

# Dublin Chronicle

June 30th 1941

Issue 23

## GERMAN DRIVE INTO RUSSIA PICKS UP PACE

**After 3 months of hard pressed fighting and limited movement in the lines the Germans appear to have broken open the Soviet defences in the North and South.**

**The city of Odessa was occupied with minimal opposition earlier in the month as German troops launched a devastating drive out of the Balkans towards the southern Ukraine.**

Soviet forces were hard pressed to hold the Germans and once the front lines collapsed they appeared little if any reserves to plug the whole, allowing the Germans to press on through the Soviet lines at Kishinev and on towards the Black Sea. Within hours of the Soviet Marine forces and 4th Army break-

ing apart the Germans had two corps in the city of Odessa, isolating the entire Soviet 3rd Army to their south west, this force is now surrounded by Axis troops and it is already known that the Soviet Fleet has long ceased to exist as a fighting force, so it would appear that these many thousands of Soviet Troops look set to surrender or be destroyed.

The speed of the advance seems to have caught not only the Russians of guard but also the Romanians who were preparing their own assault towards Odessa, only to hear



that the Germans had successfully entered the city from the north west, opening the door to southern Ukraine.

## German forces hold Soviet attack and strike to the 'Red' rear

**The Soviet Army appears to have launched a major last ditch effort in the north to retake Vitebsk, only to have victory snatched from them.**



Preparing to hold the Soviet advance.

German armour and infantry launched a strike out of the Vitebsk salient northwards at the Soviet 3rd Tank Army, one of the most elite of the Soviet Army Formations, in an effort to isolate the Soviet left flank.

The operation was quickly held by the Soviets who had been preparing for their own attack and thus were in an ideal position to pick-off the advancing German tanks.

Meanwhile some 18 divisions of Soviet infantry launched a massed attack on the Vitebsk area, defended by some 9 divisions of the German Army. The fighting was bitter and

the Soviets eventually managed to push the Germans from their front lines, at which point the German forces from the failed northern advance and fresh troops from the west arrived to bolster the defense, the new arrivals being able to steady the German line and then push the Russians back.

As this action was ensuing and the defenders of Smolensk were added to the actions around Vitebsk, a German heavy armoured force moved on Smolensk from the Gomel salient, taking the city from the rear, bitter fighting then ensued and is believed to still be going on, as militia units rally to the defense.

## Royal Navy Defeated

**A force of British Cruisers and destroyers despatched to sink the Admiral Scheer is reported lost.**

It would seem that the British underestimated the German Heavy Cruiser, now believed to be heading out into the Atlantic, where British merchant traffic is at its height, again the British fail to preserve their naval dominance.

## Spanish Front Stagnates

**British forces appear set to run for the sea again, with all forward motion having stopped, once more.**

German and Spanish forces appear to have put the breaks on the British advances in Iberia, as they rush divisions from France to the front lines.

The British are now caught in the dilemma of withdrawal or landing more troops, when they are already over committed around the world, yet to withdraw will send a terrible signal, and will be the 3rd major withdraw by the British from the continent.

If they do withdraw it is sure to send signals of defeat throughout the Allied world.



British Troops occupy Seville, but for how long?

## Indo China: end of the line.

**Japanese expansion in to Indo China appears all but at an end, as the Chinese and now allied forces move on the Marines forces of the Imperial Japanese Navy, their time ashore in Haiphong looks limited.**

An operation expected to last no more than a couple of months by the Japanese High Command has now run on for almost 5 months, with no sign of long term or short term success, the Allies being now in total control of the rest of Indo China and believed to be moving on the Malay Peninsular.

Japanese efforts to take Hanoi appear to have ended this month as their forces took to the defensive in anticipation of attacks by the KMT and Free French.



Allied Troops advance to the deep jungles and mountains to support the defence of Hanoi

If the build-up of forces continues it is inevitable that the Allies will seek to launch a massive attack on the key cities of Haiphong and Singapore, both taken in lightning raids by the Japanese.

The question must be; will the Japanese allow themselves to be pushed into the sea and take their first real defeat of the war, or will they look to reinforce their troops?

## Polish resistance continues

**Another month of desperate defense by the Polish resistance in southern Poland has been met with extreme force by the German Army.**

Reports from the region, although sketchy make it clear that the Germans have committed some 12 divisions to the subjugation of the Polish freedom fighters who appear to be fighting house to house, leaving little of the city of Katowitz intact.

## Lutwaffe hits hard at navy

**German aircraft are reported to have sunk two French Cruisers in Oran.**

In a lightning air raid the German fighter bombers struck heavily at the port and its surroundings, sinking two top of the line cruisers and causing heavy damage to the port, without any losses to their own.

## RAF takes hammering

**The RAF attempted to delay German build-ups in Spain to no avail this month.**

Elements of the British bomber force are reported to have lost up to 150 aircraft after being engaged by sizable forces of enemy fighters over central and northern Spain.

British bomber command, operating on faulty intelligence is reported to have launched a raid on elements of the German armoured advance, only to be met by key fighter groups of Luftlotte West which quickly destroyed British hopes of turning the tide in Spain.

# Italy v Great Britain

## The drifting tides.....War in the Desert

**The desert war has been one of the most one sided campaigns of the war for some time now, bar perhaps the German advance through the lowlands.**

The British have had free run of the desert for some months, pushing the Italians further east each month, whilst the Free French have been able to move westwards from Casablanca; in recent months to form a pincer movement on what is left of the Italian Army in North Africa.

The Italians have suffered numerous defeats along the way, including the loss of most of their fleet and the capture of their main supply depot in Tripoli.

Their luck has changed however in recent weeks. With the collapse of the French ,the Italians found themselves with a new fleet, perhaps not as modern as they would like, but when supplemented by their new Littorio class ships they form a sizable

and effective fighting force, that has yet to be challenged by the Royal Navy. Speaking of which this force one controlled the whole of the Med basin, but has now been missing from the area for over 3 months, during which time the tide has turned against the British, who now find themselves in full retreat.

Italian fortunes appear to have been changed by the addition of some good old fire power, in this case the addition of German Panzer units, which having been held in reserve had not been met by the British. Perhaps a little complacent, the British opted to continue their drive on Tunis using only infantry and light forces, which confronted by 3 armoured divisions were unable to put enough fire power out to hold the Italian advance.

The initial breaks in the line came when the British 2nd broke allowing the Italians to outflank the Light armoured group and destroy it to a man, turning then on the

withdrawing South African and mechanised forces that held what was left of the line.



Yes, he has plenty to smile about now!

With the Royal Navy no where to be seen and the allies pressed in Asia and Iberia the situation in North Africa looks even worse, for no one can say where the relief will come from, but it must come from somewhere, if the Italians can sort out their supply issues and the Germans can take Gibraltar then the Med will be lost to the allies and so will the link between the west and east, in fact it could well open the road for the Italians to drive on towards India linking up with the Japanese, or providing a second thrust into southern Russia in support of the Germans.

Of all of the theatres, this is the most fragile, both sides operate at the end of a precarious supply line, both sides operate with small forces in a vast theatre and both need control of the sea in order to hold any chance of success. The allies have done well to get as far as they have but then they have let the Italians off the hook by allowing them to ship in troops and supplies, so now it appears that it is Mussolini and Badoglio who hold the trump cards, but the next move lies with the British and their Allies, which direction will they choose?

