreign Minister Léon Blum

FRENCH PALIAMENT ELECTION RESULTS

Party	Candidate	Votes
Communists	Maurice Thorez	31%
Socialists	Léon Blum	22%
Conservatives	M.-G. Gamelin	28%
Nationals	Pierre Laval	17%

General Maurice-Gustave Gamelin, the candidate for the conservatives, reverts to taking charge of the French 1st Army Group in Alsace-Lorraine. In a last interview, he blamed his own party for the lack of support and public profilation. He also blamed the nationals for not taking a clear stance against Hitler. Gamelin fielded a pro-war strategy. His last words before leaving the political scene were 'my fellow Frenchmen should be more concerned over an aggressive and strong Germany, that strives for world dominance. But what more can I say? C'est la vie!'

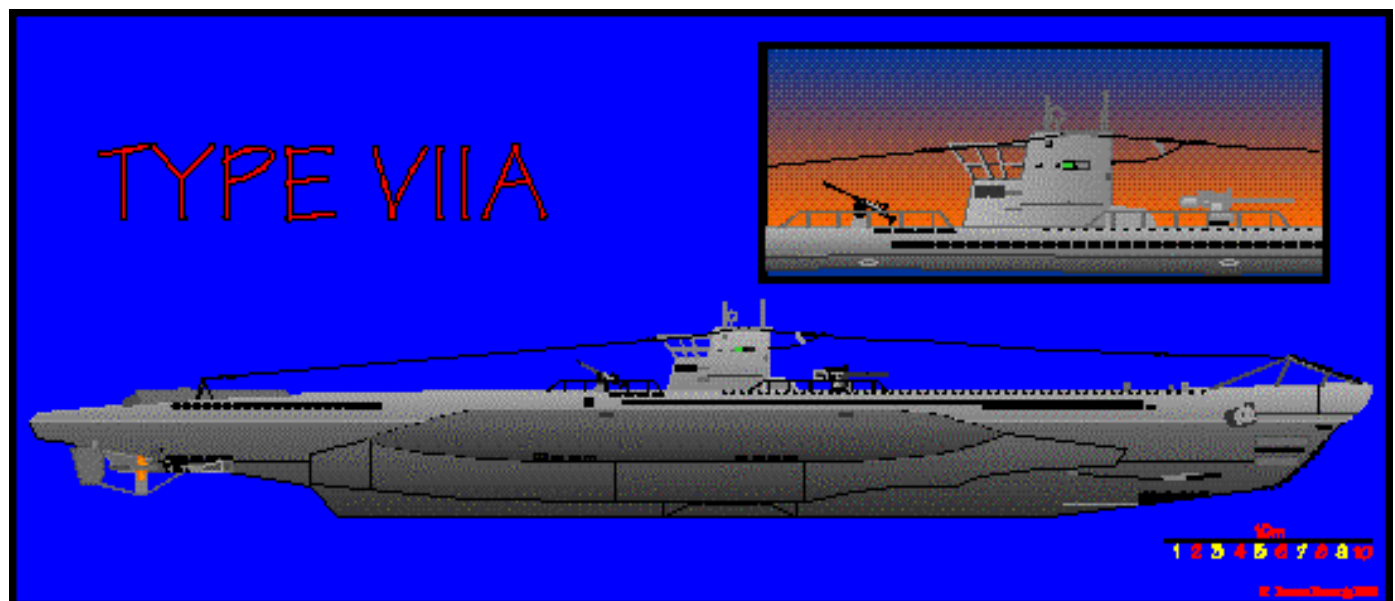
Sino - Japanese conflict heats up

Southern China was again the scene of heavy fighting between the Japanese Kwantung army and the forces of the national Chinese, or Kuomintang, government. The Japanese launched a heavy assault on the Chinese city of Hangchow. The Japanese pulled off a Nanking-style combined land-air-naval assault by units from all service branches. The Chinese defenders managed to blunt the attacking wedge of the Japanese assault. The Japanese, who could not risk bleeding out all their forces defending Changchou and Shanghai, halted their offense after first severe initial losses. In a concerted action, Japanese forces also attacked north of Amoy, south of Wuhan and in the Canton area. At Canton, the Chinese were able to launch a counterattack, but failed to make any substantive ground. The Japanese claim to have pierced the Chinese ring of defense at Amoy. Western analysts already speculate whether this could mean further territorial gains in southern China.



Japanese cruiser in the waters around Shanghai and Hangchow

U-boat attack legal?



An FBI investigation of the US ship has revealed that they were delivering a small number of declared military infantry arms to the British Forces in Northern Ireland. This is prohibited by federal law under the Neutrality Act. The captain and the company have been charged for these crimes accordingly. It is still questionable whether the reported attack from the submarine, possibly a Type VIIA 'atlantic boat' (see picture), was in accordance with international law. This prohibits attacking a merchant vessel before demanding surrender of the contraband.

However the case was closed after the verdict of conduct against the Neutrality Act. The court could not be convinced in the truth of the Captain's statement as a charged criminal. German chancellor Hitler declared that German submarines received clear orders to not fire upon US ships. Perhaps this is the reason why profit-makers do not fear to break the law and ship arms to belligerents.

Mussolini's Speech

The Italian newspaper Nova Republica published a speech from 'Duce' Benito Mussolini before the nation, in which he highlights again his demand for peace and security in Europe.

To the people of Italy

My dear fellow Italians ones again Europe is in turmoil but I am confident that we shall steer clear of this conflict.

I truly hope that the rest of the world will help to resolve it as quickly as possible. King Leopold of Belgium and my self have tried to start mediating in

the conflict but to no avail.

Germany have answered positively but the Great Britain have ignored these attempts showing no will for peace. I sincerely hope that the British Prime Minister will come to his senses and help to stop the conflict before it spreads to the rest of the world.

Also the attitude of the president of the United States is disturbing. I only hope that his attempt to preserve American trade also includes the rest of the neutral world and that it is meant as an attempt to keep the conflict from spreading.

I am happy to announce that Italy have signed a treaty of friendship with Iran. We have signed this treaty to ensure the sovereignty and the peaceful growth of the nations of Iran and Italy.

Glory to Italy.

Il Duce

Short Biography of Benito Mussolini

Mussolini's rise to power was rapid; his Fascist Party Blackshirts marched into Rome in 1922, a year before Hitler's failed first attempt to seize power, the Munich Beer Hall Putsch, landed the German in prison. By the time Hitler became the Fuehrer (Leader) of Germany, Mussolini had been "IL DUCE" (Leader) of Italy for more than ten years. He had been successful in improving the Italian economy and bringing stability, as it was said, "He made the trains run on time" (by shooting someone if they didn't). His ambition was to regain for Italy the prestige and power.



Mussolini with Hitler

Benito Mussolini, "IL DUCE", Prime Minister of Italy, is an Axis European political leader. Like Hitler, he served in the First World War as a young man and dreamed of military glory in a Second War to come. Both returned from the First World War to find their countries in political and economic chaos and formed extremist political parties.



Signed postcard from Benito Mussolini

This led him to a program of militarization. Many Europeans felt that his visible successes in restoring Italy outweighed any "rumors" of police brutality. His 1935 invasion of Ethiopia was carried out with a ruthless disregard for world opinion, including the use of poison gas. When the British and French leaders condemned him for these acts, he looked elsewhere for allies and found Germany and Japan.

He joined Hitler in supporting the Fascist "Nationalist" side in the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War. This gained him an ally, Spanish Generalissimo Franco.

These facts must be taken into consideration when judging the peace appeals of a man



Mussolini as a young officer