A Very British Civil War – The Midlands Strike Back

The opening phase of the war around the Pennines seems to have gone well for King Edward, with severe reverses for those opposing his wishes, although royalist troops were less apparent in operations than BUF forces, which has seen a rise in influence for Oswald Moseley, the prime minister.

Elsewhere the fighting is confused and many areas lack the resources for waging sustained warfare. As a result the northern ports and industry are considered a key battleground, able to import overseas aid and produce the weapons necessary to conclude business. Accordingly, it is highly likely that troops will be committed from less vital areas to ensure success.

Royalists

Edward VIII is a somewhat unhappy monarch, regardless of the current situation. Whilst Wallis’ Welsh wedding has conferred some legitimacy on the relationship, she is not queen. In addition, the fact that the ceasefire was hijacked by those who would negotiate with armed communists and proposed a settlement was not appreciated. The Anglican bishops had not been supportive of the King and their role was not appreciated. Similarly, the Duke of Westminster, who had worked so hard to arrange the wedding and ceasefire, was viewed with some suspicion, with some even heard to whisper the word ‘treason’. It seems that Edward is willing to accept nothing less than unconditional surrender from those who oppose his will and examples to be made of their leaders.

Main Groups/Characters: Duke of Westminster, assorted luminaries and families, regular British Army commanders

British Union of Fascists
Following the considerable success enjoyed by the flying columns of the BUF (a far cry from the days when his ‘black footer bags’ excited no end of mirth), Sir Roderick Spode has been rather preoccupied of late. After the previous incumbent died whilst falling down the stairs, Spode was a certainty for the seat of Harrogate, confirmed in a hastily arranged by-election, with a turnout of 94%. Appointed to the Cabinet by Moseley, with the title ‘March Warden of the North’, he is nevertheless considered to be a bit of a rotter. It is no secret he harbours greater ambitions and with the ardent support of gentlewomen of a certain age, may yet rival the prime minister. Having divested himself of his business interests, Spode narrowly escaped with his life after a bomb attack on his car. Scarred by the experience, an even more calculating and ruthless Roderick has become apparent.

In his absences, some divisions have become apparent, as stormtroopers in the west feel their achievements have been ignored, whilst those on the east have been posturing and ‘swanking about in their new get-ups’ rather than finishing the People’s Republic. Meanwhile, rumours that Moseley is determined to use fascist forces in the Midlands to take some of the lustre from Spode’s success are unconfirmed.

Main Groups/Characters: The Lancastrian Columns, The Yorkshire Stormtroopers,

Socialists

By the end of spring 1938, there was little in the way of organised socialist resistance across most of the Pennines. After the razing of Manchester by fascist forces, Royalist troops captured Liverpool, taking advantage of inexperienced commanders and ill-trained volunteers and running the city ‘in the interests of common decency and law and order’. Mockingly known as ‘the 12 tribes of Merseyside’, the socialist forces have commenced a desultory siege of the city, whilst extorting income from local towns.

To the east, the good burghers of Hull enjoyed the benefits of a flow of arms and munitions through the port, allowing them to maintain their independence. Their decision to impound supplies for the People’s Republic was not without consequences though. As fighting petered out, concern from shipping companies that their cargos would also be seized without recompense saw a reduction in trade. With cries of ‘Butter, not guns’ at public meetings, the independent city has begun bartering with Anglican and Royalist forces for fresh food from East Yorkshire.

Main groups: The Independent Port of Hull, The Lost Tribes of Merseyside, The Midlands Marchers, TBC
Communists

The People’s Republic of South Yorkshire had started proceedings brightly, pushing the fascists out of Worksop, but neglecting to pursue them over the Pennines, where they helped with the attack on Manchester. Although amply supplied with Soviet equipment and supported by advisors and volunteers, the fledgling republic struggled to formulate an effective plan of expansion and was riven by internal strife and purges. Eventually the Mayor of Sheffield was executed for lack of commitment to the cause and people’s soviets were declared across South Yorkshire. At this point in time its forces are reasonably well-supplied and making use of the resources and industry within the region. It cannot afford to sit back in splendid isolation any longer.

Main Groups/Roles: The People’s Republic, Foreign Advisors

Anglican League

The Church of England lived up to its reputation and was noted for its attempts at diplomacy, with or without the benefit of tea and cakes. After some indecision it finally played a leading role in the negotiations around the ceasefire, but many are now questioning whether there is a need for a more pro-active approach and there have been demands from some in the Church that Albert, the King’s brother, currently in Canada, would be a more suitable candidate for the throne. It will take more than digestives and Earl Grey to resolve this.

Main characters: Archbishop of York, Bishop of Chester, Bishop of Lincoln, TBC

Welsh Home Rule Alliance

Having played a key role in arranging the Welsh Wedding of Wallis and Edward, in addition to providing expertise in guerrilla operations, the Welsh proved themselves of worth. Since the ceasefire though, Edward has gone no further in offering Home Rule and opinions are now divided as to whether he can be trusted.