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"BRINGING IT HOME"

NEW ZEALAND RESPONSES
TO THE
SPANISH CIVIL WAR,
1936 - 1939

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the
requirements of the Degree
of
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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses New Zealander's attitudes to and involvement in the Spanish Civil War, 1936 to 1939. Although distance muted the war's impact, three general divisions of opinion developed in New Zealand - pro-Republicanism, pro-Francoism and "Non-Interventionism".

The first Labour Government's "limited pro-Republicanism" illustrated its commitment to collective security and was expressed at the League of Nations and in communications with Britain. Its policy was part of a move towards more independent judgement in foreign affairs and caused some strain in relations with the British Government, but was ultimately restricted by commitment to the Commonwealth. Expression of sympathy with the Spanish Government was limited by appreciation of the potential divisiveness of the issue.

The National Party and some newspapers objected to Labour's policy. These "Non-Interventionists" considered the ideological issues of the war irrelevant to New Zealanders and regarded the war largely in terms of Imperial strategic concerns. They supported British non-intervention policy and accused Labour of disloyalty to Britain. It is argued that this insular imperialist view of the war and of New Zealand's role in international affairs was the real opposite to both pro-Francoist and pro-Republican views, although conservatism and anti-Communism brought "Non-Interventionism" closer to pro-Francoism.

Although in general pro-Francoist and pro-Republican views reflected overseas attitudes, both applied the issues of the war to the New Zealand scene. Support for Franco was mainly confined to Catholics, who saw the war as a battle between Catholic Christianity and Communism. Catholic newspapers objected to Labour's policy, but there was some ambivalence towards British non-intervention.

Catholics saw pro-Republicanism as anti-Catholic and also indicative of the presence of the Communist menace in New Zealand, but did little to promote Franco's cause other than through letters to newspapers.

There is more extensive discussion of the more diverse group that constituted the pro-Republican movement. The Communist Party's slogan of "Democracy versus Fascism" was generally accepted on the Left, but it failed to create a wider Popular Front from pro-Republicanism. The Labour Party, mindful of Catholic voters' views and suspicious of Communism, was publicly cautious, although its newspaper was pro-Republican. Long standing divisions on the Left were not exacerbated by the issue, but neither were they entirely healed. However, intellectuals, Christians, workers and Labourites came together in the Communist-inspired Spanish Medical Aid Committee a focus for propaganda and fund-raising for aid to Republican Spain. Condemnation of British policy and support for Labour's independent stand was a significant feature of New Zealand pro-Republicanism.

The motives and experiences of the few New Zealanders with the International Brigades and Republican medical units, as well as the one New Zealander who fought for Franco, are considered. There is some discussion of non-partisan humanitarian appeals for aid to Spain.

The Spanish conflict did not have a great or lasting impact upon New Zealanders. However, the responses of New Zealanders were significant in their revelation of differing perceptions of the world - imperialist and internationalist - and in the development of a new independent outlook that questioned the nature and value of New Zealand's relation with Britain and foreshadowed New Zealand's full acceptance of independent nationhood after the Second World War.

Bringing It Home

Here in this country where no fighting fell
more than would make an Afghan Chieftain smile,
our thoughts turn lightly from the game of death
the Pyrenees have witnessed all this while.

Here at our slippered ease we read the papers
and switch on idle noises from the air
and think ourselves a very peaceful people,
and put an extra cushion on the chair.

But what would happen if our country's leaders
were nightly murdered, shot as being "Reds"?
What would we say if sudden submarines
torpedoed the Wahine off the heads?

What would we do if Public Works men here
were rounded up and shot for no good reason
except that since they lived and talked and voted
they must be guilty of the highest treason?

Or if, suppose, Air Force and Army men
decided that the Government of the day
must be removed, and butchered in the streets
in case it thought of cutting down their pay?

How would you act if natives from the islands
were armed and paid to massacre the people
and run amok and murder all the children
while priests approved the action, from a steeple?

And if, when we appealed to Britain's navy
and help from her (the mother of the free)
She told us that disputes about the gravy
would keep the League some little time at tea;

And added she'd offend the Argentine
if she should give us arms to fight the foe
and shut her eyes upon our desperation
in rushing on machine guns with a hoe?

Denis Glover

Tomorrow
10 November 1937, p.18.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REFERENCES

EP	Evening Post
FOL	Federation of Labour
GRA	Grey River Argus
NRFSRC	National Relief Fund for Spanish Refugee Children
NZH	New Zealand Herald
ODT	Otago Daily Times
P	The Press
SMAC	Spanish Medical Aid Committee
SRC	Spanish Relief Committee
WT	Waikato Times

INTRODUCTION

The Spanish Civil War began on 17 July 1936, in Spanish Morocco, as a pronunciamento or military revolt against the Popular Front Government elected in February 1936. Spanish politics had been in turmoil since the abdication of the King, Alfonso XIII, in 1931 and the establishment of the Second Republic. The Republican coalition that governed until October 1934 introduced wide-ranging reforms, intended to transform Spain into a modern society from its former practically feudal state. Secular education was expanded, Church and State separated and a programme of land reform undertaken. However, the Government faced mounting opposition from both Right and Left. Its final collapse in October 1934 was preceded by a general strike, a revolt in Catalonia, where the regional Government declared itself a Federal Republic, and a revolutionary uprising in the Asturias mining province. The Asturian revolt, in which armed miners occupied the provincial capital, Oviedo, was put down with the aid of Moorish troops and the Foreign Legion, under the command of General Francisco Franco, who was to become the leader of the rebels in the civil war.¹

The suppression of the Asturian revolt was accomplished with great violence and brutality, especially on the part of the Moorish troops. The victims of the military campaign and subsequent repression claimed that 5,000 had been killed, while official figures put the total at 1,300 dead and 3,000 wounded.² An estimated 30,000 political prisoners were taken throughout Spain in the wake of the unrest.

The CEDA party, a Catholic confederation led by Jose Gil Robles, which was the largest group in the Spanish Parliament, the Cortes, but had been denied a part in the Government, then took power. The right-wing Catholic Government proceeded to modify many of the

progressive reforms enacted under the Second Republic. In November 1935 it was decided to hold another election, to take place in February 1936. By this time, emotions and ideologies on both sides had hardened. A coalition of Left Republicans, Socialists and Communists fought and won the election of 16 February 1936 under the banner of the Popular Front. The new Government promised the release of political prisoners and a return to the 1931 reform programme, in particular the hastening of land reform.

The period between the election and the military rising was marked by increasing unrest and political violence. In some areas revolutionary committees were established and land was occupied by peasants; there were church burnings and political assassinations. The revolt, planned since the election, was sparked off prematurely by the murder, on 13 July, of Jose Calvo Sotelo, a former Finance Minister under the monarchy and leader of the monarchists.

Within weeks of the revolt the Spanish Civil War had become a European problem, with the provision of Italian and German military aid to the rebels. The Popular Front Government of France at first was inclined to aid the Government of Spain, but was too weak and divided to bear the political consequences. It was also clear that Britain would not support French moves to aid the Spanish Government. Instead, France proposed a Non-Intervention Agreement, which was aimed at preventing the war becoming the scene of general European conflict and perhaps spreading outside Spain. The British Government, more inclined towards the rebels and fearful of the consequences of intervention, endorsed the French proposal.³ A Non-Intervention Committee was established to police the Agreement, which was eventually signed by 27 countries, including the intervening powers. The Non-Intervention Agreement was never effective and, in placing an embargo on the sale of arms to either side, helped to limit the Republican war effort. By October 1936, the Soviet Union was sending war materials, military advisers and food to Republican Spain, although its aid never reached the proportions of German and Italian involvement. The protracted course

of the war, from July 1936 until March 1939, was in part the result of foreign intervention and the policy of non-intervention.

Outside Spain, battlelines were quickly drawn. The war had a powerful emotional and political impact upon many people in Europe and America. Fascist and Communist intervention and the propaganda of both forces in the war, and their outside sympathisers, combined to create an image of an archetypal battle between opposing ideological forces. For many on the Left, the war became a symbol of the worldwide conflict between progress and reaction, and represented a turning point in the class struggle that could determine the fate of the world. They also considered the war a foretaste of a greater battle against Fascism that would ensue if the expansionist appetites of Italy and Germany were not curbed. For the Right, and for the Catholic Church, the war was equally symbolic as a defence of order and Christian civilisation against atheistic Communism, which they saw as using Spain in its first step towards world domination.

There were, of course, varying degrees of enthusiasm for the Republican and nationalist causes and divisions within the ranks of their foreign sympathisers, as studies of the American and British responses have shown.⁴ Essentially, however, most of these who become involved in the issue outside Spain could be grouped broadly into two camps - those who regarded the war as one of democracy against Fascism and those who saw it as a battle against Communism.

In New Zealand, as in Australia,⁵ the impact of the war was muted by distance and local preoccupations. The domestic policies of the first Labour Government, elected in November 1935, were the focus of most New Zealanders' attention. Moreover, New Zealanders, although interested in foreign affairs, were not noted for their involvement in international issues. A contemporary observer described New Zealanders as having a "receptive or detached interest" in the world beyond their shores.⁶ In the absence of public opinion polls such as those taken in Britain and America,⁷ it is impossible to gauge the general trend of opinion in New Zealand.

New Zealanders certainly received considerable information about the conflict. The cinema-going public even had a chance to see the "Hollywood version" of events in Spain. In 1937 and 1938 three films were shown that had the war as background and, at least partially, as subject.

The first to appear on New Zealand screens was "The Last Train from Madrid" in the final months of 1937. This Paramount film starred Dorothy Lamour and was essentially a "romantic drama" with beleaguered Madrid as background. The Radio Record's film reviewer, Gordan Mirams, warned that partisans of either side should not expect the film to provide evidence in favour of their causes, since the film's foreword stated that it was "about people, not causes", although the depiction of Madrid in the early days of the war terrorised by bombing raids might not create any sympathy to the rebels.⁸ Conversely, the convoluted stories of aristocratic and Republican lovers fleeing not only the air raids, but reprisals for their political beliefs might not have created much sympathy for the Loyalists either.

"Love under Fire", from Twentieth Century Fox, which arrived in New Zealand in mid-1938, was probably a better example of a cynical Hollywood using the war's topicality to draw the crowds. It was a comedy-drama starring Loretta Young as a suspected jewel thief and Con Ameche as a Scotland Yard detective in search of excitement on a holiday in Spain. Again, police demands for Young's jewels and an escape from a British ship bombed by Government warships may have created a rather unsympathetic image of the Loyalists.

The third Hollywood production was a rather more serious statement. "Blockade", produced by Walter Wanger, had already aroused some interest before it arrived in New Zealand in August 1938. There had been some publicity given to reports that the German and Italian Governments, as well as Franco, had objected to the film and had sent diplomatic representatives armed with threats to ask Wanger to reconsider aspects of the film.

"Blockade" was set in a coastal town easily identified with any of the Basque ports blockaded by the rebels and starred Henry Fonda as a young farmer who had become an intelligence officer for the Loyalists. Madeleine Carroll was the daughter of a businessman active in fomenting rebellion, and herself a spy for the rebels until overcome with remorse at the tragedy of the starving population. The film made some compromises, in that the armies depicted in the film were not recognisably those of either side and nor were the issues underlying the conflict given much exposition. Yet, scenes of starving people and torpedoed foodships placed the film in the pro-Republican camp, even if much of its propaganda was not directed specifically toward the Spanish rebels. Mirams saw the real propaganda of the film as the more general message it conveyed, "that goes beyond partisanship and becomes an indictment of any kind of war that makes victims of the civilian population".⁹ Fonda's final speech encapsulated that message:

Its not war - war is between soldiers - its murder. Murder of innocent people. There's no sense to it. The world can stop it - WHERE'S THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD!

Even this more generalised message might have created more sympathy for the Loyalists, since by this time in 1938 a good deal of publicity had been given to the bombings of civilian towns by Franco and his Italian and German allies, and, as Mirams pointed out, the Republicans were not known for blockading ports or torpedoing foodships.

The film found a ready response from New Zealanders horrified by reports of bombings in Spain and China. Other reviewers praised the film's anti-war sentiment¹⁰ and Mirams reported that the preview audience in Wellington had applauded the final statement, an "almost unprecedented response".¹¹ But horror at the bombing of civilians by the rebels and their allies did not necessarily mean active espousal of the pro-Republican cause. It is likely that the attitude towards the war of most New Zealanders was one of disgust at the viciousness of the war, compounded by dislike of both sides.

Newspapers were, of course, the major source of the average New Zealander's view of the war in Spain. For the purposes of this study, six daily and five weekly newspapers were consulted. They were the New Zealand Herald, Auckland's morning newspaper, the Waikato Times, an evening newspaper serving Hamilton and surrounding districts, Wellington's Evening Post, The Press, Christchurch's morning newspaper, the Otago Daily Times, an evening newspaper published in Dunedin, the Grey River Argus, a Labour daily published on the West Coast of the South Island, the Auckland Weekly News, the New Zealand Freelance and the New Zealand Observer, published in Wellington and Auckland respectively, the New Zealand Truth and the N.Z. Radio Record, which, as its name suggests, was devoted mainly to publication and discussion of radio programmes.

The daily newspapers had considerable coverage of the Spanish Civil War in news columns, feature articles and editorials. The number of headlines and editorials about the war was at its highest in 1937; later the Sino-Japanese war and German aggression in Europe were to be the more immediate causes of concern about the international situation than the long-drawn-out conflict on the Iberian peninsula. Most of the news about Spain in New Zealand newspapers did not come from Spain itself. None of the dailies had their own regular foreign correspondents; their foreign news came from British Official Wireless in England, through Associated Press and United Press, or from British, American and Australian newspapers such as the Times, the Manchester Guardian, the Daily Mail, the News Chronicle, the New York Times or the Sydney Morning Herald. The most regular sources used were the British newspapers. Of the six daily newspapers studied, only the New Zealand Herald had a separate magazine section on Saturdays although all had extra "weekend" pages. These pages sometimes included feature articles on aspects of the Spanish Civil War, again mostly reprinted from overseas sources. The personalities of Franco and his wife, life in Madrid, stories of refugee camps and discussions of Britain's Mediterranean strategy with regard to Spain were among New Zealanders' Saturday reading.

The majority of editorial discussions of the war in New Zealand newspapers centred upon the international complications of the war.¹² Only a very few were prepared to pass judgement upon the opposing forces in Spain, preferring instead to confine analysis of events in Spain to discussions of the historical background to the war and of the military situation itself. The Otago Daily Times, in particular, demonstrated the difficulty New Zealand newspapers had in discussing the complicated and potentially divisive issue. Its editorial columns upon the "internal" aspects of the problem usually reprinted articles and editorials from overseas newspapers, and almost the only opinion ventured by the paper's editor was that the war was not as simple as many observers portrayed it. The Otago Daily Times' use of varying sources to describe the war and reinforce its emphasis on the complexities of the issue also indicated the dependence of New Zealand newspapers on overseas sources and, perhaps, the confusion that this might cause over an issue like Spain.

The popular weekly papers contained considerably less coverage of the Spanish Civil War, particularly with regard to editorial comment. Most however included some photographs of the destruction wreaked by the war, and some news reports and articles. These papers concentrated upon the New Zealand scene, with little space for discussion of international events. However, because of this emphasis they did bring news to New Zealanders of the involvement of their compatriots in the Spanish Civil War.

"Negative" evidence suggests that most New Zealanders cared little about the war in Spain. Nevertheless, there is also considerable evidence to show that some New Zealanders became strongly involved in the issue and that the propaganda and rhetoric of pro-Francoism and pro-Republicanism was transferred to New Zealand. Attitudes towards the Spanish Civil War in New Zealand and the response to the Labour Government's "limited pro-Republicanism" not only indicated the way in which New Zealanders regarded the "outside world" in the late 1930s, but also revealed significant

divisions of opinion among New Zealanders about their country's role in international affairs and its relation to Britain.

The response of the Labour Government to the international crises of the late 1930s, including Spain, has already been the subject of some discussion among New Zealand historians.¹³ There has also been some investigation of its specific attitude to the Spanish Civil War and the public reaction to that policy.¹⁴ This study builds upon earlier work to present a more detailed analysis of the impact of the Spanish Civil War upon New Zealanders and considers some aspects not previously investigated.

The Labour Government's policy on the Spanish Civil War is seen to be largely based upon its commitment to collective security and concern for the survival of the League. However, it will be shown that Labour leaders also felt some identification with the Popular Front Government of Spain. The solutions proposed to the Spanish problem by New Zealand's delegate to the league, W.J. Jordan, reveal the degree to which the Labour Government's policy was based upon naive assessments of the European situation and idealistic insistence upon the application of the principles of the League Covenant to international relations.

Labour's stand on the issue brought it into conflict with the British Government and reflected its moves toward more independent judgement on foreign policy. The question of Labour leaders' views on the Imperial link, and the extent to which loyalty to Britain limited public expression of disapproval of non-intervention is considered. The restrictions upon Labour's public espousal of pro-Republicanism at home are shown to have been caused by awareness of the politically divisive nature of the issue.

The internationalism, the insistence upon reason and justice and the conviction of the Popular Front Government's legitimacy and constitutional nature found in the Labour Government's stand was reflected in the pro-Republican opinions of many other New

Zealanders. Communists, trade unionists, members of the Labour Party, a few Catholics and ordinary citizens came together in support of the Republican cause. Discussion of the pro-Republican movement in New Zealand has been divided into three areas: the Communist Party, the Labour Movement and the internationalist anti-fascist alliance of opinion formed by "progressive people". Considerable attention is paid to the major role of the Communist Party in promoting pro-Republicanism in New Zealand. Where possible, the degree of Communist influence in other Left groups is examined. The focus in investigation of the Communist Party's views and activities is upon its use of the Spanish Civil War as a vehicle for the creation of a Popular Front coalition of all Left groups, and the success of this policy.

The responses of the Left to the Spanish Civil War reveal that, while the image of the war as a conflict between Fascism and democracy was widely accepted, there were varying degrees of commitment to the Republican cause and differing analyses of the situation in Spain. It is argued that the fact that a Labour Government was in power at the time of the war both hindered and helped the development of a strong pro-Republican movement in New Zealand. The cautious pro-Republicanism of the Labour Party is discussed in the light of long-standing suspicion of Communism within the Labour Movement and of the influence of Catholic Labour voters' views.

One of the most significant aspects of pro-Republican opinion on the war was its condemnation of British non-intervention policy and consequent support of the Labour Government's independent stand at the League. In this respect, the impact of the Spanish Civil War is seen as contributing to the development of ideas about New Zealand nationality in the late 1930s and the questioning of the nature and value of relations with Britain among some New Zealanders.

Pro-Republican sentiment found its active expression in the Communist-inspired Spanish Medical Aid Committee (SMAC), established

to raise funds to provide medical supplies for the Republican Government. Its organisation, membership and support reflected the general pattern of pro-Republicanism in New Zealand. The success of its propaganda and fund-raising activities provides an indication of how far other groups and individuals on the Left were prepared to co-operate with the Communist Party in supporting the Republican cause. The donation of money was one of the most tangible means by which New Zealanders could express their concern about the war. The Labour Movement's contributions to other pro-Republican appeals are discussed in the context of its responses to the war. The establishment of non-partisan appeals for aid to Spain is also examined.

The ultimate expression of pro-Republicanism was, of course, personal involvement in the war. New Zealand was not unrepresented in the International Brigades or among medical units in Spain. One chapter in this study is devoted to investigation of the motives and experiences in Spain of ten International Brigaders, one doctor and five nurses. The involvement of the one New Zealander discovered to have fought for Franco is considered in this chapter.

Support for the rebel cause in New Zealand was mainly limited to the Catholic Church. However, it will be shown that there was some acceptance by conservatives of pro-Francoist arguments about the influence of Communism in Spain. There was little attempt by the Catholic Church to promote Franco's cause outside the faith.

The Catholic press created a mythology about the war in Spain that depicted it as an archetypal crusade against Communism. Catholic propaganda generally concentrated upon the fate of Spain itself rather than the international complications of the war, in part because of its attempts to minimise the role of Italian and German aid to Franco. However, some ambivalence toward British policy was evident. Catholic pro-Francoists considered that the war had implications for the rest of the world, including New Zealand. Catholics' translation of the issues of the war to the New Zealand

scene and their response to the Labour Government's policy are examined. There is also an assessment of the degree to which pro-Fascist views influenced the development of pro-Francoist beliefs, within the Church and among other New Zealanders.

It is argued that the most significant division of opinion in New Zealand about the Spanish Civil War was not between Catholic pro-Francoists and Leftist pro-Republicans. The Catholic Church in New Zealand was part of an international organisation and had the wider perspective on international events that this association entailed. Most pro-Republican organisations also had international links and pro-Republicanism in general grew from an internationalist outlook. Both pro-Republicans and pro-Francoists considered the outcome in Spain itself of importance not only to Spaniards and were convinced that the "lessons of Spain" could be applied to the New Zealand scene. Their assessments of the international implications of the war were inextricably linked with their views of the nature of the conflict in Spain. There was another body of opinion in New Zealand that revealed an essentially insular, Imperialist response to the Spanish Civil War, generated by an idealised view of Britain and by assumptions about New Zealand's role in the Empire.

The National Party's response to the war, largely a reaction to the Labour Government's policy, formed a part of the assortment of opinions that has been labelled "Non-Interventionism". So, too, did the editorial attitudes of several daily and weekly newspapers, which, unwilling to commit themselves on the rights and wrongs of the war, were ready to endorse the British Government's policy.

There were indications of some leaning towards the pro-Francoist view of events in Spain. However, in general, "Non-Interventionist" assessments of the nature of the war in Spain were based upon dismissal of its relevance to New Zealanders. Discussion of "Non-Interventionism" centres upon its support of British non-intervention policy and its criticisms of the Labour Government's attitude. "Non-Interventionist" views of the conflict and its effect

upon New Zealand are considered to provide the real opposition to both pro-Francoism and pro-Republicanism in New Zealand.

The impact of the Spanish Civil War in New Zealand, then, may be seen not only in terms of New Zealanders' involvement with the ideological issues of Europe. It also grew from and contributed to the development of differing concepts of New Zealand's part in a wider world.

Apart from discussion of the Labour Government's views, which are followed chronologically over the period of the war in Spain, this study generally favours a thematic rather than a chronological approach. Responses to the Spanish Civil War did not often comprise attitudes that developed over time and modified in reaction to events in Spain. Particularly in respect to pro-Francoism and pro-Republicanism, positions were adopted at the beginning of the war and were not altered much by subsequent events in Spain, which usually served only to reinforce original attitudes.

For non-combatant partisans of either cause outside Spain, the war was one of words. Investigation of New Zealand opinions has relied heavily upon printed sources, such as the Catholic, Communist and Labour Party newspapers. Where possible, the records of groups involved have also been consulted, but in some cases this was not possible; for instance, Catholic archives and Labour Party Head Office records were not available. In other cases, investigation of the minutes and correspondence of interested organisations has proved fruitless. The records of Student Christian Movement, for instance, revealed no interest in the Spanish Civil War; yet, its journal, the Student, demonstrated definite pro-Republican views. In a sense, propaganda, published opinion, was the major response to the war in New Zealand. The Spanish Medical Aid Committee not only campaigned for funds to aid Republican Spain, but devoted a considerable amount of its activities to promoting pro-Republicanism through printed and spoken propaganda. Pro-Republicans and pro-Francoists waged a war of words through the correspondence columns of the newspapers,

particularly in the Otago Daily Times and The Press, whose editors allowed more space for the public's letters than the other newspapers.

However, propaganda has its limitations as evidence. It does not provide accurate information of the numbers who accepted its premises and divisions or variations of opinion are submerged in the presentation of the "standard" view. Submersion also occurs in other areas; Trades Union records, for example, provide evidence of resolutions of sympathy for the Spanish Government, but not of the discussions that preceded the passing of the resolutions. The existence of published opinions is not an accurate gauge of the level of interest in the subject. The degree to which New Zealanders identified themselves with the opposing forces in Spain and actually thought about the issue is one of the questions that, from lack of broad evidence in a non-poll age, is left unresolved.

It is, indeed, possible that propaganda had some negative effect upon the opinions of New Zealanders. If it stimulated a response from many already disposed to take sides, it may also have increased the resistance of others who saw no value in involvement in such an ideologically identified battle. The New Zealand Freelance, firmly convinced of the veracity of stories of Chinese women helping in the struggle against Japanese invaders, was sceptical about tales of women militia in Spain on the grounds that propaganda has so obscured the issue that facts about Spain were difficult to authenticate.¹⁵

There is also some difficulty in placing New Zealand responses into the broad context of New Zealand society in the late 1930s. There are few biographies of leading figures of the period, such as the Prime Minister Michael Savage or the High Commissioner, William Jordan. James Thorn's biography of Peter Fraser, who succeeded Savage as the Labour Prime Minister, is not particularly objective.¹⁶ General histories, like R.M. Burdon's The New Dominion¹⁷ or Sir Keith Sinclair's A History of New Zealand¹⁸ shed some light but are rather too general to be of great

assistance. There are to date no histories of the National Party or the Communist Party, although some work has been done in the former area.¹⁹ The brief history of the Catholic Church in New Zealand does not really address the question of the political and social attitudes of the Church in relation to New Zealand society.²⁰

A similar difficulty is encountered in relating New Zealand pro-Republican activities to those overseas. Examinations of the roles of Communism and the Comintern in the war have tended to focus upon their Spanish aspects.²¹ Hugh Thomas' essential work on the Spanish Civil War does provide brief information on the establishment by the Comintern of international organisations to aid Spain. With the exception of Diane Menghetti's study of the Popular Front in North Queensland, there is little detailed examination in studies of overseas responses of the operation of Spanish Medical Aid Committees and similar organisations.

Despite the limitations imposed by the sources, it is to be hoped that this study contributes not only to the body of work^{on} the Spanish Civil War, but also to a better understanding of the attitudes to the world of New Zealanders in the late 1930s.

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CHAPTER 1
COMMONWEALTH AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY:
THE NEW ZEALAND LABOUR GOVERNMENT
AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

New Zealand's first Labour Party Government, elected in November 1935, had definite views on foreign policy and was determined that New Zealand should play as full a part as possible in world affairs. Its attitude towards international affairs was characterised by a conviction that collective security provided the best means of ensuring peace and safeguarding small nations against aggression. The Labour Government's support for the League of Nations, its insistence that reason and morality should govern international relations and its consequent disapproval of appeasement soon led it to express views at variance with those of the British Government. The Government's determination to stand up for these principles even in the face of British disapproval signalled a departure from the emphasis on imperial unity that had been the mainstay of previous Governments' analysis of foreign affairs. This implied no less a commitment to the Commonwealth than shown by its predecessors, but a determination to assert New Zealand's right as a Dominion to make independent judgements on foreign policy. Although the Prime Minister, Michael Savage, and his colleagues did not consider that adherence to the principle of collective security was incompatible with commitment to the Commonwealth, ultimately they were forced to make a choice. As the threat of war grew and it became increasingly clear that the League would not act as an effective deterrent to aggression, the Labour Government became less inclined to public disagreement with British foreign policy.

The Labour Government's policy on the Spanish Civil War illuminated the difficulties of its dual commitment to Commonwealth and collective security and the first hesitant steps towards an independent foreign policy for New Zealand. Its policy was largely

expressed in the speeches of its delegate to the League of Nations, William J. Jordan, and in private communications with Britain. The League speeches were the only major public statements of the New Zealand Government's attitude to the war.

For the Labour Government the problem of the Spanish Civil War was inextricably linked with the survival of the League of Nations as an effective international security against war. The Labour Party had at first criticised the League as an instrument of the victors of World War One, but gradually moved toward full and even fervent acceptance of the League's principles.¹ As Kathryn Peters has pointed out, Labour's acceptance of the League was based on both self-interest and idealism.² Collective security was particularly attractive to small, relatively powerless nations; moreover it embodied the concept that aggression was morally wrong. The League's principles were regarded as similar to the Labour Party's. By the time of Labour's election in November 1935 the Party was firmly committed to support of the League, up to and including the use of force, if necessary, to punish an aggressor.

Ironically enough, Labour came to power at the same time that collective security was tested and found wanting. The imposition of sanctions on Italy in October 1935 as a result of its invasion of Abyssinia earlier that month had failed. New Zealand's Government was nevertheless still convinced that collective security would work if properly applied. It demonstrated its commitment to the League when member nations were invited to submit proposals for reforming the League Covenant and improving its operations, in July 1936.

Despite the British Government's request that Dominions refrain from acting on the Secretary-General's invitation until after the next meeting of the League Assembly, and then not without consultation with Britain, the Labour Government sent a detailed memorandum aimed at strengthening the League. The memorandum recommended that the provisions of the Covenant should be "given teeth". Economic sanctions should be automatic and complete and a

peacekeeping force should be established to deter aggression. The Government also emphasised that the peoples of the world rather than merely Governments ought to be consulted on the application of sanctions and the establishment of a League "army". This memorandum provided the basis for the position expressed by New Zealand's representative at Geneva on various issues throughout the late 1930s.³ In part the memorandum said:

- (6) We are prepared to take our collective share in the application, against any future aggressor, of the full economic sanctions contemplated by Article 16, and we are prepared, to the extent of our power, to join in the collective application of force against any future aggressor.
- (7) We believe that the sanctions contemplated by the present Covenant will be ineffective in the future as they have been in the past -
 - (1) Unless they are made immediate and automatic:
 - (2) Unless economic sanctions take the form of the complete boycott contemplated by Article 16:
 - (3) Unless any sanctions that may be applied are supported by the certainty that the Members of the League applying the sanctions are able and, if necessary, prepared to use force against force.
- (8) It is our belief that the Covenant as it is, or in a strengthened form, would in itself be sufficient to prevent war if the world realised that the nations undertaking to apply the Covenant actually would do so in fact.
- (9) We are prepared to agree to the institution of an international force under the control of the League or to the allocation to the League of a definite proportion of the armed forces of its Members to the extent, if desired, of the whole of those forces - land, sea, and air.
- (10) We consider that there can be no certainty of the complete and automatic operation of the Covenant unless the Governments of all Members of the League are supported, in their determination to apply it, by the declared approval of their peoples.⁴

At the League Assembly in September 1936 New Zealand's newly appointed High Commissioner to London and chief delegate at Geneva,

William J. Jordan, reaffirmed the principles in his Government's memorandum and criticised the "short and sorry tale" of League action over the invasion of Abyssinia. He voiced "the disquieting thought that the League's continued failures may well give a fatal encouragement to those who rely on might rather than right".⁵ This was the concern that underlay Jordan's later speeches at the League with regard to the Spanish Civil War, a concern for the credibility of the League as much as for the situation in Spain itself.

Jordan and his Government were aware of the shortcomings of the League, but believed that the problem stemmed not from the Covenant itself, but from the attitudes of member nations. Jordan's speeches on Spain emphasised the responsibility of member nations to another fellow member and were reminders of their moral duty to each other and to the world whose peace was threatened. His support for the Spanish Government was based on its elected nature rather than on its political views, and on a simple moral outrage at the blatant aggression of Italy and Germany.

Jordan was a former London policeman who had emigrated to New Zealand in 1904. He had become a Member of Parliament in 1922 and was a close friend of Michael Savage. A Methodist lay preacher, he was able to speak extempore and gained a reputation for plain speaking at Geneva. He was not conversant with, nor did he like, the euphemisms and equivocations of diplomatic language. His speeches had a certain naivete both in the solutions he offered to the Spanish crisis and in his assumption that the League could be roused to effective action. The naivete reflected the Labour Government's rather simplistic convictions about morality in international relations and Jordan's own "simple rules of conduct" and faith in human decency.⁶ Nevertheless, Jordan revealed in his private communications with Savage an awareness of the complexities of international involvement in the Spanish Civil War that contrasted somewhat with the simple force of his public utterances. Principle was thus to be paramount over political expediency, and his speeches

had an element of the practised preacher, aimed at imparting his fervour to his listeners.

It was Jordan's speeches at the League that caused the most consternation for the British Government, since they were public expressions of opinion rather than the private criticisms contained in communications from the New Zealand Government. The tension between the two Governments over Spain was at its peak in 1937, the year in which Spain was the focus of most international attention. By 1938 other matters, such as the Anschluss in March, had intervened to relegate Spain to a more minor role and, as well, the New Zealand Government had realised that it could not influence British policy on Spain.

It was inevitable that there should have been differences of opinion between the dominantly Conservative National Government in Britain and a Labour Government heady with massive electoral victory. In the first place the Labour Government's attachment to collective security and the League put it at odds with the British Government. Jill Edwards, in The British Government and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, endorses Lord Cecil's comment that by 1936 the British Government avoided bringing important issues to the League because the absence of Germany, Italy and Japan made vigorous action unlikely.⁷ Moreover, in the case of Spain, the British Government was aware that the divisions of opinion that would appear at the League would make effective action unlikely. But, at a time when the British were ceasing to regard the League as even a useful instrument of diplomacy, the Labour Government was insisting that collective security was the only means to a just peace. The despatch of proposals for the reform of the League Covenant against the express wishes of Britain had already demonstrated the Labour Government's determination to act independently on the issue of collective security. Insistence on the application of the principles of the Covenant to the Spanish situation not only deviated from British policy, but also was an implicit criticism of that policy. At times, Jordan, Savage and colleagues gave the impression that they

were acting as the conscience of British foreign policy, as with a certain proselytizing zeal they attempted to impress on British policy-makers the need for a moral basis to their actions.

Secondly, the two Governments approached the Spanish problem in different ways. British policy was in part guided by a desire to remain on neutral terms with whichever side was victorious, which led to its commitment to the policy of non-intervention long after it was seen to be ineffective. After Chamberlain became Prime Minister in June 1937, efforts were also directed towards a rapprochement with Italy, which necessitated some concessions with regard to Italian intervention in Spain. Furthermore, there was considerable sympathy within the British Government for the rebels, at least at the beginning of the war.⁸

The New Zealand Government's sympathies lay with the Government of Spain, which it saw as a legitimately elected, fellow democratic Government. It took a stand on principle, on rather simplistic moral judgements that did not take into account all the complications of the situation. Distance and diplomatic inexperience contributed to this approach. However, the Labour Government was aware that if League action was taken on the matter the main consequences would fall on the major European powers, including Britain. By the end of 1937 it was also clear that the New Zealand stance at the League might embarrass Britain, but criticisms there and in private consultation would have no appreciable influence on British policy.

The independent stand by the Labour Government had its limits. It was not prepared to take any action that would create an open breach between the two countries; the independence of judgement it sought was within the framework of the Commonwealth. New Zealand was economically dependent on Britain, relied on the Royal Navy for defence, and many New Zealanders had strong ties of sentiment to the Mother Country. As Ritchie Owendale has pointed out, the Dominion most critical of British foreign policy was also the one that was unequivocally prepared to stand by the leader of the

Commonwealth.⁹ Ultimately, then, the New Zealand Government had to subordinate its commitment to collective security to its prior commitment to the Commonwealth. Jordan's speeches at the League annoyed the British Government, but outside that forum the New Zealand Government refrained from any statement or action that would irrevocably align it with the Spanish Government.

Outside the two areas of the League and communications with Britain, the Labour Government's attitude to the Spanish Civil War was more equivocal than Jordan's speeches indicated. There appears to have been a clear division between the "external" response and the Government's response to appeals for humanitarian aid or support for pro-Republican activities, the "internal" response. Jordan's speeches at the League, his correspondence with Michael Savage and official reports from Geneva, and External Affairs Department records of communications with Britain provide evidence of the Government's response in terms of collective security and British policy. There is, however, little evidence of the "internal" considerations that influenced the Government's policy. There are no Cabinet minutes for the period and the minutes of the Parliamentary Labour Party Caucus meetings do not mention the Spanish Civil War.

This omission in itself indicated one reason for the ambiguities in the Government's attitude. Relatively speaking, foreign policy was not a major concern for the Government. The interest of Cabinet members, particularly Savage, Walter Nash and Peter Fraser,¹⁰ in international affairs and their concern that collective security should ensure peace must be balanced against other more immediate intramural concerns. The Government had embarked on an ambitious programme of social and economic reforms; social security, state housing, the guaranteed price for dairy products, the 40-hour week and other legislation engaged most of their attention.

The political/ideological divisions of opinion on the war no doubt also influenced Labour leaders' cautious public approach to the issue outside the League of Nations. In this respect, the Spanish

Civil War was a more complex issue for the Government than the other international crises, Abyssinia and the Sino-Japanese war, to which it reacted in a similar manner at the League. F.L.W. Wood's contention that to many New Zealanders the Spanish Government "seemed to stand broadly for the humane and liberal and democratic principles shared by the British and New Zealand Labour Movements"¹¹ may overstate the case somewhat, but certainly some in the New Zealand Labour Movement were of this opinion. The Labour Party's newspaper, the Standard, took a pro-Republican line and several Labour MPs were associated with the Spanish Medical Aid Committee (SMAC).¹² Pro-Republican propaganda in New Zealand frequently stressed the similarities between the Labour Government and the Popular Front Government of Spain.

On the other hand, the Communist Party was closely involved with the pro-Republican movement and was using it as a focus for its United Front campaign. At least two members of the Labour Cabinet, Peter Fraser and Robert Semple, were known for their strong anti-Communist views. In addition, the Catholic Church supported Franco and regarded the Government of Spain as atheistic Communists bent on destroying religion, and many Catholics were Labour voters. By late 1937 the Government's political opponents and some newspapers were criticising the Government's foreign policy on general grounds as disloyalty to the Empire. Thus, any demonstration of sympathy with the Spanish Government in terms of its political ideals would have clearly aligned the Labour Government with the Communist Party, anathema not only to its political opponents and to pro-Francoists, but also to many within the Labour Party. Even to consider, as they did, that the Popular Front was a democratically elected Government was enough to damn Labour leaders in the eyes of the pro-Francoist movement.

Therefore, the Labour Government ignored requests from groups sympathetic to the pro-Republican cause, Communist or not, to publicly state its solidarity with the Spanish Government. On the few occasions when Cabinet Members made public statements about the

war, the political issues were generally avoided. Nevertheless, a remark by Savage, in Parliament on 13 August 1936, indicated that at this early stage in the war he, at least, perceived some ideological similarities between the two Governments. While discussing New Zealand's financial contribution to the League of Nations in the course of a supply debate, Savage remarked that "In New Zealand today reforms were being made without knocking the hair off anyone's head, whereas to effect somewhat similar reforms, blood was being shed in Spain at the moment."¹³ Whether Savage's opinion changed as the Spanish Government became more closely allied with the Communists in the course of the war is unknown.

There is little evidence to indicate how much the Labour Cabinet knew about the situation in Spain, or how much pro-Republican or pro-Francoist propaganda influenced their opinions. Several files in the Nash Papers indicate that, while he was in England and Europe in late 1936 and early 1937, Nash either collected himself or was given a good deal of pro-Republican material on the war.¹⁴ News and opinion on the war was of course available to the Government from local and overseas newspapers and periodicals.

In terms of the administrative machinery of foreign policy New Zealand was dependent on its connection with Britain for information. New Zealand had only a rudimentary external affairs administration when the Labour Government came to power. There was no real External Affairs or Foreign Affairs Department. What was known as External Affairs dealt specifically with the Samoan Mandate.¹⁵ All other matters of external interest were handled by the Imperial Affairs section of the Prime Ministers Department, which consisted of "two or three" officials headed by C.A. Berendsen.¹⁶ According to his successor, Sir Alistair McIntosh, Berendsen was the draftsman of New Zealand's foreign policy in this period, subject of course to the approval of his political masters, whose general world view he shared.¹⁷

New Zealand had only one representative overseas, the High

Commissioner in London. The Government therefore relied on the Dominions Office of the British Government for most of its information. In 1937 Sir Cecil Day was appointed New Zealand Liaison Officer with the Dominions Office.¹⁸ His reports supplemented the official communications and provided the background and atmosphere lacking in official documents. The High Commissioner's Office also sent information, often gained in meetings between Commonwealth representatives and British officials. However, the information given to High Commissioners was often very selective.¹⁹

The New Zealand High Commissioner's Office in London was not regarded as an official channel of communication. In the period when New Zealand was seen as the most independently minded and least tractable of the Dominions, it alone still retained the anachronistic system whereby the Governor-General functioned as the official channel of communication between the New Zealand and British Governments. It had been agreed at the Imperial Conference in 1926 that official communications should be made directly between Governments, but New Zealand did not fully adopt this system until 1941.²⁰

The elementary nature of New Zealand's foreign policy machinery contributed to the ambiguities of its policy on the Spanish Civil War. There was neither the staff nor the means to develop and express a more complex policy, has this been desired. Collective security was the focus of the Government's concerns in the realm of foreign policy; the League of Nations was also the only forum it had for public expression of independent opinions outside the Commonwealth structure. Thus, in terms of both administration and inclination the New Zealand Government's policy was limited and defined by its relationship with Britain.

Since the Labour Government's attitude towards the Spanish Civil War was mostly expressed at the League of Nations and in consultations with the British Government, this chapter will

concentrate on these aspects of its policy. A chronological approach has been chosen that follows the development of the policy. The Labour Government's response outside the two above-mentioned areas did not appear to relate directly to these "external" factors. Therefore, the much smaller body of evidence of its attitude towards humanitarian and pro-Republican appeals for aid to and support for the Spanish Government will be discussed separately.

With the New Zealand Labour Government's philosophical position established and its concern to maintain Imperial unity while acting more independently in supporting a legitimate left-wing Government identified, attention can now be given to the interplay of international involvement in the war and New Zealand reactions. The Spanish Civil War began on 17 July 1936. His Majesty's Government in New Zealand was officially informed of the rebellion in Spain on 23 July 1936 in a telegram from the Dominions Office to the Governor General.²¹ However, the first official expression of the Labour Government's attitude did not come until 11 December 1936, when Jordan spoke on the subject at the League of Nations. In the intervening period communications from the British Government had kept the Dominions informed of international developments and the trend of its own policy. A circular telegram on 5 August indicated the British Government's concern that the war would divide Europe into two ideological blocs, as well as its suspicion of the Republican forces:

The struggle between the military and the government is becoming a struggle between Communism and Facism and there are signs that even if the struggle were to result in a victory for the moderate left parties comprising the Government, these would be submerged by the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the Communists to whom they would have largely owed their victory.²²

Later telegrams notified Dominion Governments of the British Government's decision to support the French proposal for a multilateral Non-Intervention Agreement (NIA). The NIA, signed by 27 countries in August 1936, was intended to prevent direct or indirect

interference in the war by other nations. A Non-Intervention Committee (NIC) was established in September to police the NIA and, if necessary, to take steps to prevent intervention. Neither the NIA nor the NIC proved effective methods to control aid to either side in Spain.²³

Files in the Prime Minister's Department recorded no response from the New Zealand Government to either of these proposals. The only communication from New Zealand to the Dominions Office in 1936 was a request for information about a New Zealand airman, Eric Griffiths, reported wounded while flying in the Spanish Government's airforce.²⁴ In late September and early November the British Government considered de facto recognition of Franco's provisional Government and the award of belligerent rights at sea in the event of the fall of Madrid to the rebels.²⁵ Given the New Zealand Government's later opposition to any form of recognition of any other authority in Spain but the elected Government, it is surprising that there was no protest recorded at this time. It is possible, however, that Berendsen, who was in England at the time, conveyed a verbal protest to the Foreign Office.

On 27 November the Spanish Government asked the League of Nations Council to examine the situation in Spain in terms of Article 11 of the Covenant, which stated that "any war or threat of war whether immediately affecting any of the members of the League or not is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League".²⁶ The Spanish Government justified its appeal on three grounds: German and Italian intervention on behalf of the rebels was a violation of international law; their recognition of Franco's provisional Government (on 18 November) was "virtually an act of aggression against the Spanish Republic"; and the verbal blockade of Government-controlled ports would create international difficulties. Considered together, these factors contributed a threat to international peace or good relations between nations.²⁷ The League Council was summoned to meet on 10 December to consider the appeal.

On 2 December Jordan cabled Savage that he intended to attend the meeting and assumed he might use his own discretion "in the light of developments as they occur". Savage's approval of this course of action was sent the next day.²⁸ Given that Jordan's speeches at the League were major expressions of the New Zealand attitude, this exchange was significant. There was, then, no question that Jordan would do other than reflect the views of his Government, even if he had not been given specific guidelines. Jordan himself was confident that this was the case. His private correspondence with Savage made frequent reference to his certainty that long and close friendship with Savage meant that he knew Savage's mind on most issues. For example, on 10 November 1936 Jordan wrote, "I know your thoughts".²⁹ Three years later, reflecting on his work as High Commissioner and New Zealand delegate at Geneva, Jordan said:

I have had the advantage, of course, of knowing full well what is in your mind concerning most things, as we worked together for many years, and I feel I know what is in the mind of yourself and the members of the Cabinet and having been together in Parliament and taken part in Party and private discussions on your aspirations, in matters national, international and social my mind runs with yours on all matters of importance.³⁰

Therefore, his speeches at Geneva must be regarded as sincere expressions of what he believed to be his Government's attitude. Savage did not give any indication that Jordan was mistaken in this assumption.

Jordan's speech on 11 December made plain his Government's commitment to the League of Nations. He addressed most of his remarks to the Spanish Government's appeal that the Council hear its case, and refrained from general discussion of the war. Although the French and British representatives had both emphasised that the Non-Intervention Committee was dealing with the problem of foreign aid, Jordan was adamant that the rebellion in Spain was "the business of the League".³¹ He urged the Council to agree to consider the situation and asked that the rebels also state their case to that body.

Jordan had begun by saying that he would not venture opinions on the situation within Spain itself because he was not in possession of all the facts, but it was clear that he was in sympathy with the Government of Spain:

We ask then, whether it is possible to have further particulars of the cause of the trouble, in order to see whether the action taken by the rebels is justified if, indeed, such action can be justified.

I ask myself as a Member of the Council, whether the cause of the trouble which we have power to consider is such as to merit the attention of the Council; I ask what was the cause of the revolt. We find that reference is made to "dissatisfaction with the Government and its action" - the Government that was elected on February 16th last. I venture to remark that if a nation constitutionally elects a Government, that Government must surely be acceptable to the nation, more especially if it allows of means for its own removal.³²

He reaffirmed his Government's willingness to participate in any League action that might be required to bring about a settlement "in the interests of humanity and constitutional government".³³ The concerns that Jordan expressed in this speech for the role of the League in preserving peace and protecting legitimate Governments were to remain paramount in the Labour Government's assessment of the situation.

Jordan's insistence that it was the duty of the League to investigate and then act on the situation was to no avail. The Council passed a resolution that did little more than acknowledge the efforts of the NIC and offer aid to the victims of the war. The New Zealand delegate was disappointed. In his official report to the Government he said that he felt that there had been "a striving after the bare minimum".³⁴ He was, nevertheless, aware of the complexities of the situation that made it difficult for the League to act effectively. He noted that Germany and Italy were not represented at Geneva, but were members of the NIC and that, therefore, the NIC had more chance of successful control of intervention. In addition, Jordan emphasised the divergence of

opinion among League members on Spain that made it unlikely that a strong resolution would be passed, since resolutions were not valid unless passed unanimously. Yet Jordan acknowledged that an "emasculated" resolution was better than none: "The alternative is to confess the utter futility of the League as presently constituted."³⁵ This was something neither he nor his Government was prepared to accept. The League must be preserved, even in a state of virtual inanition, in the hope that its members could be persuaded to revive it to some effectiveness.

Thus, in December 1936 the Labour Government had taken a position on the Spanish Civil War that was intimately linked with its concern about the viability of the League. Its identification with the Spanish Government was as a legitimately elected fellow member of the League rather than as a politically left-of-centre Government. Jordan's understanding of the complications militating against League action were not to prevent him voicing these concerns even more forcefully in 1937. This, in turn, focussed more sharply the variance of opinion between the British and New Zealand Governments in the critical period from March to September 1937.

For part of this time Savage and Nash and advisors, including Berendsen, were in England. Nash had arrived in London in December 1936 intent on negotiating a reciprocal trade agreement with Britain. Savage joined him in May 1937 for the Coronation of King George VI and the Imperial Conference that followed. There would then be opportunities for the representatives of both Governments to promote their ideas on foreign policy personally.

The presence of the New Zealanders in England was also a chance for British pro-Republicans to press their views, especially after the encouraging stand at Geneva by Jordan in December 1936. In February R.M. Campbell,³⁶ a member of the High Commissioner's staff in London, received a memorandum on the implications of the Spanish Civil War and New Zealand's position from Geoffrey Bing, a British Labour MP.³⁷ Campbell passed the memorandum to Nash.³⁸

While it was clearly pro-Republican in sympathy, Bing's memorandum emphasised the international legal aspects of the situation. It took as its premise that German and Italian intervention on the side of the rebels was a violation of the Pact of Paris and of the League Covenant. Bing argued that New Zealand's position as a champion of the League and as a nation of the Empire meant that the Labour Government had a right and duty to protest such violation of international law, either at the League or directly to the British Government. He also considered that the New Zealand attitude was crucial to British policy; a forceful protest from the Dominion would unite British opposition to the Baldwin Government's policy, thus creating enough public pressure upon it to alter its views.

Bing's case was supported by D.N. Pritt, a British Labour MP with close links with the Communist Party.³⁹ Pritt stressed New Zealand's unique position.

...she has endeared herself to all conservatives by her loyalty to the Empire, and to all Socialists by her commonsense Socialism. Dependent for her prosperity on unhampered sea communications with Britain, she has the right to speak firmly at Westminster and a right to be heard with respect when she does speak.⁴⁰

These arguments were calculated to appeal to Labour's leaders. Here was evidence that New Zealand's independent stand on the principles of international justice had support in England. Here too was an assurance that New Zealand was indeed speaking for a large body of opinion in Britain, and perhaps elsewhere, and a reinforcement of Labour leaders' feeling that they might act as Britain's conscience. The emphasis on international law and concern that a precedent had been established in its flouting and subsequent disregard by other nations went to the heart of the New Zealand Government's concern over the role of the League in the Spanish Civil War.

However, even if the Bing memorandum influenced Nash's and

Savage's thinking, it failed in its main objective of eliciting a public protest against the British Government's policy. The New Zealand Government was not prepared to take the final step that would align it with the Spanish Government and create an open breach between the Dominion and the Mother Country.

Nash made this clear in May after another attempt by prominent British pro-Republicans to enlist his Government's support. Wilfred Roberts, a British Labour MP, invited Nash to lunch with him, the Duchess of Atholl⁴¹ and some others to discuss the Spanish problem, not only in terms of relief work but also "from the political point of view of the possible affect of the struggle upon the British Empire".⁴² Berendsen and W.B. Sutch accompanied Nash to the discussion on 14 May. Writing on 24 May to thank Roberts for the lunch Nash said:

I am doubtful whether we can as a Government do anything to help but if you feel that I can personally at any time, then it is only necessary to get in touch with me, and if I can help I certainly will.⁴³

The delay of ten days between the meeting and the reply might suggest that there was some discussion of the Government's position before a reply was made. However, the Imperial conference had begun and Nash was extremely busy with several committees; his letter may have been delayed merely by pressure of work.

If Labour leaders were unwilling publicly to commit themselves to support of the Spanish Government, they were determined to do so privately. Before Savage left New Zealand in March to travel to the Coronation and Imperial Conference he had indicated to the British Government his Government's objection to any form of recognition of Franco. The British Foreign Office had discussed the appointment of an official agent to the rebel authorities as early as August 1936, and by March the next year planning had reached an advanced stage. The Dominions were notified of the intention on 19 March.⁴⁴ On 25 March Savage requested the Governor-General to inform the

Dominion's Office that the New Zealand Government was:

firmly and inalterably opposed to any action which, either directly or indirectly, could be interpreted as a trend towards the recognition of any administration in Spain other than that of the lawful Government.⁴⁵

Thus Savage reiterated more clearly what Jordan had signalled at the League of Nations; that his Government was convinced that the Popular Front Government was legitimately elected.

On the same day that the New Zealand telegram was sent the British Cabinet decided to postpone the appointment of an agent. Was this, then, confirmation of Bing's and Pritt's arguments that New Zealand's attitude was indeed influential? Jill Edwards suggests that New Zealand's protest had some effect, but she also notes other factors behind the decision.⁴⁶ Notably, the Russian Ambassador, Ivan Maisky, had leaked to the press the Italian Ambassador's statement to the NIC that Italian "volunteers" would not be withdrawn until Franco had won. There was a storm of protest in the British press and the House of Commons. It was hardly timely to announce that a British agent was to be sent to Burgos, even if the arrangement was described as "informal". With hindsight it may be said that outraged public opinion in Britain counted for more than a private protest from one distant Dominion. At the time, however, Labour leaders could not be blamed if they thought that their representations had played a part in the British Government's decision.

The Imperial Conference highlighted the differences between the two Governments on foreign policy. Savage's major speech on 21 May was a polite but comprehensive condemnation of the methods of British foreign policy. He roundly criticised the British attitude to the Abyssinian war and the occupation of the Rhineland. At the heart of the criticism were the beliefs that Britain had strayed from the ideals of the League Covenant and that the Dominions' views should have more weight in the formulation of foreign policy. Savage called

for a consultative Commonwealth foreign policy, as distinct from a British policy upon which Dominion Governments were informed. The joint policy was to have a moral basis, such as the principles embodied in the League Covenant. The New Zealand Prime Minister also urged Commonwealth Governments to take the lead in supporting the League of Nations.⁴⁷

Throughout the meetings on foreign policy Savage was insistent on acceptance by the Commonwealth of the principle of collective security. But his "sermon on the immorality of British foreign policy"⁴⁸ was aimed at the methods rather than the objectives of that policy; and he was later to declare that New Zealand would aid Britain in war "right or wrong". Nevertheless, the British Government was concerned at New Zealand's intransigence on the League issue, and on 28 May Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, attempted to persuade Nash to modify his Government's position. MacDonald told Nash that New Zealand was the only Dominion that was not in general agreement with British policy. Nash, on the other hand, felt that New Zealand's views were closer to Britain's than were the other Dominions', and assured MacDonald that even though his Government felt that British policy had not always been according to League principles, this criticism would never be made public.⁴⁹

Nash's assessment of the closeness of the two Governments' views, under the circumstances, was a little strange. One had rejected the League; the other gave it total support. Perhaps Nash meant the desire for peace that the two Governments shared, the "objectives" rather than the "methods" to which Savage had referred. His assurance that in public loyalty came first had particular relevance to his Government's attitude towards the Spanish Civil War. On the same day at Geneva Jordan made the second of his speeches on Spain and the role of the League and an incident occurred that seemed to some to underline the differences between the two Governments on the subject.

The Spanish Government had again appealed to the League Council to review the situation and had prepared a "White Book" containing documentary evidence of the involvement in Spain of units of the Italian army. It was rumoured that the New Zealand delegate intended to invoke Article 10 of the Covenant in support of the Spanish Government.⁵⁰ In Article 10 League members undertook to preserve the territorial integrity and political independence of all members against external aggression.⁵¹

Before Jordan spoke he was approached by the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, who appeared to be underlining or crossing out parts of Jordan's speech. When Jordan addressed the Council he did not mention Article 10. It was assumed by observers that Eden's "blue-pencilling" had prevented the New Zealand delegate from making other than a "conventional plea" for stronger League action.⁵² The incident caused a minor sensation in the English press. Eden was even called upon in the House of Commons (by Conservative MP Vyvyan Adams) to state whether or not he had altered Jordan's speech. Eden denied that he had done so.⁵³ So too did Jordan. He at first told reporters that Eden had not edited his speech, but that he and the British Foreign Secretary were merely discussing some passages in the speech.⁵⁴ Later, however, he told Hugh Dalton that Eden was marking his own speech and modified some passages according to Jordan's suggestion.⁵⁵ Either Jordan's memory was at fault, or there was something to gloss over, for Eden had spoken before him. Significantly, although Eden had denied blue-pencilling Jordan's speech he avoided answering directly another question in the House of Commons (this time from a Labour MP, Ellen Wilkinson) as to whether he had made any representations to Jordan to modify his speech.⁵⁶ W.B. Sutch, in The Quest for Security in New Zealand, claimed to have been sitting directly behind Jordan and to have observed Eden definitely editing Jordan's speech.⁵⁷

Both Sinclair and Wood consider that there is no reason to believe that Eden did insist on modifications to Jordan's speech.⁵⁸ The Savage-Jordan correspondence does not shed any

light on the incident; since Savage was in London Jordan had no need to write to him. The discrepancies between Jordan's explanations first to the press and then to Hugh Dalton, and Eden's evasiveness in Parliament, suggest that there was more to the incident than the two delegates were prepared to admit.

Jordan's speech began strongly but faded into vagueness towards the end.⁵⁹ The first part of the speech was a strong statement of Jordan's (and his Government's) view of the seriousness of the situation for Spain itself and for the League. He reaffirmed his statement in December 1936 that the war in Spain was the business of the League:

As it is a function of the League to safeguard the lives of people, to maintain peace, and to uphold lawful and constitutional Governments against invasion and the violence of outside Powers, it is now undoubtedly time that some decision in the Spanish situation was taken if the League is going to act at all in the matter.

Jordan made it clear that he believed that the war was a case of foreign aggression that was a direct test of the international community's ability and will to secure and enforce a collective peace. The Spanish Government's "White Book" was "authoritative evidence" that foreign powers were operating in Spain and therefore should be considered with the "utmost gravity" by the Council. Further, Jordan considered that what was happening in Spain was "one of the most flagrant challenges to the authority of the League which has occurred in its history". Implicit in his statements was the fear that if the League did not act, its credibility would be further damaged, if not totally destroyed. Moreover, it was not only the authority of the League that was being challenged, but the very principles which it was bound to uphold. A constitutional Government and the political independence of a nation were threatened. Thus, the survival of the League as a viable force for peace was intimately linked with the survival of the Spanish Government.

Jordan's words were both an affirmation of his Government's commitment to the League and an attempt to rouse League members to a

sense of their responsibility in the matter. Jordan was aware that the League was being bypassed. He wanted to know why the insurgents in Spain did not come forward and provide the League with their side of the problem:

How can the League Council be expected to know the details and how can these people be respected by the Council if they fight and kill the citizens of one of the League Members, and at the same time withhold from us evidence of what they say is the cause of the trouble?

The simple answer was of course that neither Franco nor his allies cared at all for the respect of the League or considered its actions as an important factor in the situation. While Jordan's demand could be interpreted as a measure of his own ingenuous confidence in the League's status, it was surely also designed to stir the sensibilities of other delegates.

The tenor of these remarks suggested that Jordan was about to reinforce his urgent demand that the League should act with a concrete proposal. He was critical of the method so far adopted by League Members to deal with the situation, which he described as "an embargo which has handicapped the Government and strengthened the hand of its aggressors". Even without direct reference to specific Powers or to the NIC this statement was patently directed at British and French policy. Obviously, Jordan knew that those two Powers, and others, wanted the League Council to confine itself to an innocuous resolution supporting the work of the NIC:

It has been said that the main purpose of this meeting of the Council is to uphold and endorse the work of the Non-Intervention Committee, to emphasize our wish for the early withdrawal of all foreign nationals from Spain, and ourselves to determine to do all in our power to facilitate the result ... We pray for the success of the Non-Intervention Committee and we are determined to do all in our power to facilitate the result, but when we say we will do all in our power I ask the question what action, if any, is being undertaken?

It was at this point that Jordan's speech lost its power and here, perhaps, was the key to the "blue-pencil" incident. After

emphasising that the situation concerned the welfare of people, Jordan said "We would fain ask that a committee of the Council be set up to act forthwith, but we have been assured that the Non-Intervention Committee will go beyond the matter of intervention ...". Had Jordan intended to ask that a committee be established to oversee the work of the NIC? If so, Eden may have heard of his intention and dissuaded him from making such a request.

Whether or not this is what happened, the rest of the speech indicated that Jordan, having accepted that the problem of Spain would be left to the NIC, was still committed to a peaceful solution that might involve the League. He made a rather vague request that the NIC extend its powers "to restore peace and good order, and then have again a democratic expression of opinion by the Spanish people". Once hostilities had ceased could not the League Council either directly or through the NIC ensure that the wishes of the Spanish people be consulted? What Jordan appeared to be suggesting was a League mandate of some form. His reference to League assistance so that peace could be restored more quickly also suggested that he had in mind some kind of peace-keeping force. This solution followed with his Government's general policy on international relations, since the memorandum on reform of the Covenant had favoured the establishment of such a force. Under the circumstances, however, it was patently unworkable. Perhaps the vagueness of Jordan's request was the result of its last minute substitution for another solution that he had been prevented from proposing.

The suggestion was an indication of the naivete of New Zealand's delegate in assuming that all parties desired an immediate, peaceful solution to the war. It was also a sincere expression of the beliefs that were at the heart of the Labour Government's foreign policy:

Surely we all agree that this matter could be better settled by reason than by guns ... only by reason and not by force can peace be maintained. The earth is being menaced by the danger of an attempt to govern by force. The only satisfactory form of Government - is a Government elected by

the people - when a Government occupies its position at the request of the governed.

Here again was an indication of the urgency with which the New Zealand Government regarded the situation. If one such attempt to rule by force was not opposed and a constitutional government was abandoned, what would follow? Jordan's suggestion of a mandate and supervised elections would at once assure that democratic government was safeguarded and confidence in the League restored, not least to its members. As Jordan said in conclusion: "If we cannot do this, we cannot do something bigger."

His proposal received no support from other members of the Council. The resolution adopted regretted that the Non-Intervention policy had not yet had full effect, welcomed the scheme of supervision adopted by NIC members and condemned the bombing of open towns.

It was the rumour that Jordan intended to invoke Article 10 that caused the "blue-pencil" incident to attract so much attention from the press at Geneva. The rumour may also have been the cause of Eden's move to check Jordan's speech. It did have a basis in fact. There exists in the Nash Papers a copy of a draft speech apparently intended to be delivered by Jordan at the Council meeting on 28 May 1937 that did ask for Article 10 to be invoked. It is not suggested that it was this speech that Eden "censored", for it differed so markedly from Jordan's delivered speech that it seems unlikely that even an accomplished extempore speaker could have replaced one for the other at short notice. However, the speech did illuminate the extent of the New Zealand Government's concern over the Spanish Civil War.

The "Nash Papers Speech" was dated 28 May, referred to the Spanish Government's note to the Council of 20 May and to the "White Paper" on Italian intervention, and noted "my own country's responsibility as a Member of the League ... and as a member of the British Commonwealth".⁶⁰ It therefore seems certain that it was

a draft for Jordan's speech to the Council. Its mention of "the crowning horror and infamy of the destruction of Guernica" indicates that it was written sometime after 24 April.⁶¹

The speech was a strong condemnation of the actions of Italy and Germany in Spain and of the policy of Non-Intervention. It assessed the situation in Spain as not only an attack on a constitutional Government and an attempt "to break democracy", but also a war of invasion by foreign powers: "From the day of its outbreak on July 18 until the present day the struggle in Spain has not been merely or even primarily a Spanish Civil War."⁶² Further, it was considered that such a situation would, if allowed to drift and in the present state of international relations, "constitute as accessories to another world war."⁶³

The policy of non-intervention was described as contrary to the Covenant of the League. The Committee established to oversee the policy was a "uniform and disastrous failure",⁶⁴ meeting in secret and without representation from the country most vitally concerned, but admitting representatives from the countries responsible for the invasion of Spain. The speech also implied that the Committee was not only unable to enforce Non-Intervention but also unwilling to try. It was in "a state of coma"⁶⁵ only broken when the Spanish Government appealed to the League and there was the possibility of its efforts coming under the scrutiny of League members. The criticism went even further than this:

... this policy, which with partial impartiality known as "non-intervention", constituted disregard of the plain duty of all the Members of the League the moment it became clear that the Spanish rebels were receiving military assistance from foreign powers. Since the invasion of Spain by a foreign army it seems to me impossible even to pretend that the policy of so-called "non-intervention" is anything, or ever has been anything else than conniving at a Fascist war of aggression for the purpose of destroying Spanish democracy and reducing Spain to the status of a Fascist province.⁶⁶

These opinions provided justification for the League to apply the provisions of Article 10 to the situation in Spain. Under this Article the League would acknowledge that Spain had been invaded and that the invasion was a threat to peace, and would act to protect the political and territorial integrity of Spain. The speech contained a draft resolution for the invoking of Article 10. The League was to recognise that the situation constituted contravention of Article 10 and, if after two months the Non-Intervention Committee had not been able to effect withdrawal of foreign troops, was to meet again to consider "the advice it should give to the Members of the league under Article 10 of the Covenant".⁶⁷ That advice ought to state that the duty of League Members was to help the Spanish Government preserve its political independence and territorial integrity by allowing it to purchase arms.

The two months' period of grace allowed to the NIC might have been an acknowledgement of the difficulties involved in invoking Article 10 in the case of Spain. Divisions between League Members on the issue were acute and there would have been difficulty in obtaining the unanimity necessary for a resolution to have been binding. Alternatively, the presentation of the resolution may have been intended as an ultimatum for the NIC members who also belonged to the League, in the hope that the threat of League action, or even the fear of League collapse if Article 10 were invoked, would spur them to positive action to prevent foreign intervention.

Certainly the speech was designed as an ultimatum to the League Council. The concluding remarks made that clear:

... while the details of my resolution are not perhaps of primary importance my Government cannot be satisfied with any text that does not give effect in some form to the principles which I feel it is essential to uphold, and that (sic) it will be my reluctant duty to vote against any resolution that does not embody those principles. It is better that the Council should fail to reach unanimity on a resolution and that public opinion in my own country, in the United Kingdom and in the other democracies should be aroused to the issues at stake, than that another sham resolution should deceive public opinion into believing that

anything effective was being done to stop the war of aggression against the Spanish Republic, while that war continued and the world went on drifting to disaster.⁶⁸

The speech was intended to have maximum impact. It is possible that its real purpose was to voice what hitherto had remained unspoken and to employ public opinion as an influence on the policies of League members. The Labour Government's memorandum on reform of the Covenant had emphasised that peoples should be consulted on decisions of collective security; the speech had objected to the NIC on the grounds that its proceedings were not open to public scrutiny. This speech was therefore another expression of the Labour Government's opinion that governments had a responsibility to consult their electors on matters of peace and war. It was also perhaps an echo of the assertion in the Bing memorandum that the New Zealand Government could represent the views of a large number of people in Britain on the Spanish Civil War and thereby provide a focus for the pro-Republican campaign. Thus, in presenting this speech the Labour Government would be acting as the democratic conscience of not only Britain but other League members as well.

There were also other indications that Bing's memorandum had influenced New Zealand's policy-makers. The speech had acknowledged the primary responsibility of the Great Powers, but defended New Zealand's right to voice its opinions not only because it was a Member of the League but because of Spain's strategic importance:

Nor can my country as a member of the British Commonwealth fail to declare that an independent and democratic Spain, bound by the ties of friendship and the obligations of the collective system to the British Commonwealth, is for us a vital interest and that it would be intolerable for us that Spain should become the vassal of a Fascist power.⁶⁹

This expression of New Zealand's own interest in the outcome of the war in Spain did not occur anywhere else but in this undelivered speech. There was also evidence of an obviously pro-Republican analysis of the war that was also missing from the Government's

public expressions of its attitude both before and after the time of this speech. The statement that the war was one of Fascist aggression against a democracy was a much stronger assertion than cautious remarks about constitutional governments. While it did not necessarily indicate sympathy with the Spanish Government's political aims, it nevertheless placed the New Zealand Government firmly in the pro-Republican camp.

In other respects the speech merely expressed the Labour Government's convictions about international relations in stronger form. The League's vacillations over Spain were clearly seen as a betrayal of the principles of collective security that would hasten war. The issue at stake was not only Spain itself but the survival of a collective system to ensure peace. The same concept was conveyed in the speech that Jordan eventually gave to the Council on 28 May, albeit in milder terms. This conviction of the need for nations to work together to protect democracy and peace was still the central theme in the undelivered speech, although it gave more emphasis to the specific problem in Spain.

The content of this speech was significant in that it revealed the Labour Government's deep concern over the Spanish Civil War. The League's attitude to the foreign invasion of Spain was clearly seen as crucial to its continued functioning as a vital force for peace and just relations between nations. In addition, the New Zealand Government's concern for the survival of democracy in Spain was also given clearer and stronger expression than elsewhere.

Unfortunately the speech stands alone. There is no indication of exactly when it was written between 24 April and 28 May and no evidence of any discussion of it by members of the New Zealand cabinet. It is possible that the speech was written either by Berendsen or Jordan, or by both. (According to Sinclair, Berendsen wrote Savage's speech for the Imperial Conference.⁷⁰) It seems unlikely that the speech was the subject of Eden's "blue-pencilling", and more probably that the draft was discussed by Savage, Nash,

Jordan and Berendsen earlier and discarded as too strong. It would certainly have constituted the public criticism of British policy that, on 28 May, Nash promised McDonald would never be made.

Undoubtedly the reason for its suppression was the acute embarrassment it would cause the British Government. Britain was, after all, a member of the NIC that was accused of conniving at a war of Fascist aggression in Spain. Such a dissociation from and repudiation of the British Government's policy could only exacerbate the tension between the two Commonwealth Governments in the area of foreign policy. Nor would such a stand have been welcomed by other members of the Commonwealth or the many electors at home in New Zealand who felt a sentimental attachment to the "Mother Country". Commonwealth, then, was ultimately more important than collective security.

Yet, even if this speech was not the cause of the "blue-pencil" incident, it provides some clues as to what actually happened at Geneva. On the back of the copy in the Nash Papers are several handwritten notes in writing that appears to be Nash's. The notes read:

1. Withdrawal from Spain of army of occupation and all foreign volunteers.
2. Effectively prevent war materials reaching the rebels*
3. Ask that a Committee of the Council be set up (with the NIC*) and ensure the wishes of the Council being carried out.
Intelligence operating.
Make arrangements for the people of the ... Spain to be ... consulted+.
4. Provide for meeting: again within specified period.
5. Committee with President to call Council.71

* crossed out

+ elipses indicate indecipherable words

These notes may indicate that, having decided that the draft speech was too strong, the New Zealand representatives in London planned to ask for a committee of the League to supervise the activities of the NIC and to find some means for a democratic choice of government by the people of Spain. If so, then Jordan's remark that he would "fain ask" that a committee be established is explained and it seems likely that Eden did prevail upon him to remove the request from his speech. Further evidence for this supposition comes from Hugh Dalton's remark that Jordan was "furious with the New Statesman", which had published a remarkably detailed summation of what Jordan's speech was supposed to contain.⁷² Citing an "independent eye-witness" the New Statesman said that Jordan had drafted notes for a speech in which he intended to:

expose frankly the short-comings of non-intervention and to urge the Council to appoint a Committee with instructions to remain in permanent session, to watch the doings of the London Non-Intervention Committee and if withdrawal of non-Spanish combatants were not secured within a month to report back to the Council with a view to more forceful action under Article X.⁷³

Of course Jordan may merely have objected to the New Statesman's statement that after his conversation with Eden he was "flustered", and "floundered" among his notes. Nevertheless, the accumulated evidence, slight though it is, does suggest that the New Zealand Government was prevented from making a specific proposal for stronger League action at Geneva in May 1937, whether or not it included any reference to Article 10.

Even if they were prevented by their own commitment to the Commonwealth, and by pressure from Eden, from bringing the matter to a head at Geneva, Labour leaders were still committed to a peaceful solution to the Spanish problem that could involve the League. From the time of Jordan's speech the idea of a League mandate was promoted by the Labour Government.

On 21 June Nash spoke at a "Stop the Spanish War" meeting of the League of Nations Union in London and gave clearer expression to

Jordan's suggestion at the League Council. The speech was one of the few examples of a public statement about Spain made by a New Zealand representative outside the League. Nash said he was amplifying the suggestion made by Jordan at the League and proposed that the League, "with the encouragement of the British Commonwealth of Nations", should ensure the withdrawal of foreign troops and thereafter exercise a mandate over Spain for two years. Two independent countries could be selected to supervise elections after that time. Nash also made comments that echoed the sentiments in the undelivered League speech. He considered that the integrity of Spain had been threatened, and pointed out that the Covenant of the League specified "certain things" in such a case. He went on to say that the NIC comprised nations that were involved in the war, while Spain was not represented on the Committee.

It was as if, having decided to avoid making such comments at the League, the New Zealand Government was determined to air its concern elsewhere. Nash stopped short of saying that he thought Article 10 should be invoked, but the inference was there to be made. The speech also demonstrated that Nash's promise that there would be no public criticism of British policy only meant direct criticism, since an attack on the composition of the NIC was implied criticism of Britain's support of that body.

Nash also expanded upon statements Jordan had made about constitutional Governments in December 1936 and May 1937. He said that the suggestion of supervised elections did not necessarily mean that he thought that the elections in February 1936 had been unfair. Although still cautious, this statement was an advance on the generalisations about constitutional Governments Jordan had made, and the more significant because it was made in a prepared public speech.

