

# The World Observer

January 31st, 1940

20 cents

## De Gaulle coups France

**Elected government imprisoned. Military reign established. War declared upon Germany.**

Paris. In a move that can only be depicted as stunning, Major General Charles de Gaulle, former commander of the French 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Corps moved his forces into Paris and seized with his troops the governmental buildings. Battle noises and smoke were heard early on January 16<sup>th</sup> by frightened Parisiennes, thinking of a German air raid. But to the utmost surprise, it appeared that French soldiers were fighting French. The Parliamentary Guard at first resisted de Gaulle's demands for clearing the building. After some shots were exchanged for half an hour, including some direct fire from de Gaulle's tanks, the security forces surrendered.

De Gaulle then removed the existing government and enthroned himself and a group of fellow officers loyal to him as the new 'congress'. The coup was obviously well-prepared in the capital. The majority of the military seems to favor the new government, but in the province, the support for the putschists is questionable.

The whole of France seems to have been paralyzed by this event, but resistance gradually formed at numerous cities all over France. Three days ago, the communist party exclaimed a nation-wide strike to resist the 'barbarous enactment of dictatorship'.

In another astonishing move, the new military government declared war upon the Reich in order to line up with England and project her inner problems to an outwards enemy. Which bill will eventually present itself to France the near future will probably tell.

### Charles de Gaulle

Who is this man, who so suddenly appeared on the stage of world politics? What are we to expect from him? A short survey on de Gaulle's life, exclusive in the World Observer.

De Gaulle was the second son of a Roman Catholic, patriotic and nationalist, upper-middle-class family. The family had produced historians and writers, and

his father taught philosophy and literature; but as a boy de Gaulle already showed a passionate interest in military matters. He was trained at the Military Academy of Saint-Cyr and, in 1913, as a young second lieutenant, joined an infantry regiment commanded by Colonel Philippe Pétain. De Gaulle was an intelligent, hard-working, and zealous young soldier and, in his military career, a man of original mind, great self-assurance, and outstanding courage. In World War I he fought at Verdun, was three times wounded, spent two years and eight months as a prisoner of war (during which time he made five unsuccessful attempts to escape), and was three times mentioned in dispatches.



### De Gaulle - hope or despair of France?

After a brief visit to Poland as a member of a military mission, a year's teaching at Saint-Cyr, and a two-year course of special training in strategy and tactics at the École Supérieure de Guerre (War College), he was promoted by Marshal Pétain in 1925 to the Staff of the Conseil Supérieur de la Guerre (Supreme War Council). During 1927-29 he served as major in the army occupying the Rhineland and could see for himself both the potential danger of German aggression and the inadequacy of the French defense. He also spent two years in the Middle East and then, having been promoted to lieutenant colonel, spent four years as a member of the secretariat of the Conseil Supérieur de la Défense Nationale (National Defense Council).

De Gaulle's writing career began with a study of the relation of the civil and military powers in Germany (*La Discorde chez l'ennemi*, 1924; "Discord Among the Enemy"), followed by lectures on his conception of leadership, *Le Fil de l'épée* (1932; *The Edge*

of the Sword). A study on military theory, *Vers l'armée de métier* (1934; *The Army of the Future*), defended the idea of a small professional army, highly mechanized and mobile, in preference to the static theories exemplified by the Maginot Line, which was intended to protect France against German attack.

His views made him unpopular with his military superiors, and the question of his right to publish under his name a historical study, *La France et son armée* (1938; *France and Her Army*), led to a dispute with Marshal Pétain. De Gaulle was then given command of the first French tank force, and promoted to Major General, September 1939. After Germany has attacked Poland and Franco-German war was becoming increasingly likely, the obvious attempt was to keep him busy at a frontline unit where he would have no time to write books and opportunity to rebel against his superiors.

## **Declaration of War**

**For the past four years, the German Empire has spread its malign influence ever further throughout Europe. The latest acts of perfidy in Lithuania and Poland are unacceptable.**

**Hitler's soldiers mass upon the border of France. Although we offered no provocation, no fewer than fifty sons of France have been lost in the recent months. We have asked for guarantees of peace and instead receive open threats.**

**For these reasons, the country of France hereby declares war on the nation of Germany. All of our power and resources are to be used to force Germany to relinquish what it has illegitimately taken and pay reparations when this war is over.**

