The Phoney War and The Winter War

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The Phoney War

September 3 1939-May 10 1940
Thesis and Guiding question:

Thesis: The Phony War held impacts on the German progression into France as well as the morale of the French army, resulting in a successful German attack and the continuing the progression of the war.

Question: What impacts did the Phony War have on the German invasion of France?
Phoney War

- Lasted until May 1940
- Known as Sitzkrieg; Sitting War
- Hopes the allies would stop fighting
- Allied terms for peace
  - Germany gets out of Poland and Czechoslovakia
  - Hitler must step down

Later resulted in Battle of France
Phoney War (continued)

- Was perpetuated by a cold winter.
- Britain dropped 13 tons Anti-Nazi propaganda calling for Hitler to be overthrown
- Poor discipline by the French.
Plan Yellow

Evolution over time:
Plan Yellow

Focused mainly on Blitzkrieg tactics.

Assumed that Netherlands and Belgium would fall quickly, so mostly only planned for France.

Old plan focused on invading South towards Paris.

Allies intercepted a copy of the plan, meaning, Gen. von Manstein had to revise a new one.
Plan Yellow (continued)

Main push now directed through Ardennes to the NW, while the force pushing towards Paris was mainly as a distraction.

Ironically, the Ardennes was the least defended area by the allies.

The German Blitzkrieg was successful.
The Winter War

Death To The Reds!
Beligerantes
Winter War Thesis and Guiding Question

Thesis: The Winter War showed the weaknesses to the previously highly-esteemed Red Army, thus ultimately leading to Hitler’s decision to initiate operation Barbarossa.

Guiding Question: What impact did the Soviet blunders in the Winter War have on the early stages of WWII?
The Great Purge of 1937

- 1937: Stalin executes or imprisons >500,000 military officers
- Army led by inexperienced commanders
Russian Command Structure

- (Nov. - Dec.) inexperienced commanders.
- Lack of flexibility on a small scale
- (Jan.-Mar.) Grigory Shtern and Semyon Timoshenko take full control
  - Much more tactical flexibility
Finnish Command Structure

Marshal Carl Gustaf Von Mannerheim

- Flexible

Kurt Wallenius
The Hanko Peninsula

- Tried to purchase
- Warm water port with access to the Baltic
- Benefits
  - Military base
  - Transportation
  - Ability to get to West Europe easier
Russian Objectives

- Strengthen northern border
- Gain territory
- Port of Hanko
Russian Forces

- 26 Divisions ~ 1.2 million men
- 1500 tanks
- 3000 aircraft
Finnish Defences

- 10 infantry Divisions
- Civic Defense
- Poorly Equipped
- Well Trained
Russian Battle Strategies

● November-December Strategies
  ○ Use air superiority
  ○ Use tanks independently of infantry
  ○ Take Finland quickly and easily

● February-March Strategies
  ○ Overwhelming numbers
  ○ Improved armored- infantry coordination
  ○ Attack across the Gulf of Finland
Finnish Battle Strategies

- Mannerheim line
- Ski troops to penetrate Russian lines
War Progression TIMELINE

- 30 November 1939: Invasion of Finland Begins
- 11 December -- 8 January 1940: Battle of Suomussalmi
  - 22 -- 23 December: Russians take defensive positions
  - 5 -- 8 January: Finnish Offensive
- 11 February: Russians break through Mannerheim Line
- 12 March: Fins sign the Treaty of Moscow
Russian Outcomes of the War

- Kicked out of the League Of Nations
- Their power is doubted
- Take Karelian Isthmus
- “Lease” Hanko Peninsula
Finnish Outcomes of the War

- Loss of the Port of Hanko
- Loss of the Karelian Peninsula
- Eventual Nazi Sympathy
Russian Casualties and Losses

- Approximate 60% casualty rate: 131,476 dead or missing, another 264,908 wounded or injured, 132,213 frostbitten, and 5,486 captured, altogether about 538,083 casualties out of 900,000 initial troops.
- 794 destroyed fighter planes
- About 1,000 tanks lost
Finnish Casualties

- 18,000 dead
- 18,000 seriously wounded
Works Cited


More Works Cited