As always, however, the major emphasis was on the League. Nash stressed the idea of a Commonwealth untied behind the concept of peace through collective security and concluded that unless the "road of the League" was taken war and disaster would follow.⁷⁴

There had, then, been some justification for Malcolm MacDonald's pessimistic remark, after the meeting with Nash, that Eden would not be able to make an impression on Savage and Nash.⁷⁵ Nash's speech revealed that whatever had happened at Geneva, or in conversations with British officials, the New Zealand Government's commitment to the League was unchanged. Neither had its attitude towards the Spanish Civil War been substantially altered. However, the limits to the expression of this attitude had been more clearly defined.

Yet, while Jordan's and Nash's speeches, and Eden's reported censorship, may have endeared the New Zealand Government to pro-Republicans in England, at home an incident had occurred that enraged New Zealand pro-Republicans. The police "interrogation" of three New Zealand nurses about to depart for Spain under the auspices of the New Zealand SMAC illustrated the caution, even suspicion, with which some members of the Government regarded local pro-Republicanism. The nurses were taken from a farewell meeting to the Auckland Central Police Station, ostensibly to check their passports. They were held for three hours and subjected to intensive questioning about their reasons for going to Spain. Some of the questions related to their involvement with Communist organisations and known Communists.⁷⁶

The police claimed that they had been requested by the Department of Internal Affairs to ensure that the nurses' passports were in order, since under British regulations only those travelling under the auspices of named humanitarian organisations were allowed to enter Spain. The official explanation from the Minister of Internal Affairs, W.E. Parry, was that his Department had only learned of the nurses' departure shortly before that time (the interviews took place only hours before the nurses' boat was due to sail). Parry justified the questioning on the grounds of the British regulations and of ensuring that the nurses understood that the Government could not accept responsibility for them.⁷⁷ Minister of Police, Peter Fraser, claimed that he had no knowledge of the incident until Parry

had passed complaints to him.⁷⁸ However, in his capacity as Acting Prime Minister, Fraser had known the date of the nurses' departure several days in advance. The SMAC had asked him to attend a farewell function for the nurses, but he had been "unable" to do so. Fraser had effected a neat compromise by speaking to the nurses by radio telephone once they were aboard the ship,⁷⁹ a much less public method of expressing "official" good wishes and one that could be justified, if necessary, by his friendship with Nurse Dodd's family.⁸⁰

Fraser later admitted that the police interviewer had exceeded his instructions with regard to the questions put to the nurses. Still, he said, "they had been put in good faith and in the belief that they were in the interests of the ladies concerned."⁸¹ Whether or not Cabinet Ministers had known of the planned "interrogation", it seems that the sudden prominence of the SMAC led Fraser to take some interest in the organisation. In July 1937 he asked the Internal Affairs Department to provide him with any information it might have on the SMAC, its organisation, membership and methods of distributing funds, to assist with "discreet enquiries" the Commissioner of Police had been asked to make.⁸² The reply suggested that the Department viewed the Committee as relatively harmless. Fraser was advised that the organisation was fairly loose, with different titles for different branches. The Undersecretary noted that the Acting Prime Minister might possibly obtain more information from his colleagues, since some Labour MPs had connections with the SMAC.⁸³ Fraser's interest was possibly less an indication of Cabinet concern than it was a reflection of his own marked anti-communism, and early evidence of the concern about dissident groups he was to display after he became Prime Minister. Savage and other Ministers had previously received correspondence from the SMAC and had apparently not bothered to find out more about the organisation.

The police interrogation of the nurses, Fraser's (and other Ministers) avoidance of invitations to appear at SMAC functions and

Fraser's interest in the organisation illuminated the difficulties of supporting the Spanish Government, yet avoiding association with domestic pro-Republicanism. Yet on the diplomatic front the new Zealand Government, in the later months of 1937, was still prepared to defend the Spanish Government.

The strain between the New Zealand and British Governments over the latter's policy continued. In July the question of belligerent rights for both sides was raised again. The New Zealand Government demonstrated its opposition to any form of recognition of Franco, but was met with the British Government's equal determination to pursue its Spanish policy regardless of the attitudes of the Dominions. On 13 July Jordan attended a meeting of Dominions' representatives and British officials that had been called to discuss the "British Plan" for withdrawal of "volunteers" shortly to be presented to the NIC. He reported with some resentment that at the conclusion of the meeting the representatives of the Dominions were told that they were not being consulted but informed.⁸⁴ The proposals were to be put to the NIC the next day, "so that whatever we said would not have any effect on the policy that was being put forward". Such a dismissal must have been galling to Jordan and his colleagues, determined that New Zealand's opinion should count, more especially so since they considered that British policy was not a reflection of their attitude to foreign affairs.

Jordan had presented lengthy objections to the "British Plan" at the meeting. The British proposal linked the granting of belligerent rights at sea (which Germany and Italy favoured) with the withdrawal of foreign combatants. Both sides in the war would be accorded belligerent rights once the NIC had been satisfied that arrangements for the withdrawal of "volunteers" were satisfactory and that substantial withdrawals had been made. Jordan considered that the grant of belligerent rights would be recognising the two sides as of equal status and was thus a contravention of the Covenant of the League. He further objected to the granting of belligerent rights under the conditions of the proposal, since the withdrawal of foreign

combatants depended on the decision of powers outside Spain. He was not sanguine about the success of the proposed withdrawal, pointing out that "Mr Mussolini had declared that under no circumstances will he allow a Bolshevik government to dominate in Spain." Nor did he think the word "withdrawal" should be used if the "volunteers" were to be discharged by the two Spanish forces. "Dismissal" could be effected without the approval of foreign powers, while "withdrawal" could operate without the decision of the belligerent parties in Spain. Jordan was obviously concerned that a token withdrawal might occur, after which Franco would be granted belligerent status and would continue to fight with aid from the Fascist powers, or that even if Franco agreed to dismiss his foreign troops, the Italians and Germans would not withdraw them.

The other part of the "British Plan" was a scheme for the re-establishment of supervision of points of entry into Spain to prevent the passage of troops or war materials. Jordan was disturbed that the naval part of the supervision was to be discontinued while control of land frontiers was restored: "It is agreed that the support for the Government is reaching Spain across the land frontier while the support for Franco has been by the sea."

If this proposal made Jordan suspicious of the direction of British policy he did not say so. He was certainly aware that the British Plan represented in part a delaying tactic.

It is very evident that we are sparring for time during which Britain may complete her defence program, and it is really not expected that these proposals will get us anywhere.

An understanding of the need for appeasement until British armaments were improved did not prevent Jordan or his Government from promoting a peaceful and immediate solution to the war in Spain. At the meeting Jordan again urged consideration of his proposal of mediation and supervised elections, only to be informed that it was unlikely that either side would agree to it. Later events were to

show that this rebuff did not shake Jordan's wish that a better solution than the NIC could be found, nor his Government's determination to disagree with, and alter if possible, British policy on Spain.

Nevertheless, at this stage the disagreement remained a private matter. And, in August, Savage's negative response to a request for a unilateral gesture of support for the Spanish Government seemed to indicate that the New Zealand Government was not prepared to stand apart publicly from the "Mother Country". On 25 August Savage received a telegram from the Duchess of Atholl, on behalf of the British National Joint Council for Spanish Relief, asking that the New Zealand Government appeal to General Franco to give a personal guarantee for the safety of non-combatants at Santander and allow the presence of neutral observers.⁸⁵ Savage requested the Governor General to inform the Dominions Office of the Duchess' request and to state that:

His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would be glad to be associated with any representations which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom may find it practicable to make in this connection.⁸⁶

The Duchess of Atholl was informed of the Labour Government's sympathy in the matter and of its advice to the British Government.⁸⁷ No doubt this answer was not quite what the Duchess had envisaged!

Nevertheless, the strain between the two Governments remained and peaked in September when Savage was reprovved and, at the League, Jordan received a reprimand from the Dominions Secretary. September was a point of high strain over the Spanish Civil War in European as well as New Zealand-British relations. In August attacks on British (and other nations') shipping had increased and so had the indignation of the British public. It was more or less an open secret that Italian submarines were behind many of the attacks. Furthermore, the French Government was becoming more and more

unwilling to co-operate in the "propping-up" of the NIC and had suggested a conference of Mediterranean powers, excluding Italy, to discuss piracy. France was also threatening to make a public condemnation of Italian intervention in Spain at the NIC.⁸⁸

By this time Neville Chamberlain had succeeded Stanley Baldwin as Prime Minister of Britain. Chamberlain had become convinced of the necessity of an Anglo-Italian agreement in order to detach Italy from Germany. Informal preparatory talks had begun in July. Thus, the British Government wished to forestall any French action that might cause the demise of the NIC or cause Italy to break off negotiations with Britain. From this situation grew the proposal for a conference of European Powers, including Italy, Germany and Russia, to discuss attacks on Mediterranean shipping, to be held at Nyon in Switzerland on 10 September. A Russian note formally accusing Italy of "piracy" led to the withdrawal of Italy from the conference, which thwarted British hopes that negotiations for an Anglo Italian agreement might have begun at Nyon.

Against this background New Zealand's intransigence over the issue took on a greater significance. On 4 September a circular telegram was sent to the Dominions advising them of the possibility of a conference.⁸⁹ The telegram also asked for opinions on a proposal to allow both parties in the war the right to examine ships to verify their nationality. (Ships supplying the Spanish Government were often disguised as British ships to avoid attack; this was used as justification for attacks on British ships by the rebels.) The New Zealand Government objected to the proposal with some vigour, and a high moral tone. It regarded the proposal as a limited extension of belligerent rights which would be to the advantage of the rebels and of equal disadvantage to the Spanish Government. It further considered that the grant would inevitably extend beyond its limitation to a situation tantamount to the granting of belligerent rights.

The New Zealand Government politely acknowledged that Britain was

more directly affected and in a better position to judge the situation, but then went on to remind the British Government of its past policy and to reprove it for this change. The British telegram had likened the possible grant of rights of search to a similar move with regard to the Sino-Japanese conflict. The New Zealand Government objected to the comparison, since the Spanish situation "has by international consent been treated on distinct and individual lines", a subtle condemnation of the whole Non-Intervention policy. Although New Zealand had disagreed with the proposal to link belligerent rights with the withdrawal of "volunteers", it now asked why the British Government had apparently abandoned the condition it had formerly attached to granting belligerent rights. No doubt the irony of the situation was not lost on the British. Given Jordan's assessment of the "British Plan" as more or less a delaying tactic, it is likely that this complaint was made with a certain amount of cynicism. The telegram ended on a note of moral righteousness directed at the British Government and indicative of the Labour Government's attitude towards the parties in Spain:

"If these recent attacks are the sole reason for the proposal to alter the policy with reference to belligerent rights ... then His Majesty's Government in New Zealand feel bound to say that in their opinion such a reason was inadequate, that it would enable the parties responsible for the outrages to profit by their own wrongdoing and it might be deplorable in its future effects.⁹⁰

It would appear that the Labour Government was concerned with the precedent that could be set by recognition of a rival authority to an elected Government. Such recognition rewarded rebellion and therefore undermined the position of legitimate Governments everywhere. It refused to associate itself with the British proposal.

A somewhat exasperated reply from the Dominions Office on 11 September made it clear that the British Government saw the proposal in an entirely different light. It merely meant, the telegram said, that there would be no objection if genuine British ships were

boarded by mistake, where it was suspected that they were only disguised as British. Thus, it was very different from a grant of belligerent rights and would, in fact, defer a situation in which the question of belligerent rights would arise. The telegram ended with as reproving a tone as that of the New Zealand Government:

In the event of the proposal being put into effect it would seem unlikely that in practice any British ship registered in New Zealand would be affected but if any case involving such a ship should arise, we very much hope that in the light of the above explanation His Majesty's Government in New Zealand would not object to the application of the procedure to such a ship.⁹¹

It was implied that the proposal should not greatly concern the New Zealand Government. That a full explanation of the proposal was not forthcoming until after New Zealand's objections had been voiced can scarcely have escaped Berendsen or his political masters. The initial telegram on 4 September had said that the proposal was to go before a Cabinet meeting on 8 September. The explanatory telegram was sent after the Cabinet meeting. It would not have been difficult for Labour leaders to interpret this as another instance when full information was not forthcoming and the Dominions' opinions were requested as a matter of form rather than with any intention of taking them into account.

By the time of the second British telegram the Nyon Conference had begun, but without Italy or Germany. Despite, or perhaps because of, their absence the conference came to a workable agreement with surprising speed. Sufficient leeway had been left in the proposals for naval patrol of the Mediterranean by France and Britain for Italy to take part and subsequently, on 30 October, agreement for Italian participation was reached between the three powers.

In the meantime, however, the events surrounding the Conference had been a setback for the Anglo-Italian talks desired by Chamberlain. In preliminary discussions it had been established that Mussolini wanted de jure recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia.

Formal recognition would necessitate a declaration by the League that Abyssinia was no longer a State. At a Cabinet meeting on 8 September Malcolm MacDonald had pointed out that there would be difficulties with some of the Dominions over such action, but if the Nyon Conference were successful even New Zealand might be persuaded to countenance de jure recognition.⁹²

Thus, at the opening of the League Assembly on 13 September Anglo-Italian relations were in a delicate state, and there was some concern in British circles about New Zealand's attitude. The Spanish Government had again appealed to the League Council, this time solely in terms of Mediterranean "piracy". The appeal had first been made on 24 August, but in view of the Nyon Conference the Council meeting had been postponed. A Dominions Office observer checked Jordan's room before the meeting and was "pleased to find" that Jordan was not even aware that Spain was on the agenda.⁹³ In fact, Jordan may not have known that the appeal was to come up that day, but he was certainly aware that the Council would be discussing the Spanish situation. He had mentioned it to Savage in a letter on 8 September. Jordan asked if he was correct in assuming that "our previous attitude should be maintained in favour of the legitimate Spanish Government subject to any modifying factors emerging from the conclusion of the proposed Conference of Mediterranean powers".⁹⁴ Savage replied in the affirmative.⁹⁵

The Spanish Prime Minister, Juan Negrin, presented the appeal. He attacked Italy for acts of piracy in the Mediterranean, objected to his country's exclusion from the Nyon Conference and criticised the Nyon Agreement because it did not provide for protection of Spanish ships. The French delegate then spoke, and after him Jordan delivered an impromptu speech. He later explained to Savage that usually speeches were made in the Assembly and were well prepared and rehearsed, but on this occasion "knowing your mind and my own feeling I hopped in early", using a few notes made during the previous speeches.⁹⁶

Jordan told the Council that he did not want to sit quiet, but wanted to express the opinion of his Government as he knew it. Because the speech was extempore and made with some passion (it was described as fiery and moving)⁹⁷ it perhaps revealed more of Jordan's feelings than had his other speeches. His decision to speak was undoubtedly a result of humanitarian outrage at the death of innocent victims of the war, fueled in this instance by the report of attacks on shipping.

The speech was a plea for humanity, democracy and collective responsibility. He considered that the problem had become "increasingly terrible" because of the killing of civilians, and quoted a passage from the Spanish Government's report on shipping losses that accused the Italians of attacking the SS *Campeador*, an oil tanker, and of firing on the crew in the water. Jordan said he hoped that the Nyon Conference would bring definite results and expressed confidence in the signatories of the Nyon Agreement. However, he expressed rather less confidence in the League. He pointed out that Ethiopia, Spain and China had appealed to the League without success, and asked who would be next: "I ask myself whether the League will exert itself? Have we confidence in each other? Can I feel that other nations will stand by my nation in time of trouble?"⁹⁸

Here Jordan clearly expressed his Government's identification with Spain as a small (that is, less powerful) state whose vulnerability to attack should be protected by collective security. His remarks did not betoken complete disillusionment with the League, for in his next sentence he pledged his Government's continuing support for the policy of collective security. Rather, as he told Savage later, he had little confidence in the League as presently constituted.⁹⁹ Jordan asked, as he had in May, if the Spanish people could be consulted and so decide their own destiny. He

proposed that Spain should be classed as a territory under an "A Mandate"¹⁰⁰ and after a "settling down" period supervised elections should be held. This would ensure that Spain's Government would be one that had the permission of the governed.

Jordan also made it clear, more so than in earlier speeches, that he did not believe that the 1936 elections had been corrupt. He pointed out that elections were controlled by the party in power, which must therefore be responsible for any corruption, and that the Popular Front Government had not been in power at the time of the elections. His abrupt end to these comments, that it was not his business, indicated that he was loath to go further into discussion of the internal political complications of the war. Debate about the elections would obscure the real point, which was that the League had a responsibility to member nations. Jordan and his Government were generally reluctant to be drawn into arguments that might lead to a political identification with the Spanish Government, even though the mere assertion that it had been legitimately elected could be regarded as a political statement.

In general the sentiments expressed in Jordan's speech were similar to those in his two previous speeches. It was another urgent reminder to League Members of their responsibilities to one another, but this time Jordan expressed less confidence in the League's willingness to protect legitimate governments. Nor did he remind the Council that its purpose was to protect lawful government, but said that it was "to protect humanity and to oppose unwarranted attacks upon innocent people".¹⁰¹

What alarmed British officials so much was not this further indication of a lack of unanimity among the Commonwealth, but Jordan's reference to the alleged Italian attack on the SS Campeador. D. Cockram, the Dominions Office observer, noted that Jordan's reference was "fortunately by hearsay" and was rather contemptuous of the mandate suggestion: "By the end the Spanish Prime Minister must have been longing to be saved from his friends."¹⁰²

The next day Malcolm MacDonald delivered a warning to Jordan. He said that Jordan's outspoken remarks were tantamount to a charge against Italy of deliberately killing civilians. International relations were in such a delicate state that even a candid remark from a Dominions' representative might "bring a note" to the British Government that could cause embarrassment. Obviously, there was concern that Mussolini might seize on Jordan's remark as an excuse for postponing the Anglo-Italian talks or for demanding further concessions.¹⁰³

Although MacDonald softened his remarks by saying that he would have been pleased to say himself what Jordan had said under other circumstances, it was clearly a reprimand. In his private report to Savage, Jordan was at pains to assure Savage that he was "candidly of the belief that everything I said would have been said by you had you been here".¹⁰⁴ He pointed out that the French Foreign Minister, the Spanish Prime Minister and others had congratulated him on the speech. But British disapproval counted more than these compliments.

Jordan also told Savage in his private report that he was disturbed by evidence that the Empire was not "looking all one way". He had heard remarks that indicated that Britain and some of the Dominions would not regret it if "the left Government of Spain" were defeated. The tone of his report was both defensive and downhearted. He obviously felt that he was battling for a lost cause with little support. He said that the League was "absolutely depressing" because of the attitude of Member States, and was concerned that even "the countries we would expect to be reasonable" would not exert themselves to help the Government of Spain. Despite his reference to the "left" Government, Jordan's main concern was still with the League's obligations to member states. He remarked that, while the Government of Spain might have "objectionable features", "You and I are not so much interested in the policy of the Government as in the fact that it was elected, and, further, that it is a Member of the League of Nations."¹⁰⁵

It is difficult to say how much effect Malcolm MacDonald's warning had on Jordan or his Government. The League Assembly considered a more general appeal by Spain in September, which called for Italian and German aggression in Spain to be recognised as such and asked that steps be taken to halt such aggression and to allow the Republicans to buy war materials. Jordan might have been expected to address the issue when the draft resolution proposed by the Sixth Committee on Political Questions was referred to the plenary session of the Assembly. He did not. Either he might have felt that he had made his Government's attitude plain in his speech to the Council or MacDonald's reprimand may have imposed a certain restraint upon him.

The resolution was the strongest pronouncement made by the League on the Spanish situation. It regretted that the NIC had failed to secure the withdrawal of foreign combatants, recognised that there were foreign army troops fighting in Spain, appealed to Governments to make non-intervention effective and noted that if this did not occur in the near future the Members of the League would consider ending non-intervention. In his official report on the League Assembly Jordan registered his satisfaction with the substantial unanimity obtained on the resolution, considering the "fundamental differences in approach and sympathy" that had bedevilled the Spanish question at the League, and made agreement on anything "beyond the most innocuous platitudes seem well nigh impossible".¹⁰⁶ Thus, at the point when Jordan seemed almost to despair at any possibility of the League's acting effectively over Spain, members demonstrated at least some willingness to acknowledge the urgency of the situation, even if only in the short-term.

Meanwhile, Jordan's remarks to the Council had raised ripples at home. There was Press criticism of his suggestion of a mandate for Spain and some concern that New Zealand was not following Britain's lead in foreign policy. The opposition National Party was beginning to object to New Zealand's attitude at Geneva as damaging to the unity of the Empire. Jordan's speech provided an opportunity for a

specific attack on Parliament. On 29 September during question time K.J. Holyoake, National MP for Motueka, asked Savage about the speech.¹⁰⁷ Had the British Government and other Commonwealth representatives been consulted about the speech and had they approved of the mandate suggestion? Savage's reply carefully skirted the question. He avoided any mention of the political issues of the war and merely said that Jordan's statement was in line with the Government's view that the problem should be resolved by reference to the "unfettered decision of the Spanish people themselves". His Government deplored the situation in Spain and "warmly deprecates" any attempt to rule by force. He said that Jordan took every opportunity to consult with other Commonwealth representatives "and while no definite information on this point is available the Government has no reason to believe that this custom was departed from in this instance".¹⁰⁸

Later the same day, in the debate on the Imperial Conference, Walter Nash was not quite so circumspect about his personal attitude to the war in Spain. Both he and Savage had indicated their disappointment that the Imperial Conference had not produced an affirmation of the principle of collective security from the Commonwealth. Nash even went so far as to say that he did not agree with the policy and procedure adopted by British representatives at Geneva. He then said that he felt that more could have been done to maintain the sovereignty of the elected Government of Spain. When Gordon Coates interjected to ask if the Government of Spain had really been elected Nash replied that the Government had been "freely and completely elected by the people of Spain in 1935". He was about to say that the election was of the "same type" as, presumably, the one that had resulted in victory for the New Zealand Labour Party, when the Speaker asked him to return to the subject of the debate.¹⁰⁹ Obviously, the Speaker did not want a free-ranging discussion on the nature of the Spanish Government.

Ironically enough, Savage had touched on the dangers of talking out of turn and thereby making difficulties for the British

Commonwealth, during his remarks on the Imperial Conference. Even without the juxtaposition of these remarks and Jordan's recent experience at Geneva, Savage's comment was particularly applicable to his Government's situation with regard to the Spanish Civil War. He reminded "all-sections of the community" that it was easy to talk and pass resolutions, but they "should recognise that we cannot play a part just as New Zealand".¹¹⁰ It could have been a special message to New Zealand pro-Republicans: the Government would not move outside the bounds of the Commonwealth; its independence of outlook had restrictions.

Even so, privately the Government was still determined to maintain as far as possible the attitude it had adopted since the beginning of the war. On the same day that Savage made this comment in Parliament a message had been sent to London objecting to the despatch of a British agent to Franco's Government. The British Government had sent a circular telegram to the Dominions on 21 September advising that it was again considering the appointment of an "unofficial" agent because it regarded its present methods of contact with Franco as inadequate.¹¹¹ Despite the assurance that the appointment of an agent would not constitute recognition of Franco's administration, the New Zealand Prime Minister's response was to refer the British Government to his reply in March to a similar suggestion.¹¹² New Zealand was still "firmly and inalterably opposed" to any action that might be interpreted as recognition of any authority other than that of the Government of Spain.

If New Zealand's opposition had been at all influential in the decision in March to postpone an exchange of agents, it was not in September. On 7 October the British Government replied that it was going to proceed with its proposal and tartly invited the attention of Ministers to the statement in its previous telegram that the arrangement was purely administrative.¹¹³ The appointment of Sir Robert Hodgson as Commercial Agent to the Nationalists was not announced officially until 16 November, by which time Jordan had

reported to Savage that the move had caused concern in Italy that British prestige was developing with Franco to the disadvantage of Italian influence.¹¹⁴ This news was probably cold comfort to a Government that had consistently favoured the legitimate Government and a solution to the Spanish problem that did not include rewarding rebellion. The despatch of Hodgson to Salamanca had made it plain that New Zealand's opinion would make little difference to British policy.

Thus, at the end of 1937, the New Zealand Government was faced with a situation in which it had fewer and fewer opportunities to express its attitude on the Spanish Civil War. Its options in terms of proposing solutions had been narrowing since May, although the policy itself had not changed. In part, the limits on expression of New Zealand's attitude had been self imposed; the commitment to Commonwealth had prevented full promotion of its views. On the other hand, it had been demonstrated that neither the British Government nor other Dominions shared its views on Spain or collective security. Without such support Jordan at the League was a voice in the wilderness. Further, although the New Zealand Government's commitment to collective security was not waning it was increasingly aware that its general attitude to the League was not shared by many members. By January 1938 Jordan felt that circumstances were against the League and that "it would be a disservice to the League to press unduly at the moment proposals which would receive little or no support".¹¹⁵ Jordan's comment related to discussion about reform of the Covenant, but could equally have applied to the Spanish situation.

In May 1938 Jordan made his last substantial statement to the League of his Government's policy on the Spanish Civil War. His remarks lacked the vehemence of his previous speeches. The Spanish Government had again appealed to the League Council to consider the problem of intervention in Spain. When the Spanish representative presented his appeal on 11 May Jordan gave a brief speech in support. He emphasised that Spain was a member state of the League

and said that, in the face of the facts that seemed so "tragically plain", the Spanish Government's request was amazingly moderate. He reiterated his Government's opinion that the people of Spain should be allowed to decide their own destinies and by "methods other than those now being adopted".¹¹⁶

On 13 May, the Spanish Government introduced a resolution calling for an end to the policy of non-intervention in terms of the League resolution of 29 May 1937 and the resolution presented to the Assembly in September 1937. Jordan was one of nine who abstained from voting. He told the Council that even though non-intervention was to a large extent disregarded already, resolving to end it would be dangerous because it would make it "free for all". Jordan said that his Government would have preferred enforcing Non-Intervention and reiterated his Government's commitment to participation in collective action by the League:

We look forward to the day when we shall do something to stop the spread of war rather than pass resolutions to withdraw from action that is being attempted, even though it may only be partially effective.¹¹⁷

The main point of the resolution, as far as the Spanish Government was concerned, was to give it the right to purchase arms and other war materials. In that case, Jordan's abstention might be seen to betoken a sudden lack of sympathy for the Spanish Government. Yet, as Jordan later said, it was really in accordance with the policy his Government had pursued from the start. Jordan regarded the object of non-intervention as ensuring that "the Spanish question will be solved by the Spanish themselves without the aid of foreign elements",¹¹⁸ even if in practice it had not so far operated in that way. His Government had always advocated that the Spanish people should be allowed to decide their own destinies. Jordan's unwillingness to vote for the end of non-intervention was also a testament of his Government's belief in collective responsibility. The League had failed utterly in this respect; the NIC had not proved much more effective but at least it was, in

principle, an organisation of powers established to enforce some kind of collective restraint on aggression.

On the other hand, Jordan's refusal to vote against the resolution was also significant. As he pointed out in his official report to the Government, nine abstentions were hardly proof of the success of non-intervention, since they were evidence of as much unwillingness to endorse as condemn the policy.¹¹⁹ The British Government had naturally voted against the resolution, and P.A.M. van der Esch considers that the abstentions of China and New Zealand were particularly damaging for British prestige, since both usually voted with the British.¹²⁰

At the same League meeting the question of de jure recognition of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia was raised. Again the New Zealand delegate abstained from voting and, moreover, supported the Russian delegate's arguments against de jure recognition, in opposition to the British representative's case. Abstentions were, in a sense, a compromise solution to the dilemma of the New Zealand Government. They stopped short of open opposition to British policy yet conveyed the New Zealand Government's disapproval of it. Jordan's stand in May 1938 was, then, an affirmation of his Government's determination to make independent judgements on foreign policy according to the principles it espoused, but also an indication that it would do so with due regard to the bonds of Empire. Jordan's lack of vehemence on the Spanish question was the result of the consideration that the unity of Empire was becoming more important as the international situation worsened.

For some members of the National Party even abstentions were signs of disloyalty to Britain. Jordan's remarks about Spain drew criticism from F.W. Doidge, National Party candidate for the Tauranga seat in the coming elections. Doidge accused Jordan of denouncing British policy and of wanting intervention in Spain. Correspondence between Savage and Tauranga MP; C.H. Burnett, about Doidge's claims is interesting for what it reveals of the importance of foreign

policy issues to the Labour Government in an election year. In response to a request from Burnett for comment, Savage sent a lengthy memorandum refuting Doidge's statements. In essence Savage repeated Jordan's arguments that cessation of non-intervention would leave the way open for international involvement and that New Zealand would rather see the non-intervention policy better applied, to the point of offering assistance in any action designed to stop the war. This, Savage said, was not a denouncement of British policy since Britain supported non-intervention.¹²¹

Savage refused a later request from Burnett to publish his letter, which, he said, was only intended to supply information for a rebuttal: "I do not wish to become involved in a personal controversy with Doidge who is not a serious problem to the Government".¹²² While this may have revealed that foreign policy was not a priority in the pre-election debates with the Opposition, it also indicated a desire to keep it that way. Had Savage entered into the debate, more attention would have focussed on foreign policy. Further, the point of focus would have been on an issue on which opinion was sharply divided among those New Zealanders who took an interest in foreign affairs. If foreign policy were to be discussed, the question of the civil war in Spain was hardly the safest subject with which to begin. The Opposition's election campaign emphasised the menace of Socialism; thus, it would not do to associate the Government too closely with a Government regarded in some quarters as the epitome of atheistic Communism.

Foreign policy was not commonly an election issue in New Zealand, but there was growing criticism of a policy that appeared to deviate from that of the "Mother Country". For a time it seemed that for once foreign affairs were to feature in the election campaign. When Parliament opened the Opposition introduced a "Want of Confidence" motion in July that included an indictment of the Government's foreign policy on the grounds that it was a threat to the solidarity of the Empire, and Opposition MPs had sharp words to say about Jordan's attitude at Geneva.

However, it was not the Spanish question, but Jordan's action in not only disagreeing with Britain over Abyssinia, but also siding with Russia that came in for the most criticism. It was hardly surprising, then, that Savage had earlier been loath to become involved in a debate on the Government's Spanish policy, which would inevitably have extended into the political and religious rights and wrongs of the situation. Peter Fraser's defence of Jordan in Parliament on the occasion of the "Want of Confidence" motion was a cogent expression of the principles behind his Government's policy, but, significantly, omitted specific reference to Spain:

It does not make any difference as far as the essential rightness and justice of New Zealand's attitude is concerned what nations do or do not stand in line with us and express their agreement or disagreement ... the moral righteousness of New Zealand's attitude is not affected in the least ... though we work in the closest cooperation with the British Government that does not mean to say that we must be prepared to swallow everything the British Government puts forward. It is our duty to the country to interpret the situation in the light of the principles on which we were elected, and loyalty to the League of Nations was a principle put forward by all three parties prior to the general election. Therefore even when the League of Nations is in retreat from dictatorship commencing at Manchukuo, if we are asked to acquiesce in the recognition of what was nothing more or less than international crimes such as the invasion of China, and Abyssinia, and other places where dictatorships have struck at national liberty, and if we have to choose between siding with those dictatorships or remaining true to democracy, then I hope the High Commissioner for New Zealand will never retreat from the position he took up and most certainly this Government never will.¹²³

The central point of the Opposition's argument was that the Labour Government's attitude was weakening the unity of the Empire and was disloyal to Britain. Jordan was concerned enough about this criticism of his speeches on Spain to send Savage evidence that this was not so. In July 1938, he noted that press reports had stated that Chamberlain was attempting to arrange a truce in Spain and that the British Air Minister, Kingsley Wood, had expressed the hope that the Spanish people could settle their differences by methods other

than force. Jordan considered that, since he had suggested the same things, New Zealand was not out of step with Britain, but had its policy endorsed by members of the British Cabinet.¹²⁴

It would seem, then, that the Labour Government regarded the Spanish issue as sufficiently complex to want to avoid public debate on its policy. However, this avoidance also indicated that Spain was not so central a matter for the Government to take electoral chances on its policy. This was probably true of any foreign policy issue, since policy at the League on reform of the Covenant, Spain, China and Abyssinia were all interrelated. But Spain had an added ideological element that made it doubly dangerous to discuss. Ultimately, foreign policy was not an issue in the 1938 election campaign. Domestic policy was of far more direct and immediate concern to the contending parties and the electorate.

After the despatch of Hodgson to Franco's Provisional Government in November 1937 and the League Meeting in May 1938, there was little more the New Zealand Government could do in support of the Spanish Government on the international scene. There was, of course, still the opportunity to express concern through the provision of humanitarian aid to either Republican Spain or to any victims of the war. The Labour Government had, indeed, had such opportunities since the beginning of the war, but although it gave sympathetic consideration to appeals from New Zealand and overseas organisations, there was little positive action taken.

The first request for aid to Spain came from the Red Cross Society in November 1936. The Society asked that the Government waive the exchange on a remittance of £25 to the League of Red Cross Societies in Paris, which was for the aid of victims of the war irrespective of their political affiliations. Savage, who was acting Minister of Finance while Nash was in England, replied on 14 November that transfer of money without exchange "would be tantamount to a special grant thus creating a precedent which would be taken advantage of by others making a similar request". Actually the money

could not be remitted without exchange, so really the Red Cross was asking the Government to pay the cost of exchange.¹²⁵ In the same month Savage received a request from John Fisher on behalf of the British Spanish Medical Aid Committee for funds or food for victims of the war. No reply was recorded.¹²⁶

Several appeals for food were considered by Nash while he was in England. In January 1937 Lady Austen Chamberlain wrote to Jordan on behalf of the "(Entirely Neutral) General Relief Fund for Distressed Women and Children in Spain". She asked for a gift of butter or alternatively a favourable price for butter. The London Manager of the Dairy Sales Division of the Primary Produce Marketing Board passed the request to Nash, noting that he had no authority to authorise a gift of butter and could not sell butter at a lower than market price. Nash, as Minister of Finance, had the power to authorise a gift or a lower price for the butter.¹²⁷ There is no evidence that either option was exercised.

Yet, Nash was concerned to help the Spanish Government - if he could. On 9 March, he sent a recommendation to Savage that the Government approve a gift of 100 tons of cheese to the Spanish Government:

The gesture would be appreciated both for its material value and on morale of people. Evidence supplied by recent League of Nations report that Government administration even in besieged Madrid is competent and effective. Note that New Zealand was in negotiation with Spanish Government for some months up to the outbreak of rebellion and although gift would not be related to this it would be appropriate.¹²⁸

This demonstration of Nash's goodwill towards the Republican side was not accompanied by any evidence of his suggestion being put into effect. Later, in April, R.M. Campbell discussed with the Spanish Embassy's Commercial Attache the possibility of the sale of New Zealand meat to the Spanish Government. Again, there was no record of further action.

It appears, then, that the provision of food aid was viewed sympathetically by the High Commissioner's Office and the Minister of Finance. Humanitarian motives may have been outweighed by financial considerations. The Government would have had to pay for food offered at no cost or a lowered price. Moreover, any gift offered specifically to the Spanish Government would be interpreted in some quarters as a definite gesture of support for the Republican cause.

The one exception to the Government's otherwise negative response to appeals for aid was made in an area where there could not be claims of political favouritism. A grant of £2,000 sterling to the International Commission for Child Refugees in Spain was approved in February 1938 and confirmed in May. The appeal had come through the High Commissioner's Office in London and significantly, was endorsed by Lord Cranborne of the British Foreign Office. The Commission proposed to establish a fund contributed to by Governments and the British Government initially agreed to give £25,000, one sixth of the total the Commission hoped to raise. In April the British reduced the amount to £10,000 when it was found that other Governments would not match its original offer, but the New Zealand Government stood by its original offer.¹²⁹ The Government subsequently used evidence of its support for refugees in this donation when refusing requests for funds from the New Zealand SMAC and the National Relief Fund for Spanish Refugee Children (NRFSRC).

In 1938, financial problems were undoubtedly a major influence on the Government's consideration of appeals for aid. New Zealand's reserves of sterling in London had been falling since 1936 and by the end of 1938 were dangerously low. It was not the time for gifts of sterling, however humanitarian the objective. Thus, Treasury refused the NRFSRC's request for a donation to cover the cost of exchange on a donation to the International Commission for Child Refugees.¹³⁰ An appeal from Ernst Toller, the German Expressionist playwright, for "surplus butter" in October 1938 was refused on the grounds that there was no "surplus" and that a donation would be the equivalent of a gift of money, since the Government purchased all the butter for

export.¹³¹ Spanish appeals were not a special case, for similar requests for donations or waiving of exchange from the Chinese Children's Relief Fund and the Oriental Missions Society were also refused.¹³²

As Minister of Finance, Nash had the most to do with requests for aid, since his Department dealt with such appeals. In 1938 and 1939, there was further evidence of his personal conviction that New Zealand should provide assistance to victims of the war. When an appeal for skimmed milk was passed to him by Jordan in November 1938 Nash minuted "Can we find a way to help, if so - we should".¹³³ Later, in April 1939, in connection with a SMAC appeal for aid to Spanish refugees in France, Nash suggested that the Government consider a grant of mutton, "which may be in quantities in excess of the quota to the U.K. and which could be purchased at comparatively low prices".¹³⁴ But neither skimmed milk nor mutton reached the refugees. The SMAC appeal had taken the form of a delegation which met with the Minister of Justice, H.G.R. Mason. The Minister had given no definite assurances, but said that he felt that New Zealand was under an obligation to the Spanish people because they had "taken upon themselves a suffering that would have fallen on some other nation". If this statement was more than a vague platitude chosen in order to strike the right note, the Government could find no way to fulfil the obligation.

In the view of New Zealand pro-Republicans, by 1939 the best method of recognising that obligation was by admission of refugees to New Zealand. Even before Franco's victory, the SMAC had begun to petition the Government to allow skilled workers to emigrate to New Zealand. By this time, the problem of refugees was not confined to victims of the war in Spain; Hitler's territorial acquisitions in Eastern and Central Europe had also produced large numbers of refugees. There is no evidence that any noticeable numbers of refugees from anywhere were admitted to New Zealand before the war, and none at all of any Spaniards.

It would seem, therefore, that it was not out of any disinclination to help the people of Spain, but rather as a matter of general policy that no Spanish refugees or displaced International Brigadiers (for instance, Germans and Italians) were allowed to settle in New Zealand. In August 1939, a memorandum from Berendsen on the subject of the French Government's plans to send Spanish refugees back to Spain indicated that neither admission of refugees nor financial aid was contemplated. The International Commission for Child Refugees had asked the Government to protest to France but Berendsen noted: "It would not be desirable for us to protest to France unless we were prepared to contribute financially or to provide emigration facilities for the refugees." However, Jordan was asked to associate himself with any action the League might take to assist the refugees, and to investigate any steps "that it might be proper and possible for us to consider".¹³⁵

By this time the war was over, the Spanish Government was defeated and Britain and France had recognised Franco's new regime. None of the New Zealand Government's diplomatic efforts on behalf of what it saw as the legitimate Government of Spain had been to any avail. One last gesture demonstrated the Labour Government's disapproval of a party that had won authority by force. New Zealand did not recognise Franco's Government.¹³⁶ It was an action consistent with the attitude the Government had maintained since 1936.

Although some Labour leaders obviously felt a sense of identification with the Spanish Government in terms of its political outlook, the Government's policy was based more on an identification with that Government as a fellow democracy and a member of the League of Nations. Its concern for the survival of democracy in Spain was, moreover, inextricably linked with its concern that the League should remain a vital force in international relations. Spain was a test of member nations' commitment to the concept of collective security, and in its attitude at Geneva the Labour Government demonstrated its belief in that system.

R.F. Holland has dismissed New Zealand's cleaving to collective security in the period before the war as a result of "New Zealand's identity as a small and vulnerable state". He sees Jordan's anguish over Guernica as "in large part a premonition of General Tojo riding into Wellington".¹³⁷ There is no doubt that self-interest played some part in the Labour Government's commitment to collective security. But Holland has ignored the part principle played in the New Zealand Government's assessment of international affairs. Jordan's pleas to the League to act to help the Spanish Government were also a result of his (and his Government's) belief in constitutional Government and democracy, that reason was better than guns and that those who attempted to rule by force should not be allowed to profit by their actions. The Government's commitment to these ideas can be seen in Jordan's speeches at Geneva. As it became obvious that there would be no attempt to help the Government of Spain, that is, to protect a legitimate Government, the New Zealand Government then turned its attention to urging the League to act in aid of democracy in Spain, in the form of the mandate suggestion. If the Popular Front Government could not be saved, this at least would ensure some kind of constitutional Government. The naivete of the suggestion and, indeed, of the Government's assumption that the League was still capable of any firm action against aggression stemmed mostly from a rather simplistic moral assessment of international problems. Jordan was well aware of the complexities of international involvement in the Spanish situation and of the ideological divisions militating against League action, but these considerations were subordinated to a belief in principle and justice.

Nicholas Mansergh has said that New Zealand's policy was:

In a sense the protest of the common man. It symbolised for him his aversion to the calculating inhumanity of Realpolitik and his instinctive belief that righteousness and the moral order should govern relations between states as between men.¹³⁸

There were certainly indications that Jordan and his colleagues felt

that they did represent the common man, the people whose views were not represented by Governments. There was also a sense that they were acting as the voice of Britain's conscience and representing attitudes within the Commonwealth that were otherwise unrepresented in the "corridors of power". Yet, the British Government largely ignored New Zealand's protests, except when, almost by chance, they threatened to upset another line of policy.

The New Zealand Government's policy on the Spanish Civil War, as well as demonstrating its commitment to collective security, revealed the ultimate commitment to Commonwealth. It demonstrated the difficulties of developing an independent policy in a period when New Zealand was still economically and emotionally dependent on Britain. Although the Government's attitude towards the Spanish Civil War remained consistent, the expression of its attitude was modified so as not to jeopardise the unity of Empire. Far from being disloyal to Britain, as Labour's opponents claimed, its actions revealed its loyalty to the Commonwealth.

Other considerations also placed limits on the Government's expressions of sympathy with the Spanish Government. It had to avoid too close a connection with the pro-Republican movement, because of its Communist connections. Therefore, the Government avoided making its stand at the League a matter of domestic politics. And, although there was concern enough for the victims of the war, financial considerations precluded positive expressions of that concern.

Some pro-Republicans found the Labour Government's policy on Spain wanting, since they felt that it did not go far enough. Nevertheless, the "limited pro-Republicanism" espoused by Labour leaders reflected the opinions of many within the pro-Republican movement. In its policy, then, the New Zealand Government represented the views of at least some of its electors, within the limitations imposed by Imperial and domestic politics.

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- 3 W. Jordan to M. Savage, 20 January 1938. EA2: 1938/8d (PM 114/1/11 Vol. 2) Reform of League. National Archives, Wellington. Jordan noted that the memorandum had been "used with discretion on all matters as they arise keeping as close to our policy as reasonably possible". For a discussion of the memorandum see Peters.
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- 5 League of Nations Official Journal Special Supplement No. 155, p 79.
- 6 Wood, p 52.
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- 8 Edwards, p 1.
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- 11 Wood, p 46.
- 12 See Chapter 5 for discussion of Labour Party attitudes.
- 13 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD) Vol. 246, p 480, 13 August 1936.
- 14 Nash Papers 1084/0003, National Archives, Wellington. This file has the most material on Spain, but Nash Papers 2129, 2306 and 2537 also contain some items pertaining to the Spanish Civil War.
- 15 New Zealand administered the former German colony of Western Samoa under a League of Nations "C" Mandate granted at the Versailles Peace Conference.
- 16 Wood, p 51. Carl August Berendsen, formerly Imperial Affairs Officer and Secretary of External Affairs, became Permanent Head of the Prime Minister's Department in 1935. He was later High Commissioner to Australia and Ambassador to the United States of America.
- 17 McIntosh, pp 15-16. Alister Donald McIntosh worked under Berendsen in the Prime Minister's Department from 1935 and succeeded him as Permanent Head in 1945.
- 18 Sir (Albert) Cecil Day had been Assistant Private Secretary to the Governor of New Zealand from 1910-1912 and Official Secretary to the Governors-General of New Zealand from 1912 until his appointment as Liaison Officer in 1936.
- 19 Owendale, p 21.
- 20 McIntosh, p 14.

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- 41 Katharine, Duchess of Atholl, was a Conservative MP who became committed to the Republican cause. In 1938 she resigned her Conservative seat in protest at the British Government's Non-Intervention policy. (She also wrote a book about the Civil War after a visit to Government Spain, Searchlight on Spain. Penguin, 1938).
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- 43 Nash to Roberts, 24 May 1937. Nash Papers 1084/0003.
- 44 SSDA to GGNZ, 19 March 1937. EA1, 355/4/2 Pt 1.
- 45 GGNZ to SSDA, 25 March 1937. EA1, 355/4/2 Pt 1.
- 46 Edwards, p 189.
- 47 Ovendale, p 42.
- 48 Lord Zetland, quoted by Ovendale, p 42.
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- 50 New Statesman and Nation 5 June 1937, quoted in Tomorrow 18 August 1937, pp 648-649.
- 51 Van der Esch, p 64, points out that although the Republicans' case had shifted from Article 11 to Article 10 by May 1937, they never made an appeal under Article 10. Its terminology was to explicit and opponents could argue that it applied only against external aggression and not civil war. If Article 10 had been invoked, Articles 16 and 17, which laid down the action to be taken against aggression, would have to be invoked as well. Since Article 16 had failed to halt Italian aggression in Abyssinia, none of the League members were prepared to risk another public failure.
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- 53 EP 10 June 1937, p 11.
- 54 EP 2 June 1937, p 11; NZH 7 June 1937, p 11.
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- 59 Report of the Representative of the Dominion of New Zealand on the Ninety-Fifth (Extraordinary) Ninety-Sixth and Ninety-Seventh Sessions of the Council of the League of Nations held at Geneva in the years 1936 and 1936. Appeal of the Government of Spain, 10 June 1937. AJHR, 1937, A-5B, pp 32-33. Jordan's 15-paragraph speech is recorded in full in his report to the Government on the appeal of the Spanish Government. This speech has been quoted extensively in the text; all quotations on pages 37 to 40 should be regarded as from this source unless otherwise stated. The full text of the speech is in Appendix 1.
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137 Holland .p 201.

138 Nicholas Mansergh: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs:
Problems of External Policy 1931-1939. London, 1952, p 202.

CHAPTER 2
"NON INTERVENTIONISM:"
THE IMPERIALIST RESPONSE

The Labour Government's policy on the Spanish Civil War was most criticised not for its partiality towards the Republican forces, but because it differed from the British Government's policy. Not all New Zealanders shared their Government's desire for independence of judgement in foreign affairs, nor its faith in the League of Nations. Rather, they felt that a strong united Empire was New Zealand's best defence and regarded any deviation from the British view as divisive, dangerous and disloyal. Their criticisms of Jordan's stand at Geneva were one expression of those several opinions on the war in Spain that collectively might be called the "Non-Interventionist" response. Other opinions which came into this category were those that, in a variety of ways, held that the political issues of the war were not, and should not be, of any concern to New Zealanders, and those which voiced complete support for Britain's non-intervention policy.

"Non-Interventionist" opinions essentially presented an imperialist, "pro-British" view of the Spanish Civil War. In this view, the war was only of significance to New Zealanders because of its effect on the balance of power in Europe and on British strategic interests, particularly the Mediterranean route that connected Britain with its Pacific dominions. It is possible that "Non-Interventionist" opinions in some form or another were held by most New Zealanders, the "silent majority" that did not subscribe to either pro-Francoism or pro-Republicanism and regarded the war as either a conflict of alien ideologies, or the product of foreign political traditions and national characteristics that had no echo in New Zealand. In a country where Britain was still referred to as "Home" and "the Mother Country", and where there was a traditional

reliance on Britain in matters of defence, it was also not surprising that some, perhaps many, should consider the war primarily from the point of view of its implications for the Empire. Ultimately, "Non-Interventionist" opinions reflected a view of the world and New Zealand's place in it that was insular, imperialist and Anglocentric. At one and the same time they stressed New Zealanders' superiority and subordination in the scheme of things. On one hand, they implied that New Zealanders were above the excesses of Communism and Fascism, and the complex political passions of Europe, because of their British democratic traditions. On the other hand, they emphasised New Zealand's dependence on Britain and its junior position in the Empire.

"Non-Interventionist" support for British policy and attacks on the Labour Government's stand illustrated the contention of a contemporary observer that New Zealanders retained an "infantile relation to the "mother country"" that other members of the Empire had outgrown. J.N. Findlay was a Briton who had spent some time in South Africa and was at the time Professor of Philosophy at Otago University. In 1937 he contributed an article on "The Imperial Factor in New Zealand" to the radical periodical Tomorrow. Findlay considered that New Zealanders had "made fairy vows and are the victims of ghostly loyalties" to "a visionary and idealised England, which absorbs the emotional energies of New Zealand, and keeps it permanently in a state of feeble-mindedness and infantility", which prevented the country from fulfilling its individual destiny.¹

"Non-Interventionist" views were given public expression by the National Party and some daily and weekly newspapers. In a sense, the National Party's attitude was as much a response to the Labour Government's policy as it was to the war itself. The Spanish Civil War was not a major concern for the party, which had been formed in May 1936 from the coalition of the United and Reform Parties that had governed from 1931 until 1935 and had fought the last election under the banner of the National Political Federation.² The National Party aimed to unite all anti-Labour groups in one force to

present a strong opposition to the Government. The Labour Government's stand on the Spanish Civil War and other international issues was used as another example of Labour's intention to bring the country to ruin, in this case by creating difficulties with its protector, Britain. Many of the comments made by the National Party Parliamentarians on foreign policy were not specifically concerned with the war in Spain, but with the general direction of the Government's policy. However, Jordan's speeches on Spain were mentioned several times and were more often an unspoken but obvious referent.

For the National Party the war in Spain was of concern because Labour's policy brought into consideration the wider issue of where New Zealand stood in relation to the Empire. National Party politicians made few comments on the war that were not related to New Zealand policy; those few placed the civil war firmly in the context of Imperial strategy. The only public statements about the parties in Spain and National's view of the nature of the war appeared in National News, first published in May 1937. These comments were also few and were matched by as many articles that discussed Spain and other international issues in terms of Imperial policy, invariably written by "A Military Correspondent".

The New Zealand Herald, Waikato Times, Evening Post and Otago Daily Times, the Freelance, New Zealand Observer, Auckland Weekly News and New Zealand Truth all presented an image of the war in Spain that served to distance its political and internal issues from New Zealanders. In discussing the international complications of the war, they placed emphasis on considerations of British policy. Over the 32 months from the beginning of the rebellion until Franco's victory march, the daily newspapers devoted considerable editorial space to discussion of the war. Most of these editorials dealt with the international aspects of the war, although the political and social background to the war was investigated and some analysis of the two forces attempted. It is not surprising that, confronted with the wealth of often conflicting overseas

interpretations of the war and, thus, aware of its complexities, most of the daily newspapers (excluding the Herald) should choose to remain neutral in discussions of the conflicting forces in the war. Their "Non-Interventionism" was more evident in appraisals of the international aspects of the Spanish situation and in their approval of British policy. Nevertheless, editorials about events in Spain itself contributed to the "Non-Interventionist" image of a war of alien values. The involvement of New Zealanders or their Government barely rated a mention in some newspapers and none at all in others. In a sense, these omissions reinforced "Non-Interventionist" opinions. To ignore New Zealand manifestations of pro-Republicanism or pro-Francoism was to indicate that they were of little or no significance.

The weekly newspapers gave only limited coverage to the Spanish Civil War and made only intermittent editorial comments that were, in the main, "Non-Interventionist". However, these weekly papers may have reached more homes than the daily newspapers. Their comments may have influenced the attitudes of some New Zealanders. Equally, the weekly papers' comments may have echoed what their editors considered to be the views of most of their readership.

The Freelance and the Observer shared the same publishers, but the former originated in Wellington and the latter in Auckland. Most of their articles dealt with the personal experiences of New Zealanders involved in some way in the war. As befitted publications whose concern was with the local scene, what little editorial comment that appeared was also directed towards local opinions on the war. The Auckland Weekly News also provided news of New Zealanders caught up in the war, but its editorials placed the Spanish Civil War firmly in the context of international relations and, more specifically, of British foreign policy. It was published by Wilson and Horton, the proprietors of the New Zealand Herald and its editorials on Spain were often reprints of those in the Herald.

The New Zealand Truth had the most coverage of the Spanish Civil War of any of the weekly newspapers. Then, as now, much of the paper's pages were devoted to details of murder cases (including New Zealand's own "suitcase murder") and salacious stories of sex and scandal. Yet, Truth was also known for its trenchant comments on the local political scene, and some New Zealand activities related to the Spanish Civil War did not escape the editor's pen. As well as editorials, there were also some long articles on various aspects of the war received from the British United Press.

It should be noted that the holding of "Non-Interventionist", or "pro-British", views in terms of international and New Zealand involvement with the war did not preclude the expression of preference for one side or the other in Spain. For example, the Herald and the National News both presented analyses of the parties in Spain and the causes of the war that owed something to pro-Francoist views and Truth also demonstrated that its opinion on the war was influenced by anti-Communism. On the other hand, the Waikato Times displayed some sympathy for the Government of Spain. However, these opinions appeared not to influence evaluations of the international problems created by the war, whereas, for pro-Francoists and pro-Republicans, commitment to one side or the other coloured their perceptions of international involvement. "Non-Interventionists", then, made distinctions between what the Evening Post called the "Spanish" values and the "European" values of the war,³ distinctions that could only be made by dismissing what was happening in Spain itself as of secondary importance.

"Non-Interventionist" opinion on the nature of the war and its significance for New Zealanders will first be considered. These, of course, influenced responses to the Labour Government's policy on the Spanish Civil War. However, perceptions of British actions had as great, if not greater, influence and, therefore, discussion of "Non-Interventionist" assessments of the international situation and reasons for supporting British policy will precede their criticisms of the New Zealand Government's views.

It was in consideration of the causes and character of the Spanish Civil War that "Non-Interventionist" opinions displayed the most variety; yet, all either contained or helped contribute to the assumption that the war had no relevance to the New Zealand experience. More than that, these views were often a specific rejection of the notion that the issues of the war could be relevant. The Hon. Fred Waite, DSO; member of the Legislative Council, gave succinct expression to one form of "Non-Interventionist" opinion in a speech in the Address in Reply debate, on 10 September 1937. Discussing the involvement of foreign powers, he said:

I do not think it is possible for us to say who is to blame. There are Communists on one side and Fascists and Nazis on the other, and we dislike all their gospels. To us they are equally abhorrent.⁴

Waite's views were echoed by a correspondent to the Observer, who also saw the war as one between Communism and Fascism, which "the British democracy" would do well to keep away from. In his view, the real conflict would be between democracy and the two tyrannies of Communism and Fascism.⁵

Foreign intervention played some part in creating the image of a war of rival ideologies, as the Herald pointed out when it said that, in a civil war "so lacking in clear cut antagonisms of principle", foreign intervention had turned internecine strife into "a war in Spain between two irreconcilable tendencies, Communism and Fascism, competing in equal infatuation for ideals imperilling the world".⁶ The Herald had presented several detailed analyses of the political and social background to the war and of the two forces involved. Its comment demonstrated that such a simplification could be made even with some understanding of the factionalism and complexity of the Spanish situation.

The National News, while admitting the influence of foreign powers on the war, and on perceptions of the war, had rather a

different view. In its first issue, published in May 1937, was a long article discussing the Spanish Civil War. This article rejected the view that the war in Spain was a microcosm of European ideological differences, at the same time indicating that this opinion was popularly held:

It is customary to say that this is a struggle between Fascism and Communism. That is what Russia, on the one hand, and Italy and Germany, on the other, would like to make it. But primarily it is a civil war. And when it is over, if any side has a decisive win, Spain will have a Spanish Government - possibly, a dictatorship of either the Right or Left.⁷

Even though the article rejected Waite's premise, it echoed his conviction that the war had nothing to do with "us". It was also a tacit admission of the influence of pro-Republican and pro-Francoist propaganda and of the appeal of the image of ideological conflict to New Zealanders. Clearly, the National News was concerned to promote the image of a local war that was purely the business of the nation involved.

A passage in a later article about New Zealand's role in world affairs indicated the National News' conviction that it was not in the New Zealand tradition to interfere in the concerns of other nations. It also revealed that the National News, although it advocated non-interference, was not entirely neutral on the issue. Headed "Neither Facsist nor Communist", the passage said:

Our people in Great Britain and in New Zealand do not subscribe to either of these two ideologies. At the same time we have no right to interfere with - nor should we have any desire to alter - any nation's internal politics. It was Soviet Russia's attempt to impose Communism on other nations that caused Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany and the civil war in Spain. We New Zealanders deplore the excesses perpetrated in Russia, Italy, Germany and Spain alike. But these excesses seem to be inseparable from political, religious and racial struggles.⁸

The National News was, of course, faithfully following declarations

by members of the British Government in its insistence that there should be no interference in the political differences of other nations. But it was also expressing convictions that were at the heart of "Non-Interventionist" views - the belief that neither Communism or Fascism had a place in New Zealand life and the conception of the fairmindedness and superiority of the British political system, of which New Zealand was seen to be an integral part.

Part of the reason for rejection of any identification with the war in Spain was simply the inability of New Zealanders, brought up under the British Parliamentary system, to understand other forms of Government and other political and social systems. It was easy to dismiss the Spanish Civil War as the product of uncivilised, undemocratic, unBritish, political traditions, in conjunction with a violent, individualistic national temperament. New Zealanders were not accustomed to settling party political differences in pitched battle; that other nations did so was evidence of their lack of advancement, their "foreignness". Discussions of the war that emphasised the role of "the Spanish character" in the war served to reinforce this particular attitude. Truth, for example, published an article in May 1937 that warned that whatever the outcome "[the] hand of every Spaniard will be against every other Spaniard". The article, which originated from the British United Press, suggested that the best scheme might be to split the country into its old provincial autonomies: "A mediaeval country and a mediaeval people, they live in a mediaeval atmosphere and might just as well have mediaeval systems of government."⁹ The writer expressed disgust at the atrocities committed by the rebels and commented that the Spanish character had been thoroughly illustrated in Merry de Val's justification of Franco. The former Spanish Ambassador to London had said that Franco had behaved no worse than the "Reds" and even if he had, it would be unfair to consider him as morally only equal to his adversaries.

Reports of atrocities and the general image received of the

violence and bitterness of the war were also an alienating factor. The Evening Post, which had at first been sympathetic to the Popular Front Government, soon suffered a revulsion of feeling largely as a result of atrocity stories. The Wellington newspaper had initially strongly criticised Franco for an attack on "a legally constituted authority, in this case a popularly elected Government" and evinced deep suspicion of the "civilisation" Franco claimed to be serving. The Evening Post acknowledged that the "Rightists'" fear of extremist domination of the Government could not be entirely ignored, but was of the opinion that the rebellion itself might have opened the way to consolidation of the Left and "the very revolution feared by the supporters of the old regime".¹⁰

The Post's sympathy for the Republican cause was based on a perception of the Popular Front Government as moderate, dedicated to social reform through constitutional methods and elected "just as the present New Zealand Government was, by the free vote of the people at the polls".¹¹ Once an apparently more Leftist Government was formed under the leadership of Francisco Largo Caballero¹², "the Spanish Lenin", the Post did not tender its sympathy so freely. An editorial on 7 September 1936 noted that Largo Caballero was "recorded just as clearly in favour of dictatorship of the proletariat as Franco is recorded for Fascist dictatorship" and hoped that the new Prime Minister would abandon any attempt to win Spain for his "ruthless programme" in favour of compromise with Franco for the sake of peace and humanity.¹³

By 10 September, with no sign of a compromise peace, the Post was reconsidering its initial response to the war. Its editorial on that date pointed out that the two forces were composed of such heterogenous elements that to label the war as a struggle between Communism and Fascism was to over-simplify. The paper considered that on the Republican side there was no real solidarity on questions of principle and was of the opinion that:

the struggle in Spain bears an unfortunate resemblance to the many sanguinary chaotic revolutions for over a century in Spanish America, where there has been no principle at

stake, nothing but the sordid conflict of rival chieftains for power, with the shocking atrocities on both sides, characteristic of the present civil war in Spain.¹⁴

No doubt the Evening Post was among those, who, it said, "had hoped for an era of progress and reform from the advent of the Spanish Republic" and whose sympathies had now been alienated by the increasing viciousness of the war. This new image of the war as one between rival would-be dictators was in its own as over-simplified as the Communism versus Fascism image that the Post had criticised. The "era of progress and reform" the Post had envisioned was doubtless on the Westminster model; when these hopes were dashed the Post was then convinced that what was happening in Spain was something alien, far less commendable and, in a sense, inexplicable to the New Zealand mind.

Atrocity stories, then, not only fueled the commitment of pro-Republicans and pro-Francoists to their respective causes, but also played some part in the creation of "Non-Interventionist" opinions. The Observer was influenced by atrocity stories to condemn both sides and to warn New Zealanders from becoming involved. On 24 March 1938, the paper reacted with concern to news reports that more than 20 New Plymouth men, inspired by Tom Spiller's appeals on behalf of the Loyalists, were about to volunteer for service in the International Brigades. In the Observer's opinion the men were misguided and ill-informed about the situation, for neither side had much to commend it:

without in any way espousing the cause of General Franco, whose methods of waging war on civilians must fill everyone with horror and repulsion, it is only right in the interests of accuracy to point out that the present Loyalist Government is the successor to a Republican regime whose ruthless methods of governing by terrorism, cruelty, and murder, on a scale unsurpassed even in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, helped to precipitate the present civil war.¹⁵

This variation on the "Non-Interventionist" theme of "a plague on both your houses" also indicated the influence of anti-Republican

propaganda on some "Non-Interventionist" assessments of the war. Truth, which also favoured a "Non-Interventionist" editorial line, demonstrated some anti-Communist sentiment as well. In January 1937, Truth expressed its disapproval of a Communist Party message to the Prime Minister, which urged him to make facilities available for volunteers to go to Spain, to send aid to Spain immediately and to attempt to persuade the British Government to change its policy. Its editorial expressed the hope that if volunteers went to Spain "our Reds would be the first to enlist" and questioned Communist's portrayal of the Republicans as the defenders of democracy in Spain. Was the Bolshevik revolution in Russia constitutional? it asked, and did Communism possess a democratic tolerance for individual beliefs?¹⁶ This editorial provided evidence of the association of the Spanish Government's cause with Communism and a consequent lack of sympathy with the Loyalist cause.

However, Truth was not in favour of New Zealanders' espousing Franco's cause. An editorial in March 1937, headed "Meddlesome Matties", began:

A good policy in this Spanish business is to watch it from a distance, and the sensible person would wish that the distance could be much greater. Certainly he or she would wish that there was no occasion for sectarian strife.

However, sundry busybodies in New Zealand have not been able to refrain from meddling with something that is not their affair, whether they think the Nationalists under General Franco are in the right, or the Reds of Madrid and Barcelona are pleasant and gentle.

Although the editorial condemned New Zealand adherents of both sides in its opening statement, its subject was the publication in daily newspapers in Dunedin and Christchurch of material that might arouse ugly "sectarian" controversy by attacking a "respectable religious organisation". Obviously, the paper was referring to pro-Republican letters about the role of the Catholic Church in Spain. Truth considered, in a tone of great moral indignation, that the times of sectarian strife were over in New Zealand and that good citizens of New Zealand who were adherents of that religion should be protected

from people who used the Spanish war as a pretext for "untrue attacks" and "cheap and senseless abuse".¹⁷

The editorial was as much an attack on the editors of the two daily newspapers as it was on the letters they printed. It was, perhaps, partly an example of Truth's sensationalising an issue to score points against other newspapers and gain praise for its defence of a religious minority, which, to be sure, was in some quarters regarded with suspicion and dislike. It was also evidence of Truth's typical style of stirring up a "storm in a teacup". The war in Spain itself was secondary to the matter, and, indeed, Truth's attitude was one of avoidance of the issue in order not to create dissent and disturbance in New Zealand.

"Non-Interventionist" attitudes to the international ramifications of the war were less insular, but still limited. In the view of "Non-Interventionists", New Zealanders' sole concern over the war should be its effect upon Imperial strategy and defence. Thus, Fred Waite, having eschewed involvement with the ideological issues of the war, went on to say that whatever happened in the Mediterranean was important to New Zealand because it was the "frontier of defence" for New Zealand and Australia.¹⁸ The National News, in an article entitled "The Mediterranean Problem - Its Interest to New Zealanders" said that events in Spain had emphasised the need for a strong Britain and warned that "if any other power got control of Spain our hold on Gibraltar might be imperilled".¹⁹ The Herald's first editorial on international involvement in the war was a discussion of the importance of Gibraltar to Britain and the necessity of keeping the peninsular "inviolable".²⁰

Given that New Zealand was reliant on Britain for defence and that, therefore, New Zealand's first line of defence was in Europe, it was not surprising that New Zealanders should pay especial attention to this particular aspect of the war's international complications. Nor was it unexpected that comment on the

international aspects of the Spanish situation should concentrate upon British policy. In any case, Britain's major role in the international imbroglio surrounding the war made such emphasis, at times, unavoidable. It was the nature of the emphasis that distinguished "Non-Interventionist" opinions. Discussions of international involvement in the war - speculations as to the motives for foreign intervention, assessments of Spain's effect on the European situation and of the value of the Non-Intervention Agreement - were based almost entirely upon assumptions about British interests and British policy and were viewed from that perspective. "Non-Interventionists" were also distinguished by their faith in the wisdom and justice of British policy towards the Spanish conflict. Indeed, readers of the Weekly News and the Herald may have found the self-congratulatory tone of British superiority a little too much.

"Non-Interventionists" saw the threat to Britain's (and, by definition, New Zealand's) strategic interests in the Mediterranean posed by the Spanish Civil War largely in terms of Italian and German involvement in the war. William Perry, president of the New Zealand Defence League, voiced this fear in the Address in Reply Debate in the Legislative Council, on 24 September 1937:

And if, with the assistance of Italy and Germany Franco and his men win the civil war in Spain then we will find a Spain, if not Fascist, at any rate under the domination of Italy and Germany and then, so far as the British Empire is concerned, we will have to consider what will be the position of Gibraltar, through which we control the western entrance to the Mediterranean.²¹

Daily and weekly newspapers echoed Perry's concern.²² In the first months of the war the primary fear was that Italy or Germany, or both, would gain territorial concessions from Franco in return for their aid, particularly in the strategically important Balearic Islands. This concern was allayed somewhat by the Anglo-Italian "gentlemen's agreement", signed in January 1937, in which Mussolini pledged that he had no intention of challenging the sovereignty of any of the independent Mediterranean states.²³ However, the

daily newspapers, in their analyses of the developments in international involvement during the course of the war, continued to place steady emphasis on Italian (and less often German) desires for strategic ascendancy in the Mediterranean. The concept underlying much of the newspapers' discussion of this theme, that the civil war was but background and excuse for an Italian attempt to challenge British naval dominance in the Mediterranean, was enunciated most clearly by a correspondent to the National News:

In your own article you strike the nail on the head when you say "If any other power got control of Spain our hold on Gibraltar would be imperilled." That is just what Italy is out to do - to cripple Gibraltar and thereby get a stranglehold on Britain's vital trade routes...unless Italy's machinations in Spain can be frustrated she will certainly dominate Gibraltar...²⁴

Although the strategic threat received the greatest emphasis in daily and weekly newspapers, the dailies with more detailed coverage, offered other speculations on foreign powers' motives for involvement in the Spanish Civil War. Again, the focus was mainly upon Italian and German intervention. There was relatively little comment upon Russian aid to the Republican effort. The Herald, in the early months of the war, placed an equal emphasis on Russian, German, and Italian involvement; its strong anti-Communist sentiment perhaps explains this.²⁵ Other newspapers mentioned Russian involvement but did not dwell on it. There was little attempt, therefore, to provide detailed analyses of Russian motives. The concept of the war as representing an ideological battle between Communism and Fascism, voiced at several times by all the newspapers, may have appeared an adequate explanation for Russian motives.

Intervention on the side of Franco was greater, more open and more obvious, and, possibly, considered the more dangerous. To begin with German aid to Franco was emphasised as much as Italian involvement. The Waikato Times and the Herald noted that German involvement was partly based on German industry's need for Spanish minerals.²⁶ The Evening Post offered another possible motive,

once it was clear that, although Germany and Italy were acting in concert in the NIC, the latter was providing the bulk of the foreign manpower in Spain. The Post speculated that Germany was encouraging Italy to embroil the western democracies in the Spanish conflict so that attention would be diverted away from Germany's expansion into Eastern Europe.²⁷ The Evening Post unravelled more of the tangled skein of international affairs for its readers than the other newspapers. In October 1937 the paper suggested that Mussolini might be hoping by involvement in Spain to aid the Japanese attack on China, by averting French and British action.²⁸

The Waikato Times expressed disgust that Germany and Italy were using the Spanish Civil War as a testing ground for new weapons and techniques of warfare.²⁹ The Times, whose view of the war and intervention was infused with a deep concern for human suffering and a profound dislike for totalitarian rule, combined the two in its bitter contempt for Mussolini's sending his fellow countrymen to die in Spain for the sake of national prestige.³⁰

Reasons of prestige, diversion, economics, and experiment were, however, rather like counterpoints to the two major themes of ideology and expansion. The two were, of course, connected. Explanations of intervention in terms of ideology did not encompass only the view that the hapless Spaniards had been chosen by their respective foreign backers as representatives of the forces of Communism and Fascism. The ideological explanation also included, although often implied rather than stated, the concept of Fascist expansionism. Discussions of Italian and German territorial ambitions in Spain were necessarily informed by the idea that German or Italian encroachment on Spanish territory was an extension of Fascism, a doctrine seen by all the papers as inimical to democracy and peace.

The Waikato Times saw in the German and Italian recognition of Franco "the alignment of authoritarian states against the democratic nations; the further restriction of those bounds within which the

will of the people is the authority for governance"³¹; the Herald, in March 1937, spoke of Mussolini's "obsession to spread the Fascist doctrine".³² Yet, neither the Herald nor the Waikato Times clearly placed intervention in Spain in a wider context of Fascist aggression. However, on two occasions, the Evening Post, otherwise a champion of Britain's non-intervention policy, presented an analysis of foreign intervention in aid of Franco that came closer to the pro-Republican perspective than it did to "Non-Interventionism".

In July 1937, the Post warned that a precedent had been set in Spain; the transformation of a civil war into an ideological battle by foreign powers might happen elsewhere.³³ And in March 1938 the Post expressed its conviction that something should be done to stop the "new technique" of interference in the internal affairs of independent countries or more would fall to Nazi-Fascism; "no longer does anyone suppose that the process of acquisition without declaration of war will end in Spain, Austria or China". Nevertheless, the same editorial also asserted that Spain was more important to Britain and the Empire than Austria or Czechoslovakia because it was situated on the line of British communications, an example of the narrow focus with which the Post and other "Non-Interventionists" generally regarded the war in Spain.³⁴

For "Non-Interventionists", the belief that Fascist expansionism posed a threat to British interests and to peace did not lead, as it did in the case of pro-Republicanism, to the view that the British Government should support the cause of the Spanish Government. Rather, it was used to justify Britain's non-intervention policy and, indeed, appeasement in general. There were some apparent contradictions in such an attitude. The National News' assertion that the war in Spain was essentially a civil war and its great confidence in Franco's claims that no other power would hold sway in Spain³⁵ contrasted with its concern that Italy was using the civil war to encroach upon Britain's Mediterranean interests. In "Non-Interventionist" terms, however, this was not a contradiction,

but simply adherence to the British point of view. In its article on "The Mediterranean Problem", the National News pointed out that it was elementary British policy to desire the friendship of whoever was in control in Spain, and quoted Anthony Eden's statement that disinterestedness in Spain's form of Government should not be taken to mean disinterestedness where British interests around Spain were concerned.³⁶

The "Non-Interventionist" ability to make distinctions between the "internal", Spanish, values of the war and the "European", international, values was most evident in their support of the policy of non-intervention. In this area, most of the comments came from the daily newspapers, and a few from weekly papers. The National News did not provide its readers with any analysis or defence of non-intervention. Its only reference specifically to the NIA was a small item in July 1938, which quoted some remarks made by Anthony Eden in defence of non-intervention to the effect that intervention merely prolonged the conflict and might encourage the spread of the war from Spain into the rest of Europe.³⁷

Eden's arguments were also the basis for support of non-intervention by the newspapers. On 4 August 1936, the Evening Post opined that British and French neutrality was correct in terms of both international law and "fair play" to a nation attempting to settle its fate,³⁸ and later that same month the Waikato Times asserted that Non-Intervention was the "only reasonable course".³⁹ The Weekly News, also in August, congratulated the British Government on its "straightforward decisive pronouncement" that the sale of war materials to either side would be prohibited, but regretted that Italy and Germany appeared reluctant to take the same step.⁴⁰ September saw the Otago Daily Times and the New Zealand Herald contending that even a partially effective agreement on non-intervention would help prevent a general war growing from the Spanish situation.⁴¹

It was soon obvious that non-intervention was only going to be partially effective. By December 1936, the newspapers were agreed

that the NIC was powerless to prevent intervention in Spain.⁴² Over the period of the war, frequent reference was made to the insincerity of some powers' commitment to non-intervention, their stonewalling of proposals that might be effective and, eventually, the hopelessness of preventing intervention in the face of this lack of good faith. By January 1939 the Otago Daily Times was using the term "farce" to describe non-intervention, which was a favourite epithet of pro-Republicans.⁴³

The newspapers also acknowledged the one-sided operation of the agreement signed by the European powers. The Herald, in February 1937 even went so far as to point out the irony that the Government could have won in the early months of the war, had it not been for aid to the rebels and the prevention of the Government's purchasing war materials under the NIA.⁴⁴ The Waikato Times said, as the war drew to a close, that there had been "a large measure of injustice in the whole situation"⁴⁵ and the Evening Post admitted, in June 1938, that the policy of non-intervention had "worked out one-sidedly for Spain".⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the newspapers still defended non-intervention as an expedient solution that had prevented the war in Spain from involving the rest of Europe in armed conflict. This view was best expressed by the Evening Post, in July 1937, in the editorial that discussed the difference between the "Spanish values" of non-intervention and the "European values". It declared that, while the former were hotly debated, the latter were simpler: "Whether factions in Spain gain or lose by non-intervention policy Europe gains by an expedient designed to keep the war wolf from Europe's door".⁴⁷ The Herald even said that "the underlying principle of non-intervention is the localising of the conflict"; thus, implying that as long as the warfare was confined to Spain, it did not matter what happened there.⁴⁸ The paper later noted that the NIC might have served as a valuable means by which nations' spokesmen could "let off steam", evidently suggesting that, otherwise, the acrimony would have taken form as further intervention or even general

war.⁴⁹ Given the sense of impending or barely avoided war that informed many newspaper editorials on the Spanish Civil War (and other international crises), it was possibly not surprising that these newspapers should place such emphasis on the international implications of the war. Their view might be called the "peace at any price" assessment of the NIC.