**May God bless us in our endeavours.**

**by unanimous consent of the military congress of  
France  
1-10-1940**

# **Scandal!**

**The president's plans to endanger American lives**

Washington. Senator Durhan has publicly accused the president of deliberately putting American life

at jeopardy by a directive given to the US Navy this month. In said directive, the navy was to send American merchantmen and warships to waters around Britain and Germany, the two major European belligerents. The Senator was aroused by a request from the navy to the civil Ship Registry Authority, demanding information about US shipping routes and vessels for being considered for such a task. The speaker of congress, surprised by this alarming news, submitted an inquiry to the White House. The president's secretary confirmed that a directive was issued to the Navy concerning 'civil and military shippings abroad'. Durhan, who claims to have knowledge from an official Pentagon memorandum, said the mission's sole purpose was to 'make holidays in the minefields'. Asked of the motives for the strange order the White House announced an official declaration in February. Said Durhan, 'the motives remain completely diffuse. When the neutrality act was passed the secretary of state in a speech declared that no US ship shall be endangered in war zones and that warring nations should provide their own transport for trading goods. America will not allow herself to be dragged blindly into a new disastrous war with another Lusitania. I say we will not sacrifice one American life for the struggles of other nations'.

Meanwhile, president Roosevelt held a speech before the press:

'My fellow Americans, I have come to you this evening to address German demands that threaten US Free trade. I have recently received a letter from Adolf Hitler, Dated December 10, 1939, that proposed a formal agreement that in exchange for Germany guaranteeing safe passage of US shipping through German controlled waters, the US would have to agree not to trade or assist Germany, Great Britain or France. My fellow Americans, I say to you and to Mr. Hitler that the United States shall never negotiate America's use of international waters to conduct free trade with any nation. The very notion that Mr. Hitler would believe that he could bargain the lives of Americans and American shipping for the restriction of trade necessary for the US economy is insulting and indicative of what we are hearing as to how Germany conducts business. Let me state once and for all, the United States of America will maintain the use of international waters and engage in unrestricted free trade. Neither Germany, nor any other nation shall interfere with US shipping and trade, without facing harsh reprisals. Mr. Hitler, this is not Poland, this is not

Lithuania...this is the United States of America. If you or any other German orders an attack on any ship flying a US flag, America can and will take any and all actions to guarantee the ability of the United States to use all international waters. The United States is neutral, but not neutered in this European Conflict. While America takes no active role in this War, it does insist that all combatants respect American neutrality. America will not become a target of opportunity for any nation. Therefore, I say to you Mr. Hitler, America shall continue to trade with all trade partners, including Germany, and it shall hold Germany and any other nation accountable for any attack launched against a vessel flying the US Flag. Good night, and God Bless.'

## Russia gains ground on the Mannerheim Line

Helsinki. A Russian army under the supreme command of Marshal Semyon Timoshenko attacked the Finnish defenders at the Mannerheim Line north of Wyborg. The Finns, outnumbered and outmatched by superior firepower, withdrew across the frozen lakes.

The Finns claim that despite severe losses on their own, after they successfully attacked supply dumps near a Russian HQ, winter has finally taken its toll from the Russian attackers, which were far too numerous to find housing and shelter in the largely uninhabited Finnish forests.



**Russian tank in the Karelian snow**

Meanwhile Russian warships and heavy bombers have turned the city of Wyborg into a blazing inferno. Due to the extreme winter, fire brigades could not effectively counter the fire due to the frozen water supply systems. Most wooden houses burnt to the ground. Thousands of people have fled over crowded streets to Helsinki.

Field Marshal Mannerheim, supreme commander of the Finnish forces, said, 'Our forces were neither directly attacked nor weakened by the bombardment, except that our soldiers were courageously fighting the fire and rescuing people when they should be manning the front. I condemn the vicious attack by the Russians on innocent civilians and private property'.

## Scandinavian Union approaching reality

Helsinki. The Pan-Scandinavian conference held at Helsinki on 7-15.1.1940, in midst of a war raging between the Bolshevik Empire and the small ex-Russian duchy of Finland, came to a new stage of uniting to what the Swedish call a 'Nordic League'. The conference was attended by the emissaries from Sweden, Norway and Finland, an observer from Denmark and Germany's foreign minister Ribbentrop. Not without surprise, the driving nations behind the Union, Finland and Sweden, very soon agreed to a draft of a bill to form the so-called 'Union of Independent Scandinavian States'. The Swedes have been fully aware that this will almost surely drag them into the current conflict. The Norwegians have indicated their principally will to join the Union after peace has been established. The Danish, surprisingly to all, declared that they will not stay behind the coming evolution, should the majority of Scandinavian countries form a political Union.

