



The Events of 1936

The Great Depression was still having an impact on the societies, economies and politics of most countries by 1936. Unemployment was still high in Australia and Europe and the USA. The rivalries and divisions in Europe from World War I had firmed up opposing alliances despite the existence of the League of Nations. Fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain opposed Russian communism but posed a new threat to world peace. The Olympic Games had only been cancelled during World War I but the choice of Berlin for the Summer Olympic Games for 1936 had become controversial after Hitler and the Nazi's became the government of Germany. The historical context of 1936 made the Olympic Games about the only venue for peaceful celebrations despite question about the host city and an Olympic boycott.

February 6-16 - The Winter Olympic Games

The 4th Olympic Winter Games were held in Germany at Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The fact that Germany had been awarded the Olympic Winter Games in early 1936 would prove to be a stumbling block for some countries considering a boycott of the Summer Olympics later in the same year. How could a boycott be justified if they had already attended the Winter Olympics in Nazi Germany?

<http://www.olympic.org/garmisch-partenkirchen-1936-winter-olympics>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1936_Winter_Olympics

March 7 - Germany Breaks Treaty of Versailles

Under Article 42 of the Treaty of Versailles the Rhineland was de-militarised. This made a buffer area between Germany and France. France had been invaded at the beginning of World War I and didn't want the German military close to that border. Hitler sent his troops into the Rhineland while the League of Nations attention was on Mussolini's military activities in Ethiopia (Abyssinia).

Summary: http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Rhineland_1936.htm

Hitler's aims and actions:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/ir1/hitlersaimsandactionsrev1.shtml>

Where did the Rhineland fit into his plans?

What was the International response to the re-occupation of the Rhineland?

<http://www.gcsehistory.org.uk/modernworld/appeasement/rhineland.htm>

Summary of Causes of World War II: <http://www.rpfuller.com/gcse/history/6.html>

March 4 - The Hindenburg airship

Australia and the Olympic Games

The Berlin Olympics 1936

Historical Context



LZ 129 Hindenburg airship was launched in Germany. It was one of a succession of Zeppelin airships but also the largest passenger airship to ever fly. It was a commercial passenger airship across the Atlantic. For Nazi Germany it became another symbol of the technological power of Germany. At over 245 metres long and 135 feet in diameter the Hindenburg towered over public events like the Summer Olympic Games in Berlin to advertise German innovation.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LZ_129_Hindenburg

History of the development of the Zeppelin and airships: http://www.century-of-flight.net/Aviation%20history/coming%20of%20age/zeppelin_ships.htm

What happened to the Hindenburg airship?

May 5 - Mussolini's Italy and Abyssinia

Although Italy and Ethiopia (Abyssinia) were both members of the League of Nations, had their own friendship treaty and signed other non-aggression pacts, a series of incidents finally led to fighting. Italy was the aggressor. Despite pleas for the League of Nations and Britain and France in particular to stop Italian expansion in that part of East Africa, Benito Mussolini's Italy took control in 1936. On May 5 Mussolini founded the New Roman Empire following the capture of Addis Ababa. Although the League of Nations began sanctions against Italy on July 4, it had shown the League to be weak and lacking support from the major powers. France would not commit military support and risk giving Germany a chance to absorb Austria. Britain could see advantages to Italy controlling Abyssinia because Japan had been exploiting that area recently for economic advantage over Britain. Mussolini turned to Hitler's Germany for an alliance and international tensions increased.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abyssinia_Crisis

http://www.johndclare.net/league_of_nations6b.htm

However, with the League of Nations focusing on this crisis Hitler took the opportunity to start undermining the restrictions placed on Germany after World War I by the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler sent troops into the Rhineland.

Other

Time magazine archives: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,883326-2,00.html>

June 19th - German boxer Max Schmeling World Champion KOs Joe Louis

In 1936 the World Heavyweight Championship between the American Joe Louis and Germany's Max Schmeling became more than a boxing competition. Schmeling defeated Louis in a non-title fight just before the Olympic Games were to be held in Berlin. Even to Schmeling's surprise he became a German national hero and a piece in Hitler's propaganda about the superiority of the Aryan German. The victory was translated into the white Aryan Schmeling defeating the black

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American champion Louis. Schmeling was brought home to Germany in another symbol of Germany's power, the giant Zeppelin *Hindenburg* to meet Hitler and be and paraded around.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Louis_vs._Max_Schmeling

Schmeling was not a supporter of Nazism. Louis and Schmeling would fight again in June 1938, amidst threats of an anti-Nazi boycott of the event. What happened then?

http://www.boxinggym.com/news/louis_schmeling1938/standard_cover.htm

July 17 - The Spanish Civil War begins

On July 17, the month before the Olympic Games in Berlin, a military uprising led by General Franco started the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). This became an international issue when the Soviet Union supported the Republican government and fascist Germany and Italy supported the rebels.

From an Olympic standpoint, the civil war broke out just as an alternative type of Olympic Games was about to start in Barcelona as a way to boycott the Berlin Olympics – The unofficial *Peoples Olympic Games*. Barcelona was the official alternate city for the Summer Olympic Games of 1936 if Berlin had lost the Games because of its oppressive policies and expansionist actions. Some 6000 athletes from 20 countries such as the USA, France, Great Britain, Russia and Denmark were in Barcelona. Before the Games could begin fighting started in the city and many athletes marched in the streets to support the government. When a French athlete was killed the foreign teams were forced to leave Spain. Some came back to Spain to fight against Franco's forces.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Civil_War

Youtube film clips: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TRDxGL66eQ>

Extension: <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/scw/scw.htm>

July 31- Tokyo Japan is awarded the 1940 Olympics (later cancelled)

This would be cancelled when Japan began the Pacific War by attacking the US Fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. Tokyo would not get the Olympic Games until 1960.

August 1 - Adolph Hitler opens 11th Olympic Games in Berlin