Defence of non-intervention was, in effect, defence of British policy. The Herald's comment, in November 1936, on German and Italian recognition of Franco indicated this assumption of the primacy of British influence in European affairs. The paper considered the two powers' recognition of Franco a "grave step", which constituted "moral intervention", in that it implied an insurgent victory and might herald more active and open intervention on their behalf. The editorial placed as much significance on the fact that Italy and Germany had pledged non-intervention to "powers other than Spain" (presumably Britain and France) as it did on the Spanish Government's legitimate right to protest to the League of Nations.⁴⁸ Earlier, in October, the Herald had said that British Foreign Office efforts were "at the moment almost the only hope of preventing Spain from becoming a general area of Fascist and Communist antagonisms".⁴⁹

It must be pointed out that generally the Spanish policies of the two Western democracies, Britain and France were treated as one policy, with Britain being regarded as the pre-eminent partner. This was particularly true of discussions of non-intervention, where France and Britain were seen as acting in concert, as were Germany and Italy. The assumption of Britain's dominance in the partnership was not entirely the result of Anglocentrism on the part of the newspapers, but rested in a large part on the facts of the situation. However, often the newspapers' expression of Britain's status as the major democratic power, and the tone of these comments, was influenced by their allegiance to the "Mother Country". There was some acknowledgement of France's particular interest in Franco's defeat so that there would not be another Fascist state on French

borders, and its strategic needs in the Mediterranean, but these concerns took second place to those of Britain. The Herald, which displayed the strongest identification with British policy, also demonstrated most clearly its conception that France was a junior and somewhat unreliable partner in the western democratic alliance. On two occasions when the unequal observation of non-intervention had led the French Government to threaten to relax control over its Pyrenean borders with Spain, the Herald commented that only Britain's influence had prevented such a step.⁵⁰

No blame was attached to Britain for the failure of the NIC to prevent intervention, and Britain's continued support of the NIC was defended as the course of wisdom and justice. Britain was seen to be, in the words of the Otago Daily Times, "strong against the enemies of peace".⁵¹ The Waikato Times celebrated the British Government's "steady adherence to principle"⁵² and the Evening Post made it clear that it regarded the NIC as merely another arm of British diplomacy when it praised the Committee for refusing to become involved in the "fascist-communist holy war" being waged in Spain.⁵³

One assumption behind this support of non-intervention was that the alternative was for Britain and France to take up arms, not only to prevent interference in Spain by Germany and Italy, but also in defence of the Spanish Government. The newspapers assumed that British policy-makers shared their distaste for Franco's politics, methods of warfare, and allies. Curiously enough, it was the Herald, whose dislike of the Spanish Government was obviously greater than its dislike of Franco, which gave the clearest expression of this view. In November 1936, the paper pointed out that Britain could find both political and strategic reasons to support the Spanish Government. The Herald said that a victory for the Government that began as a Liberal Left coalition, "before the Marxists had their way with it", may have seemed to democratic people the only chance of averting Fascist domination of Spain. Britain's Mediterranean interests might be threatened if Italian aid played a large part in a

victory for Franco. But, it added, Britain was neutral because it cared so much about the fate of Europe.⁵⁴

The implication was, then, that Britain was acting with great restraint in the interests of peace. The image of Britain as the peacemaker of Europe carried with it a certain measure of moral superiority, contrasting as it did with the headlong aggression of the dictatorships. Britain's response to the blockade of Bilbao was used as an example of this self-restraint. All the newspapers pointed out that Britain had foregone its right to protect its shipping because to do so would be to breach the NIA and perhaps precipitate war.⁵⁵ The Herald's insistence that, by leaving supply ships at the three-mile limit, Britain was not only maintaining the non-intervention pact but still "succouring the needy" was rather stretching a point.⁵⁶

There were, however, indications that the newspapers were not entirely comfortable with the expedient methods used by the British Government in its championship of peace. In July 1937, Truth hastened to reassure readers about the British Government's attitude towards Franco. The paper claimed that, although the British Government appeared to be handling Franco with "kid gloves", there was no loss of prestige in this. Franco, it said, was a comparative nonentity on the international scene and British prestige would be more damaged by taking his provocations seriously (with specific reference to the blockade of Bilbao).⁵⁷

In 1937, the daily newspapers were circumspect, but an air of gloom pervaded discussions of the prospect of the Non-Intervention Pact's receiving the full cooperation of all signatory nations. The Nyon Conference on submarine attacks on shipping in the Mediterranean was greeted with unmistakable relief. The newspapers' comments revealed their previous unease at the direction of European affairs. The conference and the Nyon Agreement seemed to the Herald a "refreshing departure" by Britain and France in "refusing to be held back by Italian arguments any longer",⁵⁸ the Waikato Times felt

that it denoted a "marked change" in the attitude of the Western democracies⁵⁹ and the Evening Post greeted the conference as a chance for Britain to pick up lost leadership in Europe.⁶⁰ Comments by the Post indicated some of the uncertainty the paper had felt about British policy over Spain, a concern undoubtedly shared by other newspapers. The Post felt that the defeat of the League over Italy's Abyssinian adventure and the frustration of the proper operation of non-intervention had reflected on Britain and France and damaged their prestige. Smaller powers had developed a feeling that the democracies could do nothing against the dictatorships and were "magnetised" away from the democracies and toward the dictatorships. The Nyon Agreement, however, would be an effective counter to "the Italo-German threatening policy".⁶¹

Yet, the Nyon Agreement ultimately had relatively little to do with foreign intervention in Spain, except that Italian "piracy" in the Mediterranean had arisen from such intervention. The agreement dealt solely with the threat to British and French Mediterranean interests, in isolation from the central issue of foreign involvement in Spain. The Otago Daily Times indicated its awareness of this distinction when it said of the Nyon Agreement, that, "unlike the efforts to secure non-intervention in Spain, this Mediterranean patrol promises to be effective".⁶² Perhaps the Evening Post's leader writer was lightheaded with relief when he wrote that while the Nyon Agreement:

makes international history and perhaps international law the United States [policy on the Japanese attack on China] is confined to a barren plan of embargo, the lash of which may fall on the wrong shoulders.⁶³

This description could equally well have applied to Britain's non-intervention policy, but the Evening Post did not seem to see the irony of its statement. It clearly regarded the halting of intervention in Spain as less important than the maintenance of British interests in the Mediterranean. The Post considered Chamberlain's approach to Italy in late 1937, with the view to

reaching an accord, "the most important event of 1937".⁶⁴ It pointed out that criticism of a British alliance with Italy because of the latter's conquest of Abyssinia and involvement in Spain did not take into account the danger of having "a permanent enemy in the Mediterranean".⁶⁵

Britain's concern for peace and need to maintain her strategic position was, then, justification for the expedient methods upon which a good deal of Britain's policy was seen to be based. Comments on Anthony Eden's resignation clearly expressed the newspapers' views on the direction of British foreign policy. By January 1938, Eden was convinced that negotiations with Italy should be delayed until there was some evidence of the sincerity of Italian intentions with regard to the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain. Chamberlain, on the other hand, was determined that Anglo-Italian negotiations should begin without delay, even without assurances about Italian involvement in Spain as a quid pro quo for British de jure recognition of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia. Eden resigned on 20 February. The Herald, the Evening Post and the Otago Daily Times were all of the opinion that Eden's position was one of idealism, while Chamberlain's stand was realistic.⁶⁶ The Otago Daily Times felt that Eden's views, while expressing the average Briton's distaste for the dubious diplomacy of some European states, were not statesmanlike.⁶⁷ The Herald even blamed upon Eden's "uncompromising" attitude the element of uncertainty that was causing international leadership to "slip from Britain's hands".⁶⁸ Here, again, was demonstrated the "Non-Interventionist" conviction that Spain could be sacrificed to a greater cause, either peace or Imperial defence strategies.

Even after the Nyon Agreement had proved to be an ineffective deterrent to Italian and German encroachments in Spain and elsewhere, the qualms the newspapers may have felt about appeasement over Spain did not harden into criticism. Loyalty to the "Mother Country" was still paramount. When, to the injury of submarine attacks in 1937, was added the insult of aerial bombing of shipping, in 1938, the

newspapers rushed to the defence of Chamberlain's policy. Only the Waikato Times counselled retaliation in the form of shooting down a plane or sinking a submarine as an object lesson to "those who will adopt these illegal courses".⁶⁹ The Times was outraged that British ships were being destroyed by foreign airmen whose Governments had agreed to observe non-intervention. Specific indignation at an attack on British ships rather, than a more general desire for firmer British policy towards the dictators seemed to motivate the Times' outburst. The incidents gave the Evening Post another chance to reiterate its view that British policy so far had managed to avert war although it admitted that the policy had "landed" the British Government with inconsistencies.⁷⁰ The Herald felt that it was understandable that British Members of Parliament should be calling for retaliation against the "barefaced" attacks on shipping but considered that a policy of patience was the only way to keep the NIC from collapsing completely. So eager was the Herald to defend the British Government's policy that it introduced a line of argument more common to pro-Francoist propaganda. The paper stated that Lloyds Shipping register provided prima facie evidence in support of Franco's claim that many of the ships attacked were only nominally British.⁷¹ Indeed the tone of the editorial was such to suggest that "profiteers" had registered their ships as British deserved to have them sunk, because the ship's registration had caused the British Government so much embarrassment and trouble.

In defending the British Government's "inaction" in response to the bombing of shipping, the Herald also voiced another view of the British Government's policy that was often implied in the newspaper's comments. The Herald pointed out that "every fresh demonstration of patience adds weight to the justification of forcible action when it finally happens".⁷² The Evening Post had earlier expressed the view that:

the peace has been kept only because the Nazi-Fascist hammer was striking on an anvil of democratic rubber - the rubber of democratic patience, meeting the hammer of Nazi-Fascist aggression. The rubber is now hardening...⁷³

Yet, the newspapers also revealed their awareness of another reason for the policies of expediency that rather belied their confidence in Britain's willingness to act against the dictators if necessary. The pace of British rearmament had lagged behind that of the dictatorships and the newspapers were only too aware of this fact. However, it was also used in defence of Britain's policies, usually in the form of attacks on British Labour Party critics. Those who were calling for firmness against the dictators, said the Herald, were the same people who had earlier called for a pacifist policy and for disarmament, thus creating the need for an appeasement policy.⁷⁴ The problem of British military strength vis a vis that of the dictators did not receive as much attention as other more passive methods of averting war, possibly because too close an appraisal of the situation would have raised unwelcome fears as to the outcome of a war and also because of the fervent hope that Britain's diplomatic methods and its international standing would stave off the approaching conflict.

Defence of Britain's Spanish policy sometimes led to inconsistencies, much as the policy itself did. An example of this was the Herald's opinion on the ratification of the Anglo-Italian Agreement. The Herald, in three editorials, expressed its conviction that Britain should not and would not break down on the "settlement of the Spanish question" that was a prerequisite of ratification.⁷⁵ To agree to ratify the pact without an Italian withdrawal from Spain, would be an "abject surrender" by Britain to Italy and it would be "equally weak and wrong" to endorse a subterfuge by which Italian troops were only nominally withdrawn. When Britain did ratify the pact after the withdrawal of only 10,000 Italian troops due for leave the Herald was left in a rather uncomfortable position. Its editorial on the ratification of the pact made no mention of the circumstances of the ratification; it merely commented that criticism in the British Parliament was on the grounds of Italy's sincerity rather than to do with the spirit of the agreement, which was "a pillar of peace". The bulk of the editorial merely discussed the provisions of the agreement rather than the Spanish question.⁷⁶

The Herald's misconception of what the British Government would or would not do undoubtedly stemmed from an "ideal" view of the British Government, partly expressed in the image of Britain as the champion of peace. The Britain that many New Zealanders were familiar with was not Britain the appeaser, but Britain the defender of the weak and upholder of the rule of law. Thus, the discomfort with the policies of expediency. "Non-Interventionist" newspapers' support of British policy was, in a sense, a mixture of idealism and realism. Their concern for British prestige was based not only on a conviction of British superiority per se, but also on the understanding that British strength was New Zealand's safety against war. Defence of British non-intervention policy on the grounds of its abandonment of self-interest and great care for the peace of Europe was matched, if not complemented, by comments that clearly showed that the fate of Britain and its particular spheres of influence were the major concern. It was in New Zealand's interest that Britain did not go to war over Spain, since such a war would jeopardise its Dominions at the end of the Mediterranean route.

The Herald, as might be expected, gave strongest expression to the view that Spain was not important enough for Britain to go to war over. In March 1938, discussing the Anschluss, the paper noted that the real reason for agitation in Europe was Franco's latest offensive, not the invasion of Austria, but that there was no reason for Britain to go to war in Europe. France, the paper suggested, was concerned at being surrounded by Fascist powers, but the fact that France and Russia might prove to have "backed the wrong horse" in Spain was no reason for Britain to "plunge her lion's paw into the flames to pull out French chestnuts".⁷⁷

This view was echoed by the National News in November 1938, in an article defending Britain's appeasement policy:

Why do some people suggest that Great Britain be the policeman of the world and actively interfere in every fight that takes place?

Why should the men of Great Britain and of Australia and New Zealand be expected to go and lay down their lives

because some Englishmen or New Zealanders are strongly sympathetic with Communism or Fascism?⁷⁸

Both loyalty to Britain and self interest, then, influenced "Non-Interventionist" assessments of international involvement in Spain and British policy towards Spain. Not surprisingly, British and French recognition of Franco at the end of the war was greeted with approval on the grounds of strategic interests and realism.⁷⁹

"Realism" was also one of the grounds upon which were based "Non-Interventionist" criticisms of the New Zealand Labour Government's policy towards the Spanish Civil War. In this instance, "realism" referred not only to support of British non-intervention policy as opposed to the "idealism" of the Labour Government's commitment to collective security and the League. The term was also used by "Non-Interventionists" to describe their view of New Zealand's role in the Empire and world affairs. Most of the criticisms of the New Zealand Labour Government's attitude came from the National Party in Parliament, sometimes with specific reference to the Government's Spanish policy and sometimes in more general discussions of its foreign policy. The National Party's views were echoed intermittently by the daily and weekly newspapers and by some correspondents to newspapers. Indeed, discussion of Labour's policy with regard to Spain was almost the only instance when newspaper correspondence columns featured letters about Spain that were not part of the ongoing pro-Francoist - pro-Republican debate.

Support of non-intervention presupposed disapproval of Labour's attitude to the Spanish crisis. As the British Government did not share Labour's confidence in collective security, neither did "Non-Interventionists". The National Party's predecessors, the United and Reform parties, had been dubious about the value of the League⁸⁰ and, by the time of the Parliamentary debate on the League of Nations Sanctions in May 1936, Opposition members evinced little faith in the League. The imposition of sanctions against Italy had failed to prevent the conquest of Abyssinia; therefore,

they said, the League could not be relied upon as an effective check to aggression. Former Coalition Prime Minister, George Forbes, made a forceful statement that indicated National's dissatisfaction with the League:

Not one nation is prepared to rely upon the League under existing conditions. It has been tried as a peacemaker and as a preserver of the peace and it has been found wanting. It has been proved to be a delusion and a snare. It has been condemned as a farce. The time has come to make that candid admission and to seek to devise a better and a more effective way of preventing bloodthirsty wars of aggression.⁸¹

The Herald considered that the Spanish Government's appeal to the League in September 1936 would be "as effective as whistling in the dark"; the Otago Daily Times shared its view.⁸² "Non-Interventionists" used the Spanish Civil War as another example of the failure of the League and as evidence of Labour's "futile devotion to an impractical ideal", as the Observer put it.⁸³ In June 1937, the Evening Post commented that New Zealand Labour leaders should take a warning from the German shelling of Almeria in retaliation for the alleged bombing of the German ship the "Deutschland". The incident, said the Post, showed the breakdown of a "collective policing system" and, thereby, "the difference between police work in a democracy and international police work".⁸⁴ The Otago Daily Times was not impressed by Jordan's suggestion that Spain should be placed under a League mandate, for, it said, in the unlikely event of the Spanish combatants agreeing to such a measure, the League would be incapable of enforcing it.⁸⁵

In the view of "Non-Interventionists", the British Empire and not the League was "the strongest force for peace in the world".⁸⁶ National Member of Parliament for Waitomo, Walter Broadfoot, said during the debate on the Imperial Conference, in September 1937:

The League of Nations did not save Abyssinia, it has not saved Spain and it is not saving China. It would not save us from a major conflagration here if it were not for the strength of British arms. We in this country exist entirely by the goodwill and protection of Britain and that is a point we should never forget in our negotiations with her.⁸⁷

"Non-Interventionists" considered that Labour Government's advocacy of League action over Spain was not only unrealistic, but disloyal. A dependent had no right to question the policy of a protector. Such an attitude was also dangerous. Since "Non-Interventionists" saw the British Government's policy of non-intervention (and appeasement in general) as the best method of preserving peace, Labour's insistence on firm action against aggression was regarded as a policy that would lead to war. The Observer fulminated against "the persistence of Mr Jordan in expressing at Geneva a viewpoint out of sympathy with the general British policy" and went on to say:

the policy has been adopted with only one end in view, the preservation of peace. Peace at any price is something, which in other days, long before there was ever any prospect of their becoming Cabinet Ministers; some of the present Cabinet advocated with considerable enthusiasm. Yet Mr Jordan at Geneva is made the mouthpiece of an attitude which, if taken seriously, might lead to war ... New Zealand seeks to ignore realities and shriek defiance at the dictators, but if the dictators responded with menaces New Zealand would have to run for protection to the Mother Country.

A similar attitude was expressed by F.W. Doidge, later to become the National Party's spokesman on foreign affairs, when he accused Jordan of wanting to involve Britain in a European war, after Jordan's abstention from voting on the League resolution to abandon non-intervention.⁸⁹

"Non-Interventionists" pointed out that New Zealand's distance made it easy, and, therefore, more disloyal, to advocate a policy for which Britain would bear the brunt and New Zealand escape "comparatively free".⁹⁰ However, concern that Britain should not become involved in a European war was not entirely based on solicitude for the sufferings of the "Mother Country". New Zealanders were aware that, if Britain went to war in Europe, its ability to defend its Pacific Dominions would be weakened. Thus, the Weekly News approved a resolution passed at the Imperial Conference in 1937 that "Britain and the Empire should not be embroiled in

quarrels arising from the bombing of the Deutschland and the shelling of Almeria". The Weekly News felt that it was desirable that the Dominions support "to the limits of their influence, Britain's service to peace".⁹¹ The Evening Post considered that the Empire's strength was New Zealand's safety and that New Zealand should play its part in maintaining that strength.⁹²

"Non-Interventionists" argued that in such a volatile European situation the Empire must show itself to be united because potential aggressors would be ready to exploit any weakness, in much the same manner as Malcolm MacDonald's warning to Jordan.⁹³ Labour's stand was seen as an embarrassment to Britain and a threat to the security of the Empire.⁹⁴ K.J. Holyoake's question in Parliament, in September 1937, about Jordan's suggestion of a League mandate for Spain, was aimed at demonstrating the National Party's belief that New Zealand was out of step with the rest of the Empire.⁹⁵

It was on the grounds of Empire unity that the Opposition indicted the Government's handling of foreign affairs, in the Want of Confidence Amendment to the Address in Reply at the opening of Parliament in July 1938. Clause 6 of the Want of Confidence Amendment stated that the Government's direction of external policy was "a direct threat to the solidarity of the Empire at a time when a united stand for world peace on a basis of strength and security is more necessary than ever."⁹⁶ The leader of the Opposition, Adam Hamilton, later said that the unity of the Empire was "never really in question until this Government came into office".⁹⁷

Accusations of disloyalty to the Empire and to Britain were, of course, convenient sticks with which to beat a Socialist Government, especially in 1938, an election year. The National News, in June 1938, said that

The spectacle of Mr Jordan, as New Zealand's spokesman at Geneva, taking sides with Russia as against Great Britain and France, is calculated to make New Zealanders feel sick.⁹⁸

The Otago Daily Times agreed.⁹⁹ Much earlier, after Jordan's first speech at the League on Spain in December 1936, Truth had made insinuations about Labour's policy. The paper said that it was itself satisfied that Jordan's remarks had stemmed from his conviction (born of Labour views) that the Spanish Government was constitutionally elected. However, it was concerned that Jordan's remarks would be misconstrued and that he would be accused of having Communist sentiments.¹⁰⁰

"Non-Interventionist" views, nevertheless, revealed the way some New Zealanders regarded New Zealand's place in world affairs. Their concern for New Zealand's "disloyalty" to the Empire went much deeper than the practical repercussions of such action. At the heart of "Non-Interventionist" objections to the Labour Government's foreign policy was an image of New Zealand as a dependent and junior partner in the Empire, its place in the world defined by its relations with Britain and the rest of the Empire. It was a view that, as Keith Sinclair has put it, "seemed not to appreciate that, within the British Commonwealth, loyalty to the Crown was not incompatible with an independent outlook in world affairs".¹⁰¹ Sinclair was speaking of the 1920s but his remarks could equally have applied to "Non-Interventionists" in the late 1930s.

The National News considered that New Zealand had a part to play in the world, but solely as a member of the British Empire, for it saw membership of the Empire as the reason that New Zealand was affected by world events.¹⁰² New Zealand's role did not include making foreign policy decisions. In June 1938, an article on foreign policy and defence asserted:

the defence of New Zealand is really the defence of the British Empire ... As we have decided upon a defence policy for the British Empire, it follows that the Empire should have one foreign policy.¹⁰³

A month later, another article entitled "New Zealand's foreign policy" said, "It is no use talking about a foreign policy unless a

nation has some offensive and defensive strength to implement that foreign policy."¹⁰⁴ The article went on to discuss British foreign policy.

"Non-Interventionists", then, saw no need for an independent foreign policy for New Zealand and, indeed, felt it was presumptuous of the Labour Government to challenge British views. The Otago Daily Times objected to what it saw as Jordan's support for the abandonment of non-intervention, in May 1938, on the grounds of New Zealand's status as a weaker, junior partner in the Empire. It found "little satisfaction to be derived from this illustration of New Zealand's determination to make its small voice heard in the Council of nations".¹⁰⁵ The Observer thought it "almost comical that New Zealand, like a small and insignificant puppy, should be trying to assert herself in this fashion".¹⁰⁶

The National Party reiterated this theme in Parliament. Mr Broadfoot considered that New Zealand was "too far from the vortex to have any great knowledge of the situation."¹⁰⁸ Nor did the National Party have any faith in the experience or knowledge of foreign affairs of the Labour Cabinet or its representative in London. F.W. Doidge gave his opinion of Jordan in early 1939

May I suggest to the Prime Minister that it really is time he asked Mr Jordan to stay away from Geneva. On more than one occasion Mr Jordan has dropped a brick at Geneva. He was the catspaw of Russia when the door of the League was slammed in the face of Italy. We all remember the famous incident when Mr Jordan caused Mr Anthony Eden so much anxiety ... Mr Jordan knows nothing about foreign politics; Mr Jordan has not been trained in diplomacy; Mr Jordan knows nothing about the intrigues and feuds of Europe ... My contention is that to send Mr Jordan to Geneva, to that centre of intrigue and doubledealings and doublecrossings is just like throwing cat's meat to a tiger.¹⁰⁹

The British Government on the other hand were wise men, experienced in diplomacy and the ways of Europe.¹¹⁰ The Opposition Member for Patea, H.G. Dickie, thought that New Zealand need not have its own seat at the League; having to go "very largely the way Britain

went", it could be adequately represented by the British delegates.¹¹¹ The Herald, in a similar vein, considered that the Statute of Westminster was not relevant at Geneva, where continued collaboration was desirable.¹¹² The National Party's Parnell representative, W. Endean, who believed that if Britain was "maintained in a position of strength and might ... the whole world can look forward to the dawn of peace and civilisation", went even further:

... it may be, I think that we are too early in New Zealand in obtaining true national status. In the Government of Britain at the present time we have a body of men of experience, character, justice and determination, and they would be able to bring to bear such a wise guidance as a young country like New Zealand is unable to obtain from its advisors. A real veto on our legislation reposed in the hands of the Governor-General would be all to the good.¹¹³

Of course, had his own party been in power, Mr Endean may not have been so eager to advocate total legislative subordination to the British Government. Nevertheless, Endean's opinion was only a more extreme statement of the attitude that informed "Non-Interventionist" thinking, that New Zealand was but an adjunct of Britain, totally defined by its part in the Empire. The Weekly News perhaps expressed this feeling best when, in 1939, it applauded Michael Savage's assertion that New Zealand would be found at Britain's side if Britain were in trouble. The Weekly News regarded this statement as expressing the feelings of most New Zealanders, born out of "deep sentiment and enlightened self-interest". The paper felt that New Zealand could well give the lead to other Dominions in this matter, by stating what it was prepared to do in support of Britain. It took pride in the fact that New Zealand could take such an unequivocal stand, unlike Canada or South Africa, compelled by racial differences to qualify their declarations, and whose leaders "might be glad to define their attitude as downrightly as Mr Savage can do."¹¹⁴

In their criticism of the Labour Government's independent stand, their insistence that New Zealand should not weaken the Empire, and their conviction that Britain knew best, "Non-Interventionists"

illustrated J.N. Findaly's contention that New Zealanders were bound by ghostly loyalties to an idealised image of Britain. "Non-Interventionists" were convinced that in considering New Zealanders as Britons first they were speaking for the "consensus of opinion of a great many New Zealanders".¹¹⁵ The Herald was sure that the Labour Government's memorandum on reform of the League Covenant and Jordan's independent stand at Geneva could not be regarded "as in all respects representative of general opinion in this country".¹¹⁶ If this were indeed so, then the influence of "Non-Interventionist" opinions provides one explanation for the lack of interest in the Spanish Civil War displayed by the majority of New Zealanders. What connection had they with a war in a country they knew little about, fought by a people with whom they had nothing in common and complicated by ideological passions with which they wanted nothing to do? And, therefore, why should their Government become involved in the issue?

Yet "Non-Interventionists" were not advocating an isolationist view, but Imperial insularity. Their view of the world outside, and of New Zealand's role in it was bounded by the bonds of Empire. Belief in the superiority of the British democratic system influenced their assessment of events in Spain, and, together with loyalty to the "Mother Country" and implicit faith in the wisdom of British leaders led them to support of Britain's non-intervention policy. The strength of this faith in Britain was demonstrated by the fact that even the Grey River Argus, a Labour daily newspaper, was convinced (at least until Eden's resignation) that British policy was correct;¹¹⁷ and even within the League of Nations Union there were those who considered that Britain's non-intervention policy should not be criticised.¹¹⁸

In some respects, "Non-Interventionism" came close to pro-Francoism. The Herald combined a gradually developing pro-Francoist view of the forces in Spain with a "Non-Interventionist" attitude to the international aspects of the war.¹¹⁹ The National News' contention that the war in Spain was

primarily a civil war, and that Franco would never allow the Italians or Germans to dominate Spain, was also a favourite argument of pro-Francoists. Catholic pro-Francoists sometimes used similar criticisms of the Labour Government's policy. The major difference lay in assessments of the international ramifications of the war and in the strong support for Britain's policy, displayed by "Non-Interventionists".

In a sense, "Non-Interventionism" was the true opposite of both pro-Francoism and pro-Republicanism, in its rejection of partisanship over the war. Both pro-Francoists and pro-Republicans saw the fate of Spain itself and events in Spain as significant for New Zealanders; "Non-Interventionists" dismissed this view in favour of a narrow focus on Empire concerns. For "Non-Interventionists", the war was not a paradigm, but a symbol of the dangers and disarray of a world outside the Imperial network. Nevertheless, the most obvious and major differences were between "Non-Interventionists" and pro-Republicans. "Non-Interventionists" rejected the internationalism of the Labour Government and of pro-Republicans in favour of a policy of limited Imperialist self-interest; in so doing they also rejected New Zealand nationalism - the concept of New Zealand as an independent nation with its own judgement in world affairs - and advocated a national attitude of dependence on, and identification with, Britain.

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- 50 NZH 19 April 1937, p 10; 25 October 1937, p 8.
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- 83 Observer 24 March 1938, p 5.
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- 85 ODT 20 September 1937, p 8.
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- 87 NZPD Vol. 248, p 497, 30 September 1937.
- 88 Observer 24 March 1938, p 5.
- 89 Tauranga Times 14 May 1938. Clipping enclosed in C. Burnett to M. Savage, 16 May 1938. EA1 355/4/2 Pt 2. National Archives Wellington. See Chapter 1, p 65. Frederick Doidge had been director of the London Daily Express and an organiser of the Empire Crusade to make the Empire a single economic unit, inspired by his paper's owner, Lord Beaverbrook.
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- 91 Weekly News 9 June 1937, p 59.
- 92 EP 29 July 1937, p 8.
- 93 See Chapter 1, p 59.
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CHAPTER 3
THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CRUSADE:
PRO-FRANCOIST OPINIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

Support in New Zealand for the Spanish rebels was largely confined to the Catholic Church, which regarded the Spanish Civil War as a battle between the forces of Christian, or Catholic, civilisation and those of atheistic Communist barbarism. There is little evidence that many outside the Church espoused Franco's cause. In a few cases, anti-Communism led to an acceptance of some pro-Francoist views. Notably, the New Zealand Herald presented editorial analyses of the causes of the war that coincided with the Catholic "Communist plot" version. The National News also published some small items and comments that indicated a certain degree of sympathy with the rebels' anti-Communist propaganda. However, neither publication wholeheartedly embraced pro-Francoism and the National Party itself generally refrained from comment on the two forces in the war. As Chapter Two has shown, the National Party was more concerned with the Spanish Civil War from the perspective of Imperial interests and the Labour Government's foreign policy. The Herald, too, whatever its editorial views on the origins of the war, displayed none of the ambivalence towards Britain's role in the war that coloured Catholic pro-Francoists' attitudes towards international involvement.

If there were other New Zealanders whose dislike and fear of Communism led them to view the rebellion sympathetically, they did not make public their opinions. Nor is there evidence that any more than a few New Zealanders supported Franco on the basis of an identification of his political aims with those of Mussolini or Hitler. Doubtless, New Zealand's small Nazi Party fell into this category, but its records are not available to the researcher and nor, apparently, did it seek to publicise its opinion in the newspapers of the day. An examination of the correspondence columns

of the six daily newspapers chosen for this study revealed only two examples of apparently non-Catholic pro-Fascist support of Franco.

The Catholic Church was the only organisation to publicly demonstrate its support for Franco and Catholic newspapers were the main promoters of pro-Francoist propaganda in New Zealand. Discussion of New Zealand pro-Francoism will therefore concentrate upon the Catholic response, and compare and contrast other pro-Francoist attitudes where appropriate.

At the time this study was undertaken, Catholic archives were not open to outside researchers. The Catholic newspapers Zealandia and the Tablet have been used as the major sources for Catholic opinion on the war. The Auckland University student newspaper, Craccum, whose staff included members of the Catholic Students Guild, also took a pro-Francoist line, and individual Catholics made their views known in correspondence to daily and weekly newspapers. The Tablet, based in Dunedin, was independent of the hierarchy, but Zealandia was owned by the Bishop of Auckland, in this period Bishop James Michael Liston, and there is no reason to suppose that the two newspapers did not represent official views.

Although their attitudes towards the Spanish Civil War were basically the same, the content and sometimes the tone of the two publications were different. Zealandia had a newspaper format and tended to publish cable news. The Tablet was a magazine-style publication and its coverage of the Spanish Civil War was generally in the form of articles discussing various aspects of the war. Both commented editorially; over the period of the war the Tablet devoted 23 editorials to the subject and Zealandia 18. In a sense, the two publications were complementary. Catholics who read both would receive the latest cable news from Zealandia, plus the occasional longer report from an overseas newspaper's correspondent in Spain; turning to the Tablet, they would find articles discussing in more depth specific issues arising from the war. The Tablet's tone was in general more considered, partly as a result of its format, but

perhaps also because Zealandia's owner and co-editor, Bishop Liston, was, in the words of a Church historian, "implacably and almost unreasonably opposed to Communism".¹

In common with secular daily and weekly newspapers and pro-Republican publications, the Catholic newspapers were dependent upon overseas sources for most of their material on the Spanish Civil War. Both Zealandia and the Tablet were connected with the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), an American Catholic organisation, and received much of their news from that source. A study of American responses to the war in Spain, The Wound in the Heart, by A. Guttman, has shown that the news department of the NCWC was sympathetic to the Nationalist cause and used its own correspondents in Spain, who made "little attempt to report objectively".² New Zealand Catholic newspapers also relied heavily upon Osservatore Romano, the official Vatican newspaper, and English and French Catholic papers, such as La Croix, the Universe and the London Tablet. Very few news items or articles came from non-Catholic sources.

For Catholic pro-Francoists, as for pro-Republicans, the war in Spain was a paradigm, an archetypal battle between good and evil. The war was regarded as first and foremost an attack on religion in Spain. In the Catholic press, Spain became a symbol of the threat that the Church was facing in Europe and elsewhere. Uneasy relations with Mussolini's Italy, attacks on the power of the Church and attempts to create a new paganism in Nazi Germany, and the blatant atheism of Russian Communism, all contributed to a sense of danger to the faith. Coupled with this was the feeling that the Church was losing members, especially among the working class, as a result of the spirit of materialism that was increasing in the modern world, as well as the attractions of other systems of belief, such as Socialism, Communism, Fascism and Nazism. Long before the Nazi challenge to the Church, Communism had been regarded as the major enemy of the Catholic faith and, even after attention had been turned to the Nazi menace, many Catholics still considered that Communism posed a wider threat.

For all this, the sense of threat, the loss of the faithful and opposition to Communism, Spain was the paradigm - a once staunchly Catholic country where now the Church and its people suffered under the persecution of atheistic Communism. Spain had a special place in Catholic history. It was the nation that had remained the bastion of the true faith despite the threat of Islamic conquest and the rise of Protestantism. It was the home of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, and it was the country that had encouraged the spread of Catholicism as far as the New World. This Catholic past made events in Spain all the more shocking. It also enabled a Catholic mythology to be built up around the war.

The Catholic press depicted the conflict as a new crusade, with Franco and his Nationalists the modern counterparts of El Cid and his crusaders, leading a national spiritual revival and rebellion against the barbaric hordes of atheistic Communism. The rebellion was justified on the grounds that Communism had infected national life and was bent on destroying the Church in Spain. In common with pro-Republicans, pro-Francoists saw the fate of Europe inextricably linked with the outcome of the war in Spain. Franco was not only fighting "for God and Spain", but for Christian (or Catholic) civilisation everywhere. A defeat for Communism in Spain would be a setback for its plans for worldwide domination an encouragement to the forces of anti-Communism elsewhere. In the service of this mythology of national martyrdom and redemption, the role of Italian and German aid to Franco was minimised in Catholic discussions of the war.

If the war in Spain was seen as the latest in a line of religious wars for the glory of God and the Catholic Church, it was also considered to be yet another instance of specific persecution of the Church. The stories of atrocities committed by the Republican forces upon priests and nuns naturally contributed to this belief. There was a tone of defensiveness in some Catholic pro-Francoist propaganda and critics of Franco and the Church's support of his cause were generally labelled anti-Catholic, in much the same way as pro-Republicans labelled Franco's sympathisers as pro-Fascist.

Although the Church denied that in supporting Franco it was pro-Fascist, there was evidence of some pro-Fascist sentiment among Catholic correspondents to newspapers. Outside the Church's own newspapers, Catholic letters to daily and weekly newspapers were the main method by which Franco's cause was promoted in New Zealand. Catholics also engaged in debate with the Communist newspaper the Workers' Weekly and the radical periodical Tomorrow. There was no pro-Francoist counterpart to the mass meetings and rallies organised by pro-Republican groups, but groups of Catholics, mainly students, disrupted SMAC meetings and rallies. Nor did officials of the Church make many public pronouncements about their position on the war. The exceptions were an article about the war by Bishop Liston that was published in several parts in the Herald and the Otago Daily Times, in September 1936,³ and public criticism of the SMAC by the Bishop of Christchurch, Matthew Brodie, in early December 1936.⁴

For Catholics, events in Spain were relevant to New Zealanders. The Spanish Civil War, they considered, revealed the dangers of Communism and the trap of Catholic complacency. The establishment of a local branch of the SMAC and the dissemination of pro-Republican propaganda in New Zealand was, for the Catholic press and many of its readers, evidence of both anti-Catholicism and Communist subversion in New Zealand society. Catholic pro-Francoists attacked the Labour Government's "limited pro-Republican" stand on the grounds of pro-Communism and, similarly to "Non-Interventionists", because it was disloyalty to Britain. However, the Catholic press' attitude to British involvement was, at best, equivocal. In general, Catholic pro-Francoists did not become involved in the debate over the Labour Government's foreign policy to any great extent; their focus was on the fate of the Church in Spain and the ramifications of this for Catholics everywhere, rather than on other international aspects of the war. Nevertheless, in insisting that what happened in Spain was a matter of importance for New Zealanders, they were in opposition to the "Non-Interventionist", "insular imperialist" view.

It is impossible to estimate how many New Zealand Catholics became deeply involved in the issue of the war, particularly as Catholic archives could not be consulted. Histories of particular dioceses and the one brief history of the Church in New Zealand are more concerned with the development of the Church in New Zealand, rather than detailing Catholic attitudes to complex political and social issues. Given that many Catholics were Labour voters and Trades Unionists, there is surprisingly little evidence of Catholic objections to pro-Republicanism within the Labour Party or the Trades Unions. There was, of course, some protest, but not on the scale experienced in Australia, particularly in the Victorian Labour Party, where Catholic pressure caused the adoption of a non-intervention policy.⁵ On the other hand, although a few Catholics indicated their disapproval of Franco's cause and some even espoused pro-Republicanism,⁶ there is no evidence that, as in France or America, significant numbers of Catholics had reservations about their Church's support of the rebels.

The apparent conformity of the New Zealand Catholic response to the official attitude of pro-Francoism was possibly, in part, a result of the nature of New Zealand Catholicism. As a minority in a non-Catholic country, presented with an issue couched in terms of defence of the faith, Catholics could be expected to draw together and follow the official line. Violent anti-clericalism was not a feature of New Zealand Catholic life, as it was in Spain. Thus, the reports of atrocities and church burnings would have had great effect in encouraging support of the Nationalist forces depicted as saving religion in Spain. Distance also played a part, as E.M. Andrews has noted of their Australian counterparts, New Zealand Catholics were "a long way from events, and had only their own preconceptions and the official channels to guide them."⁷ One correspondent to the Tablet put the matter succinctly: "If a Catholic is to believe anyone, he should above all believe his own papers, which in a matter as serious as this would not deceive him."⁸

Before the discussion of pro-Francoist attitudes and activities

related specifically to the New Zealand scene, an analysis must be made of what image the Catholic press (and other pro-Francoist sources) presented of the Spanish Civil War.

First reports in Zealandia and the Tablet clearly indicated that the outbreak of hostilities was considered to be a battle between Catholics and Communists. In the Tablet, an editorial bearing the headline "Chaos in Spain", on 29 July 1936, gave an analysis of the events leading up to the outbreak of the war. It said:

That Spain is in the grip of civil war is not altogether surprising; it is a natural consequence of her recent unhappy history. Communism is in charge there and where Communism is there is strife ... With a Government of the extreme Left in power ... [the] prolonged campaign against religious orders and Catholic institutions was intensified, and harsh and illogical education regulations were imposed, resulting in whole communities of nuns being turned out into the streets.⁹

Readers of Zealandia had a rather more sensationalist introduction to the war. On 27 August, Zealandia published on the front page a report from the Barcelona correspondent of the London Tablet. The report, headed "Chaos in Spain - Red Militia Seize Control", told of "a battle between the military defending Catholics and the Red Militia (an armed Communist mob)". A "ravaging mob of Anarchists" had opened graves and destroyed churches and convents, despite the pleas of the Government over the radio. They were "inflamed against the nuns - and the priests - by the foul lies spread about the lives of the religious by Communist and Anarchist agents".¹⁰

By 2 September, the Tablet was convinced that the conflict was "one between the Christian and the anti-Christian forces".¹¹ However, in the early stages of the war, the Catholic press did not commit itself completely to Franco's cause. Indeed, the Tablet, in its second editorial on the war on 5 August 1936, considered that "The parties of the Right apparently aspire to dictatorship",¹² an analysis that later would be dismissed as "Red propaganda". In the beginning, the Church's stance was that it was not identified

with either of the contending parties, but was above the battle, an innocent victim of the Communists. Bishop Liston, in his article on the conflict published in some daily newspapers, quoted Osservatore Romano on the Church's role in the war:

Neither the Catholic Action nor the political organisations of Catholics are engaged. Authoritative declarations and undeniable facts prove that assertion. The Communistic volcano is boiling over. And its implacable hatred is vented on the eternal victim - the Catholic Church. That is the root plan of Communism, which must emerge at every opportunity. Yet, though the Church suffers in the conflict, she has no part in it.¹³

While this image of the Catholic Church martyred in Spain was to continue as part of the Catholic response throughout the war, initially there was some acknowledgement that Catholicism had been in some way lacking in Spain. On 5 August 1936, in an editorial examining the political and social background to the war, the Tablet said:

Communism has come to Spain as a reaction against the progressive subordination of the working classes to poor economic conditions. Prolonged social misery has bred a sense of injustice in the hearts of many of the Spanish people, and the authorities of the past must bear their share of responsibility for this condition.¹⁴

Two weeks later, the Tablet made an even more specific criticism of the Spanish Church, one of the "authorities of the past":

We have been criticised for stating that the persecution of the Church in Spain is partly due to the indifference of the Catholic people themselves to the needs of the lower classes and to the constant violation of the principles of social justice. For those, who, in their ignorance, think we are too hard on the Spanish Catholics we will quote the words of the Primate of Spain, Cardinal Goma ... he sounded a grave warning to his priests that "One generation more and the present indifference of our people will turn to irreligion", and urgently called his priests to intensify their preaching of the word of God. Priestly preaching, he said, is the support of the Church and the Christian people.¹⁵

The article, in the editorial "Notes and Comments" section of the

paper, went on to quote Cardinal Goma, Archbishop of Toledo, as saying that the people were turning away from the Church because of the Spirit of Materialism in the Modern World. The Tablet also quoted the London Catholic Times' view that: "The Church has been dead asleep for years on the social welfare side and Catholic Action has arrived a century too late to counteract the mischief that has been done."¹⁶

Zealandia attached no blame to the hierarchy of the Church or to priestly teaching, but considered that the fault was in the attitude of the laity of the Spanish Church:

If the Spanish people had been Catholics in fact as well as in name the present situation could never have arisen ... if they had translated their relevant obligations into the practical terms of Catholic action, Communism could never have established its so powerful grip on the national life.

These, however, were sins of omission rather than commission, and little mention was made of this aspect of Catholicism in Spain after the first few months of the war. Any suggestion that the Church's role and power within the State might have contributed to the unrest and politically volatile conditions in Spain before the outbreak of war were hotly denied. Particularly irritating to Catholics were the accusations that the Church had great wealth. The Tablet published an article from the NCWC refuting such claims:

The Church in Spain owned properties, the income from which provided adequately for life. Far from receiving aid from the State, the Church contributed liberally to the support of the State, doing this of her own initiative or at the suggestion of the Holy See ... Under pretext of liquidating property held in mortmain, to raise funds with which to meet its own extravagance and defray the cost of political turbulence, the property of the Church was confiscated and no compensation made.¹⁸

This explanation, apart from exposing the unjust treatment of the Church by Republican Governments, was also used to answer critics who

claimed that the Church's support of Franco was based on a desire to protect its wealth.

There was little discussion in either publication of the constitutional relationship between the Church and the State under the Republic, nor any detailing of specific measures enacted about Church property or the Church's role in education. The Tablet's view of the Church's relations with various Republican Governments gave the image of a Church more sinned against than sinning, culminating in the iniquities of the Popular Front Government:

... the Church has been the chief target of successive governments over a number of years. Religious strife and disputes upon education are to some extent at the root of the current trouble, and the Church is vitally concerned in this ... The present authorities, who represent a Communist victory from Moscow, have given no quarter in their suppression of Catholic churches and institutions ... New legislation has been enacted in the past few months intensifying the severity of these attacks ... The secularisation of the school system was a thin smoke screen hiding an anti-Catholic attack.¹⁹

Despite the admission of social injustices in Spain and consequent political and social unrest, the Catholic press was convinced that the real, underlying cause of the war was a Communist plot to seize control and "Sovietise" Spain. The Communist plot was a constant theme in both Zealandia and the Tablet and in Catholic correspondence to secular newspapers. The Tablet said:

The revolt of the Spanish army under General Franco was a counter-revolution which forestalled a revolution. Plans for Red revolution had been prepared by Moscow agents working in Spain since May.²⁰

According to Zealandia:

Since 1931 Communists have been at work in Spain, inflaming public opinion and creating internal chaos ... Lenin prophesied that Spain would become the second Soviet in Europe.²¹

Much was made of the reported presence of Bela Kun, a Hungarian Communist, in Spain in May 1936, with "2000 Moscow trained Spaniards".²² (One correspondent to Craccum, in an obvious confusion of names and political beliefs, claimed it was "the notorious Bakunin", who had appeared in Spain.²³) Zealandia was also fond of repeating the statement attributed to Largo Caballero that Miguel Azana would be "Kerensky to my Lenin".²⁴ The Catholic press claimed that this "proof by association" was compounded by documentary evidence of Communist plans discovered by Nationalist troops.²⁵ The National News also indicated its interest in the "Communist plot" theory when, in October 1937, it reprinted from the London Observer an article by Arthur Bryant that claimed that Russia had been intervening in Spanish affairs long before the Civil War began.²⁶

There were several variations on the theme of Communist plotting and influence in Spain in Catholic discussions of the Popular Front Government. Pro-Francoist propagandists recognised that there were other political groupings within the Popular Front, apart from the Communists, but asserted that "the moving spirit behind the Government is the vicious anti-God Communist who stops at nothing".²⁷ According to Bishop Liston, "Communists are probably few in number, but they are the guiding and driving force of the several political groups of the Popular Front in Spain".²⁸ In Liston's version of events, the Popular Front had won the elections in February 1936 by "better grouping and strategical trading"²⁹ and, once it was in power, the more extremist groups took control and began to "tear down the existing order and to set up a dictatorship of the proletariat".³⁰

The Spanish elections that brought the Popular Front to power were a key point in pro-Francoist justifications of Franco's armed rebellion against the State. A more popular version of events than Liston's explanation of better political strategy, was the claim that the elections had been "cleverly engineered in Moscow"³¹ and that thousands of voters had been prevented from exercising their

rights by Communist and Anarchist terrorism.³² The Tablet had promoted this view in its first editorial on the war, on 29 July 1936, but by October had a slightly different explanation:

It is true that the Spanish Government had a majority of 60 seats in a Parliament of 470 after the election; and to that extent possessed the confidence of the Cortes. But to say that the Government had the confidence of the electors of Spain was incorrect, for the majority of the Spanish people had not declared for the regime. On the contrary, the elections showed a slight majority of votes in favour of the Right, and by one of those accidents of voting with which we in New Zealand are familiar a majority of seats in Parliament went to the Popular Front ... The Popular Front was a dangerous amalgamation, for it joined together a set of opposing political factions whose only band of unity was their anti-clericalism.³³

But, whatever the means by which the Popular Front had come to power, it was agreed that, once in control, it had relinquished authority to its Communist and Anarchist supporters, either unable or unwilling to restrain the excesses of the "Red revolutionaries". Thus, Franco's rebellion was justified on the grounds of law and order as well as of political subversion, both, of course, the result of Communist machinations. Catholic correspondents to the newspapers dwelt heavily upon the "law and order" argument, possibly because pro-Republican claims that the rebellion was a resort to force against a constitutional authority was seen to be a strong propaganda weapon in a country unused to military methods of changing Governments. It was, said one writer, "an axiom that any Government which surrenders control also surrenders the right to obedience".³⁴ A Catholic priest, writing in The Press, argued that the resort to force was lawful in a just cause, to defend the weak and overthrow tyranny.³⁵ Another correspondent ingeniously used a parallel with the New Zealand political scene:

If the New Zealand Government were voted into office and then joined with the Communists, who had not been voted in, then that would be in opposition to the voters and the end of democracy.³⁶

The New Zealand Herald produced another version of the "Communist plot" theory, which developed gradually over the course of the war. In its second editorial on the war, on 30 July 1936, the paper detected a "conspicuously red" element in the crisis. The Herald noted that the parties of the Left had been drawing closer together but that their cause had lacked "convenient opportunity". The nature of the cause and the opportunity's purpose was not stated. The paper continued that the opportunity had been provided by "the sympathetic attitude of the present Government toward the working classes and the consequent angering of the anti-Soviet elements. These, in their rebellion, have given occasion for a violent Communist resistance".³⁷ Thus, in a curious backhanded manner, the war was made to appear almost a case of Communist revolution and the Government to blame for it.

Indeed, four days later, the Herald explained the causes of the war in terms that resembled closely a pro-Francoist justification of the rebellion. The explanation for the war "in all that matters most" was to be found in "the Government's increasing acceptance of principles espoused by sundry parties favouring Communism and a consequent opposition roused to belligerent fury on the part of all in dread of this "red" development".³⁸

In October 1936, the Herald went even further and suggested that the Government of Spain did not have constitutional authority:

In strict accordance with Spain's constitution the President of the Republic appointed a moderate man, Martinez Barrio, as Premier when Cesares Quiroga resigned in July; but the new Cabinet was torpedoed immediately by the Marxist groups, and by their veto the present administration was established regardless of the constitution.³⁹

At the time this editorial was written, Largo Caballero was Premier; presumably it was his administration to which the Herald referred, and which it had earlier noted retained a solid body of Socialist ministers.⁴⁰ The Herald's brief summary of changes in the Spanish Government failed to mention that Martinez Barrio was

succeeded by Jose Giral, whose cabinet was, according to Hugh Thomas, largely composed of middle-class liberal Republicans, supported by the Anarchists Socialists and Communists.⁴¹ Moreover, it was Largo Caballero himself who refused to form a Cabinet unless the Communists were included, and the Spanish Communist party was at first disinclined to join the Government.⁴²

Whether this distortion was deliberate or merely the result of misinformation, it certainly promoted a view of the Government akin to that in Catholic pro-Francoist propaganda. By the end of the war this distortion appeared to have become established fact to the Herald. At the end of January 1939, the Herald noted that the war had involved a conflict of political ideologies: "the challenge of Communism inspired by Russia had been taken up by Italian Fascism".⁴³ On 7 February 1939, the paper produced an overview of the prelude to the rebellion that, as Willis Airey and Arthur Sewell pointed out in several (unpublished) letters to the editor, was a subtle distortion of the known facts.⁴⁴ The editorial said that in May 1936 Azana retired to the Presidency, after which:

the way was cleared for the Socialists Anarchists, Syndicalists and Communists, egged on by agents from Moscow, to pursue their revolutionary policy. In due time Senor Azana was succeeded as Prime Minister by Senor Caballero a Communist, who was reported to have admitted the Russian ambassador to Cabinet meetings. Rebelling against the threatened Bolshevisation of Spain, the conservatives and moderates resorted to armed resistance on July 18 1936 and the war was joined.⁴⁵

Thus, the subtle inference, in 1936 that the Government might have been responsible for the war had become, by 1939, accepted "truth" in a twisted version of Spanish political events that would not have been out of place in the Tablet or Zealandia. Either the paper's leader writer was utterly convinced of the truth of his analysis or very cynical, for, later that month, an editorial stated "so much has happened since [the beginning of the war] that this seizure of power has been generally forgotten". The editorial went on to point out that, in declaring the Government unconstitutional,

it had not "the slightest intention of justifying either General Franco's campaigning methods or the attitude he is adopting as victory appears to be within his grasp".⁴⁶ Like other daily newspapers, the Herald had voiced, on many occasions, its strong disapproval of the atrocities committed by both sides and of Franco's methods of waging war on civilians. However, its disclaimer begged the question concerning Franco's politics. By the end of the war, the rebels (or "revolutionaries", as the Herald preferred to call them) had become "conservatives and moderates" rather than "Fascists" or a mixed bag of political beliefs united by the slogan "Arriba Espana" as depicted in earlier editorials. Clearly, disapproval of the Government and of Socialism or Communism, by 1939 had outweighed the Herald's dislike of Franco's "Fascism".

The Herald's acceptance of pro-Francoist arguments, on the basis of anti-Communism, lacked the sense of specific threat that was one of the central features of Catholic pro-Francoist propaganda. Catholics considered that the chief target of the Communist plot was the Catholic church in Spain. This was not only because Communism, as Zealandia put it, had the "avowed aim of eliminating from the human mind the conception of God".⁴⁷ It was also because the Catholic Church was seen as the major threat to Communist plans for domination of Spain, and, ultimately, of the world. Bishop Liston said:

The Catholic Church in Spain as elsewhere stands for what, outside the faith, is crumbling - marriage, the family, property, authority, honour to parents, right reason. If her power remains intact these things will remain, and with them Christian civilisation and the main institutions of European society. If her power is weakened or destroyed, at this moment of revolution and transition, civilisation will decline and the way will be opened to the new paganism and the enslavement of mankind.⁴⁸

A Catholic priest informed readers of The Press that the Communists were attacking the Catholic Church in Spain because they knew that it was the only bulwark of Christianity, since Protestantism was "timid, weak and hesitating".⁴⁹

If the central theme of Catholic pro-Francoism was Communism versus Catholicism, the essential and most powerful corroborating image of the concept was that of the atrocities against Catholics, lay and religious, and against church buildings. The atrocities were the prism through which all events of the civil war were seen, and elicited an emotional response that overwhelmed any attempt at objective discussion of the causes and other issues of the war. Tales of atrocity and desecration appeared constantly in both Zealandia and the Tablet, and were repeated in Catholic letters to secular newspapers. Torture, both mental and physical, performed on priests and nuns; priests crucified or shot for refusing to blaspheme, nuns stripped and forced to walk through the streets; graves opened and bodies displayed in obscene positions; churches looted and holy images and sacred relics destroyed or defiled - these were the type of stories that appeared. Often the "appalling savagery and horror" of the atrocities would not be described in more than those terms, because a closer description was unfit to print in a Christian newspaper, thus allowing readers to supply their own imaginative details.

In September and October 1936, the Tablet published several pages of eyewitness descriptions of atrocities. Some examples were:

The report of an American woman tourist: "I saw a church burned by the Reds, who killed a priest, cut off his arms and legs, ripped open his body, and hung the corpse from a Statue of the Virgin."⁵⁰

The experience of an Irishman in Valencia:

... nuns were driven out from their convent in Valencia and stripped naked. The superior was a woman of 70. She fell to the ground, and a young captain of the Government forces, touched by the scene ran forward and covered her body with his cloak. He was accused of infidelity to the cause of Spain, and some of his men held him against the wall while another walked up with a revolver in each hand and discharged both guns into his eyes.⁵¹

An account from another Irishman in Jaen:

Monks had been beheaded, and I counted eight heads hanging from railings. There were other bodies in the street. The mob stripped 12 nuns and paraded them through the streets to the market-place with their hands tied behind them. Petrol was poured over them and they were burned alive.⁵²

Such personal atrocities, often involving sexual elements in the case of the nuns, were the most common form of atrocity stories. There were more inventive atrocity stories as well. One of the most curious was a report in Zealandia, in September 1937, of a Communist plot to spread disease in Nationalist Spain. Two Frenchmen, captured by "White Guards", claimed to have been contacted by Communist agent, working for the Government of Spain, and to have been taken to a laboratory where they were injected with smallpox virus. However, the Communists' "dastardly act" was foiled by the laboratory workers, who had injected the men with ordinary soap and water.⁵³ Besides fulfilling the usual function of atrocity stories, that is, to show that the "Reds" would stoop to any infamy, this peculiar tale also enabled readers to have the last laugh on the Government of Spain.

Atrocity stories played a major part in the Catholic "mythologising" of the war. In the context of the archetypal battle being waged in Spain between the forces of God and the hordes of Satan, the atrocities became evidence of the martyrdom that the Church in Spain, and the Spanish people, had to undergo to emerge purified and revitalised. Thus, in a sense, there was an ambivalence in the Catholic press' reaction to atrocities. They were abhorred, of course, but Catholic grief and horror at the fate of their co-religionists in Spain was assuaged by the thought that such martyrdom was to the greater glory of the Church and of God, and would not go unrewarded. This attitude was stated very clearly at the beginning of the war in the women's page of the Tablet. At the end of a small item on the women of Spain, the women's editor said: "This purging, however, is not a matter for despair. Persecution is purification."⁵⁴

Indeed, along with the atrocity stories appeared items which showed that God was protecting his own in Spain. There were numerous tales of divine retribution for atrocities and desecration; for example, this report from the French newspaper La Croix, reprinted in Zealandia:

A Communist named Balbino of Esterri, Spain, boasting that he would provide the new commune's first funeral, murdered the parish priest. He also destroyed the village's famous crucifix ... he cut the figure of our Lord almost in two pieces. On the following day Balbino was killed in a car smash ... The car hit a rock. He⁵⁵ was thrown out. His body was picked up in almost two pieces.

Guttman, in The Wound in the Heart, identifies "martyrdom and conversion" as the two common conventions in Catholic literature about the war.⁵⁶ These conventions applied not only to the fiction inspired by the war, but also to most of the reports about Republican treatment of Catholics. (Some of these, of course, were also fiction, but were not presented as such.) As the Communist Party newspaper had tales of Nationalist soldiers converted to the Republican cause while convalescing in Republican hospitals, so the Catholic press had stories of "Red" militia-men so touched by the bravery of priests facing martyrdom that they renounced their allegiance to Communism.

Perhaps the best example of the convention of conversion was a short story published in the Tablet (which had a short story in each issue - it published two with Civil War settings). The story concerned a priest, who, in disguise, had become a member of the "Red" militia and was much admired for his bravery. While holding a secret mass, the priest, known as "Esteban", was captured by a notorious Communist, "El Matador", famed for his inventive methods of killing his victims. "El Matador" led the priest into the woods, but, instead of shooting him, fell on his knees and begged "Esteban" to hear his confession. The Communist's father had been shot while trying to prevent a church burning and this had opened "El Matador's"

eyes to the viciousness of Communism and the error of his own ways. When the repentant killer's men became suspicious and began shooting at the pair, "El Matador" held them off while the priest escaped "to Franco and safety". "El Matador", of course, was killed in the process.⁵⁷ The convention of martyrdom appeared throughout atrocity stories, which always depicted nuns and priests going to their death with dignity and rejoicing in the glory of God.

The mythologising of the war in Spain inevitably evoked images of past Catholic persecution and created a rationale for the Nationalist rebellion based on the concept of a new crusade. In the words of a New Zealander, resident in Britain, whose business took him to Spain frequently: "General Franco was trying to uphold the Catholic church, the only church in the land, and trying to keep the country from being atheist as well as Bolshevist."⁵⁸

Occasionally, comparisons were drawn between the present conflict and the French Revolution, with the Communists representing the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment:

I began to realise that I was in a new vendee and that what was going on was really a religious war - a new crusade against the destructive influences of Moscow, a desperate reaction of the Catholic Spirit against the soulless powers of modern materialism.⁵⁹

One correspondent to the Otago Daily Times, writing of the attempt to trample religion, not only used the example of the French Revolution but also exhorted readers to "remember Titus Oates!"⁶⁰

But the most obvious comparison was between the civil war and the struggle against Moslem domination in the 15th century. The history of Spain was invoked by Catholic writers, and Spain was depicted as, once again, "one of the lights of Christian civilisation and culture",⁶¹ beleaguered by its enemies, but committed to saving Europe from barbarism through the faith and self-sacrifice of its people:

Twice has Spain saved Europe. The fall of Granada in 1492

marked the end of the epic contest against Mohammedan domination of Europe after 8 centuries of heroic resistance. In 1572 the victory of Lepanto broke the power of Islam for good.

In 1936 the old country of saints and warriors, of explorers and navigators, in spite of long suffering, in spite of treason and calumny has still the vitality to challenge the sacreligious violence of Moscow.⁶²

The mythologising of the war as a new crusade was most evident in the image of the Nationalist forces in the Catholic press. The deeply-rooted Catholicism of the Nationalist troops was constantly emphasised; all wore medals of the Sacred Heart into battle, went to mass and confession regularly and saw their struggle as one for God as well as Spain:

On the feast of the Assumption, thousands of young men rushed into the battle to the cry of "Viva Maria!" (long live Mary) ... This and the rallying cries "Viva Cristo Rey!" (long live Christ the King) are Spain's challenge to Bolshevism.⁶³

The "mystic religious fervour which inspired the saints of Spain and the spiritual conquistadores who followed in the footsteps of Cortes",⁶⁴ described by one writer as again present in Spain, was shared by some Catholic writers when speaking of Franco's army. In articles ecstatic in tone, the Nationalist troops were described kneeling before the grave of El Cid (the legendary scourge of the Moors), swearing to fight to the death for the glory of Spain and of God. The Navarrese were depicted in glowing terms by one Aileen O'Brien as the epitome of militant Spanish Catholicism, and of fierce Spanish courage and pride in themselves, their nation and their cause: "I was seeing the most arrogant race on earth on its knees humbly before him who died a criminal's death."⁶⁵

Together with the descriptions of the faith of the Nationalist soldiers, went items describing the revival of religion in Spain. Thus, even before the Nationalists had won, the spirit of Catholicism was portrayed as triumphing over great odds. As early as November 1936, the Tablet printed an article from the Irish Monthly entitled "Religion Is Alive In Spain". In the mythologising of the war such a

revival of religious feeling was the ultimate image of redemption:

That this religious revival in Spain is not merely a passing fit of religious exhaltation caused by a natural reaction to the attack of the Reds against all that is most sacred to the heart of the genuine Spanish nation, but something that derives its origin from higher causes, is amply proved by numerous facts that are reported almost daily from many parts of the country.⁶⁵

In other words, God was answering the call of his people in Spain; their martyrdom was not to be in vain. Over the period of the war, numerous accounts were published of religious ceremonies in Nationalist Spain, revealing the faith and dedication of Franco's army. One of the best examples of the great faith and self sacrifice of Nationalist soldiers was the tale of Colonel Moscardo, leader of the defenders in the siege of the Alcazar, in Toledo, at the beginning of the war. Moscardo, with a small force of rebel troops and a number of civilians, had been driven by the militia back into the Alcazar. After several days, Moscardo still refused to surrender and was told by the Toledo militia leader that, if he did not surrender, his son, who had been taken hostage, would be shot. Moscardo spoke to his son over the telephone and told him to commend his soul to God and shout "Viva Espana!" According to the story in the Tablet, Moscardo's son was shot immediately after his father's refusal to surrender. (Hugh Thomas, however, notes that the younger Moscardo was shot over a month later in reprisal for an air-raid.⁶⁷)

The account in the Tablet stressed the epic heroic quality of the story:

Chivalry and romance, loyalty and devotion, valour and bravery are not dead. They are still among us. History has been repeating itself in these latter days. From the smoke and fire, from the wreck and ruin, from the horrors of despair and desolation of that 72 day siege of the Alcazar in Toledo, Spain, now comes the thrilling story of Colonel Jose Moscardo, who courageously declined to yield the Alcazar to the reds who held his son as a hostage. Colonel Moscardo's loyalty and devotion to duty seemingly outrivals the courage and valour of that master-man and man

of mettle of legendary Spain, the celebrated Alonzo P. de Guzman, who resolutely refused to surrender the city of Tariza to the enemies of his king and of his country even under threat of losing his dearly beloved son.⁶⁸

This story and others about the siege of the Alcazar, collected in a book called The Epic of the Alcazar, were recommended for Catholic school children by the Tablet's education columnist.⁶⁹

Given this exalted vision of the Nationalist forces, it was not surprising that reports of Nationalist atrocities were dismissed as "Red" propaganda. One correspondent to the Otago Daily Times said:

That anyone can believe men who are fighting for their homeland, their natural rights and all they hold dear in Heaven and earth could be guilty of such inhumanity is beyond comprehension.⁷⁰

In the Catholic press, the most common method of explaining away reports of Nationalist atrocities was to claim that the Republican forces had been responsible. The best known example of this transferring of blame was the explanation for the bombing of Guernica. Pro-Francoist propaganda claimed that there had not been any bombing. An article in the Tablet, in June 1937, said: "Every day it is becoming clearer that the ancient Basque capital was destroyed by dynamiters and incendiaries before the Nationalists entered the town."⁷¹ According to this view, Guernica was destroyed by Anarchists retreating from the Nationalists, partly to prevent the victors from making any real gains by taking the city, and partly to provide evidence for propaganda about Nationalist bombings.

The justification for aerial bombing, when it could not be denied as propaganda, was a remarkable example of evasion of the issue and illustrated the lengths to which the Catholic press was prepared to go to support and defend the Nationalist cause. Zealandia's response, in particular, is deserving of rather lengthy quotation. Several points were made in the justification:

1. Everybody is doing it:

... aerial attack on objectives outside the actual war zones is now an accepted military practice. The idea is wholly repellent to the normal civilised mind, but, as with the British use of poison gas in the Great War, it seems that particular forms and weapons of warfare can only be countered by employing methods of the same type.⁷²

2. Franco was being unfairly attacked by countries whose humanitarian record in war time was no better than his:

... aerial bombing took place in the Great War ... the value of civilian life caught in air attacks on military objectives was low in the Great War ... Why should Franco be called upon to have a higher regard for human life than Britain did in the Great War?⁷³

3. Franco was scrupulous about not attacking anything other than military objectives:

The whole practice of aerial warfare is a shocking reflection on the mentality of our times, and the Popes have continually urged its abolition. But even if it be employed care can be taken to make the bombings as strictly military as possible. It is to Franco's credit that he has done his best to limit and segregate the effects of Nationalist bombing. It is to the everlasting infamy of the Reds that they have handled their weapons in precisely the same way that they have used other armed units, namely as instruments of wanton and senseless savagery.⁷⁴

Furthermore, Catholics claimed that the whole outcry over aerial bombing was being used by the Communists in a cynical propaganda campaign against the Nationalists. Those, they said, who objected so strongly to aerial bombing had been strangely silent about the murder and torture of Catholics in Spain, and about other "Red" atrocities. At the end of an article entitled "The Ethics of Bombing", the Tablet mused: "It is surely significant that the outcry against bombing has arisen only when the Christian forces appear likely to win."⁷⁵

A minor controversy began between Zealandia and the Communist

party newspaper, the Workers Weekly, in April 1937, when the Workers Weekly published pictures purporting to be child victims of Nationalist bombings. Zealandia retorted by reprinting an article from a French Catholic newspaper exposing the photographs. The photographs, it said, were actually taken from a French book entitled Temoignanges et Images Secretes de la Guerre, published after World War One, showing the victims of German bombings in Paris, in March 1918.⁷⁶ The Workers Weekly replied to this with an indignant discussion of their impeccable sources.⁷⁷ (An interesting point about the controversy is that both newspapers were, in fact, importing a controversy begun in Britain and France, since both were reprinting from overseas sources.) At the end of 1937, the Weekly renewed the controversy by publishing a photo of Generals Franco and Mola before welcoming crowds at the gates of a captured city. The Weekly called it "a real faked photograph", and challenged Zealandia to respond.⁷⁸ Zealandia remained silent, but the Tablet was provoked to a rather evasive editorial comment; it was obvious, said the editor, that this was a composite photograph:

It is hardly likely that General Franco and his staff would be walking in a different direction from the troops as they entered the city ... But all this is beside the point. The question at issue is the relative importance of this picture and those which were faked by the Reds imputing atrocities to General Franco. The Worker's Weekly must have scant faith in the intelligence of its readers.⁷⁹

Naturally, the Nationalist leader himself was discussed at length in the Catholic press. He was generally portrayed as the perfect Christian gentleman, who, as befitted his role as saviour of the Church, was deeply religious. Zealandia published an interview with an Englishwoman who had taught Franco English in Tenerife. She spoke of him as a devoted family man, not ambitious, but with a great sense of duty, and love for his country:

I got the impression that he had that superior courage of being able to walk on his own heart (and there was no doubt that that heart was a sensitive one) if it became necessary when duty called.⁸⁰

Franco, the "Marshal Foch of Spain"⁸¹ was also a merciful and humanitarian man: "General Franco could take Madrid; he has the key to the water supply, but he is too humane to use it, for this method would cause a terrible epidemic."⁸² Of all the aspects of Franco's personality that were discussed, the emphasis was on his modesty and lack of ambition. In an interview published in the Tablet, in late 1937, he was quoted as saying:

I did not start this movement because I was politically ambitious. Politics have never interested me. To become the supreme power of my native country is far from my thoughts. I am a soldier, and as such, I, with my comrades have raised the flag of Nationalism. Spain was in the hands of anarchy ... Someone had to move and save her from the final disaster and, in saving her, save the whole of Western civilisation.⁸³

Catholic letters to newspapers also hotly denied that Franco aspired to dictatorship, asserting that, rather, he was merely a patriot and a devout Catholic.⁸⁴

Discussion of the future under Franco in the Catholic press was generally in vague terms, and dealt to a considerable extent with the rightful role of the Church. Often, reports on the Nationalist Government's planned policies came directly from news services in Burgos, the seat of Nationalist Government, and there was little discussion of their application or implications. According to the Tablet, Franco would model the new Spain on Portugal: "And even the astute advanced thinkers of the left will find it difficult to bring sound criticism against Dr Salazar and his dictatorship in the prosperous state of Portugal."⁸⁵ Jose Gil Robles, the leader of the conservative Catholic CEDA party before the war, was often quoted in the Catholic press about Spain's future once the Nationalists had won. Gil Robles was the perfect spokesman for the Nationalists as far as Catholics were concerned: "No surer guide could be found than this sterling Catholic and patriot."⁸⁷ Zealandia and the Tablet were either unaware, or unwilling to mention, that there were certain political differences between Gil Robles and the leaders of the Nationalists, and that he was at some distance from the

decision-makers of the Burgos Government, having been in exile in Lisbon since the beginning of the war.⁸⁸ Franco himself was also quoted on his own vision of Spain's future:

We want Spain one and undivided under the rule of a new strong State, a State which will watch social justice so closely that there will not be a single Spanish home without a head and not a single Spanish labourer without his bread.