### Article I

The signing countries agree to form a Union of Independent Scandinavian States (UISS). The states remit their sovereignty on the fields of foreign relations and representation, armaments production and procurement, and on armed forces. All other sovereignties shall remain with the member states.

### Article II

Four federal authorities will be formed: The representative and foreign authorities, with the President of the UISS and its foreign ministry. The Armed Forces High Command with responsibility for the army. The Naval command and armaments ministry. The Scandinavian culture and law exchange authority.

### Article III

Presidency is rotated among the member states. For the first four-year period, the position of president of the UISS shall be taken by Sweden. The first Supreme Commander shall be taken by the Finnish Republic. The first Sea Lord and armaments minister shall be taken by the Kingdom of Norway. The fourth office shall be run by Sweden until a fourth member state joins the Union.

## **Sino-Japanese conflict spreads**

### **Japan conquers Hangchow**

Tokyo. In a move that show much parallels to the conquest of Nanking two years ago, Japanese army and navy forces launched a massive assault on the Chinese city of Hangchow. Under the direct fire support of Japanese battleships, which closed very near the shore at the bay of Shanghai that extends towards Hangchow, the Japanese succeeded in their relentless attack that deserted large parts of the old town.

### **China launches counterattack**

Chungking. A Chinese army under command of General Stilwell, most notable mercenary commander in service of the National Chinese, or Kuomintang, Government, attacked a Japanese garrison at Kanton. Despite the Japanese superiority in guns, which were by large due to a Japanese navy task force sent in support of the garrison division, the Chinese managed to liberate the city from Japanese oppression. With a clear superiority in troops of 10:1 to 15:1 the Japanese were finally forced to surrender. Bad winter weather aided the Chinese campaign as the Japanese air superiority was clearly reduced.

China also reports success in attacks north of the city of Wuhan, where Kuomintang forces have driven a wedge into the Japanese defense lines. Harry Hopkins, secretary to President Roosevelt has expressed his congratulations to the efforts of National China in her 'fight for freedom'. He has reminded the nation that 'despite neutrality we (the US) should not hesitate to support freedom fighters in the world morally and financially as much as we can afford'.

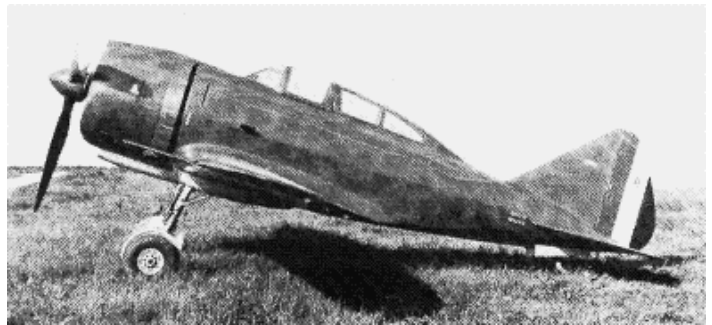
### **Economic crisis in Britain**

London. Britain this month was shaken by the largest economic crisis in this century. The disaster started when German submarines successfully man-

aged to sink almost a million tons of British overseas shipping, and causing other ships to flee or dump their cargo. The British government, really not knowing what to do, aggravated the crisis by slacking down social security and health budgets this month. As a result, unemployed and poor across the United Kingdom live under the worst conditions since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many people suffered from hunger. Insufficient medical supply combined with the cold winter this year has caused already several hundred deaths, said Doctor Lipton of the Royal Medical Society.

## **Italo-Persian Pact**

Rome. Details about the agreement between the Shah Reza Pahlewi of Persia and 'Duce' Benito Mussolini of Italy have been unveiled by the Italian newspaper 'Uomo Patriae'. According to these reports, Italy guarantees the current borders of Persia against any foreign aggression. Italy furthermore promises to protect the borders and government of Persia against any aggression from interior and exterior foes. In return, Persia grants bases to the Italian armed forces, as well as ports, barracks and airfields on Persian territory. Part of the deal shall entail the delivery of 150 modern Italian aircraft of the type Reggiane Re-2000. The paper rumored that Germany will be alongside the pact, too, providing new arms and technology for the mediterranean dictatorship - which will in turn soon show up at the borders of Iraq, Turkey, India and the Soviet Union.



**Italian war exports may soon be rocketing with this new, versatile and fast fighter plane, the Reggiane Re-2000.**