The term "social justice" was one often used in discussions of the future under Franco, as were phrases and terms like "the true spirit of Spain", "self sacrifice", and "a spirit of unity". Despite Franco's statement about a strong state, one point about the future Government of Spain that Catholic pro-Francoist propagandists were quick to make, was that it would not be a totalitarian Fascist nature. The Tablet quoted Gil Robles on the subject:

Yet, without admitting even remotely, the unjust detrimental meaning that Communist propaganda attaches to the term Fascism, no one in good faith will be able to maintain the theory that Spain will be organised as a government of that order. For the present we must not forget that Mussolini himself has declared on many occasions that Fascism is typically Italian product, suited to the needs and characteristics of Italy, and impossible of application in other countries. In agreement with this fundamental statement is that of General Franco, the chief of the Spanish State, who affirms on his part that the present movement in Spain is not of that order.⁹⁰

For Catholics, Fascism was not the issue in Spain. The accusation that Franco's forces were Fascist was seen as a "Red" herring, used by Franco's opponents to obscure the real meaning of the war:

To style the insurgent parties as Fascists is misleading and a confusion of the true issue. It suits the purpose of certain interests to describe the present uprising as a Fascist plot, because the name of Fascism in its generally accepted sense is calculated to arouse suspicion and class hatred; but actually the Fascists in Spain are so few as to be hardly worth mentioning.⁹¹

Accusations that the Church was pro-Fascist because it supported Franco were simply seen as evidence of anti-Catholic bias. Zealandia pointed out that it did not follow that Catholicism and Fascism were linked, merely because both were anti-Communist:

The menace of Communism brought Fascism into being but it is wrong to assume that Fascism is the right or the only answer to Communism ... There is in fact only one true and sufficient answer to atheist Communism and that is Catholicism. Neither the success nor failure of Fascism could alter that.⁹²

Nevertheless there were Catholics who felt more sympathy towards the Fascist type of government than towards perhaps more democratic forms of government. According to Father E.R. Simmons, historian of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, there was "a very divided mind" among New Zealand Catholics on the subject of Fascism, "a feeling among some that Mussolini was doing good things for Italy". The attraction for Mussolini's Italy and for the type of strong corporate State that news items claimed was Franco's plan for Spain, was perhaps due to the fact that this type of corporate structure had been suggested by the Pope in his 1931 encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" (although without the interference of the State itself to the extent that Fascism and Nazism allowed). Reverend J.A. Higgins S.M.; director of the Catholic Social Guild in the Archdiocese of Wellington, and much in demand on the Catholic lecture circuit, provided a justification for accommodation with Fascism, while denying that the Catholic Church was pro-Fascist. Writing in Tomorrow, in answer to editorial claims about the Church's role in the war, he said:

Obviously under Fascism the Catholic Church can at least live and in some way carry on her work, while under Communism the Catholic Church is not even allowed to exist. But ... that does not prove that the Catholic Church either approves of Fascism or buys arms for Fascists.⁹⁴

Father Simmons considered that the question of Fascism in Spain was subordinated to the major issue of saving Spain for Christianity, or Catholicism:

... one would have expected a degree of hostility to the Falangists [because they were Fascist], if not to Franco, among Catholics; in fact it didn't happen. It was a case of turning a blind eye to the chief supporters of Franco in the hope that this Communist menace would be overthrown in Spain.⁹⁵

The Tablet promoted a similar view when it said:

Catholics as such have no interest in the form of government Spaniards set up for themselves, so long as religious freedom is provided ... As a matter of fact ... the only champion of religious freedom that has appeared in Spain in the present crisis is General Franco.⁹⁶

A few of Franco's defenders in the daily newspapers went a little further than this denial of interest. Notable among these was a Catholic priest in Christchurch. On 2 December 1936 he justified the armed revolt in the correspondence columns of The Press:

Italy, Germany, Portugal, Hungary and now Spain have achieved freedom from the "Red menace" only by armed force. There is no other way. There may be a hundred conceivable ways of combatting the "Red menace" but there is only one method already organised and in the field and that is Fascism, which many of us do not like but which is by far the lesser of the two evils.⁹⁷

Later in December, the priest claimed that Fascism had only been created as a reaction to Communism and used the same brute force that Communism used.⁹⁸ Other letters voiced opinions that smacked of Fascist beliefs; for instance "Another Catholic Priest" asserted that Karl Marx was "a renegade Jew - Mordechai".⁹⁹ A Dunedin writer asserted that Franco's victory represented not only the defeat of Russia's attempt to "Sovietise" Spain but also "the deathblow to that "liberal" Masonic regime which brought Spain into poverty and ignorance".¹⁰⁰

Letters to the daily newspapers also provided some instances of support for Franco out of an identification of his cause as Fascist.

"Nino di Somma", in Christchurch, considered that the countries in Europe with the most stable Governments were the dictatorships, and that it would be best for the world if Mussolini should undertake the "pacification" of Spain and establish a Fascist Government like the one so successful in Italy.¹⁰¹ The Otago Daily Times' columns often featured letters from "Patriotic New Zealander", of Balclutha, who evidently supported Franco from more political than religious motives. This writer opened the Times' correspondence on the Spanish Civil War with a letter praising the "Fascists of Spain" whose sole aim he said, was to "scrap the rabid proletarianism" in Spain, which resembled that which ruled in Russia. The writer considered that a victory for Franco would mean the regeneration of Spain and an uplifting of the national spirit, as had occurred in Italy and Germany. This first letter also contained the curious claim that Spain's domination by the priesthood had paved the way for Communism.¹⁰² It is interesting to note that "Patriotic New Zealander's" later letters voiced an attitude more in keeping with the general trend of pro-Francoist sentiment in New Zealand, with references to attacks on religion in Spain¹⁰³ and Communist impiety.¹⁰⁴ References to the regeneration and new virility of the Italian and German nations under Fascism, as well as a defence of Japan's activities in China, clearly revealed "Patriotic New Zealander's" political leanings. Apart from these sentiments, his letters provided little new in the area of pro-Francoist propaganda. Naturally enough, he placed great emphasis on the menace of Communism in Spain. It was obvious that the writer regarded a pro-Fascist attitude as compatible with a patriotic attachment to New Zealand and Britain, for he warned of the dangers of the "red element" in New Zealand, in the form of the SMAC, and proclaimed that there was room only for the Union Jack in New Zealand, and not for the Red Flag.¹⁰⁵

The information Catholics were given about the Nationalists tended to deal less with their political aims and to focus upon how well the Nationalist forces were fighting, and on conditions in Nationalist Spain, in comparison with those in Republican Spain.

Much of the material, especially in Zealandia, was concerned with contrasting the two Spains, in order to show how Franco's rule would benefit the country. Those Catholics who read the Tablet had the added bonus of receiving a picture of Nationalist Spain from one of their own. Father Ardagh, the parish priest of Queenstown,¹⁰⁶ was in Europe at the outbreak of the war, and visited Spain to learn for himself what the situation was. The Tablet printed his diary of the visit in three parts on 31 August and 7 and 14 September 1938. The priest's diary was, in places, an almost ecstatic account of the physical and spiritual condition of Nationalist Spain, as well as containing most of the Catholic (and Nationalist) arguments of the causes of the war and details of the sites of atrocities and desecrations he was taken to see. A major point of emphasis in his observations was the normality of life in nationalist Spain, where everything was running smoothly despite the war: "The wonderful peace everywhere we go. No sign of soldiers anywhere ... People are happy, joyous. Business going on as usual ... No sign of worry or strain."¹⁰⁷

The Catholic press was most anxious to dispel any ideas that Nationalist Spain was suffering under the restrictions of harsh military rule. Thus, an article in Zealandia said: "Nationalist Spain is only authoritarian because there is a war on."¹⁰⁸ And, according to Father Ardagh: "Nowhere is there any idea of a military rule over the country."¹⁰⁹ The working class, in the view of Catholic writers, was not suffering under Franco, and economic conditions in Nationalist Spain were always pictured as stable. Father Ardagh recorded in his diary: "Prices very low. Things cheap. We find that wages, etc., have not been reduced, and prices have not been raised. That should speak volumes."¹¹⁰

While items in Zealandia claimed that there was no food shortage in Franco's Spain, Father Ardagh did note that:

In Spain poverty and charity are virtues. One day each week is a "one plate" day, i.e. a one plate meal ... In private houses the people declare (freely) that they thus save and

that amount is collected by girls who call at the homes. One day a week is a no meat day so that there will be no scarcity for the people of the towns Franco liberates. It is wonderful and the people in Spain rejoice in the sacrifice.¹¹¹

Thus, the impression was given that while food was not in abundance, Nationalist Spain was so well organised that no one went without, unlike the unfair distribution and profiteering reported as being the norm in Republican territory. Father Ardagh and other writers in both the Tablet and Zealandia eulogised the work of the "Auxilio Regular", a social organisation established by the Burgos Government to co-ordinate relief work.

Another aspect of Nationalist Spain that was often contrasted with Republican Spain was the treatment of prisoners and of captured areas. Father Ardagh's account summed up the basic points in the Catholic view of Franco's justice:

The prisoners from the Reds are divided into three classes (1) Those forced by the Reds to fight. Immediately forgiven - many of them join the Nationalists. (2) Those who fought voluntarily but not guilty of any rotten crime. Put into concentration camps; used in working gangs, repairing bridges etc. and cleaning up the wreckage of the Reds. (3) Those guilty of great crimes. If proved they pay the penalty. Re No 2 good behaviour will get reprieve and many join Franco.¹¹²

This was, of course, markedly different from the picture of Republican Spain, where, besides the atrocities against Catholics and suspected Nationalist supporters, there were also disputes between rival groups, denunciations and summary executions.¹¹³

The image of the war as a "national" rebellion of the Spanish Catholic spirit against Moscow's "degrading soulless thought and its political slavery over the people of Spain",¹¹⁴ and the mythologising of the war in terms of Spain's history of Catholic defiance of Islam, was somewhat marred by Franco's use of Moorish troops and the fact that Catholic Basques were among the Republican forces. One method of dealing with these potentially embarrassing

flaws in the Catholic argument appears to have been to ignore them. There was very little mention of either the Moors or the Basques in Zealandia. The Tablet, however, did confront the issues, although there were no articles, as such, devoted to the question of the Moors.

Catholic justifications of Franco's use of Moorish troops displayed considerable ingenuity, as well as avoidance of some of the main points at issue. Nowhere were allegations of the ferocity and cruelty of the Moors discussed or even mentioned. Nor was the suggestion that Spaniards might not welcome the idea of having their once-hated oppressors invited back on to Spanish soil to kill fellow Spaniards, Communist or not. Instead, those who criticised Franco for calling in the Moors were accused of "colour prejudice". One correspondent to Truth indicated that the major issue in the use of the Moors was that they were "natives", rather than foreign troops, when he asserted that "Moors are certainly not of the black race, but are white although tanned by the burning sun and sands".¹¹⁵

Catholics also argued that the Moors, at least, shared with Nationalist troops a conception of God: "The Moors are Moslems, yes. But Moslems are believers in God. They are better than the atheist mob that with hellish fury destroys every emblem of Christianity."¹¹⁶ The most common justification used was the precedent set by Britain and France in World War One in using Indian and Senegalese troops respectively:

What was the religion of these Indians? They were Hindoos and Moslems. What was their colour? Black. But they were British subjects from British India. So the Moors are Spanish subjects from Spanish Morocco. If it be right for England to make use of Moslems from India or the Western Front against Germany, why is it wrong for Spanish leaders to make use of Moslems from Spanish Morocco in the service of Spain? Even if a man disagrees with the cause, he must admit that the principle is as valid for Spain as for England. I am merely asking for reason rather than prejudice.¹¹⁷

A slightly different version of this argument was used by a speaker in a debate at Victoria University, on the subject, "That this house lends its support to General Franco and his cause". The speaker cited New Zealand's participation in the Boer War as an equivalent use of "foreign" troops and as a "precedent" for employment of the Moors in Spain.¹¹⁸ Possibly conceived in the heat of debate, this particular justification would hardly have appealed to the many New Zealanders who considered themselves as Britons and their country as an integral part of the British Empire.

The problem of the Basques fighting for the Republic was an even greater flaw in the myth of Catholic Spain throwing off the yoke of Communism. Again, it was the Tablet that contained more discussion of the problem, including the text of a letter from the Primate of Spain, Cardinal Goma, to the Basque President, Jose Aguirre, begging him to break his alliance with the Government and join Franco.¹¹⁹ The Catholic explanation for the "tragic error" of the Basques¹²⁰ was perhaps best articulated in an editorial in the Tablet in April 1937:

The position of the Basques is one of the most interesting features of the Spanish conflict, and from the viewpoint of Catholics one of the most tragic; it is used freely by the opponents of the Church as proof that Catholics are fighting on both sides thus removing the civil war beyond the scope of a religious struggle. The Basques, however are not fighting unitedly on either side. There are 20,000 of them fighting with Franco because only two provinces of Vascongada ever wanted autonomy very much ... Eliminate the autonomy for which some Basques are still fighting in Bilbao and Santander, and they would certainly fight against the anti-God programme of the Madrid government. Many of the Basques threw their weight behind the Madrid government not because they were supporters of Caballero's Bolshevism but because they were caught by their keenness for local rule and by the pledges of the government. To the Basque way of thinking the military movement which held the support of the Carlists and Phalangists, was not merely a movement directed against Communists but was directed also against the ardent aspirations for autonomy of the Basque country; and the defence of religion in this instance, seemed to them to be only a pretext invoked by the Nationalists to cloak political designs.¹¹²

The Basques had put their politics before their religion and, in the view of the Catholic press, would suffer for it, both spiritually and politically, for the Communists would not honour their agreement. It was emphasised that this desire for autonomy was the only reason that the Basques supported the Communists, and it did not imply in any way that the Basques supported atheist Communism. In the same editorial, the Tablet pointed out that, in Basque territory Catholics were not persecuted and religious worship went on as usual.

There was a great deal of excitement in the pages of Zealandia, although not in the Tablet, about the Basque refugee children in England. Zealandia saw the children as being used as a "Red" propaganda weapon. This appeared to be proved by the alleged discovery, by a Nationalist Salvage Squad in Bilbao, of a secret propaganda report detailing methods to be used by Spanish and English Communist propagandists to stir up support in Britain for the Republicans. What angered the Catholic press most about this, was the purported attempt to show British Catholic Archbishop, Arthur Hinsley, as supporting the Basque separatist movement, when his agreement to work with the English National Joint Committee on Spain was merely because the Basque children were in need of both physical and spiritual care.¹²² While the Catholic press objected to what it saw as the manipulative use of the Basque children for Communist propaganda purposes, it, in fact, did the same thing. In October 1937, there were several items in Zealandia describing the "lawlessness" and hooligan behaviour of those Basque children who had claimed not to be Catholic. In one reported incident, "Camarthen villagers were terrorised by children with knives, and the police were called in".¹²³ This misbehaviour was ascribed to the pernicious influence of the Communists and Anarchists, under whose sway the children had been in Spain.

Besides the embarrassing issues of the Moors and the Basques, there was another aspect of the civil war to which the Catholic press paid little attention, because it also did not fit with the image of the war it had created. The whole vexed question of Italian and

German intervention on behalf of Franco received very little mention in the pages of either the Tablet or Zealandia. The issue, was, again, seen as exaggerated by Leftists to arouse anti-Nationalist feelings, and, also, to blacken the Church by claiming that it supported Fascism. However, German and Italian intervention could not be ignored completely. The usual argument was that the extent of Italian and German intervention had been grossly exaggerated by "Red" propagandists. This claim was necessary in order to uphold the image of the Nationalist rebellion as a "national" movement, "of Spain and for Spain", fostered both by Nationalist propagandists and by the Catholic press. Thus, Father Ardagh said:

Different people tell us there are really no foreigners on Franco's side; about 2000 Italians at the front, far less than that of Germans who are only technical advisers. And Spain does not want outsiders. It is her war, defending her home and religion ... Spain is going to be for Spain - no foreign domination here.¹²⁴

Of all the excuses made about Italian and German intervention, an item in Zealandia contained the most remarkable:

The general public is unaware of the fact that when German and Italian airplanes are spoken of in the Spanish war, the reference is to the make of the machine and not to the nationality of the pilots.¹²⁵

The minimal amount of German and Italian intervention that was acknowledged was generally justified by the argument that it was necessary to counteract the massive aid given to the Government by the Russians, and the fighting strength of the International Brigades.¹²⁶ Readers of the Tablet, encountering the article entitled "Franco, Germany, Italy: A Query for Near Left Sympathisers", might have expected to find a discussion of the involvement of foreign troops. Instead, the article dealt mainly with Franco's restructuring of the economy in order to keep foreign debts at a minimum level; wheat went to Germany and olive oil to Italy, in exchange for war materials, but that was a fair exchange, for where would these countries have been if these important sources

had been cut off by the "Reds"? The article ended by emphasising the indebtedness of Italy and Germany to Franco, in contrast to Leftist arguments that Franco was under the sway of Mussolini and Hitler:

The French Popular Front came into being on the wave of Leftist enthusiasm engendered by the Popular Front victory in Spain. Had Largo Caballero's dream of an Iberian Union of Soviets materialised France would have followed inevitably. Then both Germany and Italy would have been sandwiched between a Franco-Spanish Soviet block on one side and a Russian Soviet block on the other. In view of this, have Germany and Italy saved Spain, or has Spain saved Italy and Germany?¹²⁷

The concomitant to this argument was that Mussolini and Hitler had given aid to Franco only once they had become aware of the numbers of Russians and Frenchmen fighting on the side of the Government and because they, too, were aware of the "Red menace" in Spain.¹²⁸

The minimising of foreign aid to Franco was accompanied by frequent references to the massive aid the Republicans were receiving from Russia; particularly in the way of war materials. This argument, of course, fulfilled two functions; it reinforced the idea that the people of Spain were on Franco's side and also contributed to the "Communist plot" theory. Naturally, if Russia had plotted to "Sovietise" Spain, the utmost support would be given to its puppets to ensure a Communist victory.

According to Catholic sources, the Republican war effort was only kept going by the massive influx of International Brigade troops and Russian war materials. An alleged deserter from the International Brigades was quoted as saying "They have more arms than men to use them."¹²⁹ The International Brigaders themselves were described variously as "Europe's undesirables, although some had honest motives, but misguided ones",¹³⁰ or "radicals who have flocked to Spain in an attempt to win that nation for Communism".¹³¹ It was claimed that even the International Brigades had lost confidence in the Republican Government and its cause. The Tablet reported that "A continuous stream of deserters from the International Brigades calls

at the London office of our London contemporary, the Universe.¹³² One such deserter, who had been told Franco was a Fascist and who joined the Brigades to fight for his Church, described his disillusion and claimed that Spaniards did not want to fight for the Government:

The only Spaniards now joining the army are young and quite unwilling conscripts. He has been one of an armed party with fixed bayonets sent to drag boys of 17 and 18 from their homes.¹³³

There was little discussion of the NIC in the Catholic press. Since the NIC could be seen to be operating mostly in the favour of Germany and Italy, and therefore, Franco, perhaps no comment was deemed necessary. Both the issue of German and Italian intervention, and that of the NIC, were treated merely as sidelines to the major issue of Communist plotting and intervention in Spain. Zealandia, in an editorial (one of only two major items on the NIC in the three years of the war), used recent events in the NIC as a starting point for a discussion of Communist plans for world domination. Russian protests at German and Italian intervention only came about, it said, because of Nationalist victories. Zealandia condemned the "priceless effrontery that unctuously upbraids the intervention of other States in the Spanish situation - a situation which was engineered by Russia's own agents and in which Russia herself has been supplying military and financial aid to one of the combatant parties".¹³⁴ Zealandia also viewed the non-intervention agreement as a creation of the Russians for their own purposes, instigated by Moscow's puppet, Leon Blum, to draw attention away from Russian activities in Spain.¹³⁵

There was also little discussion of Britain's role in the Spanish conflict; however, what little there was displayed some ambivalence towards Britain. In part, the ambivalence may be explained by the New Zealand Catholic press' use of Nationalist propaganda; for instance, in the rather sullen references to British precedents in the use of foreign troops and questionable methods of

warfare.¹³⁶ Some New Zealand Catholics shared Franco's resentment that Britain had not gone to Franco's aid. In letters to daily newspapers there was criticism of Britain for what Catholics saw as its refusal to grant Franco belligerent rights,¹³⁷ and some accused Britain of aiding the Republicans by default.¹³⁸ Pro-Italian sentiment among New Zealand Catholics may have also accounted for ambivalence towards British policy. G.F. Seward, one of the more prolific correspondents to The Press in defence of the Catholic view of the Spanish Civil War, exemplified this attitude:

... we Britons, so far as our press represents us, have been taking a priggish, hypocritical and unjust attitude towards Italy. British foreign policy has certainly not been more consistent, trustworthy, and straightforward than Italian ... Great Britain has adopted a highly moral attitude to hide a good deal of secret manoeuvring for her own ends ... Britain does not want a speedy decision in Spain. She wants a compromise, to keep Spain weak and divided. Italy, for her own ends and for the good of Europe and Christian civilisation wants to see Franco victorious, and says so plainly.¹³⁹

Reverend J.A. Higgins blamed England and France for the indifference of Spanish Catholics, which had allowed the growth of Communism in Spain. England and France, he said, were regarded as the progressive nations of Europe, because of the development of capitalism in those two countries; Spain was regarded as backward. When Spain tried to emulate France and England, it was then that the social abuses began that led to the acceptance of the teachings of Communism by some Spaniards:

... the Spanish capitalists did not learn usury from the Catholic Church but from the example of nations held up as an example to the world ... from the new found friend of France and England [Russia] came Communism, and its attendant horrors, to Spain ... A very plain truth is that Spaniards were debauched from the orbit of Catholic influence by the wealth offered by the capitalist nations.¹⁴⁰

Conversely, at least one Catholic argued that anyone who supported the Spanish Government was a Communist and, therefore, disloyal to

Britain,¹⁴¹ and the Catholic press complained that the Labour Government's policy was disloyal to Britain.¹⁴²

Catholic interests undoubtedly took precedence over those of Empire. There was little mention of Spain's strategic value to Britain, although Bishop Liston had said in his article at the beginning of the war that "were the rebels to triumph, aided by Italy and Germany [England's] interests in the Mediterranean would be threatened".¹⁴³ Once the Church had allied itself with Franco's cause, there was no longer talk of "rebels", and the emphasis on the national character of the rebellion and Franco's determination that Spain should be free of foreign domination possibly counted as reassurance enough for those who were worried about the Mediterranean. The Tablet did print one item that quoted Franco's denial that a "Latin bloc" - Spain, Portugal, Italy - would dominate the Mediterranean.

"But does England prefer the ports of Spain to become Russian ports?" said General Franco. "We Latins are renewing our ties of friendship that bind us together economically and culturally ... How can such a rapprochement be held to threaten anyone? ... We Spaniards have always regarded a good understanding with England as the first article of our political programme."¹⁴⁴

Readers of Zealandia during the period of the war might have gained the impression that, while the Catholic press was agitated about the issue, New Zealand Catholics were not. There was little indication in Zealandia's pages of any activity by Catholics in New Zealand about the civil war. However, the Tablet, with its more comprehensive coverage of diocesan news, gave a clearer picture. There were days of prayer for Spain "in reparation to our Divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament for the sacrileges suffered by His Church",¹⁰² and novenas said for Spain. In January 1937 an appeal by the Bishop of Wellington, Thomas O'Shea, for money to assist in the rebuilding of schools, churches and convents in Spain, was read in all Wellington churches. This raised £1,011.10.0.¹⁴⁵ Another appeal in the Dunedin diocese in August 1937 raised a total of £458.6.8.

An indication that the issue was alive in the minds of Catholics was also given in reports of Catholic debating societies using various aspects of the civil war as topics for debates, for example, "That Britain should be prepared to support the insurgents in Spain".¹⁴⁶ Holy Name Societies and Catholic Students' Guilds were recipients of lectures on the subject of the war. One of the most interesting must have been the one given to the Wellington Students Guild by Phillip Cross, who fought for General Franco for 8 months in Spain.¹⁴⁷ Surprisingly, this was the only mention in either paper of a New Zealander whose personal involvement in the war must have been of great interest to Catholics.

It sometimes appeared that the editor of Zealandia was more concerned with attitudes overseas than in New Zealand - based in a city in which operated one of the most active branches of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee, Zealandia did not have one editorial dealing with the activities of the SMAC. But in one respect Zealandia's editorials gave a very clear exposition of an element in the New Zealand Catholic response. This was perhaps a response that came initially more from the hierarchy than the laity, concerned as it was with the lesson of the civil war for Catholics. In three editorials at the beginning of the war, Zealandia compared the fanatical dedication of the Communists with the "nominal Catholicism" of the Catholic people of Spain. While this argument that the people of Spain had failed in their obligations to their faith was a part of the Catholic press' defence of the role of the Church in the Spanish Civil War, it was also the basis for a call to Catholic Action in New Zealand. Catholic Action was just beginning in New Zealand at this time, and the Spanish Civil War was the perfect image upon which to draw to convince Catholics of the need for "unity in action", as Zealandia called it, in an editorial in September 1936. Instead of many church societies, all acting in their own areas without co-ordinating with each other:

would it not be wiser that we profit by the experience of Spain and, as our Church develops here direct all our activities in such a manner as to preserve unity in action as well as faith?¹⁴⁸

Catholics must be militant in their faith and have a deep inner commitment to it, in order to combat successfully the enemies of the Church:

No Catholic can properly stand aside from the battle that is now being waged throughout the world between the Kingdom of Christ and the powers of darkness. As events have shown, the greatest danger to the Church is in the false sense of security that presumes one's local community to be immune from peril.¹⁴⁹

Although both publications identified the peril in New Zealand as Communism, especially in view of the attempt by the New Zealand Communist party to affiliate with the Labour Party in 1937, the Tablet did more than Zealandia to relate the potential threat in New Zealand to the present danger facing the Church in Spain. Unlike Zealandia, the Tablet launched editorial attacks on the SMAC from its very beginnings in Dunedin, with three editorials on the subject. After the inaugural meeting of the Dunedin SMAC in November 1936, the Tablet expressed its dismay that "various societies of a social, medical and religious character have been ensnared into support of the Spanish Reds",¹⁵⁰ for a representative of the St John Ambulance had been at the meeting. The leaders of the movement were condemned as:

The intelligentsia of the Left - those smart intellectuals who become Communists not because they have any sympathy with the oppressed poor but because it's jolly to wear a red tie and cultivate a radical outlook.¹⁵¹

The voice of the Catholic hierarchy was also raised against the SMAC. The Bishop of Christchurch, Matthew Brodie, protested about the involvement of the St John Ambulance Association, at a public meeting to organise a SMAC branch in Christchurch. Bishop Brodie objected to the involvement of the St John's Ambulance and the Red Cross on the grounds that the SMAC was a partisan organisation, supporting a Government in Spain that was "simply a disgrace to

civilisation ... marching over democracy and over the religious liberties of a nation".¹⁵²

Bishop Brodie's protest aroused a flurry of controversy in the correspondence columns of both The Press and the Otago Daily Times. Letters to both newspapers placed most emphasis on the traditionally neutral stand of the Red Cross and St John's Amulance and protested about their association with a group that had "Red" sympathies.¹⁵³ The SMAC, said one writer, was a prime example of the Popular Front tactic of "tranquillising minds and attracting large numbers of the non-Communist masses into a united movement".¹⁵⁴ Local pro-Republican activities were regarded as another facet of Communism's plan for world domination, which had caused the war in Spain:

Let not the New Zealand workers or public be fooled by the Communists. They talk of a "Popular Front" by means of which they hope to get into the Labour Party and their aim here is just the same as it is in Spain.¹⁵⁵

The controversy about the SMAC also provided the Tablet with an opportunity to attack the supposed anti-Catholicism of the Protestant Churches in New Zealand. The Tablet congratulated Bishop Brodie on his "courageous" stand and added: "We regret that the leaders of thought in other sections of the Christian community are noticeably lacking in similar courage."¹⁵⁶ The Tablet poured scorn on the "anti-Fascism" of Protestant ministers who supported the Government of Spain, implying that this was merely a cloak for anti-Catholicism:

Heads of Protestant Churches too, are associating themselves in this move to help along the Communist cause of law and order in Spain ... they see - or think they see - in this effort an opportunity of striking a blow, however feeble, at the big bad wolf of Fascism, which they quite erroneously associate with the Catholic Church.¹⁵⁷

None of the Protestant Churches in New Zealand gave official endorsement to the SMAC; thus, the Catholic view of Protestant involvement said more about Catholic fears at the time than it did about the attitudes of Protestantism.

Related to the Tablet's response to the SMAC, and a significant part of the specifically New Zealand Catholic response, was the Church's attitude to the stance of the Labour Party, and Government, towards the war. The relationship between the Catholic Church and the Labour Party in this period was somewhat ambivalent, at least on the part of the Church. The attitude of the Universal Church towards Socialism was very clear - Catholics were to have no association with Socialism at all. Yet, in New Zealand, many Catholics, especially Catholic workers, had voted for the Labour Party, despite the obviously Socialist tendencies of some of the party's policies. In addition, some Labour MPs, including the Prime Minister himself, were Catholics, albeit lapsed. Father Simmons has noted the "unlikely friendship" between the Bishop of Auckland, James Liston, and Michael Savage.¹⁵⁸ However, the hierarchy did have some hesitations about aspects of Labour's programme.

The issue of the Spanish Civil War could only increase the unease of the Church. What angered Catholics the most was the fact that some Labour MPs openly supported the SMAC, which was sending medical aid funds to the Government of Spain. Catholic letters to the Otago Daily Times objected to the involvement with the SMAC of Dunedin Labour MPs; Dr D.G. McMillan and Peter Nielsen, and of Dunedin Mayor, Reverend E.T. Cox, and Councillor Mark Silverstone. There were demands that these gentlemen state whether they were Communists or not,¹⁵⁹ and complaints that £5 of ratepayers' money had been given by the City Council to the SMAC fund.¹⁶⁰ Some voiced doubts that the medical aid unit would ever be sent and questioned the eventual use of funds raised; the implication was, of course, that the monies would go to the Communist Party.¹⁶¹ One correspondent suggested that Dr McMillan should lead the proposed medical unit and "take some of his colleagues with him", presumably with reference to the Labour Government.¹⁶²

The Tablet, at first, was inclined to give the Labour Party the benefit of the doubt. In its third editorial on the SMAC, entitled "Dunedin-Spain-Moscow", it criticised Dr McMillan, who was President

of the SMAC, for his statements about the purpose of the SMAC, but conceded that he might be unaware of the real facts of the situation in Spain. The editorial went on to say:

The Dunedin organisers of Spanish relief have, perhaps unwittingly, identified the Labour Party with a combination of forces - the Spanish government - which embrace everything repulsive to Catholics.¹⁶³

It concluded with the solemn warning that:

[the organisers of Spanish relief] have introduced factors which are liable to be mentally pigeonholed for guidance when sane and thoughtful administrators are needed in municipal and general politics in the future.¹⁶⁴

Subtle references to the loss of Catholic electoral support were evident in the Catholic press' discussion of the Labour Government's policy. Later in the war suggestions that Labour MPs had been misled by "Red" propaganda would be replaced by claims that the Labour Party was infiltrated by Communists. Again, over the issue of Labour MPs support for the SMAC, Zealandia asked if there were two voices in the party, the official voice supporting British policy and that of MPs who were "personally, actively and publicly supporting" the SMAC:

Does that indicate that the party is not only tainted with Communism, but is compromising with it? The plain facts of actual events are there to lead the public mind to form its own conclusions of the matter.¹⁶⁵

Two months later Zealandia answered its own question in response to an article in the Auckland Star by Labour MP; E.J. Howard supporting the pro-Republican interpretation of the war. (This article was answered by an unnamed contributor to Zealandia who gave the standard Catholic analysis of the issues of the war.¹⁶⁶) Editorially, Zealandia accused those members of the Labour Party who supported the Republic of having Communist sympathies; after all had not Mr Nash been to Russia? Zealandia suggested that the Labour Government had to appear to support the Spanish Reds:

to placate the Reds in the ranks of the Labour Party, but how far are red tendencies allowed to colour the public statements of Labour Party M.P.'s ... the intelligence and integrity of the party is at stake ...167

It warned that "the intelligence of the electorate is not dulled".168

There was surprisingly little comment on the stance taken by the New Zealand High Commissioner, W. Jordan, at the League of Nations, an obvious target for opponents of the Government. The Tablet merely suggested that, while it was obvious that Mr Jordan had been taken in by Red propaganda about Italian "piracy" in the Mediterranean, it was curious that his humanitarian concern did not extend to the Catholics murdered by the "Reds" in Spain:

It seems to us that the League has little chance of success when it has delegates as unbalanced as Mr Jordan, discussing international affairs in a spirit of violent partisanship.169

Only on one occasion did editorial attitudes in the Catholic press coincide with that of Labour's political opponents; namely, that the Labour Government, in its stance on the war, was out of step with Britain and was betraying the leader of the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth itself. In an editorial on radio broadcasts by one of the three nurses sent to Spain by the SMAC, Zealandia said:

It is one thing to crusade and denounce in Hyde Park: it is quite another thing to use a government censored radio service in support of a European movement which in its inseparable extensions holds grave political possibilities for the empire. It is a movement to which the British Prime Minister has, in the face of violent criticism, refused to commit his country. The New Zealand government broadcasting authorities cannot possibly be unaware of this. Why then are the implications ignored? That is a question of more than passing concern to the citizens of the Dominion ...170

Catholic Pro-Francoist letters to the newspapers also made this point.171 However, the claim of disloyalty was not made on

entirely the same grounds as "Non-Interventionist" charges. Catholic pro-Francoists displayed little of the concern for the unity of the Empire and the confidence in motives and methods of British foreign policy that was so strong a feature of "Non-Interventionist" thought. Dislike of Communism was common to both, of course, but the use of this particular argument by Catholics was rather less sincere in its Imperialism, given their equivocal response to Britain's role in the crisis.

Some Catholics felt so strongly about the attitudes of the Labour Party MPs that a public meeting was organised at Upper Hutt by Catholic members of the party to protest at a lecture given by a "prominent member of the same party".¹⁷² The Tablet printed the text of the address given at this meeting. Like the answer to E.J. Howard published in Zealandia, it gave a Catholic interpretation of the issues, repeating most of the claims made by the Catholic press. It contained no reference to the Labour Party or to the Catholic response to its policy. However, a letter to the editor of the Tablet congratulating the organisers of the meeting perhaps summed up the attitudes of these Catholics.

Now what is the foreign policy of the Labour Government. Democracy? Indeed, members prefer the name of Socialist to that of Communist, but where and when have any of them denounced the fiendish work of COMMUNISM? ... unless the present Government plainly declares a settled reversed foreign policy it cannot expect any Catholic support in November.

Mr Jordan's attitudes at Geneva have been criticised all round, except by the Rationalists and we all know what they are ... Workers wake up, open your eyes!¹⁷³

A few Catholic Labour voters also wrote to the Labour Party newspaper, the Standard, complaining of Labour and Trades Union support for the Republicans. One said:

I think it is necessary to advise the Labour Party in New Zealand that an overwhelming majority of Catholics are Labour Supporters, and if they are to remain so, the members of the party would be well advised to make sure of their facts before terming a herd comparable to the supporters of

Barbarossa a movement for social reform and the good of the people.¹⁷⁴

There appears to have been little other protest by Catholics within the Labour Party, or attempts to change Labour's attitude towards the war in Spain. Nevertheless, Catholic complaints to the Standard were undoubtedly part of the reason the paper closed its correspondence columns to discussion of the war.¹⁷⁵

There was not much attempt to convert any other New Zealanders to Franco's cause. The main method of promoting pro-Francoism outside the Church appears to have been through the medium of the daily and weekly press. There were frequent claims in the Catholic press and in Catholic letters to newspapers that the secular press was displaying an anti-Franco and, therefore, anti-Catholic bias.¹⁷⁶ Catholics wrote letters to newspaper editors, not only in answer to pro-Republican letters, but also in complaint about editorials on the subject of the war. In the view of Catholics, the New Zealand press and its overseas sources were either biased in favour of the "Reds", or the dupes of a massive and unscrupulous Communist propaganda campaign. In 1939, the Tablet printed two letters from G.F. Seward, of Christchurch, complaining about his local papers' treatment of the Spanish Civil War:

It seems that both the Christchurch daily papers continue to publish news items, articles and editorial comments about Spain, which I and many others believe to be absolutely false, and both papers refuse me (and presumably anyone else) the right to criticise them on the subject.¹⁷⁷

Since Seward's lengthy expositions of the pro-Francoist position appeared frequently in The Press, at least, one can only consider that the basis of his complaint was that the newspapers refused to alter their views to suit his. Much of this Catholic protest in the newspapers centred on news about, and editorials discussing, foreign involvement in the war, as well as Franco's methods of warfare. Catholics also complained about the use of the terms "loyalist" and "rebel", since in their view Franco's forces were the true loyalists

and "misapplication" of the terms only perpetuated "misinformation" about the war.

An interesting example of pro-Francoist objections to press bias was the controversy between Auckland University's student newspaper, Craccum, and its Wellington counterpart, Salient. The latter was the most pro-Republican of all four student newspapers and, in 1937, produced a "Spanish number", which included an interview with returned International Brigader Tom Spiller, an editorial on the war and sundry other articles with a pro-Republican bias.¹⁷⁸ Craccum, on the other hand, demonstrated a subtly pro-Francoist bias and, in general, as one of its critics complained, conducted "a systematic campaign against anything that can be regarded as faintly liberal", achieved by reporting techniques that utilised the "confusion of comment - unsupported comment - with fact".¹⁷⁹ Craccum objected to Salient's "Spanish number" with an editorial entitled "Subversive Propaganda", which condemned Salient for the publication of "the flagrant propaganda" of a "decided minority".¹⁸⁰ Both the editorial and two letters in the same issue demonstrated a pro-Francoist version of the "Non-Interventionist" view that the ideological issues of the war in Spain were no business of New Zealanders. One of Craccum's correspondents said:

... these two "isms" we have been hearing so much about lately have no particular interest for me, but, frankly, I am just a little puzzled why "Salient" should feature something that in my honest opinion has absolutely no interest for the majority of sane-minded readers.¹⁸¹

The other letter accused Salient of descending to the level of a "communistic" rag and emphasised the necessity for impartiality, and informed and intelligent comment, in a student newspaper. The correspondent's view of what was informed and intelligent appeared not to include anything of a Leftist nature.¹⁸²

The attitude of Craccum's editor and its correspondents differed from "Non-Interventionism", in that it was not a dismissal of the war

as irrelevant to New Zealanders, but a protest at pro-Republican propaganda, thinly disguised as a concern for the impartiality of student newspapers. One correspondent complained of Salient's "flagrant disregard for the facts" of the situation in Spain;¹⁸³ another, who had called for impartiality, presented a "dispassionate" survey of "the facts" about Spain that was in essence a pro-Francoist view of the war. Craccum's own claim of impartiality was made somewhat farcical by the inclusion, in the same issue, of an item recommending Arnold Lunn's Spanish Rehearsal in terms that could hardly be called unbiased: "An eminent English philosopher exposes the Communist plot in Spain."¹⁸⁴

Craccum's attitude was indicative of the defensive nature of pro-Francoism in New Zealand. Editorially, Craccum refrained from open comment in support of Franco, preferring to leave more overt bias to its always pseudonymous correspondents. Indeed, Craccum's editorial about Salient was a masterpiece of circumlocution, no doubt intended to reinforce the paper's claim that it had "no violent tendencies in any direction", but also intriguing in its avoidance of mentioning the specific issue that had caused the difference of opinion with Salient. In the same manner, the Catholic Church only propagandised for Franco in its own newspapers and did not take the issue to the New Zealand public, leaving "outside" promotion of Franco's cause to individual members of its flock, who frequently responded to alternative views of the war with charges of anti-Catholicism. The sense gained from many Catholic pro-Francoist letters, that they were, in the words of one, "persistently opposing the popular view of the war",¹⁸⁵ suggests that Catholic pro-Francoism had little appeal to non-Catholic New Zealanders.

While the Catholic arguments that Spain was in danger of a Communist "take-over" obviously gained support from other sources, the image of the war as a crusade for Christianity or Catholicism, and of Franco and his army as perfect Christian crusaders, did not. Reports of the bombing of civilians by the Nationalist forces and the evidence of Italian and German involvement, despite Catholic denials,

militated against the adoption of a pro-Francoist view by non-Catholics. Most of the secular press revealed as much distaste for Franco and his allies as they did for the Republicans and theirs.

Because Catholic archives were not available and Church histories do not discuss such matters, it is difficult to determine either the immediate impact, or any long-term effect of the Spanish Civil War upon the New Zealand Catholic Church. According to Father Simmons, the 1930s were a time of intellectual growth and vitality within the Church and this, perhaps, encouraged a greater interest in affairs outside the narrow New Zealand Church community. The threat to the faith, not only in Spain, but in other parts of Europe as well meant that Catholics had a particular interest in international affairs. The fact that they belonged to an international Church organisation, in any case, gave New Zealand Catholics a wider perspective on the outside world. On the other hand, the threat to the Church and the assumption that pro-Republican sentiment corresponded to anti-Catholicism may have encouraged a "closing of ranks" among Catholics and, thus, increased the insularity of the Church in New Zealand society.

Atrocity stories and the image of an assault on the Church in Catholic Spain jolted the complacency of Catholics, or should have, according to the Catholic press. The Spanish Civil War was certainly used by the Church in New Zealand to illustrate the necessity for Catholic Action, a movement of apostolic and social action by lay people first begun in France in the 1920s. Although the overwhelming concern in the Catholic press was for the survival of the Church in Spain and the defeat of Communism there, it was concerned to bring the issue home to New Zealand Catholics. However, there is little evidence that New Zealand Catholics felt moved to choose between their political and religious allegiances, on the grounds of what was regarded as the Labour Government's support of Communism in Spain.

Nevertheless, the central message for New Zealand Catholics about the war was "it could happen here":

It is unthinkable that the Spanish War of Deliverance should be brought to an end without a salutary effect on other countries including our own ... the defeat of Spanish Communism ... is a warning especially to Catholics of this country: a solemn reminder of their duty not only of combatting a system which brought chaos to Spain, but of working in season and out of season to remove the causes upon which the success of Communism depends.¹⁸⁶

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- 24 Zealandia 24 June 1937, p 1. Miguel Azana was Republican Prime Minister from 1937 to 1933, and again in 1936, then became President of the Republic from 1936 to 1939.
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- 80 Zealandia 30 September 1937, p 5.
- 81 Tablet 22 October 1938, p 27.
- 82 Zealandia 2 September 1937, p 1.
- 83 Tablet 24 November 1937, p 27.
- 84 P 8 December 1936, p 12.
- 85 Tablet 14 September 1938, p 24.
- 86 See, for example, Tablet 17 March 1937, p 21; 5 January 1938, p 25; 28 July 1937, p 10; Zealandia 5 November 1936, p 1.
- 87 Tablet 5 January 1938, p 25.
- 88 Gabriel Jackson. A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War. London, 1980, p 110.
- 89 Tablet 24 November 1937, p 27.
- 90 Ibid 5 January 1938, p 25.
- 91 Ibid 2 September 1936 p 3.
- 92 Zealandia 25 November 1937, p 4.
- 93 Interview with Reverend E.R. Simmons, 1980.
- 94 Tomorrow Vol. 2, No. 33, 14 October 1936, p 6.
- 95 Interview with Reverend E.R. Simmons.
- 96 Tablet 21 July 1937, p 26.
- 97 P 2 December 1936, p 7.
- 98 P 7 December 1936, p 14.
- 99 P 13 August 1936, p 8. Presumably, the writer was suggesting that Marx had changed his name from Mordechai.
- 100 ODT 23 March 1939, p 14.
- 101 P 10 August 1936, p 12.
- 102 ODT 28 July 1936, p 7.
- 103 ODT 14 August 1936, p 12.
- 104 ODT 21 January 1938, p 21.
- 105 ODT 27 December 1937, p 2.
- 106 Tablet 7 September 1938, p 5.
- 107 Tablet 31 August 1938, p 3.
- 108 Zealandia 10 November 1938, p 2.
- 109 Tablet 31 August 1938, p 41.
- 110 Ibid p 3.
- 111 Ibid 7 September 1938, p 3.
- 112 Ibid 31 August 1938, p 3.
- 113 Zealandia 8 April 1937, p 1; 15 July 1937, p 2; Tablet 1 March 1939, p 25.

- 114 Zealandia 10 September 1936, p 2.
- 115 Truth 24 August 1938, p 9.
- 116 Tablet 4 November 1936, p 33.
- 117 Idem. See also Truth 17 August 1938, p 9.
- 118 Salient 8 June 1938, p 11.
- 119 Tablet 28 April 1937, p 3.
- 120 Zealandia 5 November 1936, p 1.
- 121 Tablet 7 April 1937, p 3.
- 122 Zealandia 23 September 1937, p 1. Basque children were evacuated from Bilbao in May 1937, once it was clear that the port would soon be captured by the nationalists. 4,000 children were taken to Britain and housed first in a camp near Southampton. Later, many were cared for in private homes. France also accepted some 2,300 refugee children, and the Soviet Union undertook to care for the children of Communists.
- 123 Ibid 21 October 1937, p 1.
- 124 Tablet 31 August 1938, p 3.
- 125 Zealandia 28 April 1938, p 8. See also P 12 December 1938, p 8.
- 126 Zealandia 22 October 1936, p 1; 28 April 1938, p 8; 19 May 1938, p 8; 9 June 1938, p 8.
- 127 Tablet 22 June 1938, p 24.
- 128 ODT 29 March 1939, p 6; 26 May 1939, p 13; 27 December 1937, p 2; P 3 July 1937, p 7; 30 May 1938, p 5; WT 19 August 1938, p 9; 28 January 1939, p 9; GRA 6 April 1937, p 8. See also NZH 27 January 1939, p 8.
- 129 Tablet 24 August 1938, p 34.
- 130 Zealandia 24 November 1936, p 6.
- 131 Ibid 28 April 1938, p 2.
- 132 Tablet 24 August 1938, p 34.
- 133 Idem.
- 134 Zealandia 22 October 1936, p 4.
- 135 Ibid 10 September 1936, p 1.
- 136 See above, pp 142 & 151.
- 137 ODT 19 August 1938, p 14; P 29 August 1938, p 5.
- 138 ODT 10 August 1938, p 10; P 3 January 1938, p 6; 29 August 1938, p 8.
- 139 P 25 October 1937, p 5.
- 140 Tablet 2 December 1936, p 6.
- 141 ODT 1 April 1939, p 21. See also ODT 12 August 1938, p 6; 15 March 1939, p 17.
- 142 See below, p 164.
- 143 NZH 15 September 1936, p 6.
- 144 Tablet 25 August 1937, p 11.
- 145 Tablet 5 May 1937,
- 146 Ibid 2 September 1936, p 37.
- 147 Ibid 6 April 1938, p 42.
- 148 Zealandia 24 September 1936, p 4.
- 149 Zealandia 27 August 1936, p 4.
- 150 Tablet 18 November 1936, p 3.
- 151 Idem.
- 152 GRA 2 December 1936, p 5.
- 153 P 5 December 1936, p 20; 9 December 1936, p 18; ODT 14 November 1936, p 7.

- 154 ODT 14 November 1936, p 7. See also WT 11 March 1939, p 9; GRA 2 November 1936, p 8; ODT 23 September 1936, p 6; 14 November 1936, p 7; 5 February 1937 p 14; 6 February 1937, p 7; 11 March 1937, p 17; 14 August 1937, p 19; 12 August 1938, p 6; 2 September 1938, p 13; 16 September, p14; P 2 June 1938, p 9.
- 155 ODT 14 November 1936, p 7.
- 156 Tablet 9 December 1936, p 3.
- 157 Idem.
- 158 Interview with Reverend E.R. Simmons. See also E.R. Simmons, p 239.
- 159 ODT 6 December 1937, p 7; 17 February 1937, p 15; 11 February 1937, p 17.
- 160 ODT 17 February 1937, p 15; 18 February 1937, p 2.
- 161 ODT 18 February 1937, p 2.
- 163 Tablet 3 February 1937, p 3.
- 164 Idem
- 165 Zealandia 12 August 1937, p 6.
- 166 Ibid 11 November 1937, p 2.
- 167 Ibid 28 October 1937, p 6.
- 168 Idem
- 169 Tablet 6 October 1937, p 11.
- 170 Zealandia 30 June 1938, p 6.
- 171 ODT 12 August 1936, p 6; 15 March 1939, p 17; 1 April 1939, p 21.
- 172 Tablet 11 May 1938, p 3.
- 173 Ibid
- 174 Standard 7 October 1936, p 15.
- 175
- 176 Zealandia 22 October 1936, p 2; 19 August 1937, p 1; 9 September 1937, p 2; 21 October 1937, p 1; Tablet 16 September 1936, p 3; 3 March 1937, p 5; 30 September 1936, p 4; 21 October 1936, p 4; 21 July 1937, p 10; EP 8 May 1937, p.8; ODT 10 September 1936, p4; 18 September 1936, p 5; P 3 January 1938, p 6; 4 June 1938, p 22; 20 June 1938, p 5; 17 December 1938, p 26; 4 April 1939, p 17.
- 177 Tablet 29 March 1939, p 35.
- 178 See Chapter 6 for discussion of Salient's attitude.
- 179 Craccum 5 May 1938, p 11.
- 180 Ibid 7 April 1938, p 3.
- 181 Ibid p 9.
- 182 Idem.
- 183 Craccum 5 May 1938, p 10.
- 184 Ibid 7 April 1938, p 9.
- 185 P 4 April 1939, p 17.
- 186 Tablet 1 February 1939, p 5.

CHAPTER 4
SPAIN, DEMOCRACY AND THE UNITED FRONT:
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND
AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Pro-Republican opinions in New Zealand were more broadly based than pro-Francoist sentiments. Individuals, organisations and publications with varying political and social views supported the Government of Spain. But, if any one organisation was in the vanguard of the pro-Republican movement, encouraging and attempting to dominate and co-ordinate pro-Republican feeling in New Zealand, it was the Communist Party.

For Communists, as much as Catholics, the war in Spain became a holy war, a crusade against the forces of evil, in this case, Fascism. In Communist propaganda, Spain became a paradigm: the Republican Government represented democracy everywhere; the attack upon it by Franco and his Italian and German allies was the very embodiment of Fascist aggression and of the Fascist plan to destroy democracy everywhere.

The defence of democracy by a party not noted for its own preference for the methods of parliamentary democracy was part of the Communist Party's campaign for a United or Popular Front¹ against Fascism, in which the Spanish Civil War and the concern it aroused played a major part. The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern), held in July and August 1935, had adopted the policy of the Popular Front and Collective Security. Instead of eschewing contact with, and even working against, other Left groups - Socialists, social-democrats, Fabians, Syndicalists and such like - Communists were to work with all other social-democratic working-class and middle-class groups against Fascism. The preservation of bourgeois parliamentary democracy from Fascism was

promoted as a necessary preliminary to the establishment of "proletarian democracy". Behind the United Front policy, was a recognition of the threat to the Soviet Union posed by Fascism, especially Hitler's Germany, and of the need for an alliance with bourgeois democratic countries against Fascism.²

The nature of the war in Spain made it an ideal issue with which to form the basis of a United Front policy that would continue once the war had been won for democracy, and that could be carried over into other issues even while the war was in progress. The war in Spain was, at one and the same time, a focus for the United Front policy and an example of the necessity for such a coalition of "progressive" groups. The Popular Front Government of Spain and its army were depicted as the epitome of the United Front, fighting to save not only their own, but world democracy from Fascism.

There were, however, some contradictions in Communist propaganda about the war that revealed the "hidden agenda" of the United Front policy; that is, the protection of Soviet Russia and the ultimate aim of proletarian revolution. Despite the promotion of the United Front, there were attacks on other groups, inside Spain and elsewhere, for "Trotskyism", "sectarianism", or failure to follow the Communist Party in creating the United Front. The Communist Party was promoted as the most anti-Fascist, and the most pro-Republican organisation in the United Front.

There are few sources available that illuminate the inner workings of the Communist Party in New Zealand. Only a small number of Communist Party records are available to the researcher. An important collection of the records of the Christchurch branch of the Communist Party is held in the Canterbury University Library. Unfortunately, at the time this study was undertaken, some significant items in this collection had been misplaced and could not be found.³ The McAra Papers at Auckland University Library also contain some Communist Party material.⁴ Neither collection contains any evidence of directives to the New Zealand Party from its

overseas governing body, the Comintern, although, obviously, an international and highly centralised organisation like the Communist Party would have received a good deal of its direction from this source. There is also little record of directives from the central party apparatus in New Zealand to its various sections regarding pro-Republican activity. Therefore, most of the evidence of the Communist Party's attitude towards the war in Spain and its use of the issue to create a United Front has been taken from its published propaganda.

The main source of Communist pro-Republican propaganda was the Party's newspaper, the Workers Weekly, which gave a clear indication of the news and views received from overseas sources, and of the application of the Communist view of the war to the New Zealand scene. Like the Catholic newspapers, the Workers Weekly received a good deal of its articles and items on the war in Spain from overseas sources. The paper relied heavily upon material from International Press Correspondence (Imprecor), the official organ of the Comintern, and from English Communist publications, such as the Daily Worker. The Weekly also published articles and items from Izvestia, the official Soviet newspaper. Such "received" news included articles by Communist reporters in Spain, including Hugh Slater and Claud Cockburn (writing under the pseudonym of Frank Pitcairn). One of the most important articles about the Spanish Civil War, in terms of its expression of the Communist stance, was by Georgi Dimitrov, head of the Comintern. Entitled "Two Years Heroic Struggle of the Spanish People", it was published in the Weekly in five parts between 9 September and 7 October 1938.⁵

Communist propaganda also appeared in the Grey River Argus, a Labour daily newspaper published on the West Coast of New Zealand, traditionally a Labour stronghold. The Argus was not an official organ of the Labour Party, although many prominent Labour MPs had been associated with it; thus, it had more latitude to express views that might not conform to the official Labour Party viewpoint. However, the Argus' editorial position on the war was one of cautious

pro-Republicanism, akin to the the Labour Party's attitude.⁶ "International Notes" by "Left Wing", a weekly column, on the other hand, presented a Communist view of the war. "International Notes" consisted mainly of news items and articles culled from other sources, mainly the Workers Weekly, but sometimes overseas Communist publications. Generally, material from the Weekly appeared a week later in the Argus.

Woman Today was also a source of Communist propaganda on the Spanish Civil War. The "progressive" women's magazine first began publication in April 1937, dedicated to the ideals of "peace, freedom and progress" and "the advancement of women in all spheres of thought".⁷ Its editorial committee comprised women holding a variety of Left and Left-liberal philosophies. Many were active in other "progressive" or "feminist" organisations - the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Women's Co-operative Guilds, the National Council of Women, the International League for Peace and Freedom, the Workers Educational Association (WEA), the Left Book Club and the No More War Movement.⁸

The Communist Party was also represented, for Woman Today undoubtedly formed part of the Party's drive to create the United Front. Mrs Elsie Freeman (now Elsie Locke) was prominent on the editorial committee. Mrs Freeman was a Party member and editor of the Workers Weekly's Women's Page. She had been editor of the Party's own short-lived women's magazine, Working Woman, published in 1935 and 1936. Woman Today might be called Working Woman's successor under the Comintern's new dispensation. This is not to cast doubt upon Mrs Freeman's sincere belief in the principles for which Woman Today stood, nor to suggest that Woman Today was solely a Communist front organisation, for that was not the case. However, Mrs Freeman's involvement clearly denoted the Communist Party's interest in using Woman Today to promote the United Front. Although the magazine's editorial policy was claimed to be "non-sectarian, non-political and non-commercial",⁹ its papers were dominated by a Leftist tone. Its coverage of the Spanish Civil War generally

followed the Communist Party "line", although the themes were those that women could most easily relate to. Woman Today's "feminist internationalism" was clearly another facet in the promotion of the United Front. Woman Today and "International Notes" in the Argus provided more intermittent coverage of the war than the Workers Weekly.

Naturally, in pursuit of the United Front, the Communist Party also promoted pro-Republicanism through its membership in other organisations - Trades Unions, the Left Book Club, the Spanish Medical Aid Committee and other groups. While the Party's tactics in this area will be considered in discussion of its application of the United Front over Spain to the New Zealand scene, the influence of the Communist Party and its propaganda will be discussed, where it can be determined, in the chapters dealing with other pro-Republican groups.¹⁰

Leo Sim, a founding member of the Communist Party of New Zealand, was a delegate at the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935.¹¹ His election as General Secretary, in December 1935, signalled the adoption of the United Front policy. However, some prominent and influential members of the Central Committee did not agree with the policy, and it was not until the Party's annual conference in December 1936 that the United Front was fully adopted in practice.¹² As the Party's main tactic in the United Front policy was affiliation with the Labour Party, so its emphasis in terms of the pro-Republican movement was joint action with the Labour Party. It was possibly more than merely a happy coincidence that the Weekly's first story about the war, on 25 July 1936, appeared on the first page, together with news of the Central Committee's decision to apply for affiliation with the Labour Party.¹³ But the Party's previous "Social-Fascist" policy, which had caused it to urge voters in the 1935 elections either to vote against Labour or to invalidate their ballot papers, had left a legacy of distrust that was to prove a major difficulty in the forging of the United Front after 1936.

Most of the propaganda about the Spanish Civil War specifically aimed at New Zealanders appeared in the first six or seven months of the war and again in late 1938 and in 1939 in the war's dying stages. It was all, of course, designed to help create the United Front. The similarities between New Zealand's Government and the Popular Front Government of Spain were emphasised, as was the special part New Zealand could play in the international pro-Republican movement because of its Labour Government. Much of the propaganda was also aimed at Trades Unions, calling for them to demonstrate solidarity with the "workers' Government" of Spain and to influence the Labour Government's policy. The Workers Weekly also promoted the Spanish Medical Aid Committee in its pages and published news of other pro-Republican activities in New Zealand, designed not only to bolster the movement, but to demonstrate its broad United Front basis.

Having sketched the outlines of the Communist Party's specific appeal to New Zealanders, a survey will be made of general themes of Communist propaganda about the Spanish Civil War, before detailed discussion of their specific application to the New Zealand scene.

Generally, the Communist view of the nature of the war was that it was a war of Fascist invasion, aided by a small number of Spaniards, against the mass of the Spanish people. However, in the first month of the war, before the adoption of the more widely based appeal of "democracy versus Fascism", the war was depicted as a class war. The Weekly's first article on the war said that the Spanish workers were fighting Fascist reaction and that Army officers had plunged the country into civil war.¹⁴ An editorial, on 8 August 1936, called the conflict "the greatest struggle between Capital and Labour since the Russian Revolution", although it did also note that "world reaction" was terrified and was "plotting intervention".¹⁵ Of course, the notion of class war was always implicit in the Communist analysis of the war, since Fascism was regarded as "the hangman of big capital".¹⁶ The more narrow view of a war between Capital and Labour was possibly a hangover from the Party's previous "Social-Fascist" policy.

Some pro-Republican correspondents to the daily newspapers who either identified themselves, or can be identified, as Communists revealed more adherence to this former policy, which held that Fascism was the final stage of capitalism, preliminary to its final collapse and the victory of "proletarian democracy". One correspondent called Fascism "capitalism in delirium tremens";¹⁷ another, in The Press, in December 1936, argued that events in Spain provided a glaring example of the weakness of social-democracy.¹⁸ A correspondent to the Grey River Argus said that workers were not misled in supporting their fellows in Spain, but had been misled in having faith in democracy, which had been a tool of the exploiters to keep the workers in submission. The war in Spain showed that democracy had outlived its usefulness to the exploiters.¹⁹ Obviously, some among the rank-and-file of the Party had not yet adjusted to the United Front policy.

Although the Weekly's reaction to the war was, from the first, to call for international solidarity behind the Government of Spain in the cause of peace and democracy, to begin with it did not present a totally complimentary picture of the Popular Front Government. Two articles by Paul Nizan, Spanish correspondent for L'Humanite, a French Communist newspaper, written before the rebellion, and criticising the Government of Spain, were published in the Weekly and in "International Notes" in August 1936.

Nizan's first article stressed that the vacillations of the Government were creating unrest among the "masses of the people and that such hesitation created opportunities for reaction".²⁰ The Government's uncertainty was attributed to its bourgeois, liberal composition, and Nizan was quick to point out that the concessions made to the Government by the "proletarian parties", and their defence of the Popular Front, must be repaid with immediate action on reforms. Nizan's next article continued his criticisms of the Government, this time focussing on the military.²¹ The army, navy, and airforce, he said, were hotbeds of reaction and Fascist plotting. Instead of the Government's slow weeding out of opposition

he urged the Spanish Communist Party's solution of immediate creation of a People's Army.

Both articles had been written in early July 1936. It is possible that they only arrived in New Zealand after the war had begun. Their publication was perhaps designed to give readers more background to the situation in Spain and, of course, to show the foresight and commitment to reform of the Communist Party of Spain, but the articles certainly did not fit with the Weekly's later image of the Spanish Government as the perfect example of the United Front. They also demonstrated less than total support for the Popular Front Government from the Communist Party, in direct contradiction to the calls for solidarity about the cause of Spain.

These initial uncertainties in the Communist stand on the war were few and were soon buried under the mass of material that revealed the conflict to be an archetypal battle between Fascism and democracy. By late August 1936, the Weekly had produced the first exposure of Nazi aid for the Spanish Fascists.²² German and Italian aid to the rebels was evidence of the Fascist plan to destroy democracy everywhere.

Just as Catholics attributed the outbreak of the war to a Communist plot, so Communist propaganda promoted the idea that official circles in Germany and Italy had laid the groundwork for the rebellion long before July 1936. In January 1937, "International Notes" provided readers with Imprecor's revelation of the Nazi plan to colonise Spain.²³ The information apparently came from a French newspaper L'Oeuvre. It told of Nazi plans to claim the most important of Spanish minerals, to involve German industry in reconstruction after Franco had won, including provision of first, work, and, then, settlement in Spain for unemployed Germans, and finally to place Spain on a total war footing once it had become a German vassal state. The article claimed that Phalange Espagnola²⁴ groups were springing up in Germany and recruiting young men just out of military training, so that when Franco had won

Hitler could send these men in to strengthen the Spanish Fascists and complete the transformation of Spain into a German colony.

In this Fascist conspiracy to dismember Spain, Germany played the leading role, according to Communist propaganda. This emphasis no doubt reflected the Soviet Union's and the Comintern's concern that Germany posed the greatest threat to Russia and to Communism. Items were published about German economic interests in Spain²⁵ and, in July 1938, an article, headed "A Spanish Dossier - How Hitler Organised the Rebellion in Spain", reported that documents seized from the German Landesgruppe office in Barcelona revealed the machinations of German policy in Spain:

in every branch of public life - politics, army, industry and press - there had been set up a full espionage organisation and there had been a concerted Hitler attempt to seize control.²⁶

The documents alleged to have been seized were not quoted. (It is interesting to note the similarities between this claim and the, pro Francoist allegations that documentary evidence of a Communist plot had been discovered by Nationalist troops.)

Part One of Dimitrov's article also gave a clear enunciation of the "Fascist conspiracy" theory:

... German Fascism developed espionage and disruptive work in Spain on an extensive scale. During the existence of the Government of the Spanish reactionary Gil Robles, the German Fascists, with complete liberty, set up dozens of bases of the so-called "Landesgruppe" and established firm contacts with the Spanish army generals and systematically recruited their agents from among the officers.²⁷

Dimitrov stated that "Italian Fascism took no less active a part in preparing the rebellion",²⁸ but the Italian role was presented as less one of initiating conspiracy, than of providing the wherewithal to put the conspiracy into action. Italian pre-war negotiations with Spanish generals were reported to have concerned the provision of men and equipment.²⁹

In general statements about the nature of the war, there was little attempt to differentiate between the two intervening powers. Both were Fascist, both aimed at territorial aggrandisement and the capture of Spanish resources. In fact, Italian aid to Franco in the form of men and equipment was far greater than that of Germany, but although there were more headlines in the Weekly concerning the numbers of Italian troops,³⁰ the impression created by the paper was of massive intervention by both Fascist states. The numbers of Italian troops could be had from the daily newspapers as well; the Weekly's report of 30,000 stormtroopers in Spain was more fabrication than fact.³¹

The apparently indigenous nature of the rebellion in the first months of the war, which would seem to have belied the Communist assessment of the nature of the war, was explained by the Weekly in terms of that very Fascist plot. The Fascists naturally did not want to appear to have caused the rebellion; therefore, aid was covert to begin with. But they were overconfident; they had expected an early victory by their Spanish co-conspirators. Once it was clear that the rebels were faced with "the resolute resistance of the Spanish people", the Fascist powers hastened to secure their conquest by dispatching their own armed forces.³²

The involvement of Spaniards in Franco's rebellion and particularly, in the actual fighting of the war was played down, in order to reinforce both the argument that the war was one of Fascist aggression, rather than a civil conflict, and the contention that Franco was opposed by the majority of Spaniards. The claim that the Spanish people were almost entirely supporting the Republican Government further "legitimised" the Republican Government and its war effort in the eyes of the world. Franco's army was usually depicted as a cabal of reactionary Generals leading troops composed of foreign legionaires, Moors, Germans and Italians. In April 1937, the Weekly declared:

The Spaniards on the insurgent side are negligible. drunken sots such as General de Llano, unprincipled adventurers such

as General Franco, these tools of international finance would have been off the field - nay, would never have been on it but for their foreign pay-masters. Moors from Africa - paid with German gold - regular troops from Italy and Germany, these are the foes the Spanish people have had to fight.³³

Unlike the Catholic newspapers, which made some attempt to discuss the political and organisational composition of the Republican forces, the Weekly made little effort to outline the various political groupings led by General Franco. A discussion of the political differences between the Carlists³⁴ and the Falangists, for example, would not have contributed to the impression of a Fascist horde, and a mainly foreign one at that.

The major role of foreign intervention was also emphasised in the atrocity stories carried by the Weekly. Communist propaganda about atrocities tended to focus on the bombing of cities and towns by German and Italian planes. There was a notable difference between the atrocity propaganda in the Workers Weekly and that in the Tablet and Zealandia. Catholic reports of atrocities dealt more with "personal" atrocities: the crucifixion of priests, the murder of nuns. The image of atrocity in Communist propaganda was the menacing impersonal bomber, wreaking death and destruction from the skies upon the civilian populations of open towns. It is only to be expected that this was the focus for pro-Republican atrocity propaganda, for the bombings were the greatest atrocities perpetrated on Republican Spain. The horror of many people everywhere was aroused by such incidents as the bombing of Guernica and the shelling of Almeria.³⁵ In a sense, they were the image of modern warfare, in which civilians and non-military targets could be expected to suffer as much as the military.

Communist propaganda made use of the fact that this image was what had indeed caught the horrified imagination of the world (in much the same way as one would expect the imagination of a devout Catholic to be most stirred by the image of cruelty to and defilement of nuns). It also added force to the Communist assessment of the

nature of the war. The nationality of the planes used revealed the real perpetrators of, and participants in, the war, as well as the ruthlessness and inhumanity of the Fascist war machine. Eyewitness accounts of bombings were common in the pages of the Weekly, as were headlines like "How Fascism Makes War" and "Death from the Sky".³⁶ The following description of the bombing of Guernica was typical of the emphasis of Communist atrocity stories:

The system of attack was always the same. First they would machine gun the people, then they dropped explosive, and, finally, incendiary bombs. The planes flew very low, their machine guns rattled furiously, machine-gunning woods, fields and roadside ditches full of praying women, children and aged people.³⁷

The Weekly, in an editorial written about the bombing of Guernica, accused Anthony Eden of deliberately refusing to identify "Franco and his allies as the instigators of the dreadful massacre at Guernica" and went on to say:

Instead, a subtle attempt is made to infer that both sides are guilty of outrages. This is to suggest that the Spanish people would be guilty of self-murder. It is not for nothing that German aeroplanes were used for the work of massacre. We do not believe that the most depraved Spanish Fascists, with the exception of a few Generals, could be found to do this dastardly deed.³⁸

And yet, despite this focus on the nature of Fascist aggression in atrocity stories, the Communists were also concerned to show the depravity of the Spanish rebels. This created a difficulty in reconciling the image of the rebel war effort as being fueled by Fascist troops, and opposed by most Spaniards, with the image of depraved Spanish Fascists murdering their fellow countrymen and "encourag[ing] the violation of "Marxist" women".³⁹ The publication of comments by Mr T.E. Taylor, president of the Anglo-American Press Association, gave some clue to the way in which the two somewhat contradictory propaganda lines were synthesised. Taylor claimed that the Spanish Fascists: "play a minor part in the battles properly so-called, but that they voluntarily take up the

duties of police and executioners behind the lines".⁴⁰ However, this fitted somewhat uneasily with Communist claims that the number of Spaniards on the rebel side was "negligible". The desire to detail atrocities per se, to reveal the inhumanity of the war being waged on the Spanish people, and to paint the rebel side as black as possible was confused by the desire to apportion blame, and to underscore arguments about the nature of the war.

Another kind of atrocity much discussed, and without hesitation attributed to Franco, was the rebels' treatment of priests and of Catholic Basques who were fighting for the Government forces. This reflected another aspect of Communist arguments about the essence of the war raging in Spain. Communist propaganda was at pains to point out the fallacy of the view that the war in Spain was based on religion, that Franco was fighting for Christianity against a tide of atheism initiated by the Communists.⁴¹

The place of the Basques in this particular area of Communist propaganda cannot be underestimated. The very fact of their presence among the forces of the Government undermined Catholic arguments about the anti-religious features of the Republican regime. The Weekly printed a photograph of troops receiving mass before battle, with the caption "Church and People United in Defence of Democracy: Mass in the Field before these Basques went into Battle".⁴² It also published the statements of a "distinguished Catholic writer", M. Jacques Maritain:

It is generally recognised that the Basque population is the most Catholic of Spain; a profound faith animates their daily existence ... even those who think they have made a mistake and who condemn their political conduct must surely see, faced with the sacrifice of this good and great people, that is the recourse to civil war which must be condemned above all, that war, which with armies invoking the defence of Christianity, has pitilessly struck the most Christian district of Spain.⁴³

The Weekly's evidence of Franco's treatment of the Basques, and of Catholic priests in particular, assured its readers of the truth

of its claim that Franco was merely an adventurer and not a Christian crusader at all. In the Basque territories conquered by Franco it was reported that:

prominent Basque leaders have been transported to North Africa for slave labour. This must blast once and for all the fearful lies that the war in Spain was a religious war with Franco on the side of Christianity. The Mohammedan Moors have been brought to Spain by Franco and the Catholic Basques sent to Africa to work as slaves. No Catholic knowing these facts could feel for one moment support for Franco.⁴⁴

Several items about the execution of priests further reinforced this argument. According to the Weekly, priests were being executed for the "crime" of having said mass for Government soldiers. One item about the execution of priests could equally have come from a Catholic newspaper's discussion of Republican atrocities:

They were not allowed Mass or time for contemplation, but given two minutes, after they had been informed of the execution, for confession. There was no burial ceremony. The bodies were thrown into a trench.⁴⁵

The presence of Moors in Franco's army was also used to undermine the Catholic image of Franco as a Christian crusader, and as well, served as an additional reminder that Franco's army was not composed primarily of Spaniards fighting, however mistakenly, for a cause in which they believed. Again, the opinion of the Catholic writer, Jacques Maritain, encapsulated the Communist argument:

It is yet another sacrilege - religious in form - to deck Mohammedan soldiers with pictures of the Sacred heart so that they may kill the children of Christians in a holy fashion.⁴⁶

That Catholics like Maritain opposed Franco was another valuable factor in Communist propaganda about the nature of the war.

Further evidence to confirm that the war was not a war of religion was found in the religious freedom purportedly allowed by

the Republican Government, which was contrasted with Franco's treatment of pro-Republican priests. The Weekly printed several items that vouched for the religious tolerance of the Republican Government. However, it was unfortunate that most of these items were about the tolerance of the Protestantism in Republican Spain. The Manifesto of the Protestant Youth,⁴⁷ a report from the Jehovahs Witness Yearbook for 1937⁴⁸ and news of 52 evangelical churches operating in the Republican war zone,⁴⁹ may have imparted an impression of tolerance for minority religions by the Government, but they would have done little to assuage the fears of Catholics. The report from the Jehovah's Witnesses was a particularly unfortunate choice. The anti-clerical sentiment expressed by the Jehovah's Witness Yearbook was surely inappropriate in the context of the Catholic claims the Weekly was attempting to refute.

Another pro-Francoist claim that the Weekly was eager to prove false was the claim that the war was inspired by a Communist plot. The Weekly took great pains to point out that Communist influence in Spanish political life, prior to the rebellion, was minimal. The Weekly published a statement by Izvestia in April 1937 which said, in part: "When General Franco raised the military Fascist rebellion against the Spanish Government there was not a single Communist or Socialist in the council of ministers."⁵⁰ The same item quoted the President of the Council of Ministers, Largo Caballero: "We shall never permit that Bolshevism and Anarchism be forced upon us ... Besides, no one thinks of forcing Bolshevism or Anarchism upon us."⁵¹

However much reliance the Weekly and members of the Communist Party placed in Izvestia's veracity, the use of an official Soviet newspaper to deny the existence of a Communist plot in Spain was hardly likely to dispel suspicion among non-Communists.

In the same vein, the Weekly emphasised that the elections that brought the Popular Front Government to power in February 1936, were completely in order and quite legal, as a counter to claims of

electorial manipulation from Catholics and other anti-Republicans.⁵²

The nature of the Spanish Government itself was used to reinforce the image of a war against democracy. The Spanish Government was depicted as moderate, democratic and reformist. For this alone, even without the wider implications of the war for world democracy, workers and democrats were urged to support the cause of the Government of Spain.

The policies and social and political ideals of the Spanish Government did not play a large part in the Communist propaganda campaign. The main focus of the Weekly's coverage was the war effort and the achievements of the United Front policy in that area.⁵³ Nevertheless, enough was said to enable the Weekly's readers to understand the enlightened nature of Republican rule and the great future in store for Spain once Franco was defeated. The determination of the Popular Front Government to improve the life of the Spanish people was indicated by claims that reforms were still taking place and social policies were continuing to be effected in the midst of war. Thus, it was obvious that the Republican Government was dedicated in its pursuit of social reform. It also showed the tireless spirit of both the Government and the Spanish people, and the well organised governmental structure that must exist, if reforms were to come into operation at a time when the major focus of Government attention was the prosecution of the war.

Education and health care was most often mentioned, as well as the provisions for the care of war refugees, particularly the children. Letters from the New Zealand nurses in Spain, from Mary Lawson, a member of the Australian nursing unit in Spain, who visited New Zealand in 1938, and from Winifred Bates, an Englishwoman attached to the British medical units in Spain, were all used as evidence of the Republic's health, education and child and refugee care programmes.⁵⁴ The letters bore witness to the establishment of children's homes and the provision of educational facilities for

both the children and the wounded Republican soldiers in the hospitals. These kind of reforms and social policies were shown to be in the same spirit as the war effort, the fight against reactionary policies in all facets of Spanish life. Mary Lowson said: "The Education Department, the people and the youth of Spain are fighting illiteracy in the same spirit as they are fighting Fascism."⁵⁵

Woman Today also published Mary Lowson's letters,⁵⁶ and much of its coverage of the Spanish Civil War dealt with women under the Republican Government. "Women of Spain", by Ilya Ehrenburg, a Soviet writer and correspondent for Izvestia in Spain, discussed the emancipation of women under the Republic.⁵⁷ "Spanish ABC" (reprinted from Sight and Sound) told of an American film company's astonishment that the Government's education programme was continuing despite the war, even, it said, in the army and among munitions workers.⁵⁸

Claims about the smooth functioning of life in Republican Spain, despite bombings, shortages of food and in some cases an influx of refugees, were also used as evidence of the progressive and well organised nature of the Republican Government and as further cause for the admiration of the international Labour Movement.⁵⁹ This admiration should, of course, express itself in support for the war effort of the Republic against Fascism, that this new and dedicated democracy might not founder.

Thus, the nature of the war in Spain was made clear in Communist propaganda: it was a Fascist war of aggression waged mercilessly against the majority of the people of Spain and against their workers' Government. More than that, it was a war in which the fate of the world might be decided. The reasoning behind this argument constituted a major part of Communist propaganda about the Spanish War, for, only if it could be shown that Fascist aggression in Spain threatened all democracy, would there be any reason for the constant emphasis on the need for a United Front in aid of Spanish and,

ultimately, world democracy. The reasoning for the analysis of the Spanish situation as a microcosm of the world situation, a drama in which the audience would soon be participants, began from the basic point that the war was, indeed, one of Fascist aggression in order to seize Spanish territory. From that point, there followed what could be called the "domino theory" of Fascist aggression. In April 1937 the Weekly's editor Sid Scott wrote:

Fascism is proceeding on the principle of attacking her enemies piecemeal, of committing one act of aggression after another, of consolidating itself and of then going on to fresh victories.⁶⁰

If the Fascist attempt to add Spain to its list of conquests were not opposed, then Fascism would go on to new conquests, and eventually destroy democracy everywhere. It was "iterated and reiterated" throughout the pages of the Weekly that "Spain is fighting the battle for world democracy".⁶¹

A logical consequence of this "domino theory" of Fascist aggression was that the two Western democracies, Britain and France were endangering themselves by not taking a firm stand on Fascist intervention in Spain. Moreover, Communist propaganda accused Britain and France of betraying not only democracy in Spain itself, but their own democratic institutions, by not supporting the Republican Government of Spain. If Spain were conquered by the Fascists, then Germany and Italy, emboldened by British and French inaction, would go on to further conquests, presumably also unhindered by the two democratic Powers. Eventually, France would fall to Fascism and Britain would then have to face a Fascist-dominated Europe alone.

In the first month of the war, the Workers Weekly had supported the idea of non-intervention. On 22 August 1936, the Weekly quoted Fred Freeman, a member of the Central Committee of the Party, at a "Solidarity with Spain" meeting at the Trades Hall in Wellington: "We in New Zealand could at least support the action of the French

Government in calling for a neutrality pact, which would cut foreign Fascist aid for the rebels."⁶² By October 1936, the Weekly was condemning the Non-Intervention Agreement, and in particular the embargo on arms sales to either side in Spain, as a fake. It was described as "a blockade on the Spanish Government [that] in reality favours the rebels":⁶³

Why have the Fascists been able to advance so far in spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Spanish people back their Government. Because they have been armed by the Fascist powers of Germany and Italy. Because France and Britain have refused to sell arms to the Spanish Government, thereby breaking all international laws. Sanctions were not fully applied against Italy when it launched its war of aggression against Abyssinia. Yet the democratic countries are effectively applying sanctions against the Spanish Government, guilty of no aggression, which is defending democracy against Fascism.⁶⁴

For Communists the Non-Intervention Committee epitomised the pro-Fascist stance of the "Tory" British Government. In February 1937, the Weekly said:

bitter experience has shown that the Tory Government of Great Britain by its whole policy is assisting Fascism in Spain and betraying democracy into the hands of its enemies.⁶⁵

Communist propaganda held the British Government to be the major culprit of the NIC. France, in the first two years of the war, at least, was merely a less than willing accomplice forced by circumstances to concur with British policy. No doubt the existence of a Popular Front Government in France, led by Leon Blum, did much to influence the Communists' more sympathetic treatment of France's role in the "farce" of non-intervention. The equal culpability suddenly thrust upon the French Government in the last months of the war possibly had something to do with a change of leadership in France. In October 1937, France was described as being dragged in the wake of British policy⁶⁶ and, in March 1938, the Weekly stated, "The responsibility for [the arms embargo] rests largely with the pro-Fascist Chamberlain Government. France will not act at present unless she can depend on British support".⁶⁷

Attacks on the British Government's policy over Spain in part expressed the Soviet Union's fear that Germany and Britain would ally to attack Russia. An item in "International Notes", condemning Lloyd George's statement that Britain should cultivate Germany's friendship, said:

Hitler cannot make war without the support or, at least, the neutrality of Britain ... The need for an alliance with Britain and Italy in order to carry forward war against France and the Soviet Union is stated quite openly in Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" and in all Nazi propaganda.⁶⁸

For the Communist Party the reasons for "pro-Fascist" policy were clear: "They have too much in common with the Fascist Powers to wish to see them decisively defeated by a People's Front Government".⁶⁹ At first it was Anthony Eden, the "super-sartorial mouth-piece of non-intervention",⁷⁰ who was the personification of British policy, but once Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister, he became the target of most of the vilification directed at the policy of the British Government.

The whole thrust of the Communist argument about Spain, that it was a battle for democracy, meant that most of the propaganda about British policy was aimed at showing just how anti-democratic and pro-Fascist were the "Tory-capitalist" leaders of Britain. The injustice of Britain's attitude towards the legitimately elected Government of Spain, and Chamberlain's partiality towards the dictators, was considered to be revealed most clearly at the meetings of the NIC:

In the discussions that take place the moral and lawful rights of the Spanish Government are totally ignored and every reference to them and to the terrible policy of aggression and massacre carried out by the Fascists is condemned by the British Tories as being "provocative". Not a word must be said against the culprits themselves.⁷¹

In an article in "International Notes", in July 1937, the "London financiers' Government" was accused of attempting to aid Franco with its latest NIC "control plan", which would grant belligerent rights

to "the puppet" General Franco. The British Government's motives were interpreted as, firstly, a desire to weaken the "People's Government" of Spain by granting Franco more prestige and, secondly, the need to stifle criticism in Parliament about inaction over attacks on British ships, since, if Franco were granted belligerent rights, he would be able under international law to seize ships aiding the Spanish Government.⁷²

Even the Nyon Conference on Mediterranean piracy in September 1937, when Britain, France and other powers reached an agreement on measures to control piracy without Italy being present, was regarded by the Communist Party as evidence of British partiality for Franco. "Why was Spain not invited?", demanded the Weekly.⁷³ The Weekly could only conclude that "the British Tory Government is determined to placate Italy at the expense of the Spanish People's Government".⁷⁴ Another article in "International Notes", in June 1938, suggested that the Anglo-Italian Agreement and Britain's lack of reaction to attacks on shipping meant that Britain might not only acquiesce in Italian intervention in Spain, but actively collaborate in it.⁷⁵

A major point of the Weekly's propaganda was that Britain's Government would placate the Fascists at the expense of its own real interests as well. This argument, already inherent in the "domino theory", was compounded by reports of the sinking of British ships in the Mediterranean, and the absence of British protests to the culprit, Italy:

Gone is the day when the British flag was a citizen's protection against tyranny. Today a British citizen is allowed to suffer any indignity - providing it is inflicted by a Fascist.⁷⁶

The Weekly carried several items about the Mediterranean piracy, all designed to show that, in their frantic desire to come to an accomodation with Italy, British leaders were willing to sacrifice British ships, British lives and British status as a seapower.⁷⁷

The fundamentally anti-democratic nature of the "Tory" Government in Britain was also revealed by this inaction, according to the Weekly. In August 1938, the paper published an account, by an American seaman working on the "Thorpehaven", a British merchant vessel bombed at Alicante. The article began with the statement that "the British Government is encouraging Franco to murder British seamen and to sink British ships". Evidence for this claim was produced in the American's claim that British naval vessels stood by while British ships were bombed. The article concluded with the opinion, voiced by the seaman, that the British Government's policy "was completely destroying the average British seaman's faith in the British Government".⁷⁸

Not only was the Government acting in an undemocratic manner in its "Tory capitalist" disregard for the lives of British workers, it was also misusing the power given to it by British democracy:

British warships, paid for with the sweat of the British people, are also stopping any British vessels in the Mediterranean which are suspected of carrying supplies to the People's Government.⁷⁹

With anti-democratic sentiments naturally went inhumanity, another indication that British leaders had more in common with Fascism than with the "Spanish People's Government". It was bad enough that Chamberlain and his colleagues preventing the legitimate Government of Spain from defending itself by their arms embargo, but, worse, they were abetting the Fascist interventionists' war on women and children by preventing foodstuffs and other merchandise from reaching Republican Spain.

From December 1938, as the war drew to a close, the Communists made a great deal of "Chamberlain's blockade" of the Spanish Government, claiming that it was to be extended to cover all supplies to the now chronically short of food Republican territory.⁸⁰ Britain's inhumanity, and its partiality for Franco and his Fascist allies, was epitomised for the Weekly in the British Government's

returning to Spain the Basque children evacuated from Bilbao earlier in the war. Under the heading "British Government supports Franco", the Weekly said:

... of all crimes committed by British Imperialism in the last few years, none have been more callous and mean than the sending back, to death or worse than death, of the little Basque refugee children who fled from the Fascist terror prior to the taking of Bilbao.⁸¹

The defeat of the Republican Government by Franco was seen by the Communists as resulting as much from British and, later, French policy, particularly the arms embargo, as from the massive aid received from Germany and Italy. In addition, the coup by the Casado "junta" in March 1939, which wrested power from Juan Negrin's Government,⁸² was claimed by the Weekly to have been masterminded by Britain and France again, in order to secure a Fascist victory in Spain. By this time the Republican Government was irrevocably split over whether to continue resistance to Franco. Negrin and the Communists wished to continue resistance. Colonel Casado, General Miaja and other non-Communist members of the Committee of National Defence that seized power considered not only that the Republican Army could not fight on, but also that they could negotiate better terms of surrender with Franco than a Communist-dominated Government could.⁸³ Thus, Communist criticisms of the Casado regime were really based on its political stand and the fact that it was ready to concede defeat. However, somehow, the Casado coup became linked to British and French recognition of Franco. In March 1939, the Weekly reported:

The revolt of Casado and his colleagues was prepared in London and Paris. It is part of the policy of the recognition of Burgos ... The junta formed around Casados consisted of names which had already been selected in Paris and London by the same persons as had decided upon the recognition of Franco.⁸⁴

Although the Weekly claimed that the British Consul in Madrid had been in touch with Casado, it provided no other evidence that the coup had been planned in Paris and London. The Weekly labelled the

alleged plot "the most shameful of all betrayals", the final step in a policy of betrayal of Spanish and world democracy by the "so-called" Western democracies, which began with "the tragic farce of non-intervention" and ended with the recognition of the Burgos Government. Short-sighted British capitalists had put their own self-interest before that of their country and of the rest of the world, because they were more ideologically inclined towards both Franco's Government and German and Italian Fascism. Because first Britain and, later, France, after the fall of the Blum Government, did not favour a Popular Front Government in Spain, it was easy for them to sacrifice Spain to the appetites of Hitler and Mussolini. In so doing, said the Communists, the Western democracies had brought Europe closer to war and democracy closer to destruction.⁸⁵ In February 1939, the Weekly had said:

Barcelona has fallen, Spain is encircled with a ring of steel and drenched in the blood of its bravest and best ... The peace of Munich is with us and Fascism advances with seven-leagued boots across the face of democratic Europe.⁸⁶

As the Communists saw the war in Spain as a battle for democracy everywhere, against the menace of Fascism, so they saw the answer to that menace in the United Front of democratic people the world over. Communist use of the Spanish Civil War, and events and opinions related to it, as paradigms cannot be overemphasised. Spain was a mirror of world trends, one particularly salient aspect of the multi-faceted workings of both Fascist and Communist policy. At one and the same time, Spain was but part of a greater whole, and, yet, the microcosm of that macrocosm. The Communist Party saw Spain as only one part of Fascism's expansionist aims, but also as the leading example of those aims and the tactics, that were to be employed. In the same way, the Communists' answer to Fascism, the United Front, went further than merely a movement in support of the Republican Government of Spain, and yet was epitomised by that international pro-Republican movement.

The role of the Spanish people as the frontline fighters in a

world-wide battle for democracy was a major theme of Communist propaganda about the war in Spain. From this premise, it logically followed that democrats everywhere must support the cause of the Spanish people; it was their fight as much as it was the Spaniards'. The Weekly's first editorial on the war made this clear:

Liberal journalists and Catholic intellectuals, Labour, Socialist and Communist writers, democrats of no particular party affiliation, who have visited Spain, declare with one voice that the fight of the Spanish Government is a fight for democracy and peace ... and that so-called "neutrality" is a crime against the Spanish people and against the ideals of peace and freedom throughout the world.⁸⁷

The editorial also indicated the basis for the United Front, in its enumeration of the various types of people who supported the cause of the Spanish Government. The majority of material on Spain in the Weekly and in "International Notes" mentioned in some way the United Front over Spain, and encouraged its growth. The only way to save Spain would be by a campaign of international solidarity with the Government of Spain, to send aid and to put pressure on Governments, especially those of Britain and France, to do the same. This campaign could force Britain and France to end non-intervention and to lift the arms embargo, which had considerable influence upon the Republican Government's war effort.

It was only infrequently that Communist propaganda indicated exactly how the international pro-Republican movement was going to act to change the policy of the Western democracies. The impression given was that a major expression of public opinion in support of the Republicans would achieve this aim. It is likely that the vague calls for action were intended to promote actions such as strikes. Only in one article, towards the end of the war, when the calls for international solidarity with Spain were becoming more urgent, was it openly stated that direct action might be used to influence Governments. In December 1938, an article on Chamberlain's reported intensification of the "blockade" of Spain and the imminent granting of belligerent rights to Franco concluded:

if necessary, as Jose Diaz said in his article on the 2nd anniversary of the defence of Madrid, the workers will use all their weapons of struggle, including strike action, to enforce the demands on their governments.⁸⁸

The very vagueness of the calls for international solidarity with Spain gives the impression that Communist propaganda had as much in mind the wider purpose of the creation of a United Front against Fascism, as it did the development of a campaign to aid the Spanish war effort:

He who really desires to see the end of the destruction of peaceful towns in Spain, of the murder of women and children, who desires to have the Fascist violators driven out of Spain and to see the establishment of a firm barrier against the outbreak of a new world imperialist war must take action. It is not difficult to find the organisation and form of this action; life itself, the experience of the Labour Movement prompts them.⁸⁹

This statement by George Dimitrov in the concluding part of his article illustrates better the type of oblique comment about democratic action than does the report of Diaz' words.

The growing strength of the pro-Republican movement and, therefore, the United Front against Fascism, was indicated by items about pro-Republican resolutions and activities in various countries. In May, June and July 1938, the Weekly published a spate of articles about American pro-Republicanism; for example, the growing support for Spanish democracy in Hollywood, among stars of stage and screen like Clara Bow and Paul Robeson.⁹⁰ The pro-Republican stance of the New England Methodist Conference⁹¹ and the YWCA⁹² helped to show that enlightened and influential groups everywhere were behind the Spanish Government in its fight against Fascism.

The Weekly also made an effort to show how the workers of Fascist countries opposed the aggression of Germany and Italy in Spain; a further indication of the solidarity of the pro-Republican movement

and the growth of the United Front, even if in a covert manner. In December 1936, the Weekly reported that Japanese workers, prevented by their Government from forming groups in support of the Government in Spain, were writing anxious letters to Labour magazines to discover the truth of the situation in Spain.⁹³ Later in the same month, an item with the headline "German Workers Make Dud Shells For Franco", reported that most rebel artillery shells failed to explode and explained that there was:

... sabotage within the Nationalist ranks. A bit of paper found in the nose of one of these shells said: "While I am an artilleryman, not a single shell fired by me will explode."

Other duds were found to be filled with sawdust, despite their apparent German origin.⁹⁴

(There was no explanation of how a Nationalist soldier could open a shell in order to place a note in it.)

The United Front would triumph, said the Weekly in an editorial in April 1937, because of the justice of its cause, which was felt by workers and democrats everywhere, since it was the cause of the people. Even those within the enemy forces knew their true interests lay with the United Front, or, in the case of Spain, with the Republican forces:

The desertions from the Italian forces to the Spaniards do not mean that the Italian soldier is a coward; they mean that he is a peasant or worker dragged from his cottage door to do the bidding of that imitation Caesar, Benito Mussolini.⁹⁵

The opinions and pro-Republican activities of the British Labour Movement were much emphasised, particularly the pronouncements of Harry Pollitt, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The emphasis on pro-Republican activities in Great Britain was related, in part, to the role of the British Government in the Spanish issue. These activities were another indication that the British Government did not have the sanction of a good number of its people for its non-intervention policy.

It may be also that the Weekly was catering to the Anglocentrism of New Zealanders, in its emphasis on British activities. Internationalists the Communists may have been, but they were still New Zealanders, often with close emotional associations with England, as were the members of the New Zealand labour Movement to whom the Weekly was appealing. In January 1938, the Weekly published the views of Clement Atlee on his return from a visit to Spain,⁹⁶ and in April 1938 the Emergency Labour Conference on the Spanish situation was applauded for its decision to pressure the Chamberlain Government to change its Spanish policy.⁹⁷

The role of Spain as a paradigm of the world situation was used constantly in Communist appeals to form a United Front around the Spanish issue. Spain was a lesson to the proletariat of the world, said Georgi Dimitrov:

There also can be no doubt that the splendid example of the heroic struggle of the Spanish people has exerted irresistible influence over other nations threatened with Fascist aggression ...

... Fascism must be opportunely countered by the forces of a united working class of the widest masses standing solid in an anti-Fascist People's Front.⁹⁸

Dimitrov's article went on to detail how the example of the Spanish people's struggle had influenced the discovery of the Cagouard plot in France, the crushing of the Cedillo coup in Mexico and the determination of the Chinese people against the Japanese invaders.

The International Brigades were seen as an outstanding example of the international solidarity movement with Spain. Surprisingly, in discussions of the war effort of Republican Spain, the International Brigades were only infrequently mentioned. Perhaps the Weekly, and the Communist propaganda machine in general, were content to let the exploits of the International Brigades speak for themselves. The Weekly ran a series of articles by "Taffy" Patterson, a Welsh International Brigader who came to New Zealand from Spain,⁹⁹ as well as letters from New Zealand International Brigaders "Tom"

Spiller,¹⁰⁰ Bert Bryan¹⁰¹ and Charlie Riley,¹⁰² all giving accounts of the battles involving the International Brigades and of the stalwart internationalist and democratic spirit of these foreign volunteers for the cause of Spanish democracy.

The value of the war in Spain as a lesson to the working-class of the world was not only in the general outlines of the struggle of democracy against Fascism; the Spanish People's Front itself was the model upon which the international United Front against Fascism should base itself. The solidarity and determination of the Spanish forces against overwhelming odds, in the form of German and Italian aid to Franco, and the arms embargo, was to be an inspiration to workers everywhere.

The achievements of the Spanish army were lauded; it was the United Front incarnate. The Army was more to be commended because it had risen above severe difficulties, in the way of equipment and training, at the beginning of the war. The Spanish People's Army was the subject of an article by Hugh Slater published in December 1936. It grew, he said, from a disorganised and very poorly equipped workers' militia into a disciplined and skilled fighting force which was, by the time of the article's publishing, ready and willing to be formed into a regular army. Slater stressed that the Popular Militia was the only force at the command of the Spanish Government at the outbreak of the rebellion:

It must be remembered that when the Fascist rebellion started eight out of the nine divisions of the Spanish army mutinied against the Government. The only possible thing to do was to ARM THE PEOPLE.¹⁰³

A significant feature of Slater's article was his emphasis on the willingness of worker organisations to put aside their political differences for the sake of the cause. Inevitably, it was the Anarchists' willingness to do so, which he used as the most telling evidence of the solidarity of the Spanish United Front: "In my opinion it is a great tribute to the honesty and commonsense of the

famous ... Spanish anarchists that they have accepted the necessity for discipline in war-time."¹⁰⁴

Another significant point made by Slater was echoed by the Weekly, in an editorial entitled "Invincible", in April 1937. The Spanish Government forces were "the people armed". This was their major strength: that they were fighting for a cause in which they believed, the cause of their own democratic institutions. The Weekly said:

The glorious successes of the People's Army in Spain demonstrate the historical truth that a people in arms is invincible ... Spain today has shown the world that now, as much as ever before, morale is the deciding factor in warfare. ¹⁰⁵

Republican advances, for example, on the Aragon front in September¹⁰⁶ and at Teruel in early 1938,¹⁰⁷ were attributed to this factor of morale and were used as an example of the power that a United Front of all democratic people could wield, even in the face of overwhelming odds. They were a demonstration of the correctness of the United Front policy. Defeats, of course, were not due to the failure of purpose by the Spanish people, but to the great advantage in men and equipment held by Franco and, as well, to traitors within the ranks of the Government forces.¹⁰⁸ The concept of the people armed linked also to the Communist assertion that there were few Spaniards in the Nationalist ranks, and to the defections from Franco's side of both Spaniards and Italians.

It was emphasised that all the Spanish people were involved in the war effort, even women and children. Much was made of the participation of women in the militia, fighting alongside the men for the future of their country. Even those people not directly engaged in the war effort were still a part of the People's Army, for they were suffering privations and shortages willingly in the cause of the war. Letters from Mory Lawson, the Australian nurse, and from the New Zealand nurses in Spain, already noted for their use as evidence of the progressive nature of the Republican Government¹⁰⁹ also

usually contained references to the morale and "spirit of resistance" of the Spanish people under war conditions.

Their ensuring that daily life went on, that services ran smoothly, that discomfort and danger were endured without complaint, these were the contributions of non-combatants to the United Front. In a letter published in July 1938 Mary Lowson said: "...the morale of the Catalonians has never been so high. They show a courageous determination - a people willing to face any privation or difficulty to send aid to the front, to give food and assistance to the sick, wounded and refugees."¹¹⁰

Yet, despite the congratulatory tone that often coloured descriptions of acts of solidarity with Spain, and of the various "broadly-based" national pro-Republican movements, there was more than a hint of factionalism still to be found in the Communist Party attitude towards other Left organisations. From the Communist point of view, of course, the factionalism came from the other groups. It was the Communist Party that was aiming for the establishment of a United Front against Fascism, and in aid of Spanish democracy; therefore, it was the fault of other Left organisations and not the Communist Party if this call were not answered. As early as December 1936, the Comintern was complaining:

Under the pressure of the workers the leaders of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions declare their readiness to support Republican Spain. But why, then, do they reject the proposal of the Communist Party of France to call an international conference of all working class organisations in defence of the Spanish people?¹¹¹

However, at this early stage in the war, it was still possible to claim that the United Front was ever growing and that "the will of the working class for unity" was breaking down these obstacles.¹¹² As the war drew out, the Communist Party repeated this claim, but the urgency of its appeals for working class unity around the cause of Spain was also growing. The tone of the appeals countered somewhat

the claims of vast numbers behind the Communist-inspired United Front.

Undoubtedly, there was a large body of opinion throughout the world in support of the Spanish Government, and many of the arguments put forward by the Communists, particularly about the role of German and Italian aid and the ineffectiveness of the NIC, were based on fact. The problem lay in the Communists' use of the Spanish cause for its wider aims of a United Front, and in its manipulation of the facts to aid this cause. The single-minded unity and the setting aside of political differences which the Communists attempted both to ascribe to and to impose upon the pro-Republican movement, in the cause of the United Front, and, many suspected, in the cause of Communist domination of a united international working-class movement, did not really exist.

When the war was drawing to a close, in late 1938 and early 1939, and it had become obvious that the Republicans were weakening and that Britain and France would make no last minute decision to aid the Government of Spain, factionalism again surfaced in Communist propaganda:

The drawing out of the struggle in Spain, like the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, has only been possible through the lack of unity among the international proletariat. As a result of this the isolated efforts have not been sufficient to impose the fulfillment of their duty on the Democratic Governments in defence of Republican Spain and in preserving the territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia.¹¹³

Even at this late stage it was claimed that real working class unity could save Spain. If only opinion were mobilised to persuade Britain and France to allow the Spanish Government to purchase arms, the struggle for democracy would be won. In March 1939, the Weekly said: "The fight is not yet lost. Republican Spain can still win if the necessary support is rendered by the people of the whole world."¹¹⁴

The ambivalence of the Communist attitude to the development of the United Front, on one hand encouraging the formation of such a movement and, on the other, attacking Left groups that did not behave as the Communist Party wished them to, was most noticeable in the Weekly's attitude towards the pro-Republican activities of the British Labour movement. These activities were, at one and the same time, used to show the growing strength and, when necessary, the weaknesses and undemocratic nature of British socialism.

In the concluding part of his article on the Spanish Civil War, Georgi Dimitrov made a strong condemnation of the response of the Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions to the Communist calls for a United Front, and laid much of the blame on the British Labour Party:

But on every occasion when the Communist International has addressed its proposal for joint action to the Second International and the International Federation of Trade Unions the representatives of these organisations have ... stubbornly refused, under the influence of reactionary British Labour Party and trade union leaders and their myrmidons in other countries, to agree to organise the united action of the world proletariat that alone can produce the necessary practical results.¹¹⁵

In March 1939, the British Labour Party was accused of hindering a call from the Labour and Socialist International for (unspecified) action to break the arms embargo to Republican Spain. Worse, it was also accused of considering action against "those of its members who want to unite the democratic movement to save Spanish democracy and the future of [Britain]".¹¹⁶ It seems that the Communist Party discussed this lack of solidarity only when it suited. At other times, the statements of British Labour politicians were published to add their weight to the image of an international united movement to aid the Spanish Republic.¹¹⁷

It is likely that attacks on the international Labour Movement and, more specifically, on its British component, had as much to do with the Communist International's wider aims as they did with the

Spanish situation itself. They were a response to the Labour Movement's refusal to let the Communists call the tune, as well as expressions of disapproval of the qualified support given by British Labour to the Spanish Republican cause.

The weaknesses and factionalism in the United International Front were also apparent within the Spanish People's Army. Although little was said about the internecine squabbles within the Republican forces, in order to promote the image of the successful application of the United Front concept, the existence of "traitors" was not denied. Again, as with the international United Front, only news of that factionalism and disunity that it suited the Communists to comment upon surfaced in the pages of the Worker's Weekly. Any weakness in the Spanish People's Army was due to the presence of "Trotskyists" in the ranks, "traitors" to the people's cause.

The differences of opinion between the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista), a non-Stalinist Communist Party, and the Spanish Communist Party (Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluna, or PSUC) over the prosecution and ultimate aim of the war were the most obvious crack in the facade of the United Front in Spain. The POUM (which had semi-Trotskyist beliefs) considered that the final aim of the war should be the establishment of "proletarian democracy" in Spain; the Communists, on the other hand, in pursuit of the international United Front and in order to woo the middle class in Spain, followed a policy of suppression of revolution and promoted the war as solely aimed at saving liberal democracy in Spain. The split between the proponents of "revolution in the midst of war" and those who argued for victory against Fascism above all culminated in the Barcelona "May Days" in 1937, when fighting broke out between the two groups. The "May Days" resulted in Communist leadership of the Government of Spain becoming more firmly entrenched and, eventually, in the dissolution of the POUM and the imprisonment and trial for treason of its leaders. The purging of non-Stalinists and "Trotskyists" in Spain reflected the purges in the Soviet Union.118

Communist propaganda in New Zealand, not surprisingly, did not attempt any discussion of the issues behind the Communist "persecution" of the POUM. Mrs Elsie Locke admits that there was a "cover-up" in the Workers Weekly about the POUM - "never would we have admitted what was really happening about the POUM".¹¹⁹ Instead, the Weekly concentrated on the revelations of treachery by the POUM. The POUM was accused of having plotted with Franco in an article published in the Weekly in August 1937. The article reported that leaders of the POUM had communicated by radio and personally, with Franco's high command, in order to co-ordinate their sabotage with the movement of Franco's forces, so as to successfully undermine the Republican war effort. The Weekly called this "the ugliest revelation of Trotskyist treachery to date"; in fact, it was the first such revelation with regard to Spain to appear in the New Zealand Communist newspaper.¹²⁰

The unmasking of these "traitors" could, of course, only serve to strengthen the People's Army, as an article describing Republican victories on the Aragon front pointed out: "The unification of command in the army and the crushing of the Trotskyists have paved the way for the building of a strong and efficient army."¹²¹

Not until November 1938, did the Weekly mention the Trotskyists again, this time in connection with the trial of the POUM, being held in Barcelona. Significantly, it was only at this point that the "May Days" in Barcelona were mentioned. The image of a strong Republican war effort may have been marred by an account of the riots at the time they occurred. In 1938, it was opportune to mention them as having been inspired by the Trotskyists.¹²²

At the end of the war, too, the capitulation of the Spanish Government to Franco was seen as a betrayal of the Spanish people by their new, and not entirely welcome, leaders, Casado and Miaja. (General Miaja had earlier been lauded as a great military leader of the People's Army.) This did not mean, said the Workers Weekly, that the anti-Fascist spirit of the Spanish people had lessened at

all, but that their new leaders were crypto-Fascists, defeatists and traitors. As well as attributing the victory of the Casado coup to British and French plotting, the Communists claimed some connection between Casado and his confreres and Russian "Trotskyists", in particular the Tukhachevsky-led "rebels" (whose "rebellion", incidentally, had also been instigated by Britain and France).¹²³

In no way was the defeat of the Republican forces to be seen as the failure of the Popular Front and the People's Army of Spain, nor of the concept of the United Front itself. In a curious way, the "traitors" and the "betrayals" in Spain were more potent reasons for Franco's victory than the most obvious reason: the military superiority of Franco and his allies. Above all, the failure of elements within Spain's Popular Front to heed the direction of the Communists was seen as betrayal of Spanish democracy. In March 1939, the Weekly said:

It is worthy to note that Spain's "Red-baiters" of yesterday, the elements who hampered the conduct of the war against Franco at every stage by their disruptive policy and their sectarian hatred of the Communists, the followers of Caballero and Prieto are today joining hands with Franco to defeat the Spanish people, and are responsible for the butchering of the workers in the streets. For "Red-baiting" is the first step on the path to treachery to the working class.¹²⁴

Although the United Front policy was one of co-operation on a broad basis with other "Left" groups, Communist sectionalism never ceased to operate. The denunciations of the actions of the Socialist International and the British Labour Party, the attacks on the POUM in Spain, the hysterical claims that Britain and France and/or Russian Trotskyists were behind the Casado junta's seizure of power, all spoke of the Communist International's will to dominate the United Front and to attack any elements within it that would not accept that Communist domination, or the Communist interpretation of events. They also revealed the Communist response to the failure of the United Front in, and about, Spain: blame was apportioned elsewhere.

It is interesting to note the treatment in Communist propaganda of the role of Communism in Spain and the attitude of the Soviet Union to the Spanish crisis. The deeper purpose of the United Front to aid Spanish democracy was to protect Russian democracy from an inevitable attack by Fascism. This fear for the safety of the Soviet Union was most clearly articulated in an item "contributed by a medical man who is a keen anti-Fascist and an admirer of the USSR":

Sooner or later as world crises intensify, what remains of the capitalist imperialist system will need a convenient excuse for flying at the throats at the mighty builders of Socialism in the USSR.¹²⁵

One such convenient excuse would be the role played by the USSR in the Spanish drama. There were several references in the pages of the Weekly to the possibility that the Powers would turn on the Soviet Union because of its aid to the Spanish Government, not least because it was the only great power, and the only country involved with the NIC, that had "dared to lift the veil of pretence which so thinly masks Fascist aggression in Spain".¹²⁶

Great pains were taken to emphasise that the USSR had no interest in Spain other than the defence of democracy, both in Spain and the rest of the world, and the support of a People's Front Government against the forces of reaction. In April 1937, the Weekly published a statement by Izvestia, which concluded:

The Soviet Government and Soviet public opinion do not pursue any interests of their own in Spain. The Soviet Government and the public are interested in Spanish affairs neither more nor less than the whole of advanced and progressive mankind, which knows that victory of the Fascist interventionists over Republican Spain would be a victory of reaction over progress.¹²⁷

An article in "International Notes" (reprinted from The Soviets of Today, published by the Friends of the Soviet Union) explained why the Red Army had not marched to the assistance of Spain. The reason, according to the article, was that the Soviet Union stood for the right of self determination of all nations, as witnessed by its

non-aggression pacts with other countries, and, thus, to intervene in Spain would be a "complete abnegation of Soviet foreign policy since 1917". It was also an example of the Soviet Union's "genuine effort towards the maintenance of peace", in contrast with other powers, which had intervened in Russia in 1917 and were now interfering, or allowing interference, in Spain.

Lest anyone should think that Russia did not intervene because it was unable to do so, the article also noted that it was only through forbearance and a desire to preserve peace that retaliatory measures had not been taken for the sinking of a Russian merchant-man. It warned that in the event of a world war spreading from Spain "the Fascist nations will feel the heavy hand of 153,000,000 people who are prepared to defend democracy with the resources of one sixth of the earth".¹²⁸

In 1938, "International Notes" published a long article by Maxim Litvinov, the Russian Foreign Minister, showing how "the Soviet Union has fought consistently to preserve peace and safeguard the right of small nations". The Soviet Union was depicted as committed to international collaboration and peace through the League of Nations and regional mutual assistance pacts. A tone of injured idealism permeated Litvinov's listing of the betrayals of the ideal of international collaboration; the implication was that the Soviet Union, although feared by, and under threat from, capitalist nations, had done its best for world peace only to find the cause betrayed by those very powers it had sought to help (that is, the Western democracies):

... it must be stated that the Soviet Government has demanded nothing for itself. It has not offered itself to anyone as a partner or ally; it consented to participate in the collective collaboration only because the situation was particularly dangerous not for itself, but, in the first place for the small countries, and in the second place for the states responsible for the post-war international order.¹²⁹

The article justified the Soviet Union's participation in the

Non-Intervention Committee. Although Russia had no faith that general war would have resulted if non-intervention had not been instituted, it had consented to sign the NIA in the interests of international solidarity and in the belief that intervention would be prohibited. Once the committee had proved not only conciliatory to the aggressors but inclined toward Franco, the Soviet Union had remained only in order to attempt to salvage the situation and prevent further concessions that would aid Franco.

The article concluded with an analysis of the reasons for this betrayal of international co-operation for peace and capitulation to aggression. Ultimately, according to Litvinov, the reasons were fear of Russia and of class upheaval, which resulted in a false conception of Fascism as a bastion against the rising working-class movement. Litvinov appealed to patriotism and/or nationalism when he contrasted the progressive groups in the democracies with the "circles who prefer to sacrifice their national interests and endanger or even lose the existence of the states for the sake of protecting them from social and class opposition". In this manner Communist propaganda justified the Soviet Union's participation in the diplomatic creations of imperialist nations, emphasised its commitment to democracy, collective security and peace, and its deep opposition to Fascism, and warned potential aggressors.

Very early in the war, in December 1936, an appeal from the Comintern, published in the Weekly, called for all democrats to join the United Front in aid of Spain and emphasised equally that the United Front should "rally round the Soviet Union". It concluded with the stirring call: "LONG LIVE SOVIET POWER THROUGHOUT THE WORLD", a sentiment hardly calculated to bolster claims of the Soviet's disinterested defence of democracy in Spain.¹³⁰

Even the Spanish People's Front, in the midst of a war of self-defence against Fascist aggression, apparently had as its deeper and greater purpose the defence of Soviet democracy. Frank Pitcairn (Claud Cockburn) reported on the plenum of the Central Committee of

the Communist Party of Spain, and quoted the words of Dolores Ibarruri (La Pasionaria), a well-known Spanish Communist and heroine of the Republican war effort: "The defence of the Soviet Union against its enemies and its calumniators must be a point of honour with every militant in the working class party."¹³¹

Yet, there was something rather contradictory about the Communist treatment of the role of the Soviet Union and of the Communist Party in Spain. At one and the same time, the parts played by the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Spain in aiding the Spanish people were lauded and used to emphasise the major influence of both in the struggle against Fascism everywhere; however, any hint that the Soviet Union or the Communist Party of Spain had deeper purposes in Spain was denied vehemently.

It has been shown that the Weekly's propaganda made sure that its readers understood how slight was the power or influence of Communists in Spanish politics prior to the outbreak of the war.¹³² But the Communist Party was given most of the credit for having been behind the establishment of the Popular Front coalition that became the Government in February 1936. It was claimed that only the Communist drive for the United Front of all working class organisations made possible the united electoral action that gave the Popular Front victory at the polls. Georgi Dimitrov, in the third part of "Two Years Heroic Struggle of the Spanish People", described the co-ordination of the forces of the Labour Movement beginning in 1935 and extending into the period of the war. He prefaced his description with a statement attributing the Popular Front's success to the policy of the United Front:

For a number of years the Communist Party of Spain - the initiator of the Popular Front - has conducted a consistent and persistent struggle for the unity of the Spanish people, for rallying all the forces of the people against reaction and Fascism.¹³³

The responsibility for the creation of the People's Army and its smooth functioning against the far-better equipped Fascist war

machine was primarily that of the Communist Party as well. Its success resulted partly from the Communists' well developed pre-war United Front policy, and also because it not only continued this policy into the war, but also succeeded in routing out the traitors, such as the POUM and the "Caballero clique".¹³⁴

This emphasis on the role of the Communist Party in Spain went to reinforce the arguments for the creation of the United Front. Again, the wider aim appeared to be the focus of attention rather than the war in Spain itself. Although the Workers Weekly was in a sense "preaching to the converted", its appeals went beyond that of the small group of Communists in New Zealand. One wonders how the self-congratulatory tone of Communist propaganda and the sectionalism that appeared now and again appealed to the less ideological of its readers, those non-Communist members of the Labour Movement, whom the Communist Party wished to unite in its United Front. The Communists' demurrals of sectional interest in Spain and the emphasis on the Soviet Union's altruistic defence of democracy in Spain sat uneasily with the obviously slanted praise of the United Front policy.

This discussion of Communist propaganda about the war in Spain has so far been in terms of the general trend of that propaganda, rather than its specific application to the New Zealand scene. Indeed, much of the propaganda directed toward the building of a united pro-Republican Movement, and for a United Front to grow from it, was not directed specifically at New Zealanders. Calls aimed at the New Zealand Labour Movement often varied little from calls to the international movement. Statements such as:

We of the Labour Movement would be traitors, indeed, if we lessened our efforts for one moment to aid these heroic people in winning the fight which they are waging for our sake and theirs.¹³⁵

or:

The United Front of workers, allied with the farmers, professional people and small trades-people on a common platform of opposition to Fascism and war, and for the achievement of the most necessary demands of the toiling people - this is the People's Front, the only force which is capable of saving civilisation from barbarism and reaction.¹³⁶

had a universal application. They were reinforced by more specific calls to the Labour Movement and to all New Zealand democrats to form a United Front in support of Spain: "If we do not take what action is possible to aid Spain in her present agony, then the reputation of New Zealand Labour will be forever stained."¹³⁷ said the Weekly, in an editorial on the bombing of Guernica in May 1937.

The Communist Party's Spanish campaign in New Zealand began with a call for "Hands off Spain!", aimed at joint action with the Labour Party to create a movement of solidarity with the Spanish Government. The Weekly's first article on the Spanish Civil War called for meetings of solidarity to be held and for motions to be sent to the Labour Government urging it to express support for the Popular Front Government of Spain.¹³⁸ The campaign to involve the Labour Party was to continue for some months at an intensive level and, thereafter, intermittently throughout the war. The Communist Party's tactics in this area were to emphasise the leading influence of the Labour Party in the New Zealand Labour Movement, and to encourage the rank-and-file to influence it to support the Popular Front Government of Spain.

On 1 August 1936, the Weekly reported that Leo Sim, General Secretary of the Communist Party, had sent a note to the National Secretary of the Labour Party urging joint action over Spain. "Political differences", said the Weekly, somewhat sententiously, "cannot be allowed to stand in the way of joint action".¹⁹⁰ On 8 August, the Weekly said:

A victory of the workers in Spain would strengthen the forces of the New Zealand Labour Movement. We know that New

Zealand workers would welcome joint action of the Labour and Communist forces for the defence of the Spanish people around the slogan of "Hands off Spain". Back our call for joint action.¹⁴⁰

The Non-Intervention Agreement in August and the establishment of the Non-Intervention Committee in September brought an end to the "Hands off Spain!" campaign. It was replaced by calls for the Labour Movement to influence the New Zealand Government to protest at British neutrality and the embargo on the sale of arms to Spain. The Weekly was increasingly critical of the attitude of the Labour Party and the Labour Government for, as the paper saw it, failing to take the lead in the solidarity campaign. Editorials in the Workers Weekly, often reprinted in "International Notes", again and again noted the silence of the Labour Government and urged the Labour Movement to ensure that their leaders become involved in the movement of solidarity for the Spanish Government.¹⁴¹ By November, the Labour Party and its Government were accused of a "shameful" and "intolerable" silence. On 20 November, the Weekly expressed its dissatisfaction with the attitude of the Labour Government:

Can we then be satisfied with the attitude of complete indifference of the Labour Party to the events in Spain? No! a thousand times No! Yet till now the Labour Party leaders and the Labour Government have neither by word nor gesture given any support, whether moral or material, to Spain's fighters for liberty. This is intolerable! There is so much that the Labour Party and the Labour Government could do! There is nothing except unwillingness, which need prevent the Government declaring it regards the constitutional and democratically elected Spanish Government as a friendly Government having much in common, in spirit and aim, with the declared policy of the Labour Government itself. There is no reason why it should not express disagreement with the fake "neutrality" policy which puts an arms embargo on the Spanish Government while the Fascist rebels receive unstinted supplies from Germany and Italy ... The Labour Party must act! A hundred evidences show that workers of New Zealand are conscious of their international duty and are willing and anxious to come to the aid of the heroic Spanish people. They but lack the lead that should come from the Labour leadership. It will be a shame and a disgrace for our country and its great Labour Movement if this is not given.¹⁴³

At the beginning of December, the Weekly described the "obstinate silence" of the leadership of the Labour Party as an attitude that "can only be an encouragement to Fascism in Spain and New Zealand. It must be broken down".¹⁴⁴ Yet, later the same month it praised W.J. Jordan's stand at Geneva, no doubt with the aim of encouraging New Zealand's delegate to the League of Nations and his Government to take a firmer stand in support of the Spanish Government:

It is with a feeling of the greatest pride and pleasure that New Zealand friends of democracy will have read the cable that on December 12th Mr Jordan outspokenly denounced Fascist intervention in Spain. ... it is certain that Mr Jordan has added an honourable page to the history of New Zealand, which should call forth resolutions of congratulation and support from the whole Labour Movement.¹⁴⁵

By early 1937, the Weekly's tone had changed somewhat, and for the rest of the period of the war its attitude towards the Labour Government's policy was to be less critical and more encouraging, even coaxing. Once it was obvious that there would be no Labour-Communist joint action, and that the Labour Government was not about to make any public protest about British policy and the NIA in general, there was little point in maintaining a propaganda stand that would not help to endear the Communists to the Labour Party, to which it wished to affiliate.

In April 1937, the Weekly reported the "disappointing" resolution about the Spanish Civil War passed by the Labour Party Conference, in terms more in sorrow than in anger. The Conference resolution included the statement that the Spanish people should be left to settle their own domestic difficulties. This view, of course, did not coincide with the Communist image of the war, which denied that the war was in anyway a civil war. The Weekly merely said: "We could have desired the resolution to have been less ambiguous. People who do not understand the Labour Movement might well place a wrong construction on the words."¹⁴⁵ Even though the editorial went on to say that to infer that a civil war was taking place in Spain was to "falsify history and besmirch a courageous

people",¹⁴⁷ it apparently gave the Labour Party Conference the benefit of the doubt: "We must, therefore, believe that the Conference resolution while ambiguously worded was definitely intended to line up with Spanish democracy against its enemies."¹⁴⁸

A week later, this qualified approval had changed to a view of the Labour Party resolution as an example to the rest of the Labour Movement in New Zealand. With the news that 10,000 more Italian troops had landed in Spain in March, the Weekly urged the New Zealand Government to aid Spain; the "important" resolution of the Labour Party conference had shown the way, and the Government and "all peace-loving organisations" would do well to follow that lead.¹⁴⁹

Later comments on the attitude of the Labour Government tended to centre around New Zealand's stand at the League of Nations, urging the New Zealand Government to take its praiseworthy policy at Geneva one step further and exert its influence, as a member of the Commonwealth, on the British Government. It followed that since New Zealand, as a member of the League, had "consistently shown her support for real collective security and protection of an attacked nation against an aggressor",¹⁵⁰ it was only right that its Government should support the Republican cause in Spain.

Jordan's speeches at the League were held up as an example of the progressive nature of the New Zealand Government. In July 1937, "International Notes" published part of the text of Jordan's latest speech at Geneva and commented that it showed that he had taken a long step forward in recognising the truth about the Spanish situation. But, it said, a clear lead was still needed and the Labour Government should be urged to disassociate itself entirely from non-intervention and act in "the name and spirit of the peace-loving people [Jordan] represents."¹⁵¹

Praise for Jordan from prominent members of the British Labour Movement was also published, again to reinforce the impression of the

reputation New Zealand had, which could, of course, only be enhanced by a stronger pro-Republican policy. Harry Pollitt, "popular General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain" was quoted in July 1937, commenting upon Jordan's speech at the League in May:

Mr Jordan ... made an exceptionally fine stand on behalf of the Government and was treated very unsympathetically by Mr Eden ... The stand that Mr Jordan made has had very considerable attention in the whole British press.¹⁵²

The Weekly also reported the comments of Ernest Bevin, President of the British Trade Union Congress, on his visit to New Zealand in 1938: "Mr Jordan expressed the views of many of the British people when he asserted the right of the Abyssinian and Spanish peoples at Geneva."¹⁵³

An integral part of the Weekly's encouragement of the Labour Government and the Labour Party on the Spanish question, was the argument that New Zealand's views counted overseas, that what New Zealand did about Spain mattered to the rest of the international Labour Movement. Bevin's comment, for instance, impressed upon New Zealanders the fact that the New Zealand Government's opinion was also that of many British people. A Labour Government that was a member of the Commonwealth, and supposedly privy to the conferences and decisions of the British Government, could have a decisive influence upon British policy. In so doing it would act as a voice for this large body of British pro-Republican opinion. In October 1937, the Weekly said:

New Zealand with its Labour Government can do much, if it will, by vigorous representations at London towards helping British Labour to force the National Government to alter its policy of opposition of the Spanish Government.¹⁵⁴

New Zealand's special position in the international pro-Republican movement, because of its Labour Government, was part of the implication behind the frequent exhortations, in the first months of the war, that the honour of the New Zealand Labour Movement was at stake if it did not support the people of Spain.¹⁵⁵

This appeal to New Zealand "nationalism" was only a minor part in much of the propaganda of the Communist Party directed towards New Zealanders, often less stated than implied. It may have been one of the most potent arguments to use; after all, this was the way Savage and some of his colleagues felt. And some New Zealanders, particularly those with some interest in the outside world, filled with hope and the promise of great deeds now that Labour had come to power, felt that New Zealand's voice had value among the councils of the great. The Weekly quoted Arthur Sewell, Professor of English at Auckland University,¹⁵⁶ in a speech to a Left Book Club meeting in Auckland, in July 1938:

Small things may turn the scales in which are measured great issues. N.Z. is a small country but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that what New Zealand continues to say and do in Geneva, in London, over the busy cables of the world may turn the scales in Europe.¹⁵⁷

This was an encouragement of the independent stand New Zealand was taking at Geneva. Liberal and Left New Zealanders' pride in the progressiveness of their nation, their sense that New Zealand was in the vanguard of social reform, an example to the rest of the world, was the chord played upon in this type of propaganda. The Spanish crisis provided another opportunity for New Zealand to prove its pre-eminent position in the ranks of democratic nations. An article by George Jackson, Secretary of the Auckland Spanish Medical Aid Committee (and a member of the Communist Party),¹⁵⁸ written after the capitulation of the Spanish Government, and concerned with the plight of Spanish refugees in France, concluded:

The N.Z. Spanish Aid Committee desires that the good name of N.Z. be maintained. Remember that the Spaniards said that N.Z. was a great little country. It is a great little country and you can help to maintain its reputation of being in the forefront of human progress, by assisting these victims of Fascist barbarism today.¹⁵⁹

A part of the propaganda concerning New Zealand's importance in the international pro-Republican movement was aimed at overcoming the insularity of New Zealanders, the problem of distance dimming the

call and cushioning the impact of the war. It was of course another facet in the argument that the outcome of the war in Spain would have repercussions everywhere, even in far-away New Zealand. The Weekly said: "We must not be swayed by the idea that New Zealand is many thousands of miles distant from Spain. Wellington is no further from Madrid than Sarajevo."¹⁶⁰

Woman Today's "feminist internationalism" also stressed this theme. Its 1937 Christmas editorial, entitled "Peace on Earth - Goodwill Towards Men", urged readers not to be insular and think that "we are not as other men" (sic):

Too many of us close our eyes to world conflict and say "We are not Spain"; "The Chinese are not like us." How can we work for peace wholeheartedly with peacelovers of all nationalities while we harbour in our hearts false ideas of our own superiority?¹⁶¹

The next year's Christmas message to the women of other lands conveyed similar sentiments. It pledged to present women of other lands to readers not as images in their national costumes, but as real people, "in your daily lives, facing problems such as we have in New Zealand".¹⁶² "These Are Children Like Ours", lamented the headline of an editorial, in August 1938, which discussed the wars in Spain and China as examples of Fascist aggression.¹⁶³

A Communist Party leaflet used the bombing atrocities to good effect in this respect, asking readers to imagine a Fascist plane "swooping over Christchurch and bombing our women and children to death".¹⁶⁴

Another tactic used to stir New Zealanders into action was merely a more specific application of the general argument that, in supporting non-intervention, Britain was endangering its own interests. The Workers Weekly, said in October 1936:

... the safety and independence of New Zealand are bound up with the present struggles in Spain ... A Fascist victory achieved through the bombing planes and military instructors

Send an Ambulance Unit to Spain

Workers, democrats, the Spanish Workers' Government, fighting for its life against the attacks of Fascist degenerates, has sent out an appeal to the liberty-loving peoples of the world for aid. Beset by Franco's armies of foreign legionaries, deluded Moors, and now Germans and Italians, all armed to the teeth and aided by bombing aeroplanes, tanks and guns sent by Hitler and Mussolini, the Spanish people united in their glorious Popular Front, are resisting the foul murderers with the utmost heroism. While Madrid sleeps the bombing planes swoop over the city, releasing aerial bombs which tear the beautiful women and children of Spain to pieces. The blood-thirsty Fascist scoundrels machine gun to death harmless shoppers and innocent children.

Murder most foul! Madrid will not yield! **SHAME ON US IF WE ALLOW THIS FRIGHTFUL THING TO CONTINUE.**

Imagine a Fascist aeroplane swooping over Christchurch and bombing our women and children to death, hurling their incendiary bombs into the heart of our homes. New Zealand workers and democrats can take a hand in stopping this frightful crime. Demand that the ban on the export of arms to the Spanish Workers' Government, imposed by the Baldwin Government of Britain and other powers under the pretence of non-intervention, be lifted. **WE HAVE LED THE WORLD BEFORE. NOW THAT WE HAVE A LABOUR GOVERNMENT WE CAN DO IT AGAIN.**

Medical Unit Needs Money

Here is something we can do immediately to ease the sufferings of the Spanish masses. We can send an ambulance unit of New Zealand doctors and nurses to succour the wounded. Dunedin is giving a lead, and the committee there has organised a unit and raised some money, but more is needed. In Palmerston North the public have pledged themselves to assist. **ALL OF THE MAJOR TRADE UNIONS IN THE AUCKLAND DISTRICT ARE SUPPORTING THE MOVEMENT.** (Christchurch Press, Feb. 3.) Associated organisations are sympathetic.

LET US GET THAT MEDICAL UNIT ON THE WATER.

Vote money through your trade unions.

Send donations direct to the Dunedin committee until a committee is organised in Christchurch. Call at the address below for all information.

INTERNATIONAL BOOKSHOP

68 Manchester Street, Christchurch

Issued by the Communist Party, Christchurch Section.

February 4, 1937.

Bullivant 18925

A leaflet produced by the Christchurch section of the Communist Party in support of the Spanish Medical Aid appeal. (Leaflet from C.F. Saunders Papers. Item 10, Jack Locke Deposit, Canterbury University Library, Christchurch.)

of Hitler and Mussolini, would place Fascism in complete control of the Mediterranean. Hitler is the ally of the militarist-Fascist Japan; New Zealand under such circumstances would be thrown to the mercy of the warmongers. Our right to work out our own destiny in freedom and peace is being endangered by the treacherous pro-Fascist intrigues of the Baldwin Government.¹⁶⁵

In July 1937, the Weekly said that "British capitalism" was willing to sacrifice the interests of the Dominions rather than permit a People's Front Government to be victorious in Spain.¹⁶⁶ An item in "International Notes", in August 1938 even went so far as to claim that Britain was planning to abandon Gibraltar, because the British base could not be defended adequately against the eight batteries of German guns alleged to be trained upon it.¹⁶⁷

The Workers Weekly even used Anzac Day in its appeal to "the finest traditions of the British people"¹⁶⁸ that were at stake in Spain. The Weekly said that thousands of New Zealanders and Australians had gathered to pay homage to men who had fought for an ideal:

We should never dare to celebrate the deeds of the Anzac again if we do not make every effort to aid the Spanish people in their struggle to save Democracy and peace for themselves and the world.¹⁶⁹

No doubt this reference to a tradition and a ceremony dear to the hearts of many New Zealanders was a useful tactic; however, it was a rather surprising sentiment to come from an organisation that had usually spoken of the First World War as an Imperialist war. Even though the Weekly qualified its statement somewhat by saying that the heroes and idealists of the "Great War" had been betrayed by politicians and "butchered by inefficiency in high places", one wonders how many members of the Labour Movement, who had suffered because of their opposition to conscription in World War One, reacted to this use of a New Zealand tradition glorifying war.

The Spanish Civil War itself was, of course, a just war, as Woman

Today pointed out in its first editorial about the war. Its argument was possibly intended to justify support for one side in a particularly vicious war, in a magazine otherwise making a clarion call for peace:

Men make war and women clean up the mess. The war in Spain, however, differs from the last war in that it is a clash between democracy and the reactionary Fascism.¹⁷⁰

Communist propaganda clearly showed the attack by Fascism in Spain to be a specific lesson to the New Zealand Labour Movement. New Zealand in the late 1930s was fertile ground in which to sow this type of propaganda about the menace of Fascism, which could strike anywhere. A new Labour Government had only recently been elected for the first time. Members of the Labour Movement were sensitive and defensive about any criticism of "their" Government, or about any apparent obstruction of its social and economic reforms. Notably, the Labour Movement was sensitive to any hint of anti-Labour sentiment in the daily newspapers. The Communist Party built on this feeling. The similarities between the New Zealand Labour Government and the Popular Front Government of Spain were emphasised. An article in the Weekly, on 16 October 1936, said:

The manner in which [the Fascists] launched an attack in the early hours of the morning of July 19 with a view to destroying a constitutional Parliament is worthy of serious consideration.¹⁷¹

An earlier call for solidarity with Spain had said: "Think of the glee of N.Z.'s anti-Labour forces if a progressive Government was overthrown by Fascism and the forces of democracy did not lift a finger to save it."¹⁷² The Weekly published articles concerning a pro-Franco article in the New Zealand Herald,¹⁷³ and an interview in the Radio Record with Phillip Cross, a New Zealander who had fought for Franco.¹⁷⁴ These revealed to New Zealand Labour the pro-Fascists in their own country, whose response to events in Spain had unmasked them.

The exposure of pro-Fascist sentiment in New Zealand was also an element in the Weekly's attacks on the Spanish war news published in Catholic newspapers in New Zealand. Articles about the "lying" propaganda in Zealandia (the Tablet was not mentioned) also served as opportunities for the Weekly to promote the "correct" view of the war. From May to December 1937, the Weekly carried out an intermittent battle with Zealandia over that newspaper's claim that a photograph of a bombed Spanish child was a fake.¹⁷⁵

The Weekly apparently placed more importance on the issue than did Zealandia. It issued a challenge to Zealandia to prove that the photograph was indeed a fake, offering to donate £100 to a charitable fund, if Zealandia could do so. Later, the Weekly triumphantly proclaimed "This offer was never accepted"; thus, proving the Weekly's argument that Zealandia was merely repeating the anti-Communist lies of a British Catholic newspaper.¹⁷⁶ The Weekly then published what it called "a real faked photograph", of Generals Franco and Mola entering a city, with an applauding populace looking on.¹⁷⁷ Again, its challenge went unanswered by Zealandia.

For the Weekly, the Catholic newspaper's attack on its coverage of the Spanish crisis were an obvious example of the lengths to which pro-Fascists would go to undermine the cause of the democratic peoples of Spain, and New Zealand:

The greatest tribute that could be paid to the Communist Party, and the Worker's Weekly in particular, is the increasing viciousness and unscrupulousness of the attacks made upon them by the forces of reaction. Particularly from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church are such attacks being launched as far as New Zealand is concerned,¹⁷⁸

said the Weekly, in October 1937, with reference to Catholic attacks on the Communist view of the war in Spain. Such attacks, according to the Weekly, were all to the good, for they put members of the Labour Movement on their guard against the forces of reaction. This particular article was also an opportunity for the Weekly to promote

the concept of the United Front, and the aims of the Communist Party. The article concluded:

The Catholic press may rave as it will, but the workers, whether Catholic or Protestant, who toil at the bench or in the shop with the Communist worker understand that, atheist or no atheist, he is sincerely struggling for the good of the working class people.

No lies or distortions, however unscrupulous, can prevent the final unity of Catholic, Protestant and Communist worker against the exploiters, of all religions and no religion, who strive to divide them.¹⁷⁹

Yet the greatest enemy, as in Spain, was the enemy within. The most obvious appeal to the sensitivities of the New Zealand Labour Movement and their fears for the fulfillment of the Labour Government's policies came in an article about the Casado junta in March 1939. The Weekly built on earlier reports of treachery within the Spanish People's Army, when it solemnly concluded:

Spain is a tremendous warning to New Zealand Labour. If, after nearly three years of armed struggle against Fascism, traitors were still to be found in the camp of the people how many more are there in New Zealand, in the State Department, in the military and police forces who must be weeded out without delay. Let Labour take warning and act!¹⁸⁰

Thus, the Weekly's propaganda made it clear that in New Zealand, as elsewhere, Spain was, at once, the great issue about which to build a United Front, and, yet, only a part of the wider aim of the creation of that coalition against Fascism. The focus of its specifically New Zealand-directed propaganda was aimed at mobilising opinion in favour of the Spanish Government, in order to influence the Labour Government, as well as to create the United Front:

You can see that your organisation supports some sort of aid for Spain, that it protests against the Chamberlain policy and asks the N.Z. Government to do likewise; that it urges your local M.P. to voice support for Spain in the House of Representatives.¹⁸¹

The calls for New Zealand solidarity with Spain, unlike those for international solidarity, were more specific about the form that

solidarity should take. The above quotation gives some indication of the kind of activity encouraged by the Communist Party of New Zealand. Resolutions of solidarity, messages to the Government, and the provision of aid were emphasised, and there was never any mention of the possibility of strike action to encourage the Government to adopt a pro-Republican policy. Nor did Communist propaganda actively encourage young men to join the International Brigades.

Medical aid for Spain was one major form of action endorsed by the Weekly. In keeping with its virtual control of the Spanish Medical Aid movement,¹⁸² a great deal of news about the activities of the various SMAC branches¹⁸³ was printed by the Communist newspaper. The despatch of the three New Zealand nurses to Spain, in May 1937, received, as could be expected, a pre-eminent position in the Weekly's pages.¹⁸⁴ Letters from the nurses to the Committee were also published regularly, adding to the Weekly's attempts to bring the events and conditions of the war closer to New Zealanders. Here were three of our own countrywomen in the thick of the fray, bravely giving of themselves in the cause of the Spanish people and exposed to the same dangers as the Spanish people. Surely an example to emulate, in whatever possible manner, and a personal responsibility for all members of the New Zealand Labour Movement to ensure that the nurses' bravery did not go unrecognised and unaided by their fellows back in the safety of peaceful New Zealand.

The SMAC was held up as an example of the sterling work that New Zealanders were doing in the cause of Spanish democracy; it was an encouragement to all New Zealand democrats and it helped to show how the Communist Party itself was working in the cause of Spain. The Weekly published a list of donations to the SMAC in almost every issue over the period of the war. But all and any pro-Republican activities were grist to the Weekly's mill, as examples and encouragement to the rest of the Labour Movement.

Publicity about the activities of the Trades Unions, their governing body, the Federation of Labour (FOL), and of Labour Party

branches was the most important in this respect, for it was at these groups, in the main, that the Communists were aiming their United Front propaganda. It may be also that the laudatory comments about, for instance, the FOL's decision to send money for an ambulance to Spain in September 1938¹⁸⁵ were designed to some extent to break down the suspicion of the Communists held in some areas of the Labour Movement. Here was the FOL in solidarity with the Communist Party over a particular cause; here too was the Communist Party extending a fraternal felicitation to the FOL on its activities, so different an attitude from that taken by the Communists prior to 1936.

In the Weekly's report of the FOL council meeting whereat the decision to send an ambulance was made, headed "Federation of Labour Rushes Aid to Anti-Fascist Forces", the wider purpose behind the movement to aid Spain, the United Front itself, was obvious. The Weekly noted "the splendid spirit of internationalism" at the Council and concluded its article with the optimistic assessment:

Delegates to the National Council meeting bear witness to the inspiring solidarity and progressive character of the meeting, and are confident that the Federation is well on the way to rival and surpass the great militant traditions of the prewar Federation of Labour.¹⁸⁶

The factionalism and the somewhat piqued tone of the Communist Party, in discussing the lack of solidarity of other working class organisations, which was evident in the general propaganda, did not appear in the Weekly's news about the New Zealand scene. Of course, the general criticisms could have been taken as applying to the New Zealand Labour Movement as well; yet no specific attacks were mounted on particular organisations in New Zealand, after the Weekly's initial condemnation of the Labour Governments "shameful silence". Perhaps New Zealand was too small a country, and the sense of solidarity too precarious and too sought after to warrant attacks, which, given the size of the country, might too easily become bitter and personal. As well, the Communists must have been aware of the legacy of suspicion and distrust it had created with its pre-1936 "Social-Fascist" policy.

At the close of the war, and in some items thereafter, on the plight of the thousands of Spanish refugees in France, the Weekly did chastise its readers, but only in very general terms, calculated to instil a sense of shame in New Zealanders for their lack of humanitarian concern for the Spanish people. "You could have stopped this" read the caption on a photograph of a Spanish refugee woman. And in similar vein to its articles on the failure of the international pro-Republican movement, the item stressed that there was still time to show solidarity with Spain: "This and the countless other tragedies of Spain could have been stopped if all of us had united to help British Labour drive out Chamberlain. It is not too late to act."¹⁸⁷ Yet, blame was not apportioned as it was in references to the International Movement.

However, the Weekly did gently correct those views that it felt did not exactly coincide with the Communist view of the Spanish situation. At the close of a lengthy report of an "interesting" lecture given by Dr A.G. Butchers, a WEA tutor, to a Wellington WEA current history class, the Weekly noted that it did not agree with Dr Butchers' assessment of the role of Great Britain in the Spanish situation. It was Dr Butcher's view that the major factor in Britain's advocacy of non-intervention was a desire to prevent the war in Spain from spreading into the rest of Europe. This concern was also why Britain was attempting to come to an agreement with Italy, while stepping up its rearmament programme. An accord with Italy might ensure the withdrawal of her forces from the Spanish conflict. The Weekly noted:

On this last matter we cannot by any means agree with Dr Butchers. Even though desire to prevent war be a factor in the British policy, the abandonment of the principle of collective security and sabotage of the League strengthens the Fascist aggressor nations and weakens the position of Britain.¹⁸⁸

Similarly, the Weekly reprinted an editorial comment from the Methodist Times, which had been pro-Republican throughout the

war,¹⁸⁹ in March 1939, that deplored Franco's victory in Spain. The editorial concluded by praying that British statesmen would be guided in the right actions and policy. The Weekly commented:

Methodists will endorse the Methodist Times' support for the Spanish Loyalists. However the paper's concluding comment indicates that it is ignorant of the real villain of the piece. It is these same British statesmen ... who were responsible for the policy of non-intervention, a policy which opened the gates to unrestricted Fascist invasion, while denying the Republican Government its lawful right to obtain arms for its defence.¹⁹⁰

Yet, the Weekly still published these articles, in order to show the extent of pro-Republican opinion in New Zealand, and its criticisms were in no way similar to the trenchant attacks on the international pro-Republican movement. The Weekly even printed the appeal of the National Relief Fund for Spanish Refugee Children, a non-political humanitarian aid organisation with aims that could have been seen as rivalling those of the SMAC.¹⁹¹ Indeed, the Weekly's opening comment gave a hint of that rivalry:

In publishing the following appeal as requested by Mr K. Purdie, secretary of the NRFSRC, we desire to point out that this work is in part covered by the existing Spanish Medical Aid Committee, the President of which is Dr D.G. McMillan M.P. and the trustees the Rev. E.T. Cox, M.A. and Dr Mark Silverstone, director of the Reserve Bank.¹⁹²

The inclusion of the names of the SMAC's prominent and worthy office-holders was no doubt in answer to the NRFSRC's naming of its equally prominent trustees. It was an indication that the SMAC had important people behind it as well, and, in addition, that these people were well-known members of the Labour Movement.

The role of the Communist Party in the New Zealand pro-Republican movement was also given less direct publicity. The guiding intelligence and leadership in activities, so emphasised as far as Spain was concerned, was not as evident in the Weekly's discussions of New Zealand pro-Republican activities. On the other hand, the pre-eminent role of the Party in the cause of Spanish democracy was

never disguised. There was never any attempt to cover up or deny that the SMAC was mainly in the hands of Communist secretaries, and the calls for a solidarity movement at the beginning of the war made the Communist Party's interest in the issue quite clear. The apparent openness of the Communist Party's involvement in the pro-Republican movement was a result of the United Front campaign. If the Party were championing democracy, what had it to hide? However, the more covert activities of the Party; for example, the influence of Communist members of Trades Unions, in having resolutions of solidarity with Spain passed, was not mentioned. It would belie the image of spontaneous and wide Labour Movement responses to the peril of democracy in Spain.

Without doubt, the Weekly's coverage of New Zealand efforts to aid Spain was used to foster the image of the United Front in New Zealand as a broadly based organisation, wherein political differences did not matter. There was considerable emphasis on the pro-Republican opinions and activities of prominent people within the Labour Movement, and in Left and liberal organisations. The reports of their views added to the general propaganda about the war in Spain; they were also an indication of the strength and the worthiness of the pro-Republican cause, and an encouragement to the rest of the Labour Movement. "Broad Auckland Meeting", said the headline of a report on a SMAC-sponsored rally, where spoke Professor Belshaw, Head of the Economics Department at Auckland University, the Reverend Mary Dreaver, a Spiritualist Minister, E.M. Higgins of the WEA and J.G. Kennerly of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.¹⁹³

The involvement of Labour MPs in the pro-Republican movement was of especial note, since this indicated that, within its own ranks, the Government had a pro-Republican element, all the more reason for a strong stand on Spain from the Labour Cabinet. The fact that Dr D.G. McMillan, a Dunedin MP was the President of the SMAC was immensely useful in this respect.¹⁹⁴

Even the "Women's Corner" in the Weekly was put to the use of the Spanish cause. Along with articles on nutrition, calisthenics for children, and the like, the women's editor, Elsie Freeman, included small items about Spain; for example, the words of La Pasionaria¹⁹⁵ and calls for New Zealand women to emulate their Spanish sisters' devotion to the cause of democracy.¹⁹⁶ The calls to women, however, despite the "liberated" example of the Spanish militia-women, centred mainly around traditional female tasks, such as the provision of clothing for war-torn Spain:

I said we have staved off war, but the Spanish workers have had civil war thrust upon them. What have we done to help? (What about those scarves and socks and sweaters we are knitting for them? Are they ready to send yet?)¹⁹⁷

The same emphasis was found in Woman Today, where support for the Spanish "People's Government" was couched mainly in terms of appeals to women's traditional role as nurturers. An account of the New Zealand nurses' time in London before they went to Spain was accompanied by a photo of a dead Spanish child, captioned "Why the nurses went to Spain".¹⁹⁸ Several of the articles about Spain in Woman Today dealt with the plight of women and child refugees.¹⁹⁹ The most unusual "woman-identified" appeal was an article entitled "Spanish Relief and the Family Budget", in August 1937. The article began with an account of a SMAC meeting in Christchurch, where a young husband and father of two, until recently on "sustenance" work, had offered to donate 10 shillings to the SMAC if twenty others in the audience would do the same. It went on to discuss ways in which the family budget could be revised, to eradicate wasteful luxuries and ensure a better standard of living, while providing extra money to be given to Spanish relief. The article had a two-fold political message: it was directed towards raising money for the SMAC and, in addition, towards battling capitalism by encouraging a rejection of consumerism.²⁰⁰

The New Zealanders in the International Brigades were also a major focus of the Weekly's New Zealand-directed propaganda. The publication of letters from Tom Spiller, Bert Bryan and Charlie

Riley²⁰¹ helped to give a sense of the immediacy of the war, to bring it closer to home for insular New Zealanders. They were a reminder that some New Zealanders felt strongly enough about the war to risk their lives in the service of democracy, and an encouragement to others to do their best, not only for the sake of Spain, but so that these men were supported in their bravery by New Zealanders at home, and knew that their courage and self-sacrifice did not go unacknowledged.

Those New Zealanders who died in Spain were the image of the ultimate sacrifice for democracy, and, thus, the greatest example to the rest of the Labour Movement. In May 1937, the Weekly said:

The death within the last few weeks of two New Zealand fighters against Fascism provides a striking example of the solidarity of the world working class movement. Robertson was a worker, Maclaurin was a student. This also is fitting at a time of social change when workers and students should march together in the van of world progress. May Day in New Zealand celebrates a very vital sentiment. That this is no abstraction in the New Zealand of 1937 is shown by such examples as a self-sacrifice of our comrades in Spain.²⁰²

The deaths of New Zealanders in Spain also reinforced the argument that New Zealand had a part to play in the international movement to save Spain. These New Zealanders showed the rest of the world that the anti-Fascist spirit in New Zealand was strong, and that its United Front was growing:

Maclure's life has not been sacrificed in vain. Together with Maclaurin and Robertson, killed in previous engagements he demonstrated that New Zealand can point to men to whom freedom means more than life itself. Fascism has not passed in Spain; it shall not pass in New Zealand, where it backs the leaders of the National Party in their savage attack on the Labour Government. While the spirit lives in the New Zealand people that sent these three men to Spain, reaction can spin its plots in vain.²⁰³

The Weekly gave wide coverage to the meetings and speeches of returned International Brigaders, Tom Spiller, Bert Bryan, and Dr D.W. Jolly, a surgeon with the British Medical team in Spain.²⁰⁴

Propaganda about the civil war and appeals to aid the people of Spain continued after the war had ended, until as late as July 1939, as also did the activities of the SMAC. The theme of most of the post-war propaganda was the plight of the Spanish refugees in France, with a more humanitarian basis to the appeals than to those for a pro-Republican movement during the war.²⁰⁵

The propaganda in the Weekly, "International Notes" and Woman Today was the most public face of the Communist drive to create a strong, broad pro-Republican movement, and thereby a United Front, in New Zealand. The Party did also send telegrams to the Government, pass out leaflets and sponsor some meetings, although one suspects that it preferred most meetings to be held under the aegis of other organisations. The major focus of Communist activity about the war was, of course, the SMAC, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

More so than Catholic propaganda, the Communist Party's presentation of the issues of the war aimed at creating support for its particular view of events in Spain and their ramifications. Like Catholic propaganda, the Communist image of the war was partial, mixing facts, fiction and omission. Both had as a central message the concept that what was happening in Spain was relevant to New Zealanders.

There is no doubt that Communist activities and propaganda played a major part in creating the pro-Republican movement in New Zealand. The key points of the Communist portrayal of the war - Fascist aggression against a democratically elected reformist Government, either connived at or ignored by the Western democracies - were, in one way or another, the basis of most pro-Republican opinions, as Chapters 5 and 6 will show. But unity of opinion did not necessarily mean unity of action. There is no evidence that any wider United Front grew out of the co-ordination of opinion on the Spanish Civil War, and some groups that expressed support for the Spanish Republican cause in their publications, did not in any other way become involved in the pro-Republican movement. Discussion of the

organisation and activities of the SMAC will show that, however broadly based it was claimed to be, its main support came from Communists and Trades Unionists.

The Communist Party's primary aim of joint action with the labour Party on the Civil War, in pursuit of affiliation with Labour, was not successful, although there was considerable pro-Republican opinion among the ranks of the governing Party. In this respect, the fact that Labour was in power, which was used by the Communists to encourage the Labour Movement into solidarity over Spain, may have worked against the Communists' aim. Joint action was not likely to aid Labour's electoral chances.

Given the absence of any available figures on membership of the Party, it is impossible to judge whether the Party's presentation of itself as in the vanguard of the battle to preserve democracy had any effect on the growth of the Party in this period. The attraction of new members was, of course, another facet of the United Front policy.²⁰⁶ The Communist Party's "hidden agenda" - preservation of the Soviet Union and self-promotion - was made quite clear in the Weekly's propaganda, and this, as well as dislike and suspicion of Communism among some of the Left in New Zealand, may have militated against and the creation of the United Front. Any gains made from 1936 onwards among anti-Fascists were probably lost again at the time of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939.

Any further conclusions about the influence of the Communist Party's Spanish Civil War propaganda and activities must wait until the views of other pro-Republicans have been examined.

REFERENCES

- 1 Both terms were used in Communist propaganda, although the policy was called the Popular Front. The term United Front has been generally used in this study in order to avoid confusion with the Popular Front Government of Spain.
- 2 Hugh Thomas. The Spanish Civil War (rev. ed.) Harmondsworth, 1968, pp 30-31.
- 3 Jack Locke Deposit Canterbury University Library, Christchurch. Item 1: Correspondence: July 1931-1940 Christchurch Branch CP. and Item 16: Correspondence from Central Committee to Christchurch Branch CP, were misplaced.
- 4 Series 3: Communist Party of New Zealand 1921-1971. McAra P.W.G. Papers. A-139. Glass Case Collection, Auckland University Library, Auckland.
- 5 Workers Weekly 9 September 1938, p 3; 16 September 1938, p 3; 23 September 1938, p 3; 30 September 1938, p 3; 7 October 1938, p3.
- 6 See Chapter 6, p
- 7 Woman Today April 1937, p 1.
- 8 Ibid p 2.
- 9 Ibid p 1.
- 10 See Chapters 5,6 and 7.
- 11 Leo Sim, a farmer and accountant, had served in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in World War One and was a founding member of the New Zealand Communist Party in 1921. Elected General Secretary of the Party in December 1935 he was removed from the Central Committee in 1939 and expelled in 1940.
- 12 S.W. Scott. Rebel in a Wrong Cause, Auckland, n.d. (1960?), pp 82-85. Scott attributes the tardiness of the CPNZ to F.E. Freeman's continued hold on the Central Party apparatus even after Sim had been elected General Secretary. Freeman was later expelled from the Party for factionalism. See also "Draft Inner Resolution of the CC of the CP", 6 March 1937. C.F. Saunders Papers. Item 10, Jack Locke Deposit, Canterbury University Library.
- 13 Workers Weekly 25 July 1936, p 1.
- 14 Idem.
- 15 Workers Weekly 8 August 1936, p 2.
- 16 Workers Weekly 35 July 1936, p 1.
- 17 P 7 August 1936, p 16.
- 18 Ibid 2 December 1936, p 7.
- 19 GRA 17 November 1936, p 8.
- 20 Workers Weekly 18 August 1936, p 3; GRA 22 August 1936, p 12.
- 21 Workers Weekly 22 August 1936, p 3; GRA 29 August 1936, p 12.
- 22 Workers Weekly 29 August 1936, p 1.
- 23 GRA 19 January 1937, p 10.
- 24 The Falange Espangola, founded in 1933 by Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, was a Fascist party with membership mainly from the young middle class. It was one of the few large civilian forces that fought with Franco's forces in the first months of the war and around which Franco later created a unified political party, the Falange Espangola Tradicionalista y de las JONS. The Falange did

- have close links with Nazi groups in Spain before the Civil War (Thomas, p 278) but there is no evidence that brother organisations were established in Germany.
- 25 Workers Weekly 9 September 1938, p 3; 2 December 1938, p 3.
 - 26 Ibid 8 July 1938, p 1.
 - 27 Ibid 9 September 1938, p 3.
 - 28 Idem.
 - 29 Idem.
 - 30 Workers Weekly 16 April 1937, p 1; 10 December 1938, p 1; 13 May 1938, p 3.
 - 31 Ibid 25 March 1938, p 1. Thomas, pp 793-794, estimates the maximum number of Italian troops in Spain to have been about 50,000. The total number of Germans in Spain was about 16,000, but many were civilians and instructors. There were about 6,000 men in the German Condor Legion.
 - 32 Workers Weekly 9 September 1938, p 3.
 - 33 Ibid 9 April 1937, p 1.
 - 34 The Carlists were a royalist party, with greatest strength in Navarre, who supported the claims of a collateral branch of the Spanish Royal Family, with "primitive" political ideas. The organisation had begun in the 1830s and had fought in two "Carlist Wars" in the 19th Century in support of their Pretender to the throne.
 - 35 See Chapter 3, p 141 for the Catholic version of the destruction of Guernica. Pablo Picasso's painting "Guernica" was the Spanish artist's anguished response to the bombing. See Chapter 2, note 84 for a discussion of the shelling of Almeria.
 - 36 Workers Weekly 9 April 1937, p 3; 3 September 1937, p 3; 18 February 1938, p 3; 22 February 1938, p 3; 27 May 1938, p 1; 28 October 1938, p 1.
 - 37 Ibid 3 September 1937, p 3.
 - 38 Ibid 7 May 1937, p 2.
 - 39 Ibid 21 May 1937, p 4.
 - 40 Idem.
 - 41 Ibid 25 September 1936, p 3; 10 September 1937, p 3; 8 October 1937, p 1; 30 September 1938, p 3; 3 February 1939, p 4; GRA 2 October 1936; p 8.
 - 42 Workers Weekly 10 September 1937, p 1.
 - 43 Ibid 5 August 1938, p 1.
 - 44 Ibid 12 August 1938, p 1.
 - 45 Ibid 16 September 1937, p 3.
 - 46 Ibid 5 August 1938, p 1.
 - 47 Ibid 10 September 1937, p 1.
 - 48 Ibid 29 October 1937, p 3.
 - 49 Ibid 17 August 1938, p 1.
 - 50 Ibid 30 April 1937, p 3.
 - 51 Idem.
 - 52 Ibid 26 November 1937, p 4.
 - 53 See below, p 204.
 - 54 Workers Weekly 12 November 1937, p 1; 11 March 1938, p 3; 3 June 1938, p 4; 1 July 1938, p 4; 29 July 1938, p 3; 2 October 1938, p 4; 21 October 1938, p 4. See also Woman Today June 1938, p 56.
 - 55 Workers Weekly 29 July 1938, p 3.
 - 56 Woman Today August 1938, p 17; October 1938, p 18.

- 57 Ibid December 1937, p 206.
58 Ibid September 1938, p 19.
59 Workers Weekly 29 July 1938, p 3.
60 Ibid 16 April 1937, p 1.
61 Idem. This particular claim appeared in most of the Weekly's articles on the war.
62 Ibid 22 August 1936, p 4.
63 Ibid 9 October 1936, p 3. See also Workers Weekly 2 October 1936, p 1.
64 Ibid 9 October 1936, p 1.
65 Ibid 29 February 1937, p 1.
66 Ibid 29 October 1937, p 1.
67 Ibid 25 March 1938, p 1.
68 GRA 9 October 1936, p 12.
69 Workers Weekly 16 April 1937, p 1.
70 Ibid 7 May 1937, p 3.
71 Ibid 29 October 1937, p 1.
72 GRA 31 July 1937, p 4.
73 Workers Weekly 17 September 1937, p 1
74 Ibid 29 October 1937, p 1.
75 GRA 30 June 1938, p 2.
76 Workers Weekly 9 December 1938, p 1.
77 Ibid 12 August 1938, p 1; 16 September 1938, p 3.
78 Ibid 12 August 1938, p 3.
79 Ibid 10 December 1937, p 1.
80 Ibid 23 December 1938, p 3.
81 Ibid 9 November 1937, p 1. See Chapter 3, note 122.
82 Juan Negrin, Professor of Physiology at the University of Madrid and a Socialist deputy under the Republic, was Finance Minister in the Largo Caballero Government, formed in September 1936, and succeeded Largo Caballero as Prime Minister in May 1937. He was ready to compromise with the Communist Party in order to win the war, but, according to Thomas, p 557, the Communist Party increased its power less under Negrin than under his predecessor, despite the fading of Anarchist influence. Nevertheless, his Government relied heavily upon the Communists.
83 See Thomas, pp 734-749.
84 Workers Weekly 31 March 1939, p 1.
85 Idem.
86 Ibid 17 February 1939, p 1.
87 Ibid 4 December 1936, p 2.
88 Ibid 23 December 1938, p 3. Jose Diaz was General Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party from 1932 until after the close of the Spanish Civil War.
89 Workers Weekly 7 October 1938, p 3.
90 Ibid 27 May 1938, p 4; 17 June 1938, p 3.
91 Ibid 17 June 1938, p 3.
92 Ibid 1 July 1938, p 3.
93 Ibid 4 December 1936, p 3.
94 Ibid 18 December 1936, p 3.
95 Ibid 9 April 1937, p 2.
96 Ibid 14 January 1938, p 3.
97 Ibid 29 April 1938, p 1. See also Ibid 2 September 1938, p 3.
98 Ibid 30 September 1938, p 3.

- 99 Ibid 11 February 1938, p 4; 18 February 1938, p 4; 25 February 1938, p 4; 4 March 1938, p 1; 18 March 1938, p 4; 25 March 1938, p 4; 1 April 1938, p 4; 8 April 1938, p 4.
- 100 Ibid 21 May 1937, p 2; 17 December 1937, p 1.
- 101 Ibid 8 July 1938, p 3; 23 September 1938, p 4; 18 November 1938, p 3; 23 December 1938, pp 1, 3 and 4; 13 January 1939, p 1.
- 102 Ibid 26 August 1938, p 2.
- 103 Ibid 18 December 1936, p 3.
- 104 Idem. In fact, the Anarchists had not, in December 1936, accepted the reorganisation of the militias into a "People's Army". The separate militias continued to exist as late as March 1937. See Thomas, pp 557-560.
- 105 Ibid 9 April 1937, p 2.
- 106 Ibid 8 October 1937, p 1.
- 107 Ibid 11 March 1938, p 1.
- 108 See below, pp 209-211.
- 109 See above, p 191.
- 110 Workers Weekly 29 July 1938, p 3.
- 111 Ibid 18 December 1936, p 3.
- 112 Idem.
- 113 Ibid 13 January 1939, p 3.
- 114 Ibid 10 March 1939, p 4.
- 115 Ibid 7 October 1938, p 3. See also 29 October 1937, p 1.
- 116 Ibid, 3 March 1939, p 3.
- 117 See above, p 203.
- 118 See Thomas, pp 543-560.
- 119 Elsie Locke interview, March 1982.
- 120 Workers Weekly 13 August 1937, p 3. According to Thomas, p 578, a genuine Falange conspiracy had been unearthed in Madrid, in April 1937, by Communist-controlled police. Documents linking the POUM to the conspiracy were forged.
- 121 Workers Weekly 8 October 1937, p 1.
- 122 Ibid 25 November 1938, p 3.
- 123 Ibid 28 April 1939, p 3. See Thomas, p 579. Tuchachevsky and the other generals had been charged originally with plotting with Nazi Germany.
- 124 Workers Weekly 17 March 1939, p 1.
- 125 Ibid 7 May 1937, p 3. It was implied that the contributor was a New Zealander.
- 126 Ibid 29 October 1937, p 2.
- 127 Ibid 30 April 1937, p 3.
- 128 GRA 19 February 1937, p 12.
- 129 Ibid 23 September 1938, p 4.
- 130 Workers Weekly 18 December 1936, p 3.
- 131 Ibid 13 August 1937, p 3.
- 132 See above, p 190.
- 133 Workers Weekly 23 September 1938, p 3.
- 134 Ibid 30 September 1938, p 3. Earlier Largo Caballero had been hailed as a "heroic Labour leader" (Workers Weekly 12 September 1936, p 1) He fell from grace with the Communists because of his refusal to work against the POUM.
- 135 Ibid 5 August 1938, p 1.
- 136 Ibid 9 April 1937, p 2.
- 137 Ibid 7 May 1937, p 2.

- 138 Ibid 25 July 1936, p 1.
- 139 Ibid 1 August 1936, p 1.
- 140 Ibid 8 August 1936, p 2.
- 141 Ibid 22 August 1936, pp 1 and 4; 29 August pp 1 and 3; 5 September 1936, p 3; 12 September 1936, pp 1 and 2; 18 September 1936, p 1; 25 September 1936, pp 1 and 3; 2 October 1936, p 1; 9 October 1936, pp 1 and 3; 16 October, pp 1 and 2; 23 October 1936, p 1; 30 October 1936, p 1; 6 November 1936, pp 2 and 3; GRA 9 October 1936, p 12; 17 October 1936, p 9; 24 October 1936, p 12; 14 November 1936, p 12.
- 142 Workers Weekly 13 November 1936, p 1; GRA 21 November 1936, p 12.
- 143 Workers Weekly 20 November 1936, p 2; GRA 28 November 1936, p 12.
- 144 Workers Weekly 4 December 1936, p 2.
- 145 Ibid 18 December 1936, p 1.
- 146 Ibid 9 April 1937, p 1.
- 147 Idem.
- 148 Idem.
- 149 Ibid 16 April 1937, p 1.
- 150 Ibid 17 September 1937, p 1.
- 151 GRA 24 July 1937, p 3.
- 152 Workers Weekly 23 July 1937, p 1.
- 153 Ibid 2 September 1938, p 3.
- 154 Ibid 29 October 1937, p 1.
- 155 Ibid 12 September 1936. Most of the early calls for a solidarity campaign included some reference to the honour of the Labour Movement.
- 156 See Chapter 6.
- 157 Workers Weekly 22 July 1938, p 1.
- 158 See Chapter 7.
- 159 Workers Weekly 16 June 1939, p 2.
- 160 Ibid 16 April 1937, p 1.
- 161 Woman Today December 1937, p 193.
- 162 Ibid December 1938, p 1.
- 163 Ibid August 1938, p 1.
- 164 C.F. Saunders Papers. Item 10, Jack Locke Deposit, Canterbury University Library. See also Workers Weekly, 22 July 1938, p 1.
- 165 Workers Weekly 30 October 1936, GRA 7 November 1936, p 4. See also Workers Weekly 28 October 1936, pp 1 and 2.
- 166 Workers Weekly 23 July 1937, p 1.
- 167 GRA 5 August 1938, p 4.
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- 169 Ibid 29 April 1938, p 1.
- 170 Woman Today May 1937, p 1.
- 171 Workers Weekly 16 October 1936, p 1; GRA 24 October 1936, p 12. See also Workers Weekly 20 November 1936, p 2.
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- 173 Workers Weekly 11 March 1938, p 3.
- 174 Ibid 29 July 1938, p 1. See Chapter 8.
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- 176 Workers Weekly 26 November 1937, p 2.
- 177 Ibid 3 December 1937.
- 178 Ibid 8 October 1937, p 1.
- 179 Idem.
- 180 Ibid 17 March 1939, p 1.
- 181 See Chapter 7.

- 183 Workers Weekly 20 November 1936, p 2; 27 November 1936, p 4; 18 December 1936, p 4; 3 December 1937, p 4; 17 December 1937, p 4; 7 January 1938, p 4; 5 August 1938, p 4; 29 July 1938, p 2; 12 August 1938, p 4; 6 April 1939, p 4; 21 April 1939, p 4; 16 June 1939, p 2.
- 184 Ibid 21 May 1937, pp 1 and 3.
- 185 Ibid 9 September 1938, p 1. See Chapter 5.
- 186 Idem.
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- 188 EP 14 August 1937, p 15; Workers Weekly 27 August 1937, p 3.
- 189 See Chapter 6.
- 190 Workers Weekly 10 March 1939, p 4.
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- 192 Workers Weekly 1 July 1938, p 1.
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- 194 Ibid 20 November 1936, p 2; 27 November 1936, p 4.
- 195 Ibid 23 July 1937, p 4.
- 196 Ibid 21 May 1937, p 4.
- 197 Ibid 18 December 1936, p 2.
- 198 Woman Today September 1937, p 135.
- 199 Woman Today January 1939, pp 1 and 15; February 1939, p 4; April 1939, p 17; May 1939, p 7.
- 200 Ibid August 1937, p 44.
- 201 See above p 204.
- 202 Workers Weekly 30 May 1937, p 2.
- 203 Workers Weekly 7 January 1938, p 1.
- 204 See Chapters 7 and 8. Workers Weekly 1 April 1938, p 4; 14 April 1938, p 4; 29 April 1938, p 4; 17 June 1938, p 4; 21 April 1939, p 4; 12 May 1939, p 4.
- 205 Workers Weekly 5 May 1939, p 3; 12 May 1939, pp 3 and 4; 19 May 1939, p 3; 9 June 1939, p 3; 16 June 1939, p 3.
- 206 "Draft Inner Resolution of the CC of the CP", 6 March 1937. C.F. Saunders Papers. Item 10. Jack Locke Deposit, Canterbury University Library.

CHAPTER 5
INTERNATIONALISM, CLASS WAR AND CAUTION:
THE RESPONSE OF THE NEW ZEALAND LABOUR MOVEMENT

The late 1930s were heady years for the Labour Movement in New Zealand. The election of the Labour Government in 1935 was for many in the Movement the signal of a new dawn, the beginning of a progressive age. Some of the energy and excitement created by the vision of Labour in power spread over into the Movement's perception of international issues.

The Labour Party, internationalist in outlook, committed to collective security, saw their ideals voiced at Geneva by William Jordan and in the councils of the Commonwealth by Michael Savage and Walter Nash. The sense that New Zealand, soon to become a social-democratic paradise, could influence the rest of the world was best expressed by the Labour MP for Wairarapa, B. Roberts, in the debate on League of Nations Sanctions in Parliament, in May 1936:

This Dominion has had a new political birth, and I hope that the spirit born with it will ultimately permeate all its consciousness, and the individual who will represent this Dominion at the League of Nations ... will be able to carry with him that same new spirit of generosity, recognising that the whole of the nations of the earth are one family of the earth ...¹

Trades Unions found greater unity after May 1937 with the establishment of the Federation of Labour (FOL) as their national representative body. The FOL created far greater unity, where previously there had been bickering and hostility between the largely industrial Alliance of Labour and the mainly craft union-oriented Trades and Labour Councils.² This healing of rifts in the Trades Union movement, according to one commentator, resulted in the FOL's being able to maintain "a fairly united front on a progressive platform", which, in terms of international issues, was a policy described as "Socialist internationalism".³

Under such conditions, an attack on an apparently similar social democratic Government in Spain naturally reverberated on the New Zealand Labour scene. But, the very event that helped build a sense of international solidarity in the Labour Movement, also focussed attention inwards. The Labour Movement's priorities were to support and encourage "its" Government and to defend it from domestic opposition. Its main interest was in the development of the Labour Government's domestic policies.

Internal, New Zealand, preoccupations particularly affected the Labour Party's response to the Spanish Civil War. Not only was the war of less immediate importance than, for example, preparations for the 1938 election, it also presented a complex and potentially divisive political problem for the Labour Party. On one hand, the Communist Party was urging joint action over Spain and calling for the Labour Party to take the lead in a campaign of solidarity with the Spanish "People's" Government. On the other, there were Catholic objections to the Labour Government's "limited pro-Republicanism". If the Labour Party adopted a more openly pro-Republican stand than its Government, it would not only embarrass the Government, but lose support for Labour from some Catholics who might feel forced to choose between their religious and political allegiances. Therefore, the Labour Party followed a path of cautious pro-Republicanism, maintaining a low profile on the issue and avoiding discussion of the political issues in Spain. Conferences passed only innocuous resolutions that indicated qualified support. However, some Labour MPs made clear their support for the Republican cause, and the Labour Party newspaper, the Standard, produced trenchant criticism of the British Government's Spanish policy.

Trades Unions displayed a stronger pro-Republican attitude, but, in some responses, demonstrated a concern not to embarrass the Labour Government. Some unions went further than considering the Spanish Civil War a case of Fascist aggression against democracy, and labelled the conflict a class war. Parallels between events in Spain and the New Zealand scene were clearly drawn. The FOL gave a strong

lead in espousing pro-Republicanism, but not all unions responded. Support for the Republican cause was mainly confined to the large, militant industrial unions. There was also some evidence of Communist influence within the unions on the issue, but, equally, suspicion of Communist activities and motives was apparent.

In both the political and industrial wings of the Labour Movement the most tangible evidence of support for the Government of Spain was in the form of donations either to the Spanish Medical Aid Committee, or to other funds established to aid Republican Spain. Trades Unions also demonstrated support by passing resolutions of sympathy with the Government or the people of Spain.

Detailed discussion of the attitudes of the Labour Movement is divided into two parts. First, the Trades Union response will be considered and, then, the attitudes of the Labour Party, to which many unions were affiliated.

The main source of information for the responses of Trades Unions are their own records. Minutes of meetings recorded resolutions of solidarity with the people of Spain, and the donation of funds for aid. For the purposes of this study the records of 27 Trades Unions were checked for reference to the Spanish Civil War; of that total, 16 were found to have mention of the war.⁴ The few union journals available did not contain many references to the Spanish Civil War, with the exception of the Borer, the publication of the Auckland branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (ASC & J) and the N.Z. Transport Worker, the official organ of the Waterside Worker's Union. The latter, however had no articles written specifically for New Zealand workers, but merely reprinted material from the International Federation of Trades Unions.

Many of the resolutions of solidarity were made in the first few months of the war and clearly showed that the war in Spain was regarded as a battle for democracy, and even as a class war. The resolution passed by the Otago Carpenters Union was in somewhat

stronger language than most, yet it indicated the general trend of thought about the Spanish situation. In August 1936, it was resolved:

That this branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners extend to our fellow workers in Spain our sympathy and moral support in their heroic struggle to defend their Democratic Liberty against the Military-Fascist Butchers of Finance Capital. And express the hope that the Spanish Government will successfully overcome the Fascist Rebels.⁵

New Zealand Trades Unionists identified the Government of Spain as a workers Government; almost all the resolutions passed spoke of the "Spanish workers" struggle. Thus, a clear judgement was made - the Republican forces were those of the working classes; here were their fellows engaged in a battle for that which the New Zealand working class had just achieved with the election of a Labour Government. It was only fair that New Zealand's workers should support the cause of the Spanish workers. Among other unions that made similar resolutions in the early months of the war were the Auckland and Wellington branches of the Federated Seamen's Union,⁶ the Auckland Tramways Union,⁷ the Dunedin Unemployed Workers Movement,⁸ the Canterbury branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS),⁹ the Auckland Cutters and Pressers Union¹⁰ and the Auckland, Wellington, and Hamilton branches of the General Labourer's Union (GLU).¹¹

Many of the resolutions also contained appeals to the Labour Government to support the Spanish Government. The Auckland branch of the Federated Seamen's Union in September 1936 urged the Labour Government to: "appeal to the Imperial Government to afford every possible facilities (sic) for the democratically elected Spanish Government to defeat the belligerent Fascist rebels."¹²

Once the Non-Intervention Agreement had come into force calls, were made for the Labour Government to protest about the embargo on the sale of war materials to the Spanish Government. The Auckland

Cutters and Pressers Union called on the New Zealand Government:

to use its influence both at Geneva and with the British Government. The object of having the iniquitous non-intervention clause removed so as to enable the Spanish Workers Government to purchase the munitions and war materials to successfully defend themselves against bloody reaction.¹³

Most of the resolutions, whether or not they contained calls to the Labour Government to act in some way, were sent to the Government.

Articles in the Borer also indicated a sense of identification with the Spanish workers. Of all the union journals Borer, carried the most items about Spain and the only ones that related the struggle in Spain to the New Zealand scene. Along with articles received from the International Federation of Trades Unions,¹⁴ and some from Communist writers such as Frank Pitcairn,¹⁵ all of which stressed that the war in Spain was a struggle against an unholy alliance of the Church and the "big bosses", were articles written for New Zealand unionists that placed the implications of the Spanish War firmly in a New Zealand context. An article simply entitled "Spain", in July 1937, expressed the fervent hope that the same attack on democracy would not occur in New Zealand "if the Government runs counter to vested interests".¹⁶ Another declared that the Government of Spain was less radical than the New Zealand Labour Government in New Zealand, leaving its readers to draw their own conclusions about support for the Spanish Government and the lesson of Spain for New Zealanders.¹⁷

Yet others decried the "falsifying" of civil war news in the daily newspapers, and particularly in the New Zealand Herald. (This too was seen as a factor in the "struggle for Socialism", which, for one correspondent, was exemplified in the Spanish Civil War.¹⁸) An article entitled "The Herald on Spain" concluded:

The rule of the people will only come when the workers become intelligent enough to discredit such newspaper

propaganda and become strong and organised to end the rule of the many by the few; then newspapers will become the true voice of the people.¹⁹ Thus, the lessons of Spain were not only apparent but immediately applicable to New Zealand workers:

We do not think many of the thinking members of our organisation have any doubts as to the importance of the matter as in nearly every branch a small sum [for Spanish Medical Aid] has been voted.²⁰

The donation of money for aid to Spain was the means by which many unions showed their solidarity with the Spanish workers, over and above resolutions that indicated moral support and denoted the unions' viewpoint on the matter. Many unions gave money to the Spanish Medical Aid Committee and supported the Committee's activities by attending meetings "affiliating" their unions to the Committee and having SMAC speakers at their own meetings. The connection between the unions and the SMAC will be dealt with at length in Chapter 7. At this point, however, it is worth noting that the sums of money given to the SMAC were often large irregular donations as in the case of the Denniston miners, who gave £45 in one month in 1938.²¹ Other unions gave less, but made regular donations. The total contributions from trades unions alone in 1938 and 1939 to the SMAC's funds were over £1,000, which represented a considerable proportion of the total amount raised in that period.

The unions also established their own fund to aid the Spanish people. Various referred to as the "Spanish Workers Fund" or the "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund" (apparently its official title), its origins and instigators are unclear. A final balance sheet in the Roth Labour Movement Collection,²² printed by the Standard Press, gives the date of inception as 22 September 1936; the date of closure was 1 November 1937. The National Industrial Conference, which inaugurated the FOL, endorsed the appeal, urging all unions to give the utmost financial aid. A spontaneous collection at the conference, after an address by a member of the Wellington Trades and Labour Council on the plight of Spain, raised £22.5s4d for the appeal.²³

It appears that the appeal was overseen by the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union, and that the money was generally sent through the Standard, the Labour Party's newspaper, which published a subscription list in each issue. The secretary's report to the 21st Annual Conference of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Union, on 24 of November 1937, noted:

£348.3.6 received for assistance for the Spanish workers through the appeal in the "Standard" Delegates would note from the payment side that £343.1.2 had been forwarded to the International Federation of Trades Unions leaving £5.2.4 in hand to meet the cost of stamps and exchange and printing the balance sheet of the fund.²⁴

The balance sheet entitled "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund" in fact shows that £375.11.2 was sent to the International Federation of Trades Unions; the amount kept for expenses is the same as in the secretary's report.²⁵ However, an analysis of the contributions recorded shows that the total contributed by trades unions was indeed the £343 noted; the rest came from Labour Party branches and individuals.

The Waterside Workers' Union itself sent £300 to the International Transport Workers Federation for aid to Spain. A special conference in 1936 had decided to donate the money and recoup the sum through a levy on all members. James ("Big Jim") Roberts, the powerful secretary of the union, and a leading figure in the Labour Movement in New Zealand, appears to have had a great concern for the Spanish situation.²⁶ With reference to the objections of some union members to the donation he said, "as far as I am personally concerned I think the grandest thing we have ever done was to show our appreciation of the splendid fight put up by Trade Unionists in Spain". He recommended that branches did not pay their share of the donations out of general funds but that they raised it by direct levy on members.²⁷ Roberts, who became President of the Labour Party in 1937, had initiated the resolution at the National Industrial Conference that endorsed financial aid to the Spanish Government.²⁸

The role of the Federation of Labour in pro-Republican activities was of some importance to its affiliated unions. The FOL was the voice of the New Zealand Labour Movement, and it was the national, "overseeing" organisation whose decisions and attitudes had an influence on the activities of the affiliated unions. An executive meeting of the Canterbury Carpenters' Union, upon receipt of an appeal from the SMAC, decided to take no action "pending advice as to what the local branch of the FOL intend to do in this matter".²⁹

The Federation of Labour did endorse the work of the SMAC and urged its members to give it "all support possible" in 1937.³⁰ In May 1938, the National Council of the FOL further resolved to write to each Trades Council (its local representatives) asking them to take up collections for the SMAC funds.³¹ The FOL also made its own contribution to the cause of Spanish democracy, in the form of the despatch of money for the purchase of an ambulance, in August 1938. The money for this donation was taken from FOL funds, amounting to "about £ 570, and was then requested from the affiliations in the form of a levy."³²

The impulse for this act of solidarity with the Spanish Government came both from the National Council of the FOL and from its branch organisations, the Trades Councils. The Auckland, Otago and Wellington Trades Councils, had all forwarded resolutions to the National Council asking that such action be taken.³³ There was some discussion as to whether the National Council could authorise what was, in the words of FOL President Angus McLagen,³⁴ "a great dip" in the Federation funds, for such a "lump sum" donation. However, because it would take "fully six months" to raise the money by direct appeal to unions, and because of the urgency of the Spanish situation by this time in 1938, it was decided that the National Council did have the power to authorise such an action. It was estimated that a levy on each member of 3d would cover the cost.³⁵ Affiliated unions still had to vote to endorse such a donation and to agree to pay the levy, but there is no record of any objections being made, either to the FOL itself, or at local level on

the occasions of union resolutions agreeing to the donation. According to the balance sheet, entitled "Unions Which Have Contributed to the Spanish Ambulance Fund",³⁶ the total amount raised by levy was £612.3.2, of which £562.7.4 went to purchase the ambulance, which was later reported to New Zealand workers as being in use on the Madrid Front. The remaining £49.15.10 went to "Spanish Refugees Fund". Whether this referred to a SMAC appeal or another fund is unknown.

FOL Conferences were an important opportunity for affiliates to make their views known to their National Organisation, and to determine policies the FOL, as the united voice of the Labour Movement, could then authoritatively express in high places. At Conferences in the period of the Spanish Civil War, the "socialist internationalism" of the FOL was elucidated in resolutions of concern about the international situation, particularly with regard to Fascist aggression. Trades Unions' concern about Spain was usually not expressed as a separate issue, but rather as a part of the whole complex of Fascist expansionism and its appeasement by Britain and France. At the 1938 Annual Conference, a lengthy resolution was passed condemning Fascist aggression, which included the problem of Spain. In part it said:

The cause of world peace today depends upon the checking of Fascist aggression in central Europe, Spain and China. Therefore we urge the Labour Government to insist that the British Empire will (a) support France and the Soviet Union in guaranteeing the independence and security of Czechoslovakia, (b) lift the embargo on arms to the Spanish Government and insist upon the immediate withdrawal of the Fascist interventionist forces in Spain, and (c) organise collective action to bring to an end Japanese aggression in China.

Also we call upon the trade union movement to improve in every way its support for the Spanish Government and to strengthen the boycott of Japanese goods.³⁷

The Conference heard an address from Tom Spiller, recently returned from Spain, in which he described the attack on the Spanish Government as "one of the greatest tragedies that had ever befallen

the human race".³⁸ FOL President Angus McLagen said that the situation in Spain held a "serious lesson" for the Labour Movement and that he believed that more could be done for Spain.³⁹ The Conference voted to send a telegram to the Prime Minister of Spain, expressing sympathy and solidarity, and took up a collection for the SMAC immediately, which totalled £30.14.9.⁴⁰

Like its individual affiliates, the FOL also appealed to the Government with regard to Spain. Again, its resolution placed Spain in the context of wider Fascist aggression. In March 1938, the National Council resolved to ask the Government:

in connection with their discussions with the Imperial Government, that it will endeavour to secure the collective security of all democratic countries against fascism. This will apply to countries like Spain, Austria, China and other nationalities likely to be under attack by Fascist governments, and in doing so to carry out the principles and policy as laid down by the League of Nations.⁴¹

And yet, activities relating to the role of the New Zealand Government in the Spanish crisis posed a problem for the Trades Unions. On one hand the Labour Government was seen as "their" Government, likely to share attitudes and to listen sympathetically to unionists' opinions. On the other hand, part and parcel of the feeling of kinship with the Government, there was a concern in some sections of the union movement not to embarrass the Government, and thereby give ammunition to its enemies. This was particularly evident with regard to the Seamens' Union, a situation which may have arisen from the close relationship between Peter Fraser and Seamens' President, Fintan Patrick Walsh, a member of the National Council of the FOL and later to become the Federation's President.⁴² The secretary of the Auckland branch of the Union reported to a meeting that, at the time of the police interrogation of the nurses for Spain (when it was feared by the SMAC that the women either would not be permitted to leave or miss the boat⁴³), Tom Stanley, President of the Auckland SMAC, and Leo Sim, Communist General Secretary, had requested that the seamen hold up the Awatea until the nurses were

allowed to board. The secretary said that:

he had refused to take such action without further information because to do so would have been to fight the Government, and it appeared most unlikely that the Government was any party to what was being done and that it was more probable that the police had exceeded their instructions.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the union decided to protest to the Government about the police interrogation of the nurses, which they felt was "most scandalous"⁴⁵ and to press the Government to institute an enquiry. Several other unions also resolved to do so, no doubt also secure in the belief that it was not the Labour Government which was at fault, but the remnants of the "old guard" left in the services of the state, such as the police force.⁴⁶

Not all the unions felt as "protective" towards the Labour Government. The Auckland ASC & J's opinion was expressed in the Borer in strong words. The Borer suggested that perhaps the New Zealand Government was afraid of offending Britain,⁴⁷ and urged it to take a firmer pro-Republican stance; the British Government, after all, was just as much composed of class enemies as were the Fascist forces in Spain.⁴⁸

Yet, the Borer too saw the interrogation of the nurses not as an example of the Labour Government's ambivalence about the Spanish situation, but as an indication of which side the "bureaucratic authorities" supported.⁴⁹ This perception, of course, added to the argument that what was happening in Spain could also happen in New Zealand, which encouraged New Zealand workers to take an interest in the conflict in Spain and to become involved in supporting the Republican Government that was considered to be fighting for them as well.

It may have been the fear of causing problems for the Labour Government that prevented unions from taking stronger action to enforce their views on the Government, and to persuade it to take a

firmer line itself, which did happen in the case of the Sino-Japanese war. The Waterside Workers' Union placed a ban on the loading of scrap-iron for export to Japan. After having said that his Government would not be blackmailed in such a way, Savage then banned the export of scrap iron anywhere. R.M. Burdon points out that scrap-iron went mostly to Japan, so this act really meant that the Government agreed to use the issue to make a gesture of disapproval of Japan's aggression in China.⁵⁰

The Spanish Civil War raised more complex political issues than did the Sino-Japanese conflict. The endorsement of a committed pro-Republican "line" involved the acceptance of the Communist viewpoint as well. Any direct union action, such as the holding up of the Awatea, would not have resulted in the Government's becoming more publicly pro-Republican and would have, no doubt, aroused public disapproval of the union action, because of the political nature of the issues involved with the war in Spain. There was some suspicion of Communist motives of some influential sections of the labour Movement; for example, by this stage Fintan Patrick Walsh, after having earlier been a member of the Communist Party was becoming increasingly hostile to Communist activities.⁵¹

As well, there were purely practical obstacles to direct, or more public, action to display concern over events in Spain. It does not appear that New Zealand exported anything to Spain in this period, although it received a small number of imports, such as olive oil. Thus, there was no ready target for a display of pro-Republican sentiment. Nor was it practicable, or likely to be condoned by the Government, the public and a large section of the unions, to take direct action with regard to trade relations with Britain to protest at its non-intervention policy.

At least one unionist interviewed for this study felt that New Zealand unions' failure to take direct action of some kind was indicative of a certain lack of commitment to the Spanish cause on the part of the unions; that they did not feel strongly enough about

the issue to involve themselves in public action which would incontrovertably reveal their views.⁵² Yet there were the obstacles to this kind of action discussed above. Without doubt, the unions that gave money and passed resolutions of solidarity with Spain were sincere in their concern. The level of commitment of individual unionists to pro-Republicanism is less easy to gauge. To what exactly did a resolution recognising the fellowship of New Zealand and Spanish workers in the battle to defend democracy, or establish socialism, commit New Zealand workers, apart from a certain philosophical and ideological standpoint? There is a sense that while sincerely felt, these resolutions were in some manner rather like popular slogans, easy to voice without really engaging hearts and minds on the issue.

It must be emphasised that there were, naturally, more immediate concerns in New Zealand for unionists. The Labour Government's policies, the inauguration of the FOL, the move among some unions to form national organisations of their own, including the "One Big Union" campaign of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, engaged a large part of the attention of New Zealand workers. Concern about Spain was a part of concern about the whole trend of international events and came a poor second to national issues.

On the face of it, resolutions of solidarity and the unquestionably generous and sincerely motivated donations of money seemed to indicate the New Zealand Trades Union Movement's approval of and participation in the United Front promoted by the Communist Party, as did the "socialist internationalism" of the FOL as a whole. The passing of resolutions was, after all, a major point in the Communist Party's campaign to involve the New Zealand Labour Movement in a campaign for solidarity with Spain.⁵³ However, there was not a wholehearted acceptance by the Labour Movement of this ambitious plan for a "common front of all progressive people". Interest in Spain and in the Sino-Japanese war fitted well into the Communist scheme of things; the FOL did take the lead in forming opinion on such matters. Yet, the trades unions response to the war

in Spain, as to other international issues, was not a united and unanimous response.

In general, it was the larger industrial unions, with a tradition of militancy, that involved themselves in pro-Republican activities. The large membership of such unions, of course, had some bearing on the donations they gave to the SMAC. The Waterside Workers' Union, the miners, the Federated Seamens' Union, the railwaymen and the freezing workers were among those unions expressing the greatest concern and donating the most money. These unions had a tradition of involvement in issues wider than those of merely wages and conditions; they had a socialist analysis of the system and a history of militant action. Conrad Bollinger attributes the "socialist internationalism" of the FOL entirely to the prompting of these large, industrial, militant unions.⁵⁴ Other unions contributed small amounts of money as well; yet, noticeable in both the accounts of the SMAC and the balance sheet of the "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund" is the absence of contributions from what might be described as "white collar unions", or craft unions.

The role of certain individuals in the unions, and particularly in the more militant unions, also had a bearing on their response to the Spanish Civil War. The influence and activities of Communist unionists was particularly important. A draft resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in March 1937 stated that all Communist Workers must be Trade Union members:

It is necessary to work for the strengthening of the membership and unity of the N.Z. Federation of Labour, to secure the Affiliation of all Unions to it, to work towards complete Trade Union Unity, to campaign for the ousting of the Trotskyist Splitters from the Trade Unions, to bind closer the relations between the Trade Unions and the L.P. In each Trade Union Communists have to work for international Trade Union Unity...⁵⁵

According to Sid Scott, editor of the Workers Weekly in this period, Communists indeed became a "definite force" in the unions and in the FOL itself at this time, and to a certain extent these

Communist unionists became "rallying points" for the more radical among the workers.⁵⁶ Evidence of Communist involvement in Trades Unions comes also from the records of the Christchurch Branch of the Communist Party. In reply to a questionnaire from the Central Committee about membership, the branch replied that it had 22 members, of whom 16 were Trades Unionists. One was president of the Addington branch of the ASRS, one was on the executive of the Furniture Trades Union and three were members of the FOL. (It is not clear whether this last reference meant that the three were members of unions affiliated to the FOL, or that they were members of the local Trades Council; since most of the unions mentioned in the report were FOL affiliates, probably the latter was meant.)⁵⁷

It followed that, if Communist membership in the Trades Unions had as its aim the creation of the United Front, then the impulse for some resolutions of solidarity with the Spanish Government came from Communist members of the unions. In some cases, these people are readily identifiable. Tom Stanley, chairman of the Auckland branch of the SMAC and a member of the Communist Party, was also secretary of the Auckland General Labourers Union and in this capacity was elected to the Auckland Trades Council, and thence to the National Council of the FOL in January 1938. At Easter 1938 he was elected President of the Communist Party. It was he who initiated the resolution about the international situation at the FOL Conference in 1938.⁵⁸ George Jackson, secretary of the Auckland branch of the SMAC, was a Communist and a member of the Otahuhu Railway Workshops Union, which gave often and generously to the SMAC. The resolution passed by the Canterbury General Labourers Union that asked the FOL to organise a national movement to raise funds for aid to Spain⁵⁹ was initiated by one Mr Greatorex, who was also a member of the Christchurch section of the Communist Party.⁶⁰ Some deductions may be made where party affiliation was not obvious. For example, someone who moved a motion of solidarity with Spain⁶¹ and also promoted remits for the Labour Party Conference urging acceptance of Communist Party affiliation and permission for Labour Party members to also belong to the Friends of the Soviet Union,⁶² as in the

case of "Brother Jamieson" of the Otago Carpenters' Union, may reasonably be expected to have been sympathetic to the views of the Communist Party, if not a member.

Trades Unions usually kept very clear and full minutes, yet the discussion surrounding resolutions put was not often included, nor was it often indicated if a motion was carried unanimously, or on what basis any objections were made. The impulse of one member and his personal and political interest in Spain, may have generated a resolution; there is no way of discovering if the same commitment was felt by his fellows, or even if they agreed to the resolution.

There is some indication that not all Trades Unionists felt that the cause of the Republican Government of Spain should be supported. The Auckland District Council of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners received a letter from a member, "Brother Armanesco", objecting to a donation to the Spanish Workers Fund. The meeting resolved to inform the member that the resolution was carried unanimously and had he attended the meeting he could have made his objection known. Further, the District Council added that the resolution was "in keeping with the objectives of our union in that we believe in assisting workers organisations wherever possible".⁶³

It might have been expected that Catholic unionists would object to moral and financial support being given to a regime their Church regarded as tantamount to the personification of the anti-Christ; yet, there was little reference to any complaints in union records. Catholic objections may, of course, have contributed to the silence of some West Coast unions on the issue. (The West Coast of the South Island had a large Catholic population and was a traditional Labour stronghold.) James Roberts, as well, noted some objection on a "religious basis" to the Watersiders' Unions' donation of £300 for aid to Spain in 1936 when he remarked on the money yet to come in for the donation.⁶⁴ In 1938, he indicated that there was still some £ 21.17.6 still to come from branches, particularly Palmerston North and Napier.⁶⁵

The secretary of the Canterbury Freezing Workers Union also reported to members that some were not giving all they could, or should, to aid Spain, in May 1937:

The appeal for funds to support the Spanish people in their struggle shows some anomalies when the efforts of the large and small branches are compared ... Some of the Freezing Works Branches are subscribing to the appeal to a man, others, again are showing an utter disregard for the sufferings of the Spanish people and of the possible effects of the struggle upon ourselves and other democratic peoples if the people of Spain are ultimately subjected to a Fascist dictatorship.⁶⁶

Whether this was due to lack of interest, or disagreement with the analysis of the Spanish situation promoted by the secretary, was not stated.

The Secretary of the Auckland branch of the Federated Seamen's Union gave evidence of his suspicion of Communism both in New Zealand and Spain. In November 1938, he complained to his counterpart in Dunedin that a watersiders' dispute that had almost affected the seamen was "the sort of thing" that could "seriously endanger the Government" if those responsible were not checked. He concluded:

The example of what is happening in France, and has already happened in Spain, ought to be sufficient warning to the workers not to allow themselves to be led by irresponsibles masquerading as the saviours of the working class.⁶⁷

Even this comment, however, showed that the situation in Spain was used as some kind of example of ramifications that could be applied to the New Zealand scene, although not quite in the manner in which the Left, and particularly the Communists, usually directed such application. It is clear, then, that the Spanish Civil War did have some impact upon Trades Unions in New Zealand, and that events in Spain were seen to have significance for New Zealand. While there was a certain amount of Communist influence, some of the concern and the impulse to donate money came from non-Communist Trades Unionists. After all, if a Communist proposed a resolution,

particularly in the case of the FOL, it would still have been possible to oppose or defeat it. Trades Union responses to Spain indicated not only a certain level of Communist involvement, but also that there was some agreement with the Communist presentation of international issues in terms of the threat of Fascist aggression. Nevertheless, the United Front policy of the Communists can be seen to have had only limited success with Trades Unions, one of the groups most important in the creation of this "progressive" coalition against Fascism. Its success was also in the area where it might be most expected to have had results, among the militant unions with a predisposition to radicalism and a desire for Socialism. Even though the FOL gave a positive lead in the matter, there is little evidence that the rhetoric of pro-Republicanism and the United Front against Fascism gained any significant number of adherents among smaller or more conservative unions.

Although Spain and its bloody internecine strife was overshadowed by the greater war that followed, there are indications that the Spanish Civil War became a part of Trades Union mythology, at least while the membership of unions still comprised those who had been unionists in the late 1930s. The lessons and rhetoric of the Spanish Civil War had not been forgotten by the time of the 1951 waterfront dispute. Film of a meeting of workers during the dispute shows Eddie Taylor of the Drivers' Union exhorting workers to remember the words of La Pasionaria in their struggle with the National Government. He said, misquoting the famous slogan: "Far better to go down fighting than to live forever on your knees."⁶⁸

The attitudes of the Trades Unions had some influence upon the response of the Labour Party, for many unions were affiliated to the Labour Party and the advent of compulsory unionism had increased the unions' voting strength at Annual Conferences.⁶⁹ However, the Labour Party's official attitude to the Spanish Civil War was considerably more cautious than the unions', at least in terms of any analysis of the political situation in Spain.

Unfortunately, the records of the central Labour Party organisation were not available for use in this study; therefore, most of the evidence of the Labour Party's attitude has come from newspaper reports of MPs' statements, branch records and opinion expressed in the Labour Party's newspaper the Standard. The minutes, correspondence and files of the National Executive of the Labour Party would, no doubt, have given a much clearer indication of the development of the Party's opinion on the matter. However, the sources used reveal the basic elements of the response to the Spanish Civil War.

Several considerations precluded a strong pro-Republican response from the Labour Party. To begin with, its attention was focussed mainly upon the Government's domestic policies; by 1938, not only the coming election, but also internal differences over financial reform within the Parliamentary Labour Party⁷⁰ were major preoccupations. The Labour Party's dislike of Communism was deep-seated and grew out of differences in the 1920s over the relative merits of parliamentary or revolutionary methods of achieving Socialism. In 1926, the Labour Party's National Executive ruled that members of the Communist Party could not be delegates to Labour Representation Committees (LRCs). Later, in 1933, membership of the Communist-inspired Friends of the Soviet Union and "Movement Against War and Fascism" was declared to be incompatible with membership of the Labour Party.⁷¹ The use of the Spanish Civil War as a tactic for joint action and eventual affiliation with Labour by the Communist Party was also a significant influence upon the Labour Party's maintenance of a low profile on the issue. Comment in the Standard revealed not only a suspicion of Communism among some Labour Party members, but also the objection of some Catholic's to their Party's apparent pro-Republicanism.

The attitudes of individual Labour Party members and MPs are difficult to ascertain. Few expressed publicly their opinions on the Spanish crisis. Parliament devoted very little time to the discussion of international affairs, and specific references to a

particular international event, except in the making of general observations, were few and far between. At the very beginning of the war, in August 1936, C. Morgan Williams, MP for Kaiapoi, drew Parliament's attention to cable messages which, in his opinion, showed that British warships were offering protection to British merchant vessels carrying war material to the Spanish rebels. The Prime Minister assured him that the British attitude was one of strict neutrality.⁷² The incident to which Williams referred was the stopping of a British petrol tanker by a Spanish Government cruiser, after the British Government had affirmed its right to protect British shipping from interference. William's assessment of the situation from these bare facts indicated some concern for the role of the British Government in the crisis. Apart from this little was said about Spain in the House. The comments of Labour Cabinet members have already been noted in consideration of the Government's response to the war.⁷³

Labour MPs clearly stated their support for the Government's foreign policy as expressed by Jordan at the League on several occasions when the Opposition attacked Labour's handling of foreign policy, which also implied support for the Government's attitude towards the Spanish problem.⁷⁴ Most Labour backbenchers were convinced, like Savage, Jordan and Nash, that New Zealand had a part to play in international affairs, and that the path to peace lay through the League of Nations and collective security.

Outside Parliament, some Labour MPs did become publicly involved in pro-Republican activities and even went so far as to associate themselves with the Spanish Medical Aid Committee. This was particularly the case with the three Dunedin MPs. Dr D.G. McMillan, MP for Dunedin West, was President of the SMAC, a nominal position, which did not commit him to active involvement in the day to day organisation of the Committee, yet, even so, a public acknowledgement of association with the aims and activities of the appeal, and, therefore, with pro-Republicanism. The two other Dunedin Parliamentarians, Peter Neilson (Dunedin Central) and James Munro

(Dunedin North) also publicly endorsed the SMAC's appeal at least in the first few months of the Committee's existence. It may be that enthusiasm waned later, when it became more obvious that the Committee had a distinct Communist bias.

Personal associations played some part in the Dunedin trio's willingness to become involved with the SMAC. Ted Hunter, the Dunedin SMAC secretary, was a long time member of the Labour Party, and had been MP for St Kilda from 1933 to 1935. He was well known to the three and it may have been his personal influence that induced them to give support to the SMAC, when, otherwise, prudence may have been stronger than pro-Republican sympathies.⁷⁵

No other MPs nor even Labour Party members became so closely associated with New Zealand's major pro-Republican organisation, although a few were prepared to speak out on the Spanish issue. Ormond Wilson, who won the Rangitikei seat for Labour in 1938, spoke with W.B. Sutch at a meeting organised by the Victoria University Students Association, in Wellington.⁷⁶ E.J. (Ted) Howard, Labour MP for Christchurch South, made some comments about the Spanish conflict among more general discussion of the European situation in September 1937, on his return from the Empire Parliamentary Association Conference:

If Germany and Italy beat Spain - and it is hardly likely that poor little Spain can hold the country - the Fascist movement will be subsidised in the same way in other near European countries.⁷⁷

Howard considered that Fascism was using internal dissension in other countries to gain control of Europe in order to then launch a concerted attack upon Russia. However, the dangers of such public expressions of sympathy for the Republican Government of Spain may have been brought home to M.P.s by Zealandia's attack on Howard's comments in October 1937. Zealandia's dire warning of electoral retribution from Catholics if Labour MPs and the Government itself

did not refrain from taking a pro-Republican stance may have been a contributing factor to the silence of many MPs on the issue.⁷⁸

The records of Labour Party branches, and of Labour Representation Committees, the Party's regional organisations, also revealed little comment on the Spanish Civil War. Of the records of the four LRCs and five Labour Party branches available for consultation, three LRCs and two branches discussed the issue. Resolutions of solidarity or sympathy for the Republican Government of Spain, similar to those passed by unions, were almost non-existent. The Waikato LRC seems to have been one of the few sections of the Party to have passed any resolution on the Civil War. In December 1936, on the motion of the Taupiri branch, a meeting of the LRC resolved:

That this meeting of the Waikato LRC, being convinced that the action of the British and other European Governments in applying an arms embargo to the friendly Spanish Government is a direct breach of international law, calls on the Government to press for removal of the embargo.⁷⁹

This resolution studiously avoided taking sides over the Civil War, confining its assessment of the situation to the frame of reference of international law. The Labour Government also couched much of its Spanish policy primarily in these terms. Whether this approach by the LRC was from prudence or was genuinely the way in which the Civil War was viewed is difficult to say.

Earlier, in August 1936, the North Canterbury LRC had put before it a resolution that would have clearly indicated pro-Republican sympathies from an ideological standpoint on the war. The resolution expressed "sympathy with the loyal Spanish working class" and called on the New Zealand Government to assist the Government of Spain "to the limits of international law". The resolution was rejected, after "long discussion", in favour of an amendment that established a sub-committee of three "to go into the matter", a neat bureaucratic solution which effectively buried the issue. Whether the sub-committee ever met, and whatever it may have decided was not

recorded in subsequent minutes.⁸⁰

The example of the Otago LRC also revealed the Party's circumspect treatment of an ideologically explosive issue. While resolving to donate £ 2.2.0 to the SMAC appeal and to request affiliations and branches to do the same, the executive committee decided to take no part in a procession planned by the SMAC, nor to provide a speaker for the meeting to be held afterwards, which had been requested by the SMAC.⁸¹ The Auckland LRC also donated money to the SMAC, but refused to pass to the Medical Aid Committee a list of branches and affiliations to enable the SMAC to circularise them for the Spanish aid appeal.⁸²

Branches appear not even to have formulated resolutions concerned with the Spanish crisis (with the exception of the Tau piri branch), much less debated the wisdom of passing them. Lack of interest or concern seems not to have been the reason for this, although the level of both is difficult to gauge. Some branches revealed their concern by donating money to the Spanish Medical Aid funds and to the Standard's "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund".⁸³ It seems likely that either the level of interest was not high enough to warrant discussion at meetings, or the issue was safer kept one of humanitarian aid rather than one of political analysis. Some branches were more concerned than others. The Mount Eden branch allowed speakers from the Eden Communist group to address a meeting about the Spanish situation in August 1936. The Communist delegation "asked for the co-operation of the Party in a project against the interference with the present Spanish Government."⁸⁴ The response of the meeting to that suggestion was not recorded. Later, in April 1937, a collection was taken up for the SMAC at a meeting of the branch.⁸⁵

Some Auckland branches of the Labour Party were concerned enough to send delegates to the Auckland SMAC's first few meetings. The second meeting of the newly-formed Auckland SMAC boasted delegates from five Labour Party branches": Devonport, Onehunga, Auckland

West, Birkenhead and Glenfield.⁸⁶ The first three branches, as well as the Tamaki, Grey Lynn, Milford, Manurewa, Mt Albert Women's Division and Huntly West branches later donated money to the SMAC.⁸⁷ It is worth noting that all of these donations were made in 1938 and 1939, after the "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund" had been closed. None of the donations were more than £2.10.0, nor for that matter were those made by Labour Party branches to the Standard's fund. Few branches had large amounts of money in hand. Most of their money went to the Labour Party itself for campaign purposes or to other appeals for which there may have appeared a more immediate and urgent need, such as the fund established to provide enough finance to enable the Standard to become a daily newspaper, in order to combat the anti-Labour tone of most New Zealand dailies.

Reports of the Labour Party's Annual Conferences also revealed little attention to the Spanish Civil War, yet gave a clearer indication of the Party's attitude to the conflict. The resolutions of the Defence, War and Peace Committee indicated the Party's concern about the international situation, in which Spain was a factor. The Labour Party's traditional hostility to militarism and the manufacture and sale of armaments, and its conviction that the League of Nations and collective security were the best means of securing world peace were affirmed at conferences in 1937, 1938 and 1939. The issue of Spain was for the Party, as for its leaders in Cabinet, inextricably linked with the problem of the maintenance of the League of Nations as a force for world peace. The endorsement given by the Party in 1937 to William Jordan's stand at the League, while primarily related to the wider issue of the Government's support of the League, was also an acknowledgement of the Party's acceptance of the policy on Spain he had expressed at the League. The Party pledged itself: "to unceasingly support the Government in its efforts for world peace and to work untiringly for the triumph of the Democratic principles for which the party stands."⁸⁸

This conference in 1937 also passed a specific resolution on Spain, although it was not included in the deliberations of the

Defence, War and Peace Committee, which dealt with remits on the international situation, but in those of the General Committee. The resolution, related to a remit asking for the establishment of a fundraising committee for aid to Spain, and for consideration of the SMAC appeal, stated:

That conference deplores foreign intervention in the Spanish Civil War and urges the New Zealand Government to press the Imperial Government to ensure the withdrawal of all foreign troops from that country and to leave the Spanish people to settle their own domestic difficulties.⁸⁹

As the Workers Weekly pointed out,⁹⁰ the analysis of the Spanish conflict contained in the resolution was begging the question somewhat in insisting that the Civil War was still a domestic problem. Yet, by maintaining the view that the war was, even now, in April 1937, the same type of conflict as it had been at the very beginning, a civil revolt, the Labour Party avoided the pitfalls of debating what exactly the war did represent (in much the same way as the League of Nations avoided defining the war's status). The resolution was also an echo of the Labour Government's stand, in that both Jordan and Savage expressed the wish that the Spanish people be allowed to choose their own form of Government without interference.⁹¹

The strength of the British connection was also revealed in this resolution, even if the Party and its leaders in Parliament deplored the lack of commitment to the League manifested by Britain's Government. The Imperial Government was regarded as powerful enough to ensure the withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain. It was, of course, in part a recognition of the responsibility the British Government had taken upon itself, albeit in a somewhat ambivalent manner, in its continued support of the NIC. This conviction of British strength and of the weight of its opinion in the affairs of Europe was to be echoed in the Standard, although usually in a negative manner, exhibited in the indignation and frustration expressed at the British Government's unwillingness to use its influence to halt foreign aggression in Spain.⁹²

Another remit presented to the Conference in 1937 may have had reference to the Spanish Civil War. If so, it showed that, despite the wide berth the Party kept around discussions of the political/ideological issues raised by the war, its meaning for democracy and its application to the New Zealand situation were not lost on the Party. In part the remit said:

... in view of the situation in Europe where constitutionally formed Governments have been overthrown by militarists and Fascists we urge the Government to take steps to ensure that all persons appointed to the army, air and police forces of the Dominion are in sympathy with the Democratic form of Government.⁹³

It would be difficult to argue that the remit had not been influenced by the situation in Spain. It indicated that the "lessons" of Spain, which the Communists were so eager to impress upon the New Zealand Labour Movement, had, indeed, had some impact upon members of the Labour Party. Trades Unions' opinions had also expressed a similar application of events in Spain to the New Zealand scene.

By the time of the 1938 Conference, a subtle change had taken place in the Labour Party's perception of the international situation. Whilst reaffirming support for the League of Nations and collective security, and encouraging the Government's "urging the necessity of basing British international policy on these principles",⁹⁴ the Party evinced more awareness of New Zealand's defence needs. International tension was increasing, and signs of impending war were more apparent. A remit calling for the abolition of compulsory military training⁹⁵ was not included in the final recommendations of the Defence, War and Peace Committee, which instead pledged: "to support the Government in every step necessary to ensure the adequate defence of the Dominion in its support of the defence of democratic principles and world peace."⁹⁶

The 1938 Conference report made no mention of Spain. By the time of the 1939 Annual Conference, the threat of war was even closer, and

the Spanish Civil War was over and far in the background of Labour concerns about the international situation. The Committee on Defence, War and Peace recommended that nothing be done about a remit calling for the provision of relief for the people of Spain.⁹⁷ Hitherto the greatest manifestation of the Labour Party's concern about the Civil War, and possibly one of the few steps it could take, had been the donation of money for Spanish aid. But by 1939 other international issues, and the problem of national defence, were more urgent than the problem of stateless and starving refugees from Spain.

During the three years of the Spanish Civil War, the Labour Party moved from a period of interest and demonstrable concern for at least the humanitarian aspects of the war, to a mood of concern for approaching general war and New Zealand's part in it, which overshadowed any sympathy, doubtless still felt, for the benighted and betrayed Government of Spain.

In all, the interest and involvement in the issue displayed by the Labour Party appears to have been slight, judging from the records of branches, LRCs and conferences. The pages of the Labour Party's official weekly newspaper revealed rather more about both the attitude of the Party to the conflict and the difficulties of taking a pro-Republican stand on the issue.

The Standard reflected the Labour Party's concentration on domestic issues, while still demonstrating that there was interest in the Spanish war. Most of the newspaper's content was devoted to news of the Labour Government's policies, and developments within the party itself, as well as other local news of particular interest to the Labour Movement, such as the National Industrial Conference in 1937. Few news items as such about the war were published; presumably there was little space for them. Most of the Standard's material on the civil war was in the form of reports of local meetings and local views about the conflict, as well as the comments of British Labour leaders, and press releases from the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trades Unions.

There was no mention in the Standard of the battle raging in Spain until September 1936, more than a month after the war had begun. One of the first major items published was a report of a New Zealander's reaction to and analysis of the situation. The Standard devoted almost the whole of page two of its issue of 16 September 1936 to a transcript of a radio journalist's broadcast on Station 1ZB in Auckland, which dealt with the political and social background of the war, and concluded with a prediction that the Non-Intervention Agreement would not work, and that without intervention the Government would eventually win because its supporters were spurred by an ideal of democracy and freedom.⁹⁸

In keeping with its concentration on domestic issues, the Standard devoted no editorials to the subject of the Civil War. However, comment on international events was provided in a column entitled "Week by Week", situated next to the editorial column, in which brief paragraphs discussed major international issues. The Spanish Civil War, and particularly the international aspects of the problem and the activities of the Non-Intervention Committee, featured largely in this column throughout 1937. Comment on the civil war in the column ceased in early 1938 and, in general, the Standard gave less coverage to the war after 1937.

The column closely followed international news reports and provided commentary on, and the interpretation of, international events. Such was the nature of the column that there was little space devoted to discussion of the issues behind the war in Spain as such, nor of the nature of the Republican Government itself. The major focus was on the role of European powers in the struggle and on the NIC, as the most salient feature of international deliberations about the conflict.

Although the column was not used merely as a vehicle for pro-Republican propaganda, it was clear that the sympathies of the commentator, identified simply as "L.E.", lay with the Republican Government of Spain. The unstated, yet obvious, interpretation

running through discussions of the civil war was that Spanish democracy was being threatened by Fascism, and that this would have repercussions for other democracies if Fascist expansionism were not halted in Spain. No brief was held for Franco's argument, and that of his German and Italian allies, that they were saving Spain from the pernicious influence of Communism. In June 1937, the column reported an interview given by Franco to the London Times, in which he made this claim, and commented drily:

It may be, as he says, that the Government was responsible for crimes and that there were Spaniards who were against the Government. If Franco considered it his duty to liberate the reactionaries and to exact punishment for the crimes, he has gone about it in a strange way.⁹⁹

Italian and German intervention in the war was seen as another step on the path of Fascist expansionism; a belief often expressed was that both Fascist nations wanted Spain for her raw materials and strategic position.¹⁰⁰ Franco was a dupe of the Fascists, and he would have greater difficulty in dislodging them from Spain than he had had in inviting them. Whatever side won was really beside the point, because the Fascists would not relinquish their hold on Spanish territory.¹⁰¹

Unlike the Communist newspaper, the Standard gave some credence to the idea that there were Spaniards fighting in Franco's army. Several times the opinion was expressed that even in the unlikely event of a withdrawal of foreign troops there would be no sudden end to the war, nor a clear cut victory for either side; the end of hostilities would probably see a divided Spain with little hope of reconciliation between the two sides. However, this result, it was implied, would be in a large measure because of the escalation of the war caused by Fascist intervention, and the bitterness resulting from this.¹⁰²

The danger to France of a Fascist victory in Spain was emphasised, following from the premise that Germany and Italy would

hold Spanish territory, in an analysis similar to the Communist "domino theory" of Fascist aggression:

All the while France has been alarmed by thoughts of what might happen if the Spanish issue were to be dependant on German and Italian intervention. The British Government ought to have been as greatly perturbed; the Fascists would like nothing so much as a stand which would bring them in easy striking distance of France and with that the whole European democracy.¹⁰³

Although the menace of Fascism to civilisation was an obvious part of the line of argument pursued in the "Week by Week" column, there was little attempt to reinforce this view by discussion of reports of Fascist atrocities, or to deny atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the Republican forces. The column was not a vehicle for propaganda as such, although early in the course of the war it had warned readers that many newspapers were bolstering the "Fascist attack on the workers' Government", by publishing falsified reports of Republican atrocities.¹⁰⁴ This was the only mention of Republican atrocity stories. Two atrocities too widely publicised to be ignored, the bombing of Guernica and the shelling of Almeria, were the exceptions with regard to Fascist atrocities. Indeed, the Standard was one of the few New Zealand newspapers that specifically discussed the tragedy of Guernica. The emphasis was on the horror of the event itself, rather than on the question of who was responsible, and what that revealed of the perpetrators' regard for human life and their style of warfare:

It is not surprising that so outrageous an attack on a civil population was denied by every party which might have been responsible for it ... But actually it is not important who were the offenders, it matters most that 1937 should see a repetition of the outrages to humanity that were seen also in the Abyssinian war.¹⁰⁵

Yet the comparison with Mussolini's Abyssinian adventure could be read as implying that the rebels and their allies were responsible for the atrocity.

Throughout the commentaries there was an emphasis on the importance of definite action by Britain and France to put a stop to Fascist aggression, in Spain and elsewhere. It was on this aspect of the Civil War that most of the "Week by Week" discussion focussed: the failure of Britain and France to provide an adequate defence of Spanish democracy and, therefore, of all democracy, particularly as revealed in the workings of the Non-Intervention Committee.

As in the Communist newspaper, it was the British Government that was seen as the leading actor, and France the unwilling understudy in the farce of non-intervention:

But it was the British Government which demanded from France observance of the Non-Intervention pact, and France, afraid to offend Britain at so critical a time, agreed to anything.¹⁰⁶

The blame for most of the international entanglements of the Spanish problem was laid upon the British Government's timidity and ambivalence about the outcome of the war. From the very beginning of the war the ambiguous nature of the British attitude was emphasised. The first comment in the "Week by Week" column on the Spanish situation, and, incidentally, the first mention of the war in the pages of the Standard, on 2 September 1936, condemned civil aviation firms that had supplied planes to both sides in the war (reflecting a traditional Labour concern with the manufacture and sale of war materials) and concluded:

The fact remains that in the eyes of the world no country is more culpable than Britain itself who, while negotiations [for the NIC] were proceeding, permitted the export of civil aeroplanes to Spain in increasing numbers.¹⁰⁷

Once the NIC had been established and its ineffectual nature demonstrated, even in its very composition, the culpability of the British Government became even more evident to the Standard's commentator. A heavily ironic tone soon invaded discussions of the activities of the NIC and conveyed a sense of the unreality of the whole procedure. Various epithets were used to describe the

Committee; the favourite of pro-Republicans, "farce", was the most frequently used; other more inventive descriptions were "wistful legend"¹⁰⁸ and "fairytale".¹⁰⁹ Notwithstanding several comments about the absurd, comic aspect of the Committee's deliberations and of the Powers' manoeuvrings to create the illusion that something was being done, an overtone of indignation of the two Western democracies' abandonment of their obligations at the Republican Government of Spain was very evident in the "Week by Week" column.

The only member of the NIC whose behaviour was noted with any sort of approval was Russia. The columnist praised the Russian representative's stubborn refusal to participate in the "charade" of non-intervention and in the camouflaging of German and Italian activities in Spain, even though it was considered that this, too, was used by the Fascist powers as yet another excuse for obstructing the progress of the NIC towards some solution of the Spanish crisis.

When Italy refused to participate in the Nyon piracy conference in September 1937, "Week by Week" noted that the refusal was ostensibly due to Russian accusations of Italian responsibility for Mediterranean piracy. While giving some credit to the Fascist view that Russia's action was a deliberate attempt to spoil the conference, the column, nevertheless, judged the Russian move as the "only possibly course of action" in placing blame where blame was due:

If, like Russia, the other Powers had the courage to fight piracy at its origins instead of politely inviting the pirates to talk it over, Mediterranean outrages would be shortlived and Fascist obstreporousness would be brought to account.¹¹⁰

Even though Russian motives might be suspect, the Soviet Union's unwillingness to enter into "the conspiracy of evasion",¹¹¹ which was regarded as the main feature of NIC deliberations, and its insistence on the reality of Fascist intervention in Spain could only have been appreciated by a newspaper column that was also undeceived

(and unwilling to deceive itself) about the situation in Spain. Perhaps too, although this was never stated, Russian attempts to bring the crisis to a head, and to create a rift between the two Western democracies and the Fascist Powers so wide that there would be no option but to go to war over Spain, were not far removed from the Standard's commentator's idea of a solution to the problem. His frequent insistence in discussions of international involvement that a display of strength by Britain would solve the problem of Fascist aggression in Spain must surely have had as a consideration the prospect of outright war in consequence of such action.

The policy of the British Government in encouraging and continuing the Non-Intervention Pact long after it was obvious to all concerned that it was nothing more than a "camouflage", and a "polite fiction" was treated with what almost amounted to scorn and contempt. Indeed, the Standard's commentator was far more outspoken in his condemnation of British policy over Spain than the Labour Government could ever dare to be. A wealth of bitterness was conveyed by comments such as: "But Britain of course has not been completely passive. Looking on from Downing Street, her ministers have felt, as they said "Deep concern"."¹¹²

Non-Intervention was regarded as the British Government's creation; therefore, much of the blame for its ineffectiveness was laid upon Britain's attitude towards the conflict. Naturally, the part played by Germany and Italy, first of all by intervening in Spain and then by prevaricating and paying only lipservice to the concept of non-intervention, was not overlooked. However, it was taken for granted that German and Italian diplomacy was based on deception and aggression rather than on rules and gentlemanly agreements. Therefore, it was considered all the more to the discredit of the British Government that it had for one moment considered that the Non-Intervention Pact would have any effect in defusing the Spanish crisis. Indeed, the columnist's comments revealed his doubts as to the sincerity of this motive in the British Government's adherence to non-intervention. The very first comment on the Non-Intervention

Committee expressed clearly the two points about British policy that were to be stressed again and again in his observation of the international implications of the Spanish Civil War:

Non-intervention, by what indications there are, is another of those weakling shifts which Hitler and Mussolini are past masters at making farcical ... Non-intervention was a glaring halfmeasure amounting almost to inverted intervention. There was never any reason in the first place for supposing that a rebel victory in Spain would be at variance with British interests.113

"Week by Week's" writer clearly considered that the apparent self-delusion of British statesmen about the willingness of the two Fascist Powers to abide by some form of international co-operation to solve the problem might not be self-delusion at all, but self-interest, a calculated move designed to allow Franco to win without appearing to have actively aided his efforts. Evidence of Britain's partiality was given by the column firstly in the serious consideration given by the NIC to the granting of belligerent rights to Franco in July 1937. This move was also seen as indicating the British Government's desire to extricate itself from an increasingly complicated and fruitless, as well as embarrassing, situation:

Give Franco his belligerent rights, in other words, and see if he will end things more quickly - that is the sum of the week's deliberations, though it has been well shrouded in Edenesque humbug ... Mr Eden, one of these days, may make an excursion into that appalling frankness upon which Earl Baldwin of Bewdley's fame may rest. He may tell the nation that the Government, in distributing belligerent rights to Franco, was aware that it was playing into Fascist hands. Perhaps also he will admit that the Government thought it was the easiest thing to do.114

The exchange of commercial agents between Burgos and London, in November 1937, however much Britain protested to the contrary, was held up in the "Week by Week" column as the final proof of Britain's partisan interest in the outcome of the war, and as the logical conclusion to the policy of "inverted" intervention. Even if Britain did not really intend it as such, it was a recognition of Franco's sovereignty over at least part of Spain. The claim that the agents

did not have diplomatic status was discussed as hopelessly transparent; on 11 November 1937 the columnist sniffed:

Presumably there is some notable difference between being a diplomat and a diplomat's mouthpiece ... If this does not mean de facto recognition of Franco, it is hard to know what it does mean.¹¹⁵

The suggestion of British complicity in Italian and German use of the NIC as a temporizing measure whilst they continued to influence the course of the war in Spain, was a delicate matter in the pages of a newspaper whose party was the Government of New Zealand, dealing closely with the Government of the "Mother Country". The claim, often made in the Worker's Weekly, that the British Government was aiding and abetting Fascist aggression in Spain because it was itself pro-Fascist, never became an overt part of the Standard's analysis of the British response to the Spanish conflict. Yet, it was obvious that British policy, whether from weakness or partiality towards Franco (rather than his foreign allies), evoked nothing but disgust and anger in the "Week by Week" column.

The impression given in the column was of outraged astonishment at the gullibility of British statesmen in allowing non-intervention to continue when it was obvious to all, surely including British statesmen, that discussions in the NIC about the withdrawal of volunteers and belligerent rights would never come to anything. If, by July 1937, the British Government was having to extricate itself from an embarrassing situation by considering the granting of belligerent rights to Franco, British statesmen only had themselves to blame for the whole farcical situation:

The polite treachery of both Germany and Italy, however much it is immediately responsible for the present tangle and however much it may be deplored by a righteous Britain, can be traced back to British vacillation in the earliest stages of the war. Non-intervention, properly handled, may have much to be said for it, but at no time was there room to say that Britain had used it to any definite purpose. It has been a half measure from the beginning. By taking an opportunist attitudes towards it, by using it as the fabric with which to patch dangerous situations Britain plainly

made the way for such a situation as she now dreads [the total collapse of non-intervention].¹¹⁶

Even the Nyon piracy conference, held in September 1937 after a disturbing number of submarine attacks on shipping in the Mediterranean, and the only occasion of relatively firm action by Britain and France, was dismissed at its conclusion as ineffectual. Heralded by the column when it was announced, as the "first really determined move since the Spanish War began",¹¹⁷ by the time of its conclusion it was described as a "squib". The absence of Italy, whose responsibility for the piracy was an "open secret", admitted by none except the Russians, was seen as ensuring that the conference would achieve little, since Mussolini would not agree to conditions made without his representatives' involvement. Conceding that the proposals made by the Conference to curb piracy were good in theory, the commentator nevertheless saw the outcome of the conference as yet another triumph for Italy over British statesmen who still hoped to halt aggression by holding discussions with the aggressor. Italian absence from the decision-making process gave Mussolini the perfect excuse for refusing to adhere to the agreement.¹¹⁸

Behind all this criticism of Britain lay the firm conviction that the British Government could and should act decisively to stop foreign aggression in Spain. The reasons given by the British Government itself for the establishment of non-intervention, in "Week by Week's" assessment of that institution, were also the subject of criticism. Eden's claims that positive British action in the beginning would have increased the danger of a general war were discounted; yet, the Standard's commentator did not disregard the contention that a general war might result from the Spanish imbroglio. However, he saw the prospect of more widespread warfare as resulting in part from the exacerbation of international tensions over the Spanish Civil War by the long drawn out and ineffectual process of non-intervention, as well as from the bolstering of Fascist confidence caused by British inaction.

The argument that more progress in British rearmament was needed

before a firmer stand against Fascist aggression could be taken was also taken into account:

British statesmen repeat continually their determination not to be sucked into a general European upheaval meaning that wars are inconvenient interruptions to an armaments building campaign.119

Given Labour's strong opposition to war and to rearmament it is not surprising that this particular argument for non-intervention in Spain should be treated so dismissively. It would seem that the "Week by Week" columnist was of the opinion that war would not have ensued from firm British action at the beginning of the Spanish crisis, yet what other form it could have taken and what other response there might have been from Italy and Germany was left to the readers' imaginations. The statement quoted above was in itself, rather peculiar, for what other reason could there be for armaments building, if not preparation for war? Perhaps a general war over Fascist aggression in Spain was a "just" war and preferable to the stockpiling of armaments for a future less justifiable conflict.

There was also some recognition of the wider purposes of British appeasement of the dictators over Spain, particularly the attempt to win Italy away from the alliance with Germany cemented during their Spanish campaign. However, the "Week by Week" column again saw in this "Italian venture", and especially in the proposal for a Three Power Conference, the ingenuousness of British statesmen and their almost wilful lack of understanding of Fascist "diplomacy":

Actually the Three Power Conference seems a waste of time. Italy may attend it. But even if we imagine her allowing discussion to get anywhere [save to her own advantage] it still seems ingenuous. Fascist obstreperousness is not a matter for conferences, so much Britain and France ought by now to have learned. Stripped of diplomatic language the invitation to Italy is clearly an attempt to get the Fascist fly into the conservatist parlour.120

A feature of British appeasement of the Fascists in Spain that caused much concern to the Standard's commentator was the damage to

British prestige that resulted from this display of weakness. He was quick to point out that the interests of British statesmen in a victory for Franco did not necessarily coincide with the interests of the British Empire as a whole. Apart from the general impression created of British helplessness in the face of aggression, the war in Spain had resulted in specific dangers to the Empire, in the Italian challenge to British Mediterranean supremacy. In April 1937, the column said: "Matching Fascist intervention with a stand of unenlightened neutrality Britain stood by to watch an open Italian encroachment on her Mediterranean interests."¹²¹

Italian presence in the Mediterranean created difficulties for the Empire's link through that sea-route, and moreover, endangered British status as a major sea power. This loss of status would make it all the more difficult for Britain to act firmly in the future, once it had become obvious that it would not resist encroachments on her interests nor respond to the lowering of status this entailed. The blockade of Bilbao was cited as a particularly glaring example of British readiness to sacrifice prestige in order to "keep the peace":

No one can welcome the unsavoury truth that the Spanish rebels by their sheer effrontery enforced an intolerable restriction upon British shipping. Above all in a series of slights borne by the British Government in the cause of a backhanded neutrality this is the hardest to endure. At best it can be said for the Government [of Britain] that it was strict in following the letter of its chosen policy of non-intervention. That is scant comfort for the loss - which may have consequences - of an important right which allows Britain to protect her merchant ships and which is vital in the scheme of Europe.¹²²

In this connection, the "Week by Week" column affirmed that the Spanish issue was one in which the whole of the Empire was involved. The column noted the statement of the Dominion Prime Ministers at the Imperial Conference that England and the Dominions should not become embroiled in incidents in Europe that were not the concern of the Empire, and expressed surprise that the Dominions should see the consequences of the Spanish Civil War as "beyond the Pale of Empire affairs". Italian threats to Britain's Mediterranean interests were

surely a problem for the whole of the Empire, although they might not have become so had it not been for British timidity in the early stages of the war.¹²³

It seemed impossible to escape the conclusion that throughout the course of the war in 1937 the British Government, if not actively pro-Fascist, had by its inaction proved "a good friend to the Fascists"¹²⁴ and was intent on sacrificing Spain in the cause of appeasement. However, at times the commentator appeared to hesitate about this judgement. On occasion, there seemed to be some agreement with the view later to be expressed by New Zealand's representative to the League of Nations, that an ineffectual policy of non-intervention was better than no policy at all.¹²⁵ For instance, in April 1937 it was suggested that "for what it is worth as a safeguard, Italy must be kept pledged to non-intervention".¹²⁶ The next month, the column claimed that the NIC was more suited to deal with the Spanish crisis than the League of Nations.¹²⁷ This latter judgement may have been the result of negative rather than positive conclusions about the NIC. It had, after all, pre-empted the role of peacekeeper in the Spanish conflict, which should have been the League's prerogative. The NIC was a *fait accompli*, however little it did in reality achieve and, therefore, the onus was on it rather than the League to solve the problem.

Indeed, the Standard's columnist displayed a view of the efficacy of the League of Nations in the Spanish crisis surprisingly at variance with the policy pursued by New Zealand's Labour Government. Far from regarding it as the League's duty to act, the column rather echoed the British assessment, which was aimed at keeping the League well away from involvement with the Spanish War, and its attendant international entanglements. As did Jordan and his colleagues, the "Week by Week" column saw the Spanish Civil War as an issue fundamental to the survival of the League. Rather than seeing Spain as the issue that would reawaken the League to its responsibilities as protector of its members against aggressors, the columnist saw any

raising of the Spanish question at Geneva as sure suicide for the League of Nations. He considered that, in view of the League's failure to halt aggression in Abyssinia, there was little point in expecting the League to be able to act effectively a year later on much the same kind of problem. Moreover, to involve the League in the matter would be to expose its weakness further, and might result in the loss of what little credibility the League retained.¹²⁸

This was not a denial of the right of the Spanish Government, as a member nation, to bring its grievance before the League, but it questioned the wisdom of so doing when it was apparent to all that the League was moribund. This view, curious in its rejection of the solution most favoured by Labour leaders, was nevertheless not a reversal of Labour's fundamental belief in the concept of the League and of collective security as a means of avoiding war. It was, rather, an appreciation of the helplessness of the League as constituted, a recognition that unless all members were willing to fully participate in a system of collective security the League could never hope to be effective. This, too, was what Labour's leaders believed, but they were sanguine enough to see the Spanish crisis as a means by which the League members could be stirred into an awareness of their duty to each other and of the need for decisive action. The "Week by Week" column was less optimistic:

Until the nations are agreed once more on a collective system, centred around a restored League, it would be merely ingenuous to carry fundamental grievances to Geneva. Worse it would be doing the League a serious disservice; to force upon it a strain it is unable to take is only to weaken it further.¹²⁹

It is significant that there was no discussion of the New Zealand Government's stand on Spain at the League or elsewhere. The statement quoted above was made only days before Jordan's much publicised speech of 29 May 1937, and the Eden-Jordan "blue-pencil" incident; its criticisms of the ingenuousness of the Spanish Government in applying to the League for aid could well have been applied to Jordan's hope that he could awaken the League to its

responsibilities. Jordan's speech was reported in the Standard, on the front page, but without comment. In addition, the heading of the report, "Menacing the World - Rule of Force", focussed attention on Jordan's assessment of Fascist aggression in Spain, shared by the Standard, rather than on his attempt to restore the League to its proper function.¹³⁰

The Labour Government's objections to British policy on Spain would have fitted well with the stand taken by the "Week by Week" column, even despite differences over the role of the League. It can only be concluded that the Standard was scrupulously avoiding involving the Labour Party and the Labour Government in any kind of controversy over the war. Criticism or appreciation of the Government's policy would surely have drawn some response. In the same way, the sudden disappearance of any mention of Spain from the paragraphs of the "Week by Week" column after January 1938, except for one reference to Tom Spiller's speaking tour,¹³¹ cannot solely be explained by the submerging of the issue by other international issues. It is true that considerably less attention was paid to the Spanish problem by the daily newspapers in 1938; other conflicts took prominence, yet most managed a few editorials to keep abreast of developments on the Iberian peninsula and in the offices of the NIC.

Perhaps it was decided that the safest course was to avoid any discussion of the issue at all. Criticism of the British attitude had been trenchant in 1937; it is possible that in 1938 this attitude was deemed no longer wise, or no longer for public consumption, as war clouds grew more ominous and New Zealand's dependence for defence on Britain became more important.

The Standard and the Labour Party itself avoided expressing a

clear policy on the Civil War. It was a difficult and complex issue; the Communist Party and the Catholic Church had taken opposing sides, and both religious and political passions had been aroused by the war. It must have been difficult for the Labour Party's newspaper to tread a pro-Republican path while avoiding involvement in any kind of controversy over the war.

These difficulties must have been brought home to the editor not long after the outbreak of war in 1936, when a debate erupted over the religious issues of the war in the correspondence columns of the Standard. The controversy was sparked by a letter from a correspondent who was "a member of a church whose faithful sons are being slaughtered for nothing other than their allegiance to the faith".¹³² This writer, who used the nom-de-plume "Catholic", denounced New Zealand Trades Unions' support for the Government of Spain, items about which had been published in the Standard. The letter went on to repeat Catholic claims about the illegality of the Spanish elections of February 1936, and about the Russian money and propaganda behind the Popular Front, as well as pointing out the atrocities against church people and buildings perpetrated by the Spanish Government's supporters, all to reinforce the argument that New Zealand Labour should not support such a regime. "Catholic's" letter ended with a warning about loss of Catholic support for the Labour Party if it continued to demonstrate sympathy for a "herd comparable with the supporters of Barbarossa".¹³³

The response to this letter indicated that not all Catholics were about to withdraw their support for the Labour Party over the Spanish issue. In the month following publication of "Catholic's" letter there appeared one further in support of his view and five against, at least two of which were written by Catholics.¹³⁴ All of the five stressed the political, as opposed to the religious, nature of the war and the justice of the Spanish people's cause against the large landowners and repressive church hierarchy whose association with the Fascist powers would do nothing but harm to the Church. One correspondent, also a Catholic, assured the Standard's readers that

"Catholic's" point of view was not held by a large number of Catholics in New Zealand and that many Catholic workers voted in terms of class rather than creed. Religion, said this writer, should be separated from politics: "I would as soon take my politics from Moscow as from Rome, while still upholding my faith."¹³⁵

The editor noted, in the issue of 21 October 1936, that many more letters had been received for which there was not space. He was also at pains to point out that, at this point, the New Zealand Labour Party was not expressing any opinion on affairs in Spain, and that it was not bound by any resolutions passed by affiliated unions.¹³⁶ With the publication on 4 November of a letter in support of "Catholic's" view, the correspondence was abruptly closed without explanation, saving right of reply from "Catholic".¹³⁷

At the same time as the controversy over the religious aspects of the war in Spain there also appeared two letters dealing with the political issues of the war, warning the Standard's readers of the dangers of supporting a Communist-led regime. Inspired by a comment in the "Week by Week" column about the pro-Fascist bias of some newspapers, the first writer, whose letter appeared on 21 October, accused the Standard of the opposite bias, of assuming that all stories of Fascist atrocities were true and all of Republican were false:

The Standard as a Labour paper is against communism, but it would seem that in regard to Spain the Standard will pass as good reports against the enemies of communism and will take trouble to deny reports against the Communists.¹³⁸

Another correspondent, whose letter in support of this claim appeared three weeks later, on 11 November, warned that it was communism, "red rebellion", that led to the rise of Fascism. The lesson of Spain should be clear to New Zealanders: "Sow Moscow, reap Spain". This letter also denounced any Labour support for the Republican Government, although on political rather than religious grounds: "With Barcelona controlled by the Anarchists how any

orthodox Labour man can advocate financial aid to people whom Bob Semple called "the enemies of all mankind" puzzles me."¹³⁹

It is possible that these two letters also came from Catholics; although there was no specific indication of the basis for their views, their rhetoric echoed that of Zealandia and the Tablet. "Catholic" replied to his critics on 18 November, concluding that Spain:

would be better to follow the greatest Government in the world today - our own Labour Government in New Zealand than to fall into the materialism of the Soviet with its class hatred and destruction of the good in the past as well as the bad.¹⁴⁰

Thereafter not one letter was published about the Spanish Civil War until 1939. A letter then published, on 9 February 1939, expressed a view of Labour involvement with the Spanish issue at odds with the letter of 11 November 1936. The two letters possibly represented two opposing poles of thought within the Labour Party on the issue. The 1939 letter, signed "A New Zealand Mother", reported the meeting of welcome for the two New Zealand nurses, in Wellington, and voiced concern and indignation that there were not more official representatives of the Labour Party present. Mrs C. Stewart, MP for Wellington West, was the only Labour representative. The writer said: "Why is it that a matter so vitally concerning the people should be so quietly received ... It might be our turn next."¹⁴¹

These two points of view were the horns of the dilemma on which the Standard found itself. By February 1939 it was apparently safe enough to resume publication of letters about Spain, but in the early stages of the war safety lay in silence. The Editor's reply to a correspondent on 7 May 1937 revealed both that letters on the issue were being received, and the reason for non-publication.

As you are a subscriber to the Standard you will know that weekly for the past six months we have been appealing for funds for the relief of distress in Spain. We are not publishing correspondents' letters especially when they deal

with the political situation, which is far from clear, and no good would come from any controversy that may be started.¹⁴²

Yet it was obvious, particularly in the first few months of the war (excepting August 1936, when the Standard was obviously deciding what to say about Spain) that the paper's sympathies lay with the Republican Government. However, even before it had been demonstrated that controversy would be caused by the issue, the political aspects of the war were not much discussed. Even the "Week by Week" column, as critical of Britain as it was, refrained from much discussion of the nature of the two Spanish sides in the war. Much of the initial material about the war focussed on the humanitarian aspect of pro-Republicanism. Several photographs of civilian victims of the war were published with captions urging New Zealanders to give generously to aid Republican Spain. A general anti-Fascist note was also present; presumably the Standard took it for granted that its readers were anti-Fascist, whatever they may have felt about Communism, either in relation to Spain or in general. The Editor's comment to the correspondent complaining of bias made this clear; he said: "May we suggest that truth as the people see it can never be what a Fascist, for instance, sees."¹⁴³

Even if the Standard itself refrained from making comment about the political issues involved, and from making too open a pro-Republican stand, the material it published, particularly the reports of meetings and resolutions in support of the Republicans, indicated where the sympathies of the Labour newspaper lay, and were perhaps intended to subtly direct the attitudes of its readers in that direction also.

Nevertheless, mentions of Spain after December 1936, outside the "Week by Week" column, were few and far between. The only article about the Republican Government, a report on its education policies, was published on the Women's Page, which also occasionally carried items about the involvement of foreign women in relief work in Spain.¹⁴⁴ There was some coverage of SMAC activities, although

little mention was made of the Committee's political affiliations. Indeed, the first mention of the SMAC, a report of the establishment of the Auckland branch, again published on the Women's Page in March 1937, described the Committee as "Dr McMillan's scheme to send a medical unit from N.Z. to the aid of sufferers in the Spanish hostilities".¹⁴⁵ Perhaps this was an attempt to legitimise the Committee, or, more likely, the image of the Committee which the Standard, and doubtless other Labour people, preferred to keep in mind.

The SMAC's despatch of the three nurses to Spain was also covered, with reports on the farewell meetings held.¹⁴⁶ The Standard's view of the police interrogation of the nurses, despite indignation among union affiliates, very carefully followed the official line expressed by Fraser and Parry. The report of the incident, published on the front page, quoted the Ministers' statements and made no comment. It was not published until 17 June 1937.¹⁴⁷ The return of Nurses Shadbolt and Dodds in early 1939, and their experiences in Spain, were also the subject of an item in the Standard on 26 January 1939. The interview with the nurses stressed the problem of food in Republican Spain, the progressiveness of the Republican Government and the determination of the Loyalists to fight on despite overwhelming odds.¹⁴⁸

While the Standard refrained from editorial comment on the Government's policy, it nevertheless published in reports of meetings and other items the comments of members of the Labour Movement in praise of the Government, which it must have condoned, since it allowed their publication. Several items lauded the "splendid" stand taken by Jordan at Geneva, in marked contrast to the general comments made in the "Week by Week" column about the danger of involving the League in the issue. A letter from Bert Bryan, a New Zealander in the International Brigades, published in August 1937, mentioned this and presented a view of the war that stressed its significance for world democracy, and specifically New Zealand democracy.¹⁴⁹ Reports of the National Industrial Conference in 1937¹⁵⁰ and of

the FOL Conference in 1938,¹⁵¹ of the Dominion Conference of the SMAC in December 1937¹⁵² and of a meeting held in Auckland to mark the second anniversary of the war in 1938¹⁵³ also mentioned the New Zealand Government's policy in terms of approval and reinforced, with the reported speeches and attitudes, the opinion held by many Labour members, particularly in the unions, that the war was an issue that should involve New Zealanders.

The Standard's pro-Republicanism, circumspect in terms of political analysis and propaganda, was most clearly indicated by the establishment of the "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund" in the 4 December 1936 issue. As mentioned above, the origins of this fund are obscure.¹⁵⁴

The Standard directed contributions to a Spanish Relief of Distress Committee at a Wellington Post Office box number; however, it appears that the fund was administered in part by the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union. According to the Standard's report of the fund's establishment, the impulse came partly from the example of the British Labour Party. The British National Council of Labour had appealed to British Labour to donate money "entirely for the relief of distress amongst the Spanish people, especially the women and children".¹⁵⁵ Accordingly, said the Standard, it was opening its columns to New Zealand donations, which would be acknowledged weekly in a subscription list and, like the British fund would be sent to the International Federation of Trades Unions to distribute. Like SMAC appeals, the item closed with the exhortation. "The need is great, do your part, do it now", the like of which followed every subsequent item on the fund. When it closed in November 1937 the fund had raised £ 375, most, as discussed earlier, from the trades unions.

The Standard, then, provided some leadership for New Zealand Labour on the Spanish issue, even if it was careful not to become involved in the controversy. Despite editorial silence, the attitude of the paper was revealed more subtly in the material it published

concerning Spain, and its reports of New Zealanders' responses to the conflict. All these items were an encouragement to cautious pro-Republicanism, even if it were primarily endorsed for ostensibly humanitarian motives. The anti-Fascism of the Standard was clear, however, and the activities of Germany and Italy in Spain were of concern.

Almost paradoxically, the guide given by the Standard on the Spanish issue was also revealed in its avoidance of discussion of the political issues of the war; its pro-Republicanism, and that of the Labour Party as a whole, indicated by the reports of Labour Party Conferences, was a limited pro-Republicanism, circumspect in the extreme. Small pockets of strongly pro-Republican sentiment were to be found within the Labour Movement, but, in a sense, the official view was that the Labour Party should keep the issue at arm's length. The need to protect the Labour Government from controversy over ideological viewpoints was an essential part of this attitude. The Standard's silence about the Government's stand on Spain, and Conferences' lack of specific reference to this or to other stands in defiance of British policy (such as the recognition of Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia) was a reflection of the Labour Government's own caution in not treating the issue as matter for public debate over its policy.

If the responses of Trades Unions revealed the limited success of the Communist Party's "Spanish Solidarity" campaign, the attitude of the Labour Party indicated the reverse. There is no doubt that avoidance of association with the Communist Party, both with regard to public opinion and because of dislike and suspicion of Communism, played a part in limiting the Labour Party's active commitment to pro-Republicanism. The domestic responsibilities and preoccupations of a party whose Parliamentary wing was the Government restricted the public expression of what was undoubtedly felt by many, sympathy for the Republican cause. Within the Labour Movement, the Trades Unions took the lead, but the Labour Movement as a whole was not the driving force in the New Zealand pro-Republican Movement. That role was largely left to the Communists.

Nevertheless, the responses of the Labour Movement indicated little deviation from the basic Communist argument about the Spanish Civil War. In viewing the conflict as an attack on democracy that had significance for Labour democracy in New Zealand, in criticisms of British policy and in support of Jordan's stand at Geneva, the Labour Movement was in the mainstream of pro-Republican belief in New Zealand.

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- 2 Serious differences between unions had come to a head at the Alliance of Labour Conference in April 1936. The suggestion of a Unity Conference came from Angus McLagen of the United Mine Workers. At first the two factions had planned each to hold a Conference, but, with some persuasion from the Labour Government finally agreed to a National Industrial Conference. See H.O. Roth. Trade Unions in New Zealand Past and Present, Wellington, 1973, pp 54-56.
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- 8 Workers Weekly 9 September 1936, p 3.
- 9 Ibid 25 September 1936, p 3.
- 10 Ibid 6 November 1936, p 3.
- 11 Ibid 18 September 1936, p 3.
- 12 Minutes of Stopwork Meeting, 1 September 1936. Auckland Branch, Federated Seamen's Union.
- 13 Workers Weekly 6 November 1936, p 3.
- 14 Borer February 1937, pp 12-14.
- 15 Ibid March 1937, p 5. See Chapter 4, p 178.
- 16 Ibid July 1937, p 14.
- 17 Ibid August 1937, p 12.
- 18 Ibid May 1937, p 10; July 1937, p 13; August 1937, p 15.
- 19 Ibid August 1937, p 15.
- 20 Ibid June 1937, p 14.
- 21 SMAC Account Books, 21 August 1938 to 20 September 1938. Auckland SMAC Records. Jackson Collection (Private), Auckland.
- 22 Mr H.O. Roth, formerly Deputy Librarian of Auckland University Library is an historian of the New Zealand Labour Movement and has a considerable collection of Labour Movement material.
- 23 Standard 22 April 1937, p 16.
- 24 Report of 21st Conference of the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union, 24 November 1937, p 23. Roberts Papers. Beaglehole Room Collection, Victoria University Library, Wellington.
- 25 "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund". Statement of Receipts and Payment. Roth Labour Movement Collection (Private), Auckland.
- 26 "Big Jim" Roberts was a leading spokesman for the Trades Union Movement in the 1920s and 1930s. A former gas stoker and "Red

- Fed", Roberts was instrumental in the reformation of the Waterside Workers Union in 1914. A powerful voice in the Alliance of Labour, Roberts was originally a syndicalist and scorned parliamentary action. By 1925 his views had changed and he had a seat on the Labour Party executive until 1929, and again from 1933 until 1937 when he was elected President of the Labour Party.
- 27 Secretary's Report, 1936, p 13. New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union. Roberts Papers.
 - 28 Minutes of National Industrial Conference, 14-19 April 1937, New Zealand Federation of Labour. FOL Library, Unity House, Wellington.
 - 29 Minutes of Executive Meeting, 26 October 1937. Item 14. Canterbury Carpenters and Related Trades Union Records. A-181. Canterbury University Library, Christchurch. The "local branch of the FOL" referred to was the Canterbury Trades Council.
 - 30 National Council Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1937. New Zealand Federation of Labour. FOL Library.
 - 31 Ibid 2 May 1938.
 - 32 N.Z. FOL Bulletin, No. 12, September 1938.
 - 33 Minutes of Third National Council, 30 August 1938, p 9. New Zealand Federation of Labour. FOL Library.
 - 34 Angus McLagen, first President of the FOL, was leader of the United Mine Workers. He had been a member of the Communist Party in the 1920s and editor of the Communist paper the Worker's Vanguard. By the late 1930s, McLagen had left the Communist Party and was opposed to Communist influence in the Trades Unions.
 - 35 Minutes of Third National Council, 30 August 1938, p 9. New Zealand Federation of Labour. FOL Library.
 - 36 "Unions Which Have Contributed To The Spanish Ambulance Fund." New Zealand Federation of Labour. Roth Labour Movement Collection. (Private), Auckland.
 - 37 Report of Annual Conference of the new Zealand Federation of Labour, Opened 14 April 1938, p 4. FOL Library.
 - 38 Standard 21 April 1936, p 3.
 - 39 Idem.
 - 40 Report of the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Federation of Labour, (Opened 14 April 1938), p 4.
 - 41 Report of Meeting of National Council. N.Z. FOL Bulletin, No. 7, 31 March 1938.
 - 42 Bollinger, p 200. Fintan Patrick Walsh, like McLagen, was in the 1920s a member of the Communist Party, but had left in the early 1930s. He and his supporters took control of the Seamen's Union in 1927. Walsh became a major opponent of "Big Jim" Roberts' control of the unions through the Alliance of Labour. By the late 1930s he was becoming increasingly anti-Communist. Walsh had a seat on the executive of the FOL and had a large power base within the Labour Movement through the Seamen's Union and Clerical Workers' Union. He later became President of the FOL.
 - 43 See Chapters 7 and 8.
 - 44 Minutes of Stopwork Meeting, 1 June 1937. Auckland Branch, Federated Seamen's Union Records.
 - 45 Idem.

- 46 Minutes, 28 May 1937. Auckland District Council, Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. Auckland Branch Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. Records, 1935-1968. D-31. Glass Case Collection, Auckland University Library. Auckland.
- 47 Borer July 1937, p 13.
- 48 Ibid August 1937, p 19.
- 49 Ibid July 1937, p 13.
- 50 R.M. Burdon. The New Dominion. Wellington, 1965, pp 269-270.
- 51 Bollinger, p 197.
- 52 Interview with Percy Hansen, Wellington Tramways Union, August 1981.
- 53 See Chapter 4, p 217
- 54 Bollinger, p 202.
- 55 "Draft Inner Resolution of the C.C. of the C.P." 6 March 1937. C.F. Saunders Papers. Item 10. Jack Locke Deposit, Canterbury University Library, Christchurch.
- 56 S.W. Scott. Rebel in a Wrong Cause. Auckland, n.d. (1960?), p 94.
- 57 Minutes, 13 March 1938 Christchurch Branch Communist Party. Item 7. Jack Locke Deposit. The Unions to which members belonged were the General Labourers Union, New Zealand Workers' Union, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, Railway Tradesmens' Association, Freezing Workers' Union, Storemen and Packers' Union, Public Service Association, Post and Telegraph Association, Tramways Union.
- 58 See above, p 252. Tom Stanley, a member of the Communist Party since 1932, became Secretary of the Auckland Section in 1936, the same year as he was elected Secretary of the Auckland General Labourers Union. Prior to joining the Communist Party he had been a member of the Labour Party.
- 59 Minutes 2 August 1938 Canterbury General Labourers Union Records. A-159. Canterbury University Library, Christchurch.
- 60 Minutes, 25 February 1938. Christchurch Branch Communist Party. Item 7, Jack Locke Deposit.
- 61 Minutes 7 August 1937, Otago Carpenters Union Records.
- 62 Ibid 14 December 1936.
- 63 Minutes, 14 October 1936. Auckland District Council, Auckland Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.
- 64 Secretary's Report 1936, p 13. New Zealand Watersider Workers Union. Roberts Papers.
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- 66 Secretary's Report to Branches, 21 May 1937. Canterbury Freezing Workers Union Records. A-157. Canterbury University Library, Christchurch.
- 67 Correspondence with Dunedin Branch, 15 November 1938. Auckland Branch, Federated Seamen's Union Records.
- 68 "The Hammer and the Anvil - A Trade Union History of New Zealand." Directed and produced by Gerd Pohlman and Merata Mita in association with SPTV and TVS, 1979. The slogan was "Better die on your feet than live on your knees."
- 69 Bruce Brown. The Rise of New Zealand Labour. Wellington, 1962, pp 185-187.
- 70 The movement for monetary reform along radical lines was spearheaded by MP John A. Lee, a colourful and controversial

- Labour figure. Lee was expelled from the Labour Party in 1940. See Brown, Chapter 10 and Eric Olssen. John A. Lee. Dunedin, 1977, particularly Chapters 10 and 11.
- 71 See Brown, pp 52-59, 176.
- 72 NZPD Vol. 247, p 496. 30 September 1936.
- 73 See Chapter 1, pp 25 & 61.
- 74 NZPD Vol 245, pp 169, 174, 175, 180-181; Vol. 247, pp 881, 882; Vol. 248, pp 483, 484, 494, 505, 510; Vol. 251, p 329; Vol254, pp 606-607, 608.
- 75 See Chapter 7.
- 76 Salient 6 April 1938, p 1. When interviewed Ormond Wilson could not recall his involvement in the pro-Republican movement and thought that he would have been asked to speak by friends in the Trades Unions. Interview with Ormond Wilson, August 1982.
- 77 EP, 1 September 1937, p 10.
- 78 See Chapter 3. Zealandia's objection was to an article in the Auckland Star, but it appears that this must have been a report of Howard's words in the Evening Post, as no article could be found.
- 79 Standard 10 December 1936, p 3.
- 80 Minutes, 27 August 1936. North Canterbury Labour Representative Council (LRC) Records. A188. Canterbury University Library, Christchurch.
- 81 Executive Minutes, 21 April 1937. Otago LRC Records. AG53. Hocken Library, Dunedin.
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- 95 Idem.
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- 99 Ibid 24 June 1937, p 6.
- 100 Ibid 25 February 1937, p 8; 11 March 1937, p 6; 15 July 1937, p 8; 30 September 1937, p 8; 20 January 1938, p 9.
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- 103 Ibid 4 March 1937, p 6. See also 1 April 1937, p 6; 15 July 1937, p 8.
- 104 Ibid 7 October 1936, p 6.
- 105 Ibid 6 May 1937, p 6.
- 106 Ibid 11 March 1937, p 6.
- 107 Ibid 2 September 1936, p 8.
- 108 Ibid 25 March 1937, p 8.
- 109 Ibid 22 July 1937, p 6.
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- 111 Ibid 12 August 1937, p 6.
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- 113 Idem.
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- 118 Ibid 23 September 1937, p 6.
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- 125 See Chapter 1, p 64.
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- 134 Ibid 14 October 1936, p 5; 21 October 1936, p15.
- 135 Ibid 21 October 1936, p 15.
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CHAPTER 6
"PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE":
AN INTERNATIONALIST ANTI-FASCIST ALLIANCE OF OPINION

Ted Hunter, National Secretary of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee, once referred to the diverse group of supporters of the Republican cause as "progressive people".¹ His nomenclature is as definite and as appropriate as any. The espousers of pro-Republicanism in New Zealand were not all motivated by positive democratic zeal, for some based their attitudes upon negative anti-Catholicism. They were, however, "progressive" in their insistence that a world in which there was social justice, reason and liberty was preferred to the rule of privilege and militarism. They were united in dislike of Fascism and Nazism in an internationalist outlook that insisted that events in Spain had a bearing upon life in New Zealand. This alliance of Communist fellow-travellers, Socialists, liberal and Left-wing academics and students, some Methodists and ordinary citizens with a world view was primarily expressed in published pro-Republican opinion, rather than in concerted activities aimed at both increasing public acceptance of Republicanism and providing aid for the Spanish Government.

Opinions included in this alliance were those expressed by two daily newspapers, The Press and the Grey River Argus. The latter was a Labour daily, published on the West Coast. Its preoccupation was with the Government's domestic policy, but in the few editorials it produced on the Spanish Civil War the Argus took a cautious pro-Republican stand. The editorials of The Press, a Christchurch paper, contained relatively little discussion of the contending forces in Spain, but it clearly considered the war one of Fascist aggression upon a democracy. Much of its editorial comment on the war concerned the international aspects of the crisis and contained severe criticism of British policy. Pro-Republican letters to

newspapers have also been considered in this discussion of the "progressive" alliance, since in few cases were their political affiliations able to be established. Before detailed discussion of the pro-Republicanism of this diverse group, some of the elements within it must be delineated.

In the case of both the Methodist Church and the Student Christian Movement (SCM) the expression of pro-Republicanism was limited to intermittent comment in their publications, respectively the Student and the Methodist Times.

The Methodist Church at its Annual Conferences displayed a generalised concern for the international situation and recognised that both secularism and economic inequalities played a large part in international tensions.² In 1936, the Conference recommended that church members become individual and corporate members of the League of Nations Union³ and, in 1937, the Public Questions Committee of the Conference endorsed a decision by the President of the Conference to write to the Prime Minister proposing some solution to international tension. The Conference, "profoundly concerned at the perils to world peace resulting from growing disregard of international obligations and the world-wide increase in armaments", asked the Government to call for an international conference:

to grapple with the economic and territorial causes of the international tensions which threaten war, and to make a resolute attempt to prove to each nation that it will be treated with justice and goodwill.⁴

But the Church was anxious to avoid the unedifying spectacle of political disputation within its ranks. When a resolution was proposed at the 1938 Conference expressing appreciation of William Jordan's stand at Geneva, there was some feeling that the resolution was inappropriate because it had a political flavour. Nevertheless, after it was argued that Jordan was speaking in the name of Christ and humanity, the resolution was passed unanimously.⁵ Undoubtedly the Spanish Civil War was considered too politically

fraught a question to be appropriate for discussion at Conferences. But in several editorials, the Methodist Times expressed concern about the war, based partly upon humanitarian distress for its "sanguinary" nature, but also upon anti-Fascism and anti-Catholicism.

The Student Christian Movement nurtured an approach to Christianity that demanded the application of spiritual values to the secular world. First founded in New Zealand in 1894 as the Christian Union, with strong international links through the World Christian Student Federation, the SCM was based around students at Universities and Training Colleges and derived support and guidance from young ministers of the Protestant Churches, like Alun Richards and Lex Millar, both Presbyterian ministers. According to Alun Richards, many of the SCM members were disposed to question the present organisation of society, particularly its economic basis. They questioned the morality and efficiency of the capitalist system and at least some were prepared to consider that other political social and economic systems might be more just.⁶

Despite the involvement in secular issues deemed necessary for a proper evaluation of Christianity in an increasingly materialistic world, the voluminous correspondence and minutes of the SCM do not make any reference to the Spanish Civil War. However, in 1937 the Student's "Current Events" column discussed the war frequently. The Student considered that the war raised profound questions about the involvement of Christians in war; its pro-Republicanism was based upon a dislike of Fascism, and it questioned the morality of British policy.

Other University students also demonstrated their support for the Republican cause. Individual Students' Associations and their national body, the New Zealand University Students' Association, were generally silent on the issue. It appears that they regarded their function as having more to do with looking after student interests, organising inter-University sports tournaments and awarding sporting "blues" than promoting any particular political or ethical standpoint

on campus. The Canterbury University Students' Association refused to allow the showing of the pro-Republican film "Defence of Madrid" as part of the "Welcome to Freshers" week at the beginning of the 1938 academic year. The President of the Students' Association considered that it would "introduce a political bias into the Student Union buildings".⁷ However, the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association collected funds for the NRFSRC's aid campaign,⁸ and in Dunedin, Otago University's Student President, Douglas Kennedy was involved with the establishment of the SMAC.⁹

Pro-Republicanism upon campuses found expression in the clubs established to discuss international and political issues, usually styled "Radical Clubs". At Otago University the Independent Radical Club, politically "somewhere between the Labour Party and the Communist Party",¹⁰ attempted to have the Students' Association pass a resolution of sympathy with "the struggle of the workers in Spain against the forces of Fascism". The motion was lost.¹¹ The Canterbury University Radical Club held meetings on the Spanish Civil War, including one at which Dr D. Jolly and Bert Bryan, New Zealanders returned from Spain, spoke.¹² It also opened an appeal for donations to the SMAC.¹³ The student newspaper Canta, although it made little editorial comment, demonstrated a mild pro-Republican sympathy. At Auckland University, the Labour Club and the International Relations Club jointly sponsored meetings addressed by Tom Spiller and "Taffy" Patterson.¹⁴ At Victoria University Salient, which replaced the student newspaper SMAD in 1937, was far more political in content than any of the other campus newspapers. In March 1938 it produced a "Spanish Number" in which three pages were devoted to pro-Republican comment.¹⁵ Almost the whole front page was given over to an interview with Tom Spiller, which, rather than dealing with his personal experiences in Spain, presented conventional Communist propaganda on the war. Inside there were reviews of Elliott Paul's The Life and Death of a Spanish Town and Arthur Koestler's Spanish Testament (both accounts of experiences in Spain published in London in 1937) and excerpts from poems about Spain by English poets W.H. Auden and John Cornford. There was also

an editorial that used the Spanish Civil War as an example of the decay of the established social and economic order, related the conflict directly to the New Zealand scene and condemned British policy. The paper's editor, A.H. Scotney, later took part in a debate on the war in answer to a challenge by Catholic students, in which the pro-Republican side was triumphant.¹⁶

The pro-Republican sympathies of academics were most often expressed by involvement with the SMAC. Auckland's Professor of Economics, Horace Belshaw; lecturer in History, Willis Airey; English lecturer, Arthur Sewell; and Philosophy lecturer R.P. Anschutz were all associated with the Auckland branch of the SMAC. In Wellington, J.C. Beaglehole, lecturer in History and one of New Zealand's most eminent historians, was chairman of the Wellington SMAC, and dedicated the proceeds of his volume of poems Words For Music, published in 1938, to the SMAC. Winston Rhodes, lecturer in English and co-editor of the radical periodical Tomorrow, was Chairman of the Christchurch branch of the SMAC. There were also other academics who allowed their names to be used in endorsement of the SMAC's appeal for funds.

All of these men held left-wing views; some also were tutors for the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and belonged to the League of Nations Union (LNU) and the Left Book Club (LBC). Left Book Clubs, forums for discussion as much as the dissemination of left-wing books, had been established in England by the publisher Victor Gollancz, and appeared in New Zealand in 1938, and by their very nature promoted pro-Republicanism. There was also some pro-Republican sentiment expressed within the LNU. However, the LNU was divided on the issue and in the late 1930s was focussing its attention on reform of the League. The decline of the League after the failure of sanctions in the Abyssinian crisis in 1935 was reflected in the League of Nations Union and there was increasing dissension between its more radical intellectual leadership, people like Airey, and F.L.W. Wood, Professor of History at Victoria University, and its more conservative middle-class rank-

and-file.¹⁷ The LNU supported Jordan's stand at Geneva, because it was perceived as upholding collective security, but was generally silent on the Spanish Civil War.

The views of many of New Zealand's left-wing intellectuals found expression in the fortnightly magazine Tomorrow. Published in Christchurch by Kennaway Henderson, artist, Socialist, and the magazine's co-editor and cartoonist, Tomorrow was the major disseminator of pro-Republican opinion in New Zealand after the Workers Weekly. In the view of Charles Brasch, poet and founding editor (in 1947) of Landfall, a literary journal, Tomorrow was "probably more influential than any other New Zealand periodical before or since".¹⁸ The magazine was contributed to (and read) by academics like Airey, Sewell, Beaglehole, Rhodes (a co-editor) and Frederick Sinclair, Professor of English at Canterbury University. Leading New Zealand poets of the 1930s and 1940s like R.A.K. Mason, a Marxist, Denis Glover (also a co-editor), A.R.D. Fairburn, Allen Curnow and Peter Middleton were published in Tomorrow, as was writer Frank Sargeson. Other contributors included W.B. Sutch, an economic advisor to the Minister of Finance, James Bertram and Ian Milner, both New Zealand Rhodes Scholars, and W.N. Pharazyn, an official of the Clerical Workers' Union.

Most of Tomorrow's coverage fo the Spanish Civil War appeared in regular columns, notably in "News and Views", paragraphs of comment and quotes on the news of the day, and in "Foreign Affairs", a weightier column, written by Junius, the pseudonym of Bruce Souter, an official of the Public Trust in Christchurch. Tomorrow began regular editorials in April 1937, stating that the lack of editorial opinion had been a weakness in the magazine and that "sooner or later everyone will be forced to take sides".¹⁹ The first editorial was on the subject of intervention in Spain and others on various aspects of the Spanish situation were to follow. Winston Rhodes' column "Life and Letters" and F. Sinclair's "Notes by the Way" also included comment on Spain, and there were also individual articles on the subject. An "Australian Notes" column written by Nettie Palmer,

an Australian Socialist and writer, contained some news of Australian pro-Republican activities. From late 1937 a column entitled variously "Spain from Fleet Street", "Notes on Spain", "Spanish Notes" and "News from Fleet Street" reported snippets of information and comment from various British and foreign newspapers, apparently intended to publish the news from Britain about Spain that New Zealand daily newspapers could not or would not print.

Tomorrow's own writers drew on a wide variety of sources for their information. As well as the British newspapers whose items also appeared in New Zealand dailies - the Daily Mail, the Times, the News Chronicle, and the Manchester Guardian, for example, - Tomorrow's writers (and possibly many subscribers) also read overseas periodicals not widely available in New Zealand, such as the New Statesman and Nation, the New Leader, the Labour Weekly, and Time and Tide. Such periodicals were rarely to be found in New Zealand bookshops and generally had to be subscribed to in order to be obtained.

Tomorrow's treatment of the Spanish Civil War was rather more thoughtful than the Workers Weekly's and there was more acknowledgement of the complexity of the situation. There were no exhortations for all democrats to support the Spanish people, no frantic eulogies to the Republican Government and few atrocity stories. Instead, there was generally reasoned discussion that seemed to take for granted that readers would accept the point of view expressed. Tomorrow's stance as an independent journal of opinion and its editorial policy of allowing critics right of reply meant that several shades of opinion about the war were expressed in its pages, although, in general, the magazine's pro-Republicanism differed little from other sources. Bruce Souter's "Foreign Affairs" column presented a generally Communist view of the war, but there was some Trotskyist opinion as well, at least until the defeat of the POUM in Spain. That the journal even discussed the conflict between the POUM and the Communists in Spain and evinced some sympathy for the POUM's standpoint indicated the differences between Tomorrow and

the Workers Weekly. Tomorrow also provided, in F. Sinclair's opinions, the only discovered example of initial support for the Republican cause followed by disillusion because of the increasing influence of the Communists in Spain.

Because Tomorrow provided the greatest source of pro-Republican opinion amongst these "progressive people", there will necessarily be considerably more discussion of the attitudes expressed in the magazine than of the opinions of others in the pro-Republican alliance of opinion.

Assessments of the nature of the war, the forces involved and its ramifications displayed the most diversity of opinion among those who supported the Republican Government, especially in the first few months of the war.

Initially, the Spanish Civil War appeared to pose certain ideological problems for the SCM. The first mention of the war in the pages of the Student came in the editorial in the issue of July 1936, only days after the war had begun and too early for any real assessment of the situation. The editor reported that, from the available evidence, it appeared that "a Communist Government is opposed for its acts of oppression by Fascist rebels", the opposing forces having the aid, respectively, of Russia and of Italy and Germany. The editorial went on to note that the Government was apparently guilty of repressing religion, and proffered the opinion that the Catholic Church, despite some responsibility for Spain's social ills, was still the representative of God in opposition to an atheist Government. However, reservations were expressed as to the political ideals apparently espoused by those who had rebelled "in defence of the faith": "The Communistic ideal is perhaps preferable, at least in its possibilities, to the Fascist regime as seen in our midst today."²⁰

Thus depicted, the war took on the appearance of both a religious crusade and an ideological battle. For the Student, these

complexities raised the essential question of which side the Christian should support. Alongside this problem, of Christian belief in conflict with political or ideological preferences, the war in Spain raised an even more essential question: should Christians take up arms at all? The Student gave no answers to these questions but instead concluded with another of particular reference to the New Zealand scene: did New Zealand's distance from the battleground absolve its people from concerning themselves with these problems? The Student's final warning that the problem might not long remain remote reinforced the sense conveyed in preceding paragraphs that the Student saw the Spanish Civil War as an event of significance.

By the time of its next comment on the Civil War, in April 1937, the Student's views on the nature of the war had changed considerably. Its "Current Events" column now described the war as "one phase of the worldwide struggle against Capitalism and its paid bully Fascism."²¹ In the interest of giving its readers a basis on which to form opinion about the war, the paper devoted the bulk of its comment on Spain in the April issue to a summary of the two major interpretations of the war, while warning that "there are as many versions of the affair as there are social and political philosophies in the world today".²² The pro-Francoist claim that the rebels were saving Spain from Godless Communism, which Russia and a few radical Spaniards were attempting to force on an unwilling populace, was described as "wildly astray" and "wilfully misleading".²³

In contrast to the negative analysis of the pro-Francoist argument, considerably more sympathy was shown toward the pro-Republican interpretation of events. This was delineated by the Student as a view which saw the war as a long-planned Fascist war of reaction by entrenched interests against a reformist, not Communist, Government of united radical groups intent on divesting such interests of their monopoly over Spanish society. The only criticism made of this particular argument was that it was simplistic, "but we can make no sense of the Spanish situation unless we take it into account".²⁴

The Student was obviously of the opinion that the members of the SCM were, or should be, interested in the Spanish Civil War, for, as well as offering this summary it suggested that a fuller understanding might be gained by reading the Workers Weekly, or better the Manchester Guardian Weekly or the New Statesman and Nation, as a counter to the "one-sidedness" of the daily newspapers' coverage. It was considered that:

History is being made in Spain, not only for Spain but for Europe and for the world. The issues lie deeper than a difference of opinion about a form of Government; and the implications of the struggle are a good deal wider than the Iberian peninsula.²⁵

The first issue of Tomorrow that appeared after the rebellion was that of 5 August 1936. Both "News and Views" and "Foreign Affairs" devoted considerable space to the situation in Spain. The former discussed the immediate situation. In the writer's view, what had happened in Spain was a Fascist rebellion against a liberal coalition government pledged to economic and social reform through constitutional means, a fairly common pro-Republican analysis. However, it was clear that the writer did not think that constitutionalism would survive in Spain; the outcome of the war, he said, would be dictatorship of one kind or another. There was no longer room for compromise, and the Government of Spain must now confiscate the land and other property of the aristocracy to ensure the support that would guarantee its victory and its future in power. Once back in control it would have to "render absolutely powerless" any who might foment further revolt. In his opinion events were approaching a situation that "the theorists" termed "imminently revolutionary" and if the urban workers could seize the initiative there was a "real prospect" of a dictatorship of the proletariat emerging from the conflict. He prophesied the conclusion as either workers' revolution, fascist dictatorship or "a Spanish French revolution".²⁶

His comment that the fate of the left-wing Government of Spain was of "enormous international significance" may, then, have had

less to do with the survival of democracy in Spain than with the possible transformation of the Popular Front into a workers' revolutionary government; in other words, the significance lay in the path of the Left in Spain and was for the Left elsewhere.

Junius' initial appraisal in the "Foreign Affairs" column of the nature of the conflict was somewhat different and closer to the rhetoric of Communist propaganda:

The Republican Government of Spain, assisted by the workers and peasants, is at present fighting for its life against the reactionary forces grouped under the leadership of the army officers.²⁷

The bulk of his article discussed the political and social background of the present conflict and provided an analysis of the elements in Spanish society that differed from that presented in "News and Views". Whereas the latter had mentioned that some support for the rebels must be coming from the "priest-ridden peasantry",²⁸ "Junius" presented an image of a Spanish peasantry "urgently interested in agrarian revolution" and "always willing to act against the landowners".²⁹ Like his opening statement, this view had the ring of the orthodox Communist image of the Civil War.

Junius also saw the rebellion as having a significant impact on the Left in Spain. He noted a disunity among the Left peculiar to Spain resulting from the influence of Anarcho-syndicalism, that the Communists had partially succeeded in breaking down in the elections that had brought the Popular Front to power, and said that "the present conflict should complete this work".

Both "Junius" and the "News and Views" column hinted that these Left observers of the conflict saw it in some measure as a "blessing in disguise" for the Left, in that it would force not only unity, but also the adoption of a more radical position in order both to create popular support and ensure victory. "Junius", for one, laid some of the blame for the rebellion at the feet of the Republican

Government. In a much earlier article in March 1936, he had discussed the elections that brought the Popular Front to power. He had warned then that the Popular Front must "continue to organise the workers, peasants and intellectuals apart from the Cortes in order to prevent a coup d'etat from the Fascists". In August 1936, it seemed that his prophecy had been fulfilled. The Popular Front Government had paved the way for the rebellion, he said, because it had "exhibited the weakness of all social democratic Governments, namely the desire to please both the Left and the Right", and so had failed to suppress the elements that might rebel.³⁰

If, at the beginning, the war was not for these two writers simply the embodiment of a clash between democracy and Fascism, it was for "Junius" a part of the culmination of other historical forces. He reviewed the events of 1936 in an article in February 1937, entitled "1936: The Year in Retrospect". In it he drew parallels between the years 1914-18 and 1936, for, in his opinion the international imperialist struggle for the redivision of the world and the international class struggle, both evident in 1914-18 were again in 1936 racing towards a climax. The war in Spain was an example of both. Italy and Germany had intervened in Spain in the hope of gain rather than for ideological reasons and the nature of the two Spanish sides engaged in the struggle placed it clearly in the category of class war.³¹

The Grey River Argus also regarded the war in Spain as a class war, and, initially, produced similar criticisms of the Popular Front Government as "Junius" had. The Argus' editorials began on 22 July, by attributing some of the blame for the rebellion to the Spanish Government, which, the paper considered, had "tried to run with the hares and hunt with the hounds". The Government had gone a certain distance with the Communists because it needed to retain the support of the Left-wing, but had also introduced changes that had "conformed with the notions of cosmopolitan capitalism". Yet, this apparent condemnation of moderation was followed by the opinion that the Government had lost the opportunity to render permanent changes by

allowing strife between opponents and proponents of the new order to continue, rather than subjecting them to restraint and promoting conciliation.³²

By the last two months of 1936, however, the paper was ascribing the causes of the war more to economic and social issues, namely industrial development and the incidence of industrial capitalism. The true revolutionists in Spain, the paper said in November, were not military rebels, but those who supported the Madrid regime.³³ In December the Argus described the war as one between the old order and the new, which wanted a revolution on the Soviet model. In this particular editorial, the paper provided an analysis of the contending forces that clearly revealed a "class war" interpretation. The Government's support, "apart from anarchists, liberal anti-clericals and Russian-style Communists", came from the proletariat, "that is, the wage-earning class in capitalist society". The Argus also noted that among the large proportion of Spaniards who were not directly involved in capitalism, there was a section of peasantry who had been denied ownership or even a fair living standard and had for years opposed the old order. The rebels' support was said to comprise "the owning classes", the Army, the clergy, and "a large section of the peasantry and workers who are not engaged to employers who are anonymous and merely profit seeking".³⁴

Given that the Argus promoted itself as a workers' paper, this analysis of the war was not surprising. However, future editorials did not go on to lend support to the Government of Spain, nor to proclaim that popular pro-Republican slogan "Fascism versus Democracy". The paper preferred the more neutral "Right versus Left" and considered that the European powers involved in the war had aligned themselves according to this interpretation.³⁵ Most of its later editorials discussed the international aspects of the situation in somewhat guarded terms.³⁶

The Press' pro-Republicanism was to be revealed largely in its

assessment of international involvement, but in its early analyses of the situation, the newspaper revealed an anti-Fascist stand that echoed "Junius'" rhetoric about a "people's war". In August 1936 the paper said:

... the war is a war between an army of people. If the rebels win it will be a victory not of Christianity over paganism (unless Moors are the defenders of Christianity) or of European civilisation over Communism (unless Fascism and European civilisation are synonymous) but of discipline and high explosives over popular enthusiasm and rifles.³⁷

The more orthodox portrayal of the Republican forces was also represented in the pages of Tomorrow; the most salient example appeared before divisions among the Popular Front became so apparent. On 30 January 1937, an article by Nettie Palmer was published, entitled "Who are the Spanish People?" Palmer and her husband Vance were Australian writers and Socialists who had been in Barcelona when the rebellion began. In her article, Palmer was concerned to contradict Franco's claims that he was leading a nationalist movement fighting for the Spanish people against the encroachments of Communism. Therefore, she proposed to "restate a few clear facts about this democratic Government". She discussed the February elections and pointed out that only 14 of the popular Front majority were Communists and, further, that the Spanish Communists were not militant, but interested in peaceful co-operation between anti-Fascist and democratic groups. The slow progress towards unity on the Left and improvement of Spanish society was brought to a halt by the rebellion, but the revolt of the Right had also served to make all divisions between the various left groups "academic".

Mrs Palmer recounted her own experiences in Barcelona, which seemed to give the lie to Franco's claims of Communist domination. There, she claimed, the militia was composed first of Anarchists, then Socialists, and, only later, of Communists, some not even Moscow aligned.³⁸ She then quoted from a letter from a Catalonian fisherman that gave further evidence of the spirit of unity and democratic ideals among the Spanish people: "All of us from

republicans to anarchists are determined to destroy the false old Spain ... and to build a state of liberty and justice".³⁹

This image of the united Popular Front and a moderate reformist Government was also the one most commonly portrayed in pro-Republican letters to newspapers. Since, of course, many of these letters were in answer to pro-Francoist attacks, it is not surprising that most repeated conventional pro-Republican propaganda, rather than providing any deeper analysis of the Republican forces or discussing the possibility of proletarian revolution in Spain. There was, as in Mrs Palmer's article, considerable emphasis on the claim that the Government was "legitimately constituted authority", and that few Communists had won seats in the February elections,⁴⁰ as well as upon the democratic reformist nature of the Government.⁴¹

One suspects that the apparently legitimate status of the Government was considered to carry a good deal of weight with New Zealanders, who saw political and social change as normally effected by Parliamentary means rather than through armed rebellion. Even those who had little brief for some of the Government's supporters accepted these arguments about the constitutional nature of the Spanish Popular Front Government. One correspondent to the Otago Daily Times said that although the Government of Spain was "more or less Communistic", it was the legitimately elected Government and should have been given a chance to put its policies into action.⁴²

Salient's editorial in its "Spanish Number" in March 1938 also promoted a view of the Spanish Government as moderate and reformist, akin to the New Zealand Labour Government, but went on to use the war as the starting point for a radical critique of present social organisation. The editorial, entitled "A Lesson to Learn",⁴³ totally condemned the attitude that the war was a struggle between Fascists and Communists that had no relevance to New Zealand:

We are asked to look at it as if it were some kind of dreadful catastrophe which has fallen on the Spanish people

because of their temperament, "the cruel streak in their nature".

In Salient's view, the war was not a civil war at all, but an invasion of Spain by European Fascist powers, and, more importantly, it was an attack on democratic processes. The presence of German bombers and Italian and Moorish troops proved that the Spanish temperament was no explanation for the outbreak of the war. The reason for the rebellion was that "the existing social and economic order was being challenged by a Government elected by popular vote" which was moving "timidly and with hesitance towards some long overdue curtailment of the property rights of the Spanish landlords, army officers, clergy and owning class in general". This, for Salient, raised fundamental questions about the nature of present social organisation and the future of democracy:

That struggle [in Spain] is being waged upon the issue of whether a people has the right to modify by popular vote the existing economic system ... It is being waged, in a word, to decide whether democracy such as you and I live in is an illusion or a reality.

It was in this respect that the Spanish Civil War was particularly pertinent to New Zealand; it had a lesson "which we will fail to learn at our peril". Salient drew parallels between the situation in Spain immediately before the rebellion and that in New Zealand at the time of writing. The editorial pointed to the establishment of "semi-fascist" bodies like the New Zealand Defence League⁴⁴ and the New Zealand Freedom League (established in direct response to Labour's policies),⁴⁵ the hostility of most of the New Zealand press towards the Labour Government and the opposition and sometimes deliberate obstruction of manufacturers to Labour policies, all leading to the conclusion that eventually New Zealand's Government would challenge the property rights of a minority as had the Spanish "liberal" Government. If Spain were any example, the Labour Government would therefore run the risk of a civil war.

For Salient, the war in Spain and the British response to it seemed to vindicate the Communist argument that existing democratic principles would only survive as long as capitalist property and the capitalist system itself remained unthreatened; once this happened the wishes of the people would be overruled, if necessary by civil war.

However, Salient's predictions were not entirely pessimistic. The "lesson to learn" of the editorial's title was not only that the war in Spain had a bearing on democracy in New Zealand, but that civil war could be averted if the danger to democracy shown in the Spanish situation were recognised and acted upon in time. The manner in which this was to be done was not clearly stated. Salient's concluding statements could be seen to be a clarion call for the establishment of a United Front. The "popular forces as a whole" and their leadership must shed their illusion that the "owning class" would allow a progressive Government to undermine their entrenched positions. Presumably they could only do so as a united body, as by so uniting they would be able to stand firm against the "capitalist threat". However, the editor's final remarks had a somewhat ominous undertone as well:

Once that illusion has been shed, then it is perfectly possible for such a Government to make it impossible for the forces of reaction to plunge their country into civil war "in order to save it from Bolshevism"

How this was to be done? Salient's editor gave no indication.

In terms of the editorial's discussion of Communist suspicion of the democratic process as it then existed, this raised the question of the editor's concept of democracy, that catch-cry of Pro-Republicanism. Communist propaganda about Spain used the threat to democracy as its basic element, despite Communism's own lack of commitment to that principle. Many non-Communist pro-Republicans sincerely viewed the Spanish Civil War as revealing a threat to democracy from the Fascist powers. This editorial was one of the

most overt statements of dissatisfaction with the democratic system as it was then practised; the Communist Party's own propaganda in the Workers Weekly shied away from any discussion of the deeper questions about democracy which arose from the Spanish Civil War, although it often emphasised threat to New Zealand's own "democratic forces" from "capitalist reaction". The Communists were concerned to create a United Front around the Spanish issue, which would include many of less radical persuasion. Salient, although naturally eager to arouse pro-Republican sentiment among students, did not have quite the same need to skirt the deeper issues, and thus presented a more radical critique of democracy and more radical conclusions about the significance of the Spanish Civil War than were voiced overtly in the Workers Weekly. The Canterbury University Radical Club had also detected the "seeds of Fascism" in New Zealand.⁴⁶ However, their public analysis of the nature of the war in Spain was the more common image of "International Democracy against International Fascism", as expressed by Winston Rhodes in an appeal for medical aid to Spain.⁴⁷

As the war continued and the extent of Italian and German intervention became clear, it was inevitable that the simplistic slogan of "Democracy versus Fascism" should become the catch-cry and that differing views of the Republican forces and variant hopes for the eventual outcome in Spain should be subsumed into a general desire for the defeat of Fascism by forces that, for most of these "progressive people", represented a better chance for social justice and progress.

It followed that in this simplistic overview, the divisions among the Republican forces were generally overlooked. As befitted its deeper coverage of the war, Tomorrow was the only vehicle of pro-Republican opinion that ventured any discussion of the differences between the supporters of the popular Front Government. The Workers Weekly had, of course, also noted these divisions, but in a rather different manner. The clash between POUM, Anarchists and PSUC was followed by Tomorrow, if somewhat intermittently, until the

eventual victory of the Communist point of view. Such discussions naturally followed from initial speculations about a radical transformation of the Spanish Left and the prospect of a "workers' revolution" in Spain.

W.N. Pharazyn's "Spanish Puzzle", in March 1937, was the first mention in Tomorrow of the cracks in the Popular Front's facade of unity. In Pharazyn's opinion, the Popular Front was an uneasy alliance between Trades Unions and the organised working class and a Government representing the interests of the industrial and commercial classes. This alliance was now seen to be breaking down and, in the writer's view, the "original" policy of Soviet Russia was at least partly to blame. His explanation for the divisions among the Popular Front was based upon an interview between POUM leader Maxim Gorkin and Fenner Brockway, a leader of the British Independent Labour Party (ILP), which supported the POUM argument.

The salient points of this interview were that Russian aid to the Spanish Government was dependent upon the Government's adoption of Communist policy that democracy rather than social revolution was the ultimate aim of the war. Naturally Gorkin disagreed with this policy; the POUM's stand was that "the revolution is the war, the war is the revolution". The small pre-rebellion Communist party had grown in members largely because of the prestige conferred upon it by Soviet aid; however, Gorkin claimed that Communist attacks on the POUM had shocked workers and that most of the non-Communist Left was supporting the POUM's stand that workers' power should be the aim of the war.

Pharazyn acknowledged that the interview told only one side of the story; yet, there were indications that he was more inclined towards this side than to the Moscow Communists' view. For Pharazyn, the Communist's arguments that the POUM was a party of saboteurs, fascists, and Trotskyists was undermined by the presence of large numbers of the POUM at the front line, the shooting of Andre Maurin, a POUM leader, by Franco, and criticism of the party from Trotsky and

the Fourth International. It appeared that Pharazyn held no brief for Russian-aligned Communism. He felt that Russia had abandoned its policy of international revolution for one of alliances with capitalist powers. He saw this as partly responsible for Russian policy in Spain being directed towards democracy rather than revolution. A workers' revolution in Spain would endanger Russia's alliance with France (he did not explain how) and, thus, threaten Russian national interests and military security. Yet, Russia "still essays to carry the old banner of Lenin" and could not totally abandon Spain. These conflicting concerns were the explanation for both Russian diplomatic policy and that of the Russian-led Communists in Spain.⁴⁸

A footnote to his article in the next issue of Tomorrow revealed that Pharazyn, like others, saw in Spain a situation not unlike that of Russia in 1917, giving rise to hopes of another workers' state. It also underlined Pharazyn's disapproval of the Russian Communists' line. He noted that the division in the Popular Front forces was clearly becoming an alliance of Moscow Communists, Republicans and supporters of "the present non-working class government" against the Anarchists and revolutionary Communists. Moscow was using its "powerful influence and revolutionary prestige" to ensure that the outcome of the war was little more than the establishment of a liberal capitalist regime (which tallied with the hopes of the British and French Governments). While Pharazyn saw some justification for this policy, in that Spain was so backward industrially and socially that a workers' government might not be able to hold power for long, he said "if in Spain in 1937 Moscow is right, then in Russia in 1917 Lenin was wrong."⁴⁹

Further support for the POUM came from the "News and Views" column. On 12 May 1937 the column brought news of the Barcelona "May Days" and delineated the arguments of the two sides in much the same way as had Pharazyn.⁵⁰ Later in the same month, the column noted that the probable reason for the exclusion of Largo Caballero from the new Spanish Government was that he was "too revolutionary".

Again, the parallels with Russia in 1917 were drawn: the Spanish syndicalists desire to raise mass support against Franco by collectivising the land and granting workers' control of factories repeated Lenin's technique which "alone" had allowed the overthrow of the Kerensky Government. Yet, in Spain, the Communists were opposing revolutionary tactics. Fenner Brockway was quoted on evidence that the revolution was slowing down and that workers' committees were being suppressed. The columnist remarked cynically that if the counter-revolution were successful, the new Government might then be able to come to terms with Franco, which "would be the ideal solution for everyone except those who wish to see a socialist republic in Spain."⁵¹

In June 1937, the column reported more evidence in support of the POUM argument for revolution within war and damaging to the Communist propagandist's image of the Popular Front's united war effort. The fact that Franco could apparently maintain control over half of Spain suggested to the columnist that the majority of Spaniards were still neutral in the conflict. Therefore, the column's conclusion was that the POUM policy of revolutionary socialist objectives was the only way to mobilise the mass of the population against Franco. (These statements begged as many questions as the Communists' insistence that the people of Spain were united against Franco in defence of democracy; did the mass of the population want revolutionary socialist objectives?) Again, the columnist's source was the ILP's publication The New Leader, and in particular Fenner Brockway, who claimed that revolutionary enthusiasm was no longer strong in Barcelona because of Communist suppression. The dissensions among the Popular Front's supporters, especially the predominance of the Communist viewpoint, were seen as causing the loss of Bilbao to the Fascists. "News and Views" noted that it was reported that an offensive on the Aragon front had been made impossible because the Government had starved the potentially revolutionary militia of weapons.⁵²

The final comment in "News and Views" on the issue of "revolution

or democracy" provided more damning evidence against Communist policy. The column quoted George Orwell, late of the POUM militia, on the situation on the Aragon front. According to Orwell, the infantry were poorly armed, while the troops in the rear, whose charge was to keep order, were supplied with the most up-to-date Russian weapons, and, further, that when the POUM militia returned to Barcelona from the front they were arrested. The news that their party had been suppressed had been kept from them to ensure their participation in the offensive against Huesca.⁵³

This was the last comment that presented the POUM side of the argument. Their publication had not brought angry responses from those committed to the Communist view of the war, nor caused any kind of debate about the merits or otherwise of either POUM or Communist policy. However, some support of the latter policy was also to be found in the pages of Tomorrow. In the issue of 13 October 1937, in a "Foreign Affairs" article largely devoted to the tortuous workings of non-intervention, "Junius" made a passing reference that hinted at the Communist charge that the POUM were "saboteurs". He noted that the Government had made spectacular advances on the Aragon front, which:

discount the allegations of Fenner Brockway and his followers that the POUM was the backbone of the revolution in Barcelona. It is only since the POUM was suppressed that any substantial activity has taken place on the Aragon front.⁵⁴

Readers of the earlier comments in "News and Views" may have wondered if "Junius" was talking about the same revolution.

A far more substantial presentation of the Communist case ended Tomorrow's somewhat intermittent commentary on Republican internecine disputes. In February 1938, portions of John Langdon-Davies' "The Struggle for Anti-Fascist Unity in Spain" were reprinted from the Labour Monthly. The editors' note stated that the article was published in view of the war's general significance and because of conflicting opinions about the suppression of the POUM and the

resignation of Largo Caballero. The editors also pointed out that Langdon Davies' book Behind the Spanish Barricades had received acclaim from both the Times Literary Supplement and the New Leader.⁵⁵ They failed to note, however, that Langdon-Davies, an English writer, was also a Communist, and scarcely likely to provide a neutral assessment of the situation. Langdon-Davies claimed that the Negrin Government had been the only solution to the conflict over the direction of the war, and that any other would have led to the victory of reaction and international Fascism. He disclaimed any suggestion that he could speak for official Communist policy, but considered that the Party in Spain had saved the cause of anti-Fascism. In his view, the "May Days" in Barcelona were an example of men doing Franco's work, whether deliberately or out of stupidity. The crisis that came to a head in the "May Days" was the result of a coalition of incompatibles, with the Anarcho-syndicalists more interested in the triumph of anarchism than in the wider aim of winning the war.⁵⁶

The bulk of Langdon-Davies' two-part article in Tomorrow consisted of a number of enumerated points justifying the measures taken by the Negrin Government against the Anarchists. The main thrust of all these points was that Anarchism's lack of co-operation with other Republican forces had undermined efforts to co-ordinate all aspects of the war effort. Langdon-Davies spoke of the disorganisation among Anarchist-run munitions factories, which resulted in loss of production, lack of planning to meet war needs and, worse, diversion of munitions from the front to Anarchist stockpiles. Anarchist-run industries also refused to direct their profits towards the war effort. Thus, the new Government's determination that all industries should be controlled by the State was not a surrender of the workers' revolution to bourgeois democracy, but "the consolidating of its economic strength against Fascism".⁵⁷

Langdon-Davies also stressed the problems of discipline. Anarchists would not obey orders; their representatives on the

Barcelona Government would not implement decrees they had themselves voted for; the secret police in Barcelona had become an Anarchist army of private vengeance; and the Anarchists even went so far as to tap the telephones of members of the Government. These and other claims were made in order to illustrate Langdon-Davies' central thesis that the Anarchists were not only hampering the Republican war effort, but also that the revolution they claimed to support was not a workers' revolution but a sectarian Anarchist revolt.⁵⁸

Largo Caballero was tarred with the Anarchist brush in Langdon-Davies' analysis: he was arbitrary, egoistic, unco-operative and out of touch with the realities of the situation. In Langdon-Davies' view, the Negrin Government had helped deflect the course of the revolution in Spain from the blind alley of a sectarian revolt with unrealisable objectives that would alienate the majority of the population and ignore the bourgeois phase of the revolution that was necessary for its success.⁵⁹

This article provided justification for the suppression of the Anarchists in the name of victory over Fascism and in terms of Marxist theory; the POUM, by associating itself with the call for immediate revolution by the Anarchists, was discredited by association.

By the time Langdon-Davies' article appeared in Tomorrow, the Communist point of view had prevailed. There was no longer any need to discuss the possibility of workers' revolution in Spain. The earlier airing of the issues in Tomorrow was only a minor part of its coverage of the war; however, it was significant for two reasons. The first was the very fact of discussion; it indicated that this type of information was available to some New Zealanders at least and that not all pro-Republicans took for granted the Communist presentation of the war as a united anti-Fascist effort of all the Spanish people. It was also significant in that such discussion aroused very little debate - there was no vehement taking of sides by POUM or Communist supporters, suggesting that, in fact, knowledge of

dissensions among the Government forces did not matter a great deal. There was no evidence that the divisions and the Communist suppression of the "revolutionary" elements caused pro-Republicanism to lose support in New Zealand, although perhaps those who lost faith preferred not to advertise the fact.

The only hint of protest against the commonly held view of the Spanish Government came well before the Popular Front's divisions began to receive attention from Tomorrow. Frederick Sinclair had initially supported the Spanish Government in its battle to suppress the military revolt. He, too, saw at the beginning of the war the possibility of a workers' revolt, but he did not welcome it. Sinclair became convinced that a victory for either side would result in "detestable tyranny".⁶⁰ These views were expressed in Sinclair's column "Notes by the Way" in the 20 January 1937 issue of Tomorrow.

The column was one of opinion on events national, international and literary, in which Sinclair hoped to stimulate debate and controversy. His views on the Spanish Civil War may have given him more than he bargained for. They resulted in a debate between the columnist and his old colleague in the Victorian Socialist Party, Vance Palmer, which began in gentlemanly and even affectionate fashion, but ended bitterly and, reportedly, created a rift between the two that was never to heal.⁶¹

On one level, it was a debate about partisanship and neutrality in the Spanish Civil War, but on another, deeper, level it was an intensely personal debate between old comrades about the quality of their respective commitments to social change. Sinclair was convinced that neutrality over the war in Spain was an alternative point of view not deserving the accusations of cowardice from the partisans of either side. In his first comment on the issue, Sinclair quoted Don Miguel de Unamuno, the Spanish novelist and philosopher who had recently died.⁶² Sinclair commended to readers Unamuno's statement that whoever won, "I shall be on the

other side". In Sinclair's view, there was no clear division into right and wrong between the two contending forces in Spain. However black liberals and radicals painted the rebels and their allies the other side also had its faults:

... to say that the present Spanish Government has an exceedingly bad record and gives little promise of making Spain a tolerable place to live in, is to state the fact with considerable restraint.⁶³

Palmer's short reply to this on 3 March 1937 took issue with both Sinclair's championing of Unamuno's neutrality and his view of the Spanish Government. In Palmer's view the tragedy of Unamuno was that he had thought he could take a place above the battle only to find that finally it was "an ignominious funkhole". Palmer defended the Spanish Government: it had only been in power a few months when the rebellion began and yet it had showed that it was liberal and progressive, "painfully trying to create a humane and ordered society".⁶⁴

Both these rebuttals were essentially an argument for a partisan attitude toward the war as opposed to Sinclair's option of neutrality. Palmer's final statement clinched his argument with the greatest of the partisan claims: it was not a Government that Franco and his allies were fighting but the people of Spain. Sinclair's reply to this was to explain further the reasons for his own neutrality and his opinion that there was a case for withholding partisanship from either side. He said that he had read widely of literature from both sides and had concluded that there was "a good deal" to be said against the Popular Front and "a little" to be said for the insurgents.⁶⁵ He quoted Professor Allison Peers⁶⁶ on the Government's failure to prevent disorder, arson and the assassination of prominent Rightists and on doubts as to whether the Government was, in fact, constitutional.

The debate was beginning to have the appearance of many pro-Republican - pro-Francoist controversies, in that each side used

different sources to justify their opinions. Yet the debate between Sinclair and Palmer had one fundamental difference: Sinclair was not attempting to make a case for the rebels or their supporters. He was using Professor Peers' views to justify his own lack of enthusiasm for the Government of Spain and to query the validity of some arguments used by its supporters, in order to question the nature of that support. Thus he noted that constitutional points might not be of importance in themselves, but important because the Government's defenders appealed to constitutional law. Sinclair also pointed out that one might feel sympathy with the Republican side through reading partisan statements, but that it was not the same thing as having confidence in the Government as a Government. He also questioned the confidence with which so many foreigners were prepared to speak of and for the people of Spain.⁶⁷

However, Vance Palmer was arguing from a committed pro-Republican point of view; his premises were not the same as Sinclair's and his partisanship assumed that sympathy for the Spanish Government also meant confidence in its ability to govern Spain and that neutrality was the same as supporting Franco. His final word was an "open letter" to Sinclair. In this letter he widened the issue into a general argument against neutrality with specific reference to Spain. He asked if to commit oneself to one side in any conflict was to be partisan and asserted that Unamuno's statement was not the only attitude possible to "reasonable men".⁶⁸ One could weigh up the arguments on both sides and reach a conclusion in favour of one. Palmer himself had done this and had failed to find a dramatic balance between the Republicans and the Nationalists. In answer to Sinclair's reference to Professor Peers he cited Professor J.B. Trend of Cambridge, an active campaigner for the Republicans. He felt that both Peers and Unamuno concentrated on the decorative side of Spanish life (bullfights and fiestas), the side that most concerned the upper classes in Spain, while the masses were preoccupied with the assertion of human dignity and the spiritual value of the common man, the other side of Spanish life. Palmer also refuted Peers' views on the grounds of personal experience as well as

literary and spiritual grounds. He said that while he was in Catalonia he had seen no sign of anti-clericalism or church burning. In any case, his view was that the Government may not have been able to keep order, but that its intentions were the important thing - it had nothing to gain by disorder.

The crux of Palmer's argument was in the last paragraph of his letter. His parting shot was a personal one, that contributed to the bitterness of Sinclair's response. He suggested that the logical conclusion of Sinclair's view was that people should refrain from supporting the side they felt to be right in case they were accused of partisanship. In the past, said Palmer, Sinclair had not placed such importance on detachment and neutrality.⁶⁹

Sinclair's final word on the matter was a bitter and intransigent response. He described Palmer's "sentence of moral excommunication" as "nothing but thunder" and reiterated his point that he was dealing with a case where right and wrong were not clearly defined.⁷⁰ Sinclair obviously felt that in Palmer's widening of the issue there was a suggestion that he advocated "cowardly neutrality" on all issues, when in fact he felt that one should espouse the right, but that in the case of Spain that right was not to be found. He accused Palmer of not using evidence; but "a sort of inner light" to justify his stand and of claiming to know more about Spain than Unamuno or Professor Peers. What had begun as a discussion between old friends had become an acrimonious argument between two irreconcilable viewpoints: Palmer was a supporter of the Spanish Government; Sinclair was not. In Palmer's view that made him an opponent of the Spanish Government, and that, in turn, convinced Sinclair even more of the pitfalls of partisanship. Sinclair ended his column with a diatribe against those who argued that sides had to be taken, which rejected the idea that the war in Spain was the paradigm that both sides claimed. This made the issue simply one of Left or Right, and to say that the world had no other choice but a dictatorship of either was to "admit despair as a counsellor, and to abandon the appeal to reason".⁷¹

Sinclair's views were clearly out of step with most of Tomorrow's other contributors opinions on the Spanish issue. The magazine's editors did believe that sides had to be taken and that world events were entering a stage when, in Sinclair's words, "neutrality is either impossible or infeasible".⁷²

They were certainly not the views of his colleague in the English Department at Canterbury University, Winston Rhodes, who wrote a column entitled "Life and Letters" for Tomorrow. In two of these columns Rhodes put forward the case for intellectuals to commit themselves to political causes, rather than remaining "above the battle". One used the example of English intellectuals in the International Brigades⁷³ and the other a Left Review pamphlet on writers' views on Spain⁷⁴ to argue that intellectuals must take sides:

For many years the writers have been accused with justice of having forsaken the cause of the people, of having betrayed the cultural heritage for the sake of popularity and the plaudits of the wealthy, but the stain of betrayal is being wiped out not only in the trenches before Madrid but in the universities and studios and writers' circles in England, France and every country in the world today. The forces of reaction ... will obtain little help from the men of letters, the workers or the scientists who more and more realise that there is a future for art and letters, a future for science, a future for a free society only if fascism can be checked.⁷⁵

Yet Sinclair's attitude revealed yet another aspect of New Zealander's responses to the Spanish Civil War. Perhaps there were others who had studied the issue as he had and had come to the same conclusions. His was an argument from another perspective than that which said that the war had no significance for New Zealanders, because it was a battle between the supporters of extreme political beliefs that had no parallels in New Zealand, or only saw its relevance in terms of British interests and policy. Sinclair was, or had been, a committed "Socialist", who was now re-examining his views in the light of the polarisation of political attitudes in the late 1930s. His argument was against simplification of the issues by

neutrals, pro-Republicans or pro-Francoists and a plea for the issues of the war to be seen in their own right rather than as exemplifying certain political movements and their beliefs. It was also an objection to any alliance with Communism over the issue.

If there was recognition among the members of the pro-Republican alliance of opinion that the largely Communist-inspired image of the war was lacking, in terms of its view of the forces engaged in Spain, it was far less evident in discussion of the Spanish Government's opponents. There was virtually no examination of the different groupings behind the rebellion and the Nationalist war effort. In Tomorrow, "Junius'" initial article on the war, in August 1936, mentioned only two elements among the rebels' supporters. Readers were told that "politically the reactionaires are organised in the Accion Popular", which "like all fascist organisations ... endeavours to conceal its real nature and beguile the workers with democratic slogans and pseudo-socialistic phrases". The other "formidable group" was said to be the army officers.⁷⁶ Even The Press confined its description to "the army fascists".⁷⁷ It is possible that the absence of discussion of the various political and social groupings among the rebels was an indication that sides were taken rapidly on the conflict and that there were few who saw the matter as anything other than a war against Fascism, whatever their opinions of the Popular Front Government's policy.

The only element among Franco's supporters to receive more than cursory mention was the Catholic Church. Since most pro-Francoist opinion in New Zealand came from Catholics, it was inevitable that there should be some attention devoted to this aspect of the war. Tomorrow featured two debates on the issue of the Catholic Church's involvement in the war, the first between "Junius" and Father E.M. Higgins S.M.⁷⁸ in October 1936⁷⁹ and the second between the editors and a correspondent writing under the pseudonym of Christian in May 1937.⁸⁰

The first debate was sparked off by "Junius'" comment in a

"Foreign Affairs" column that rebel equipment was "no doubt" financed by not only "English, French, German and Italian capitalists", but also the Catholic Church.⁸¹ In the same issue of Tomorrow there appeared a cartoon by Kennaway Henderson showing two brutal-looking drunken men, one dressed as a monk and the other labelled "Spanish Fascism", lurching towards a cliff edge.⁸² The debate consisted mainly of claims and counter-claims and the production of "authoritative evidence" in support of arguments, which was then dismissed by the other side. The essence of "Junius'" argument was that the Church in Spain was a reactionary force with a deep interest in maintaining its enormous economic, social and political power in Spain. Accordingly, it was supporting the rebels against a progressive Government that would strip it of this power. He claimed that there was evidence that the Church was co-operating with Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, and that the Accion Popular Party in Spain was not only a "Vatican" party that received financial support from the Church, but also a Fascist party. It followed, therefore, that the Catholic Church was supporting Fascism in Spain. "Junius" considered that there was enough "damning" circumstantial evidence of the involvement of priests in the fighting and the storing of ammunition in churches to support the claim of the Church's active support for the rebels.⁸³

The editorial comments in Tomorrow in May 1937 addressed the wider question of the Church's support for Fascism, using the Spanish Civil War as an example. The first editorial noted the "unconcealed entry into the political arena"⁸⁴ by the Catholic Church and, while not denying the Church the right to take sides in a political conflict, warned that it must expect criticism on political rather than religious grounds. The editorial's main concern was with the Church's "shameless support of the foreign fascist invasion of Spain" and the methods by which the Catholic laity was influenced to support the rebels. Again, it was a case of discredited, distorted or dismissed evidence. The editorial claimed that New Zealand Catholic papers totally misrepresented the war in Spain. The newspapers always referred to the Spanish Government as "Reds", thus misleading

September 30, 1936.

TOMORROW

9



SPANISH SCENE.

Over they will go; if not today, then tomorrow.

Kennaway Henderson's view of the Spanish Catholic Church. (Tomorrow 30 September 1936, p 9.)

readers as to the nature of the Government. "Well-authenticated" events such as the bombing of Madrid, the Badajoz massacre,⁸⁵ and the attack on Malaga⁸⁶ were ignored in preference to "dubious atrocity stories which must inflame the minds of Catholics".⁸⁷

The response to this editorial from "Christian" was mainly concerned with what he considered to be the periodical's anti-Catholicism, which was the usual response of Catholic propagandists for Franco to criticisms of their position.⁸⁸ "Christian" considered that Tomorrow's real objection to the Catholic Church was the Church's opposition to Communism and the fact that the Church stood for "spiritual values that condemn your blatant materialism". The writer contended that Communism was in fact much more than politics and that it was deceitful of Tomorrow to accuse the church of going outside its sphere when it attacked Communism. The reason for Tomorrow's editors so doing was, of course, that they did not want the Church to defend itself against "an enemy which strives for its destruction".⁸⁹

The editors' reply did not directly answer "Christian's" charges that at the basis of Tomorrow's anti-Catholic view was the Church's opposition to Communism. In the editors' view, world events were coming to a climax in the struggle between the possessors and the dispossessed. Because the Catholic Church was a great force in the world its position was important to understand, and it seemed that the logic of events was forcing the Church, opposed to Socialism, to the support of capitalism and, at the extreme, of Fascism. The fundamental weakness of the Church's position was that it would not accept that the war in Spain was one waged by the possessors against a democratic reformist Government. As an answer to "Christian's" contention that the Government of Spain had not been proven to be constitutional, Tomorrow's editors used an argument in common currency among New Zealand pro-Republican propagandists: the New Zealand Labour Government had not received a majority of votes in the 1935 elections, but did this prove that it was not constitutional and would the Catholic Church therefore support a rebellion against the

Labour Government? In the editors' view, it was the weakness of the Church's argument that led it to use questionable propaganda like the atrocity stories and the attempt to label the Spanish Government Communist. "Christian's" arguments had left the editors unconvinced that the Church did not support Fascism. No one, they said, would argue that the Church was supporting Fascism in New Zealand, but elsewhere if democracy were threatened by Fascism the Church preferred to make a deal with Fascism than to fight for democracy's maintenance.

The question of the involvement of the Catholic Church on the side of the rebels was the only aspect of the war that received attention from letters to the editor in Tomorrow, all of which supported the periodical's view.⁹⁰ Given this ready response and Henderson's cartoon, there can be seen to be some justice in Catholic claims of anti-Catholicism in pro-Republican arguments, although not to the degree that Catholics saw it.

The Methodist Times' response to the Spanish Civil War was largely based upon anti-Catholicism although it was also motivated to some extent by democratic anti-Fascist sentiment. In fact, the two were connected in Methodist thinking, for, of all the democratic liberties at stake in Spain, the most important to the Methodist Times was that of religious freedom.

In its very first comment on the war, in August 1936, the Times made its position clear:

Insofar as the Government in power stands in any measure for democracy and freedom it must have the support of all right-thinking Christians men and women. The monarchist element in Spain has always been intimately associated with the Roman Catholic Church, which has been distinguished all through Spanish history with superstition, bigotry and intolerance.⁹¹

This statement was made despite a comment earlier in the editorial that the Government was closely associated with the

Communists and would undoubtedly have the support of Russia, as the rebels had German and Italian aid.⁹² The theory of Communism in general, and its application in Russia, was hardly notable for religious tolerance, and Communism was one of the "secular religions" which the churches saw as responsible for the breakdown of international amity. The religious issue in Spain was obviously more important to the Methodist Times than was the civil war's significance as a symbol of the clash of Fascism and Communism. The view that the war was a battle between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany on the one hand, and Communist Russia, on the other, was a component of the Methodist Times' discussion of the war, but only initially. The final comment on this appeared in September 1936, when the Times predicted that a victory for either side would pose a problem for Europe, with either another Fascist state, or an ally for Russia in Western Europe, and "after all one Soviet Government for the time being is enough".⁹³

From this issue until the end of the war there was almost no mention at all of the part Russia had in the war, or of Communism in the Government. Indeed, shortly after this article, a rather different view of the Government of Spain began emerging in the pages of the Methodist Times. In November 1936, the Times noted that the evangelical churches in Spain were supporting the Government⁹⁴ and, on 30 January 1937, reported the remarks of the Spanish Ambassador to Britain that his Government would guarantee religious liberty, but wished also to curb the power of the Catholic Church so that no one faith had more influence in the State. The Methodist Times acknowledged that the Ambassador was a propagandist for his Government, but felt sure that he was speaking with sincerity.⁹⁵ The Methodist newspaper also published the report of the English Anglican and Free Church delegation to Spain,⁹⁶ which supported the Ambassador's earlier claim that there was no official persecution of religion in Republican Spain, and reported favourably on the status of the Protestant churches. The item was entitled, "An Impartial Report on Spain", which was perhaps special pleading.⁹⁷

This espousal of the Republican cause for religious reasons was almost as strongly influenced by Francoist propaganda as it was by Republican. Francoist propaganda aimed at Catholics could not but increase Methodist anti-Catholic fears. In November 1938, the Methodist Times contrasted Juan Negrin's statement that the Republican Government would uphold freedom of conscience and religion with one made by Cardinal Goma in a French Catholic newspaper. Cardinal Goma's claim that the Catholic Church and the Nationalist leadership were in perfect accord, that the latter "never takes a step without consulting me and obeying me", together with his somewhat vengeful assertion that to establish a regime of harmony between church and state there could be no reconciliation or pacification without arms, must have aroused Protestant fears of a new inquisition.⁹⁸ That Cardinal Goma's vision of the "new Spain" was rather different from that of General Franco did not matter; the threat to the Protestant churches was clear.

Not surprisingly, pro-Republican letters to newspapers also concentrated a good deal upon the role of the Catholic Church in Spain, in answer to Catholic pro-Francoist letters. Arguments about the wealth of the Church and its culpability for the poor social conditions in Spain were common.⁹⁹ As did the Methodist Times, letters pointed to the freedom of worship in Government controlled Spain,¹⁰⁰ and the Communist argument about the support of Catholic Basques for the Government also appeared.¹⁰¹ Generally, it seemed that explanations of the Church's power in Spain seemed sufficient to justify atrocities, if they were not simply dismissed as lying Francoist propaganda. (Attacks on church property were usually justified by the claim that churches were being used as arsenals by the rebels¹⁰²).

However, there were some more ingenious justifications for atrocities. One writer, while denying claims of atrocities, suggested that there were so many nuns and priests in Spain that it was inevitable that large numbers were reported killed.¹⁰³ Another was convinced that church burnings and atrocities were the

work of capitalist or Fascist agents provocateurs disguised as Communists in order to create revulsion against the Government.¹⁰⁴

In the many letters that dealt with the religious aspect of the war in whatever form, there was little evidence of pro-Republicanism adopted solely or even primarily because of anti-Catholicism or anti-Christianity. There were only a few instances where this sentiment was immediately obvious. One of the Otago Daily Times' correspondents attributed Spain's troubles to "the baneful influence of Spain's ancient alliance with the Roman Catholic Church" and asserted that Spain's rejection of the Reformation had led to ecclesiastical despotism.¹⁰⁵ A few others emphasised that the hold of the Church had to be broken in Spain before any social progress could be made.¹⁰⁶

Despite evidence of anti-Catholic sentiment among pro-Republicans, some Catholics also espoused the cause of the Government of Spain. The reaction of some Catholic Labour voters in the pages of the Standard has already been noted.¹⁰⁷ A very few Catholics also wrote to daily newspapers and to Zealandia in defiance of their Church's stand on the war. One objected to the "bigotry" revealed by Catholic pro-Franco letters.¹⁰⁸ Another in The Press explained church burnings in terms of the repression of demands for Catalonian autonomy and a mistaken belief that the Church sided with Fascism, but noted with sorrow that great masses of people did not turn against their church unless that church had turned its back on the oppressed.¹⁰⁹ This view was shared by a correspondent to the Tablet, who also questioned the veracity of atrocity stories and considered that Catholics should examine why the Spanish Church had aroused such violent hatred among Spaniards:

Is it not more than a coincidence that the three countries in which Christianity has suffered most in recent times - Mexico, Spain, Russia - are or were examples of the gravest social injustice. In each of these countries did not a wealthy and at least partly State supported Church seemingly acquiesce in a state of affairs wherein a landed aristocracy

lived in luxury and idleness on the labour of workers and peasants little better than land serfs ... the canker of Bolshevism does not grow in a community where the political, religious and social leaders work for economic justice ... here is the crucial economic question of today and one of the chief causes of the revolutions in Russia, Mexico and Spain - social injustice and insecurity and the struggle of the workers for economic equality ... Where do we Catholics stand?110

One Catholic was appalled that the "sacred name of the Church" was connected with Moorish "mercenaries out for loot" and that it was considered Catholics' duty to defend Franco's use of the Moors and of rebellion against constitutional authority:

I hope that the liberty I now possess under our democratic constitution will leave me no less a Catholic if I uphold in debate our system of law and order even in Spain, which has the same form of elected Government as we have here.111

Franco's use of Moorish troops in the rebellion was considered by pro-Republicans to reveal that the rebels were cynically using the religious issue to justify a rebellion and Fascist aggression. The Student, which considered Catholic support of Franco "curious" in the light of Papal condemnation of Capitalism,¹¹² argued that the employment of Moors and foreigners clearly indicated that the people were not behind Franco.¹¹³ The Methodist Times saw in Franco's use of "barbarous Moorish regiments - Mohammedans" evidence of the spuriousness of his claim to be defending religion in Spain.¹¹⁴

The Moors were mentioned frequently in letters to newspapers, generally in claims that Franco did not have popular support. However, a certain amount of racism was also apparent, and one suspects that the employment of Moors was also treated as a type of "atrocious" story, in that foreign, worse, coloured troops from a country that had once conquered Spain were reintroduced to fight other Spaniards. Letters to the Otago Daily Times in particular, referring to "hordes of black savages" brought from "the jungles of Africa", revealed the "racial" aspect of complaints about the Moors and the writers' rather limited conceptions of democracy and

internationalism. The rebels' hiring of coloured troops to "mow down" members of their own race was, said one writer, "the most degrading action conceivable".¹¹⁵ Indeed, the question of the Moors in Spain provided one of the few examples of pro-Republican use of sexually related propaganda, in the report the Quiapo de Llano boasted that "Red" women would be turned over to the Moors on a ratio of one woman to 20 men.¹¹⁶

Above all, it was the involvement of Italy and Germany in the war that was seen as evidence that the war in Spain was not a Catholic rebellion against Communism, with wide popular support, but a war of Fascist aggression. Even the limited, largely anti-Catholic pro-Republicanism of the Methodist Times included this assumption. The Times considered Mussolini's and Hitler's flagrant disregard for international law and the League of Nations a major factor in the deterioration of international relations and, in several editorials over the period of the war, lamented "the dreadful circumstance" of Italian and German aid to the rebels that had prolonged the war's "sanguinary course". In its final comment on the war the Methodist Times excoriated Mussolini's and Hitler's actions as "shameless" and "utterly without conscience", and bitterly rued a situation that had led to the probable establishment of a third Fascist State in Europe.¹¹⁸

There was, however, relatively little analysis of Italian and German intervention in Spain in these sources of pro-Republican opinion. Unlike the Workers Weekly, none went into detailed discussion of Fascist plotting in Spain before the rebellion. The fact of Italian and German aggression in Spain seemed plain and, given that pro-Republican assessments of the nature of the war had included from the beginning the assumption that the Republican forces were fighting against Fascism, needed little amplification. It was generally agreed that the war in Spain was one aspect of Fascist aggression against democracy that was ultimately aimed at destroying world democracy and peace.¹¹⁹ A cartoon by Kennaway Henderson in Tomorrow that showed two children amidst rubble, with a plane showing

a swastika flying in the background, was captioned "Spain Is Fascism's Latest Front". The text underneath said:

The German and Italian planes continue bravely.

Is that which is possible in Spain impossible elsewhere?

Destruction of the best and wisest, such is the method of fascism. Reason and justice, for which we all live, is the most dreadful thing it can meet on its way.¹²⁰

Tomorrow, in July and August 1937, published a summary of the collection of documents "The Italian Invasion of Spain" presented to the League of Nations by the Spanish delegation.¹²¹ The Press and Tomorrow did provide a little analysis of German and Italian motives for involvement in Spain. The Press considered initially that Germany wanted "to fish in troubled waters" rather than influence the course of the war,¹²² but later became convinced that intervention in Spain, the German threat to Czechoslovakia and Anglo-Italian rivalry in the Mediterranean were not separate problems but different aspects of the same threat to peace.¹²³

Since "Junius" regarded the war as an indication of renewed imperialist and class struggle, it was not surprising that he should conclude that Italy and Germany had entered the fray in the hopes of "plunder".¹²⁴ Prior to Junius' discussion of Fascist motives in "1936 In Retrospect", W.N. Pharazyn had voiced the same view:

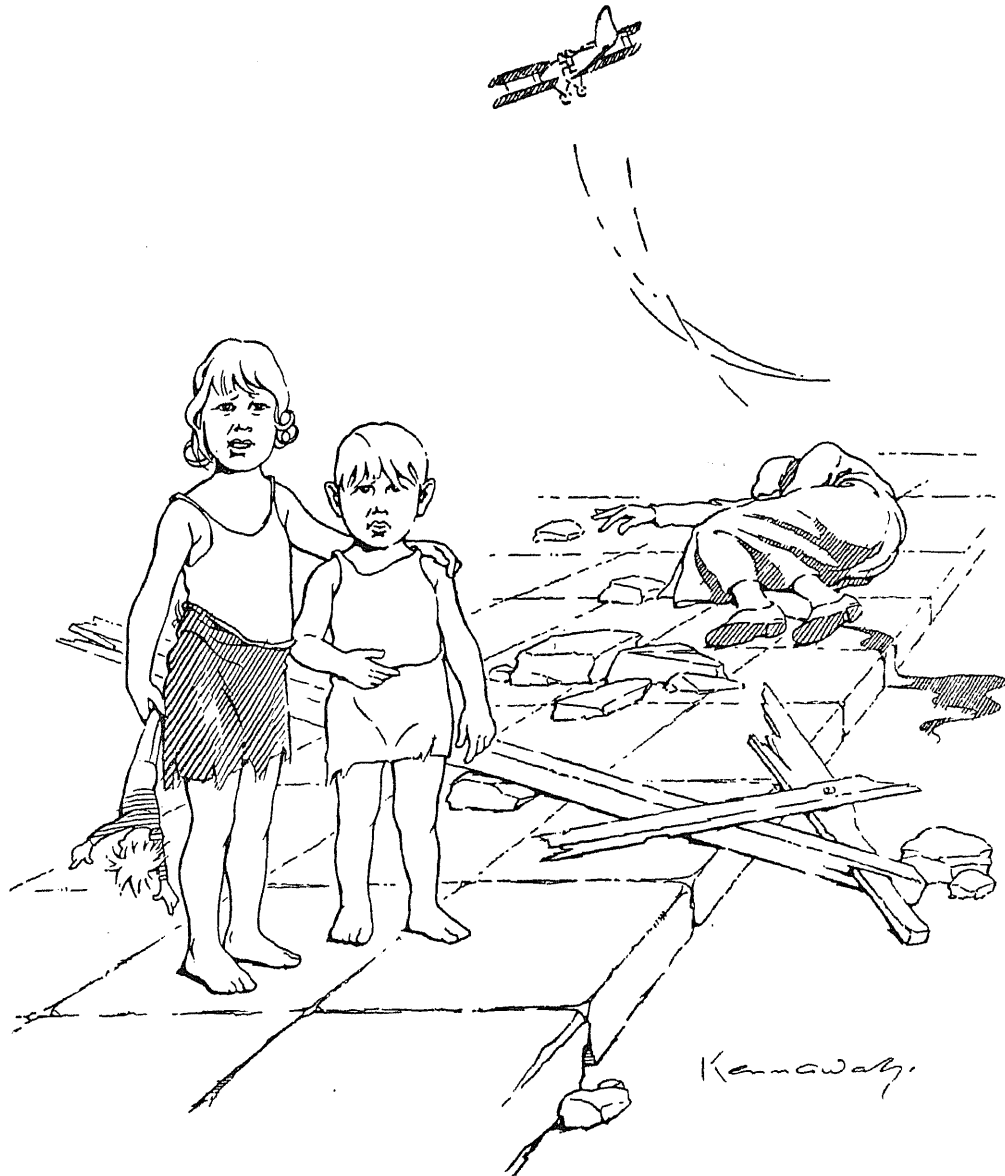
The notion that Germany and Italy are intervening in Spain through sentimental attachment to the theories, in fact the religion of International Fascism, need not be seriously entertained.¹²⁵

Yet the image created or implied in most of Tomorrow's discussion of Spain was not merely of two aggressive states intervening in the hope of material and territorial gain; it was one of Fascism gaining the upper hand in Spain and ensuring another aggressive Right-wing dictatorship in Europe. The two concepts were, of course, inextricably linked - the aggression and expansionism of Germany and Italy were far worse because they were both Fascist states, with all

June 23 1937

TOMORROW

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SPAIN IS FASCISM'S LATEST FRONT

The German and Italian fascist planes continue bravely.
Is that which is possible in Spain, impossible elsewhere?

Destruction of the best and the wisest, such is the method of fascism. Reason and justice, for which we all live, is the most dreadful thing it can meet on its way.

Cartoon by Kennaway Henderson (Tomorrow 23 June 1937, p 519.)

that implied. In the context of German and Italian motives in Spain, it must be mentioned that Tomorrow's writers, like most other pro-Republicans, were convinced that a rebel victory would mean that the two Fascist powers would remain firmly entrenched in Spain, or in Spain's strategically important island possessions.

Most pro-Republican discussion of foreign intervention in Spain centred upon the negotiations and actions of the Non-Intervention Committee. In this respect, it appeared axiomatic in pro-Republican thought that Italy and Germany would pay only lip service to the Non-Intervention Agreement and would maintain the pretence of attendance so long as the Committee's deliberations meant that no other international action was forthcoming. This premise was frequently stated and was usually an underlying implication in most of opinions on of non-intervention in The Press, the Student and Tomorrow, which contained the most discussion of non-intervention.

There was little discussion of Russian involvement in the war. It should be noted that W.N. Pharazyn's analysis of Russian policy was virtually the only published recognition of the operation of Russian foreign policy within Spain and through the Spanish Communist Party.¹²⁶ (The Workers Weekly's propaganda, of course, made plain the connection between Russian diplomatic behaviour and Comintern policy, but it certainly did not discuss these links openly.) Most other pro-Republican comment concentrated upon the aspect of Russian aid to Spain. Pharazyn, "Junius" and The Press were agreed that open intervention on the side of the Republicans would have serious consequences for Russia. The Press considered, in October 1936, that the Russian capacity to provide aid to the Government of Spain was limited and that the Soviet might not intervene at all for fear of providing Germany and Italy with an excuse for greater intervention.¹²⁷ However, the paper was sharply critical of Russia's announcement in October that it would be bound by non-intervention only as far as other nations were constrained. The Press cynically commented that Russia had made an "original and possibly valuable contribution to the technique of

diplomacy" in enunciating the concept that "if treaties cannot be kept they can at least be violated equally".¹²⁸

Pharazyn had argued that Russia no longer had a policy of encouraging world revolution and that its non-intervention was based upon Russian national interest and security. "Junius", however, considered that Russia was supporting the Spanish Government "wholeheartedly"¹²⁹ and presented an argument similar to The Press', although couched in terms much closer to Communist rhetoric. If Russia sent arms to Spain, he said, it would "supply the Fascists with the excuse they desire and lead inevitably to their intervention on the side of the Spanish rebels and to a rebel victory".¹³⁰ The manner in which this was phrased seemed to imply that, even while not giving tangible aid, Russia was helping the Loyalist cause, and placed "Junius" clearly in the role of presenting the Communist view of the war in the pages of Tomorrow.

In common with other sources of pro-Republican opinion, such as the Workers Weekly and the Standard, most of the focus in terms of international involvement in the war was upon British policy. Interpretations of British motives varied, all condemned British policy.

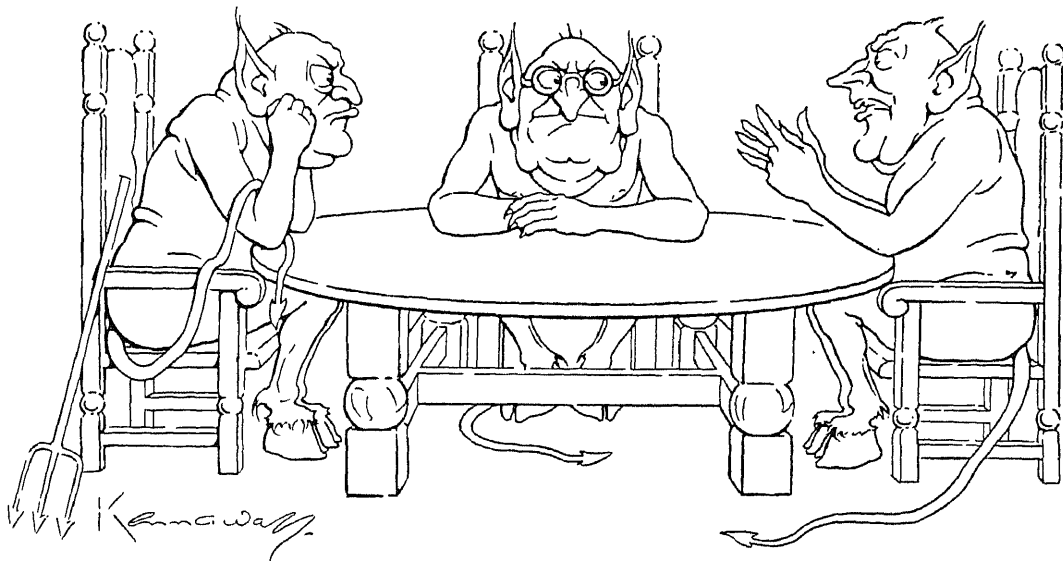
Initial criticisms of British policy were based on the argument that non-intervention was a violation of international law and that it in effect gave belligerent rights to Franco.¹³¹ The Press noted, in October 1936, that non-intervention would not be effective unless Britain and France were prepared to take a firm line, and concluded that the two powers were "certainly not" going to do so.¹³² Throughout the period of the war, The Press' most reiterated criticism of the NIC was to be that Britain and France did not support the principle of non-intervention to the extent of taking firm action to ensure its observance,¹³³ and, by July 1937, the paper was of the opinion that had the British Government acted firmly at the beginning of the war, Italy and Germany would not have gone beyond threats.¹³⁴

Since most pro-Republicans saw the war in Spain as one part of a Fascist campaign for world dominance, they placed scant faith in the British Government's claim that non-intervention would stop a wider conflagration spreading from the Iberian peninsular. The "News and Views" column in Tomorrow argued that a rebel victory aided by Germany and Italy would bring world war closer,¹³⁵ and The Press considered that British and French "failure to accept the implications and responsibilities of the Non-Intervention Agreement" would contribute to the threat of war, presumably because lack of firmness would only increase the dictators' aggressive appetite.¹³⁶ The Student also attacked the British argument, but from a slightly different perspective that indicated a certain amount of pacifist disgust at statesmen's manipulations. In October 1937, the Student described this particular explanation for British policy thus:

Avoid European war at all costs partly because war is horrible, partly because war is wasteful and partly because Britain is not yet strong enough to be sure of "victory".¹³⁷

The most common pro-Republican explanation for British policy on the Spanish Civil War was that the British Government was willing to sacrifice the Spanish Government, Spain itself and even, to a degree, its Mediterranean strategic position for the sake of class interests. In the first place, class interest was seen as inclining the British Government towards Franco. In the 5 August 1936 issue of Tomorrow, a cartoon appeared that depicted Stanley Baldwin arm in arm with a woman representing British democracy, while in the background lurked a sultry woman labelled "Spanish Fascism". The cartoon was headed "Will It End In Divorce?" and the caption had "the lady, British Democracy" asking a startled Baldwin "who was that person you spoke to?"¹³⁸

In the Student's view the British Government's pro-Francoist bias stemmed from the influence of British capitalists afraid that a Left victory in Spain would endanger their financial interests in that country.¹³⁹ Salient's editorial in its "Spanish Number" echoed



AT A PRIVATE MEETING OF THE "NON-INTERVENTIONISTS" THERE
WAS ONE HONEST PARTY.

Later.

According to cable from London, Feb. 16, "Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop (German Ambassador to London) welcomed the committee's decision to place an embargo on shipments of arms or volunteers to Spain as a possible turning point. He announced

that Germany was prepared to contribute financially to the immediate operation of control by land and sea. He hoped Portugal would find a way to collaborate." The cable cynic heads this up, German Satisfaction At Decision.

Kennaway Henderson's cartoon depicted most pro-Republicans' opinion of the Non-Intervention Committee (Tomorrow 3 March 1937, p 269.)

this attitude:

Today, when mildly democratic opinion in Britain evokes the principles of legality, democracy and constitutionalism on behalf of the Spanish Government, when liberals ask that the elementary usages of international law should be applied to that Government they are blandly told that it is no concern of the British Government's; that since fundamental property rights are at stake in Spain, such things as legality and democracy have become side issues.¹⁴⁰

Commentators in Tomorrow also said repeatedly that British policy was based upon a desire to prevent a Left victory in Spain.¹⁴¹ For the editors, the blockade of Bilbao was clear evidence that Britain was aiding Franco to the limit of its ability.¹⁴² They accused Britain of using the NIC to strangle any real aid to the Spanish Government.¹⁴³ In November 1937, "Junius" noted that, just as France was about to open its borders to Spain on the grounds that non-intervention had broken down, the British produced a control plan for the withdrawal of volunteers, thus preventing any French aid to the Republicans.¹⁴⁴

Parallels with the Russian Revolution were drawn, as they had been with regard to the revolution and counter-revolution among the Republican forces. In the case of British policy, the parallels were used to point out the "unprecedented" nature of non-intervention and to emphasise that class interest had played a part in British policy formulations. The "News and Views" column had noted on 19 August 1936 that Britain and other countries had not been neutral in the case of the White Russian revolt in 1918-19 and had, in fact, sent troops to aid the rebels.¹⁴⁵ An editorial on non-intervention on 14 April 1937 took the parallel a little further. The editors saw in British statements that the Spanish people must be allowed to work out their own destinies echoes of similar statements made when British troops went to the aid of the White Russians. The conclusion was obvious: British policy was directed against the Leftist Government of Spain.¹⁴⁶

August 5, 1936

TOMORROW

13



WILL IT LEAD TO DIVORCE?

The Lady, British Democracy, to the Government: "Who was that person you spoke to?"

Mr H. G. Wells, Lord Allen of Hurtwood, Sir Stafford Cripps, and other prominent men have appealed to the British Government to allow loyalist Spanish warships to be refuelled and provisioned at Gibraltar. The signatories of the appeal declare the refusal to be contrary to established international law and urge the British Government to apologise to the Spanish Government and to extend to it all the courtesy and assistance which the Government of a friendly nation is entitled to expect.

Press cable, July 29, 1936.

Kennaway Henderson's assessment of British policy was a common pro-Republican belief. (Tomorrow 5 August 1936, p 13.)

It followed from conclusions that class interests led Britain to support Franco that British policy was also pro-Fascist. The Student noted the "apparently limitless readiness of Britain to conform to Italio-German ideas"¹⁴⁷ and, in October 1937, characterised British policy in the following terms:

Do nothing which will forward the Left trend in Europe. Rather Fascism, even if it means singing "Rule Britannia" in a softer tone, than any form of Socialism which involves radical interference with the status quo.¹⁴⁸

Ian Milner, in an article in Tomorrow discussing British Mediterranean policy, opined that the very instincts of conservatism sensed a coming conflict between Socialism or Communism and Fascism and that this had helped mould British policy: "In the last resort British imperialism must take sides, actively or benevolently with the fascists against the menace of Socialism."¹⁴⁹

The logical conclusion of this view was that British policy was ultimately aimed at isolating Russia. "Junius", as the representative of the Communist view in Tomorrow, had argued this particular point as early as January 1937. He was convinced that British policy was aimed at creating a Four Power Pact or Western European Pact of Mutual Assistance whose object was "an early German attack" on Russia, thus ensuring that France and Britain were safe from German aggression.¹⁵⁰

Most "progressive" pro-Republican comment did not go so far as "Junius" or the Workers' Weekly. For most it was enough that the British Government so wished to come to terms with the Fascist powers that Franco's victory in Spain was a small price to pay. The Press, of course, did not accuse the British Government of being pro-Fascist; such a statement was rather too strong for the Christchurch morning paper. Nevertheless several editorials did hint at a variant of this argument, that the British Government was too eager to accommodate the Fascist powers. The paper initially welcomed the news of the Nyon Conference as a sign that Britain and

France were for "the first time disregarding the wishes of Italy and Germany".¹⁵¹ Later, however, The Press was of the opinion that the Nyon Agreement had little to do with the war in Spain - it would benefit Franco more than the Republicans and was fundamentally an attempt to protect sea routes in the Mediterranean rather than to do anything about intervention in Spain.¹⁵² For the Student, the motives for the British Government's apparent hardening of attitude with respect to Mediterranean piracy were also little to do with Spain, but evidence that "the voice of traditional British Imperialism is beginning to be heard in the councils of Whitehall". The Student apparently considered this motive as morally reprehensible as those informing earlier British vacillation.¹⁵³

Nor did Tomorrow consider the Nyon Agreement evidence of any real change of attitude by Britain. Despite claims that Britain was willing to sacrifice imperial interests in order to both ensure a Franco victory in Spain and placate Italy and Germany, some commentators in Tomorrow divined Imperialist interests in British policy towards Spain. The "News and Views" column at the beginning of the war had suggested that British foreign policy was directed toward maintaining the Empire above all else and that the war in Spain entered British strategists' considerations only as it affected the balance of power in Europe, not in terms of the reasons for which the war was being fought. According to this view, British policy makers hoped that if Germany were to acquire Mediterranean territory it would act as a check on Italy, which had grown too strong in that area and posed a threat to Britain's Suez route.¹⁵⁴ This view had been largely discarded in favour of the class-interest-based pro-Franco bias, but Ian Milner introduced it again, in slightly different terms, in two articles on 15 and 29 September 1937, discussing respectively general British Mediterranean strategy and the Nyon Agreement.

In his first article, Milner concluded that, in the case of Spain, British policy was affected by both class and imperialist interests and that strategic losses by Britain in the area would be

tolerated only if the sacrifice was merely apparent. Milner saw the "temporary" gains allowed Germany and Italy in the Mediterranean as part of the British attempt to break the Rome-Berlin axis and, as well, a recognition of a changing balance of power that meant that Italy had claimed "her place in the sun".

Milner was apparently optimistic about this strategy. Although both Italy and Germany were in a position to bargain, it was "fairly certain" that either would make "considerable concessions" in return for a close understanding with Britain. In return, Britain might have to make some concessions, such as accepting a Fascist Spain. In this context, Milner made an assessment of British views about German territorial gains similar to that in "News and Views" much earlier in the war. Milner suggested that British statesmen felt that some concessions to "fascist enterprise" were necessary and that perhaps they considered it was better to have Germany in the Canaries than in Tanganyika.¹⁵⁵

On 29 September, Milner continued his interpretation of British policy from an Imperialist viewpoint. Like the Student and The Press, he saw the Nyon Agreement as having more to do with British and French strategic interests than the war in Spain. He doubted whether the Agreement would afford any protection to Russian shipping travelling with supplies from the Black Sea to Valencia and regarded the exclusion of Russia from the Agreement as a sop to Italy. This view reinforced the idea that Britain was still attempting some form of rapprochement with Italy and that the Nyon Agreement was not intended to threaten Italian intervention on behalf of Franco.¹⁵⁶

The detection of Imperialist interests in the British Government's Spanish policy did not, however, prevent Tomorrow from continuing to emphasise Britain's acquiescence in damage to her Mediterranean interests. The attacks on British shipping, which intensified in 1938 despite the Nyon Agreement, were for "Junius" further evidence of the Chamberlain Government's dual desire for a rebel victory and an alliance with Italy. On 22 June 1938, he

predicted that, rather than take any definite action to protect British shipping, the British Government would instead attempt to prevent them trading with Spanish Government ports on the grounds that protection was impossible.¹⁵⁷ This move would injure the Spanish Government's war effort and thus help expedite Franco's victory. On 6 July he reported that his suspicion had been confirmed.¹⁵⁸ Italian attacks on British shipping were to remain a point of emphasis in Tomorrow. Lists of ships attacked were published from time to time to reiterate the point that the British Government was willing to sacrifice British seamen's lives and traditional Imperialist interests in order to come to terms with Italy and to help Franco win the war.¹⁵⁹ Perhaps this particular theme was of special significance to New Zealanders nurtured on the belief that Britannia not only ruled the waves but also had a powerful protective instinct towards her own. Tomorrow's emphasis on the British Government's failure to react to attacks on shipping carried with it an implicit comparison with former British policy. While it could, no doubt, be assumed that many of Tomorrow's readers and contributors had little love for the manifestations of Imperialism, perhaps it could also be assumed that, as well as serving rather well to point out the vacillating and pro-Fascist nature of British policy, this particular example caused some trepidation, some fearful resonance, in the minds of New Zealanders dependent on the British navy for protection.

The theme of British compromise with the Fascists involving a compromise of British Imperialist tradition was carried on until the very end of the war. In March 1939, the "News and Views" column noted that the British Government was not pressing claims for damage to British shipping on Franco.¹⁶⁰ The column provided a comparison with the Venezuelan war in 1901-1903. When the Venezuelan Government seized some ships belonging to the British colony of Trinidad, the British Government blockaded the Venezuelan coast until the ships were returned. The columnist was at pains to point out that the British Government of the time had included Neville Chamberlain's father and brother.

As in other pro-Republican sources, Tomorrow's cataloguing and condemnation of British policy on Spain made Chamberlain the villain of the piece. A Foreign Affairs article on the Anglo-Italian agreement, written by Donald Gordon, was headed "Il Duce and J'aime Berlin".¹⁶¹ Although this trend was evident throughout the magazine, the image of Chamberlain as the personification of British policy was most clear in Kennaway Henderson's cartoons. These depicted Chamberlain with top hat in a "danse macabre" with Mussolini, Hitler and a demon with a swastika on his chest; Chamberlain, carrying a briefcase labelled "Intrigue", sandwiched between Hitler and Mussolini on a horse named Fascism galloping toward the cliff edge of world war; Chamberlain as Macbeth, appalled at a vision, not of Banquo's ghost, but of the shades of Barcelona and Guernica.¹⁶²

The Press also condemned Chamberlain personally when, in discussion of the Anglo-Italian Agreement in May 1938, it said cynically:

It becomes increasingly apparent that a necessary preliminary to the success of Mr Chamberlain's plan for the pacification of Europe is the despatch of a British army to Spain to finish off the Spanish Government.¹⁶³

The paper went on to suggest that the Spanish Government's refusal to admit defeat was embarrassing to the British Government, which had probably made settlement in Spain a prerequisite to the ratification of the agreement because it had seemed certain that a victory for Franco was imminent (and would have satisfied Italy). "Junius", who discussed the Anglo Italian Agreement in several "Foreign Affairs" columns, was also of the opinion that the "settlement" for Spain meant for both Italy and Britain a victory for Franco.¹⁶⁴ He even went so far as to claim that one of the secret clauses in the Agreement was an approval of a Franco victory.¹⁶⁵

The Press' major criticism of British policy was not, as in Tomorrow or Salient (or even the Student), based upon assumptions

August 3 1938

TOMORROW

619



"How is't with me, when every
 noise appals me?
 What hands are here? Ha! they
 pluck out mine eyes!
 Will all great Neptune's ocean
 wash this blood
 Clean from my hand?"

—Macbeth.

Chamberlain as Macbeth, haunted by the human consequences of his Spanish policy.

Cartoon by Kennaway Henderson. (Tomorrow 3 August 1938, p 619.)

about class-interest and pro-Fascism, but, ultimately, upon the consideration that British policy displayed weakness and expediency rather than principle. The Press attacked the British and French "restricted conception of self-interest" and "the inadequacy of a policy of combatting international lawlessness only when and if the extent that it directly threatens British and French interests".¹⁶⁶ As early as January 1937, The Press was of the opinion that the British Government had no long-term foreign policy: "It prefers to deal with situations as they arise and to extract itself from difficulties by the method likely to cause the least trouble at the moment."¹⁶⁷

In part the paper's rejection of "limited self-interest" as the basis for a foreign policy stemmed from a commitment to collective security and the League of Nations. Several times The Press expressed dislike of Britain's return to bilateral negotiations. It described the Anglo-Italian Agreement as a return to 18th century diplomacy and power politics¹⁶⁸ and later questioned the validity of the British Government's theory that "in present circumstances bilateral negotiations offer the most hopeful road to peace and security".¹⁶⁹ The little criticism that the Grey River Argus made of British policy was also based upon the lack of certainty in British policy¹⁷⁰ and its dismissal of the League. While Eden was in office the Argus was apparently of the opinion that British policy was still based on the League Covenant, but in July 1938 the paper complained about the "amazing reversal of policy" of the Chamberlain Government with regard to collective security.¹⁷¹

The Press' dislike of British policy was also based upon its doubts that Britain could continue to support non-intervention with honour.¹⁷² Letters to newspapers also demonstrated that some New Zealanders were more used to British policy that was based upon principle, honour and the rule of law. Those who had believed in Britain's strategic and moral superiority found that faith undermined by a policy of concessions to the dictators which engendered "neither enthusiasm nor self-respect" and "makes John Bull a sissy".¹⁷³

New Zealanders accustomed to reliance on the "Mother Country" were made uncomfortable by the lack of certainty and firmness in Britain's approach:

Even today the British Empire could be described as the greatest instrument for peace in the world, but if it is to continue to be such it must cease to advertise on every possible occasion that it will make every conceivable effort to avoid the use of its strength.¹⁷⁴

More than discomfort and uncertainty, there was also a sense of betrayal in some pro-Republican comments about British policy. It is likely that this feeling informed the Student's scornful criticism of British policy. Alun Richards recalled in an interview the sense of shame he and others in the SCM felt about British policy.¹⁷⁵ This feeling was something that could only arise among people who also had some sense of association with that policy. It was even expressed in the pages of Tomorrow. Denis Glover contributed some poems about Chamberlain, entitled "Variations on a Theme - Pastorale, Gigue and Coda".¹⁷⁶ All three indicated Glover's contempt for Chamberlain as the representative of British policy, but "Gigue" also revealed the reason for such contempt:

There was a time, we must suppose
when every Englishman was glad
to beat the bully and the cad
protect the little bullied lad
and punch the bully's nose.

...

But there's no virtue in such a folly
so Neville Chamberlain instead
invites the thug to go ahead
and sitting on the victim's head
he pokes him with his broolly.

In discussing criticisms of British policy in terms of the threat to Empire and Britain's betrayal of the Principles of justice, it is difficult to distinguish sometimes between cynical use of these arguments as effective propaganda and a genuine sense of betrayal arising from certain convictions about Britain. However, the fact that propagandists obviously considered betrayal of the Empire and of



THE RUNAWAY

Another of Kennaway Henderson's variations on the theme of Chamberlain and Fascism. (Tomorrow 11 May 1938, p 433.)

justice an effective means of arousing New Zealand opinion suggests that a rather idealised image of Britain did exist in some New Zealand minds.

Criticism of British policy in terms of betrayal of ideas of liberty, justice and defence of the weak often appeared in the context of support for the New Zealand Government's stand at the League of Nations. Almost all the newspapers examined had some correspondence on this matter, and in the Otago Daily Times a fierce debate on New Zealand's stand took place that ranged from erudite and reasoned argument to personal invective.

Approval of Jordan's attitude at Geneva often stemmed from the conviction that he was merely expressing a traditional British (and Commonwealth) concern for the defence of liberty and dislike of force, that Britain herself had only recently and inexplicably abandoned. The image thus presented was of Jordan (and the New Zealand Government in general) acting as the voice of Britain's conscience, reminding the "Mother Country" of the path of righteousness and justice that it had forsaken.¹⁷⁷

This point of view, then, implied no disloyalty to Britain or the Empire in differing from the British Government; rather, the opposite - it was Britain that had deviated from the ideals and principles that had made the British Empire great. Although one proponent of this argument did argue that New Zealand had the right to an independent voice at Geneva, in a sense, that was a separate issue entirely. Seeing New Zealand as the voice of Britain's conscience, far from asserting its independent nationhood, was in fact emphasising its "Britishness", its central place in an idealised Commonwealth that stood for justice and defence of the weak. The Grey River Argus, for example, considered that the New Zealand Government was following a policy that was the logical conclusion of Eden's support for collective security.¹⁷⁸

Others, of course, who stressed the New Zealand Government's

commitment to justice and democracy did not relate it to an idealised Britain. Those who regarded the British Government as pro-Fascist in its Spanish policy were more inclined to applaud the New Zealand Government's action as evidence of its disassociation from the Imperialism and colonialism of the British Empire.¹⁷⁹

Tomorrow made little comment upon the New Zealand Government's attitude, but what was said centred upon the influence of the British Government. The police interrogation of the nurses was, for the editors, another example of the British Government's attempt to strangle aid to the Loyalists. A page-long article headed "Nurses and Non-Intervention" devoted one paragraph to the nurses and the rest to other evidence of British attempts to deny passports to others involved with aid to Spain. It was clear that of the two alternative explanations initially offered - that the questioning was at the instigation of the British Government, or that the police had exceeded their authority - the former was preferred.¹⁸⁰

In August 1937, Tomorrow published further evidence of British interference in an article entitled "Eden and Jordan: A Study in Censorship". The article consisted of excerpts from The New Statesman and Nation, which discussed the Eden-Jordan "blue-pencil incident" at Geneva in May 1937. These excerpts amplified the meagre coverage the affair had been given by the New Zealand press and left Tomorrow's editors, at least, in no doubt that Eden had in fact censored Jordan's speech. Apart from an expression of confidence in the New Statesman's analysis of events at Geneva, the editors themselves made little comment on the affair. Perhaps the New Statesman's indictment of Eden and of British policy in general spoke for itself. The only point that was queried by the local writers was the New Statesman's confidence that in New Zealand public indignation would be aroused by Eden's treatment of Jordan. Where, asked the editors, was that indignation?¹⁸¹

In December 1937, the "News and Views" column commented on the Government's gift of £1,000 for medical aid in China. The columnist

noted that the need for aid was as great in Spain and yet the Government "has not given a penny" to aid the victims of the Spanish war. While unspecified "internal reasons" were partly to blame for the Government's inaction, the columnist saw the main cause as the attitude of the British Government, which tied New Zealand's hands. The voice of New Zealand nationalism was raised: why must a Labour Government in New Zealand not offend a National Government in England?¹⁸²

This resentment of British ties was perhaps at the heart of Tomorrow's trenchant criticism of British policy over Spain, the other side of New Zealanders' Empire connection. It was, in a sense, an attitude that at one and the same time demanded British protection and denied British direction. A correspondent in July 1939 voiced this view:

The foreign relations of all the members of the British Commonwealth are controlled by Britain ... whose policy has been to sabotage the League of Nations and collective security with the consequence that we in the Dominions are left to waste money on armaments and protect ourselves as best we can in the event of our being drawn into a war brought about by a policy over which we have had no control.¹⁸³

Yet in another sense, blaming the New Zealand Government's Spanish policy on the British Government was "the easy way out", absolving the Labour Cabinet's members of any question as to where they stood with regard to the war in Spain. Tomorrow did not hesitate to criticise the Labour Government on other issues; therefore, it was surprising that the anti-Communism of the Minister of Police, Peter Fraser, was not even mentioned in connection with the nurses' interrogation. Obviously the concentration was upon the differences between New Zealand and Britain.

The Labour Government's policy on the Spanish Civil War, among other things, gave some rise to some questioning of the Imperial link. J.N. Findlay, Professor of Philosophy at Otago University and an Englishman had attacked New Zealander's idealised image of Britain

in his article in Tomorrow, "The Imperial Factor in New Zealand".¹⁸⁴ He began a heated debate in the correspondence columns of the Otago Daily Times when he questioned the National Party's claim that the New Zealand Government's policy threatened the solidarity of the Empire.¹⁸⁵ Findlay regarded as "deplorable" any suggestion that Empire solidarity meant "blind unquestioning lining up behind the British Government of the day" and "abdication of the right of New Zealanders to determine their own policy intelligently in the light of the present world situation". He considered that New Zealand would, in fact, fail to fulfill its function in the Commonwealth if it were to act in blind subservience to the British Government. Findlay conceived of the British Commonwealth as an association of independent nations linked by common traditions and the Crown, with separate destinies, but attempting to co-operate in creating a common policy. He attacked the idea that the Commonwealth was "a hierarchy mystically centred in Great Britain":

A veneration for the Feudal relics of England is perhaps a harmless trait; it ceases however to be harmless when British Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries are included among these relics and when the representatives of a limited section of one of the British parties are regarded as the representatives of Britain and the Empire ...

Findlay suggested further that since the British cabinet was criticised by Englishmen there was no reason that New Zealanders could not also question its actions.¹⁸⁶

Findlay's contention that only by behaving in a manner that revealed intelligent criticism could New Zealand cease to be a political nonentity and become accepted by Britain as a valuable associate was upheld by J.T. Paul, who had been influential in the formation of the Labour Party in New Zealand and was a former President of the Party.¹⁸⁷ Paul considered that the ideal relation between nations in the British Commonwealth was one of "mutual interdependence", which naturally involved a "free interchange of views" and required that nations must not merely echo

Britain, even at the risk of making mistakes. Paul also presented a view allied to that sometimes expressed by Savage and others in the Labour Government, that, although small, New Zealand might play a significant part in world affairs and, indeed, might make a unique contribution to a "new internationalism".¹⁸⁸

The Press also welcomed the idea that New Zealand might take a more independent line in foreign policy under a Labour Government, although it did not directly address the issue of the Government's Spanish policy. The Press had applauded both the Government's forwarding of its memorandum of reform of the League of Nations Covenant and the sentiments expressed therein. It regretted that such views had not been presented by one of the major European powers, since then they might have had more impact on world affairs. Its editorial on the memorandum remarked that the New Zealand memorandum "seems almost innocent in its simplicity", but said that, if there were more "innocent directness" in diplomacy, the world would not be in such a state of confusion. Nor should the Government's actions be seen as "a frog expanding itself to bullish proportions"; the paper ended its editorial with a quote from the prophet Isaiah: "... and a little child shall lead them".¹⁸⁹

Later, in November 1936, discussing the visit to New Zealand of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Dominions, The Press deplored previous Governments' general lack of independent thought on international problems:

The independence in external affairs conferred in practice after the Great War and legally in the Statute of Westminster has been regarded in New Zealand as a privilege which need not be used. The truth is that it is an obligation which cannot safely be evaded.¹⁹⁰

Together with these views went a commitment to collective security, based partly on the consideration that the Empire was not and could not become invulnerable and therefore must seek peace and safety through the League of Nations: "the choice is not between collective security and unilateral security but between collective

security and no security".¹⁹¹ Even if it did not devote any editorial space to discussion of specific differences in policy between the British and New Zealand Governments, The Press was prepared to admit, in an accepting manner very different from the indignant tones of other daily newspapers, that the Commonwealth might not be united behind Britain. After the resignation of Anthony Eden, the paper warned that the New Zealand Government might face a conflict of loyalties between London and Geneva, and that the ascendancy of Chamberlain's views might in general weaken the solidarity of the Commonwealth:

... there is much to support the contention that if Mr Chamberlain's faith in the League becomes openly faint and perfunctory, the Monroeism of Canada will receive an impetus and the internationalism of the New Zealand and South African¹⁹² Governments will be at odds with British policy.

There were others who, through the correspondence columns of the Otago Daily Times, proclaimed the need for more independent policy from New Zealand and supported Findlay's criticism of "the indiscriminate" truckling to the British Government which has too long passed for patriotism in New Zealand".¹⁹³ R.W. Souter, who begged leave to "reluctantly doubt the wisdom while thoroughly respecting the sincerity and idealism" of Jordan's attitude at Geneva, labelled as a national weakness the lack of "some effective kind of distinctive national vision". Yet, in a sense, Souter was perpetuating some of the myths of the "British system". He proclaimed that in British countries patriotic citizens always had the right to criticise Governments and political parties and that this "precious heritage" must be preserved in New Zealand.¹⁹⁴ "X.Y.Z." condemned the "worship of the English Government as the incarnation of all that is good, great and wise".¹⁹⁵ He further felt that talk of Britain's altruism and protection was nonsense, and that New Zealand should develop a spirit of national independence, since in a crisis New Zealand might be on its own.

Another correspondent took this line of thought even further and

argued for complete independence from Britain because New Zealand's and Britain's geographical interests diverged. The writer argued that if Britain could allow the vital Mediterranean route to be threatened, then it did not have New Zealand's interests at heart. He considered that New Zealand's foreign policy should concentrate on the Pacific, where Britannia did not rule the waves and where a Pacific non-aggression pact would provide the best solution for New Zealand's defence.¹⁹⁶ A letter in similar vein argued that, since support for British policy meant toleration of the Berlin-Rome-Tokio axis, it must be opposed because of the threat the Tokio Government posed to New Zealand.¹⁹⁷ It is interesting to note that this letter was one of the few examples of a concrete expression of a connection between the Japanese menace in the Pacific and Britain's appeasement policy, although pro-Republicans did link the Sino-Japanese war with Spain in a more general sense as another example of Fascist aggression.

Concern over the Spanish Civil War and British policy thereon can be seen, then, as contributory factors in a re-evaluation of New Zealand's relation to Britain. Not all of those who felt support for the Spanish Government, of course, participated in this developing desire for more independent policy and status for New Zealand. Notably, the Methodist Times was silent about British policy and the New Zealand Government's independent stand at Geneva. But within the Student Christian Movement, on some university campuses and in general within the intelligentsia who read and contributed to Tomorrow, there was a sense that it was time New Zealand discarded its colonial dependent outlook upon the world. Writing in Contemporary New Zealand, a survey of New Zealand's domestic and foreign policy published in 1938 by the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, J.C. Beaglehole mused on the advantages and disadvantages of New Zealand's participation in the Commonwealth. Although he qualified his conclusions with the consideration that there was no arguing with the "absolute value" of New Zealand's links with Britain, he also said:

This may at least be said; the interests of New Zealanders, as a people with some leanings to democracy, with even, at this moment, a transformation to socialism not impossibly before them, lie much more clearly with the struggling left-wing parties of the world than with any system of institutions, however deeply and splendidly rooted in history, which would, when driven to a final choice oppose those parties or ignore their efforts or their agony.¹⁹⁸

In an addendum to the same publication, F.L.W. Wood considered that the Labour Government's foreign policy was a sign that "significant steps have been taken in the direction of national maturity".¹⁹⁹

It is difficult, of course, to estimate how many New Zealanders supported the Labour Government's policy and felt the need for such re-evaluation of Imperial links. Indeed, it is as difficult to estimate the support for the Republican cause among New Zealanders. In both cases, much of the comment came from the intelligentsia, a small group in New Zealand society. The evidence of pro-Republican letters to newspapers does not necessarily indicate a high level of feeling among New Zealanders, for many were from the same people who wrote persistently on the issue throughout the war. Because of the general acceptance of the basic Communist attitude towards the war, it is also difficult to gauge how many of these letters were from non-Communist pro-Republicans. Charlie Saunders, the Communist Secretary of the Christchurch branch of the SMAC, referred, in a letter to the Wellington "Polit Bureau", "to our team of letter writers":

There have been occasions, such as when the Catholic reaction has been writing through its priests in favour of Franco, that the Editor of the Press has had as many as 60 letters in one day from the Left. Many of the most prominent writers are in touch with us when there is a barrage on and the effect they have on the Editor of the Press trickles out occasionally.²⁰⁰

Since the Christchurch section of the Communist Party did not have 60 members, it must be assumed that Saunders' "team" included non-Communist pro-Republicans. Apart from involvement with the SMAC,

letters to the newspapers were one of the few methods by which New Zealand pro-Republicans could proselytize for their cause. In 1939, Tomorrow published an article by Willis Airey and Arthur Sewell headed "Misleading Article, A Study in Capitalist Freedom of the Press". The article told how Airey and Sewell had attempted to correct the Herald's editorial statements about the Popular Front Government of Spain. Lengthy letters written in refutation of the Herald's claims of Communist influence in and unconstitutional behaviour by, the Popular Front Government prior to the rebellion were either unpublished or finally printed in a truncated manner so as to render their argument "innocuous". The conclusion was that the capitalist press could appear to be fair and free, while serving the interests of capitalism and publishing only those criticisms that did not substantially alter its own case.²⁰¹

If words were the medium, there is little evidence that Spain had a significant impact upon New Zealand writers and poets. Denis Glover attempted to interest other poets and writers in a collection of poems about Spain whose proceeds would go to the SMAC, but apparently received only a lukewarm response. In May 1938, A.R.D. Fairburn wrote to Glover:

... smothered in work and worry ... why I haven't sent you a contribution to your potage Espagnole so far. Sargeson tells me you're going thoroughly crook about the indifference of all of us guys (bar Beaglehole. No don't bar him - let him in) in the matter of General Franco.²⁰²

The "potage Espagnole" did not appear. R.A.K. Mason wrote a verse play for the SMAC's meeting in Auckland to mark the second anniversary of the beginning of the war in July 1938²⁰³ and Allen Curnow, under his pseudonym of "Whim-Wham", contributed some doggerel upon Franco's peculiar love for his people to The Press, but apart from Glover's own poems,²⁰⁵ these appear to have been the only examples of New Zealand verse inspired by the Spanish Civil War. Glover also contributed a poem in more serious vein to Tomorrow that transposed Spanish events to the New Zealand scene. Entitled "Bringing it Home", the poem said in part:

But what would happen if our country's leaders
 were nightly murdered, shot as being "Reds"?
 What would we say if sudden submarines
 torpedoed the Wahine off the heads?

...

And if, when we appealed to Britain's navy
 and help from her (the Mother of the free)
 she told us that disputes about the gravy
 would keep the League some little time at tea;

And added she'd offend the Argentine
 If she should give us arms to fight the foe;
 and shut her eyes upon our desperation
 in rushing on machine guns with a hoe?²⁰⁶

The poem voiced the sense of New Zealand's isolation from the centre of events that informed some pro-Republican propaganda that aimed specifically at eliciting a response from New Zealanders. Yet, in a sense, Tomorrow's own coverage of the Spanish Civil War indicated and even reinforced that isolation. The majority of its material was an exercise in interpretation of events that may have enhanced readers' understanding of events and may indeed have converted some to pro-Republicanism. The periodical was, of course, not in the same business of propaganda as was the Workers Weekly, but even so, as the major source of pro-Republican opinion after the Communist newspaper, Tomorrow made surprisingly little mention of New Zealand activities aimed at promoting the Republican cause. There were reports of meetings in aid of Spain in Australia and London, but none of meetings in New Zealand.²⁰⁷ The only report of the New Zealand nurses' time in Spain came in a letter from an Australian nurse who mentioned meeting the New Zealand trio at Huete.²⁰⁸ The return of Nurse Dodds and Sister Sharples to New Zealand in early 1939 provided the "News and Views" column with an opportunity to remind readers of New Zealanders who had fallen in Spain,²⁰⁹ but the only interview with an International Brigader in Tomorrow was a laconic item on E.N. Griffiths, scarcely the most political of the New Zealand Brigaders, which added little to the sum of readers understanding of the conflict.²¹⁰ The Mayor of Westport's refusal to chair a meeting for the nurses came in for criticism in "News and Views"; yet no interview or report of their experiences

appeared.²¹¹ This omission was all the more surprising given that Winston Rhodes was Chairman of the Christchurch branch of the SMAC and could provide first-hand accounts of meetings and, as well, had access to all the propaganda material received or generated by the SMAC.

Perhaps there was no need to advertise the SMAC in Tomorrow through reports of meetings and donations received; in a country as small as New Zealand, in which the Left intelligentsia was a much smaller component, no doubt all who were interested knew of the SMAC and related activities. Rhodes' own recollections of Christchurch in the period covered by the Spanish Civil War were of a lot of activity on several issues among a relatively small group of people. The SMAC, the Left Book Club, the China Aid Committee, and Tomorrow's editorial board all drew their membership from the same pool of people.²¹²

Was this then the United Front the Communists had hoped for? Winston Rhodes also noted that while there was a good deal of effort expended towards the United Front, there were still many divergent opinions among those who worked together on such issues as the Spanish Civil War.²¹³ It can be seen from the opinions discussed that the grounds upon which pro-Republicanism was based varied. Nevertheless, many among this "progressive" alliance of opinion based their analyses of the Spanish Civil War upon their considerations that an alternative system to capitalism might be more just. In some cases, the use of the Spanish Civil War to demonstrate the failure of capitalism, and even democracy as far as Salient was concerned, went further than the Communist presentation of the issues of the war. Ultimately, however, the Communist view on the war was accepted even by those who had hoped for a social revolution in Spain. Tomorrow's coverage of the POUM-PSUC dispute revealed that some New Zealanders, at least knew about the divisions among Spain's Popular Front, and therefore had a choice to make. They could choose to take sides with either POUM or PSUC or disregard the differences in favour of the wider front of anti-Fascism (this later choice was, of course, in effect choosing PSUC over POUM).

The opinions of students (Christians or not), academics, at least one editor of a daily newspaper and ordinary citizens also revealed the ambivalence of the British connection. Even where Britain was accused of pro-Fascism there was sometimes a sense of betrayal that indicated a previous loyalty. In their criticisms of British policy, these "progressive" people were also following the Communist "line", but the interpretation they brought to it in terms of the Labour Government's policy possibly constituted the most specific application of the "lessons of Spain" to the New Zealand scene.

Their opinions revealed at bottom a concern about what happened in Spain itself as much as for the wider ramifications of the conflict, which placed them all firmly in the category of internationalists with a wider view on the world than simply of New Zealand in the context of Empire.

In one sense, then, this alliance of opinion can be seen as a validation of the Communist drive for the United Front, since in New Zealand the main method of responding to the plight of Republican Spain was to create a body of opinion in support of the Republican cause. But there was a means with which to translate words into action, the Spanish Medical Aid Committee. Chapter 7 will show the degree to which the "progressive" people became involved in active support of the Republican cause.

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- 24 Idem.
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- 28 Ibid pp 2-3
- 29 Ibid p 6.
- 30 Ibid p 8.
- 31 Ibid 17 February 1937, pp 221-222.
- 32 GRA 22 July 1936, p 4.
- 33 Ibid 7 November 1936, p 6.
- 34 Ibid 15 December 1936, p 6.
- 35 Ibid p 4; 8 January 1937, p 4.
- 36 See below, p 351. See also Chapter 2, p 114.
- 37 P 19 August 1936, p 10.
- 38 Since Catalonia was the heartland of Anarcho-syndicalism, it was hardly surprising that the Communists did not play a leading role in the initial disposition of the forces.

- 39 Tomorrow 20 January 1937, pp 170-172.
- 40 ODT 18 November 1936, p 6; 19 September 1936, p 6; 22 September 1936, p 12; 8 August 1938, p 14; 4 November 1938, p 4; P, 13 August 1936, p 8.
- 41 NZH 18 September 1936, p 15; WT 24 January 1939, p 9; GRA 17 November 1936, p 9; 19 September 1936, p 9; 25 September 1936, p 5; 22 September 1936, p 12; 17 February 1937, p 15; 16 March 1939, p 16; 13 August 1936, p 8; 19 August 1936, p 2; 4 December 1936, p 9; 5 December 1936, p 20.
- 42 ODT 12 August 1936, p 5.
- 43 Salient 23 March 1938, p 2. All quotations on p³¹² to p³¹⁴ are from this lengthy editorial unless otherwise stated.
- 44 The National Defence League (N.Z.) was first formed in 1919 as a pressure group with its main aim to prevent total disarmament. It died away in the late 1920s but was revived in 1936 and campaigned for conscription.
- 45 The New Zealand Freedom League was formed in 1938 by Professor R.M. Algie, lecturer in law at Auckland University College, expressly to combat the policies of the Labour Government. Algie later became National Party Minister of Education and Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- 46 Canta 30 June 1937, p 2.
- 47 Ibid 5 May 1937, p 2.
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- 49 Ibid 14 April 1937, p 378.
- 50 Ibid 12 May 1937, p 418.
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- 54 Ibid 13 October 1937, p 777.
- 55 Ibid 8 December 1937, pp 253-255; 19 January 1938, pp 218-221.
- 56 Idem.
- 57 Idem.
- 58 Idem.
- 59 Idem.
- 60 Ibid 20 January 1937, p 176.
- 61 Interview with Winston Rhodes, March 1982. For discussion of Sinclair's earlier views and his association with Vance Palmer see David R. Walker, Dream and Disillusion: A Search for Australian Cultural History. Canberra, 1976, pp 71-89, 131-132, 153.
- 62 Tomorrow 20 January 1937, p 176. Unamuno, Basque philosopher, was Rector of the University of Salamanca. At the beginning of the war he aligned himself with the Nationalists, but later repudiated their cause. Unamuno died under house arrest on 31 December 1936.
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- 64 Ibid 3 March 1937, p 270.
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- 66 Professor Allison Peers was an English historian who had written The Spanish Tragedy in 1936 (London) and in 1937 published Catalonia Infelix.
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76 Ibid 5 August 1936, pp 6-8.
77 P 28 July 1936, p 10.
78 See Chapter 3, p 146.
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80 Ibid 12 May 1937, pp 420-421; 9 June 1937, pp 508-510; 23 June 1937, pp 517-518; 4 August 1937, pp 637-638.
81 Ibid 30 September 1936, p 6.
82 Ibid p 9.
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84 Ibid 12 May 1937, pp 420-421.
85 The "Badajoz Massacre" occurred after the capture of the town by the Nationalists. Militiamen were herded into the bull-ring and shot.
86 Malaga was the scene of a general evacuation after a Nationalist campaign. The town was bombarded by gunships and almost totally ruined. Refugees from the town, fleeing to Almeria, were the subject of an assault by Nationalist tanks and aircraft.
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88 See Chapter 3, p 146 & 166.
89 Tomorrow 9 June 1937, pp 508-510.
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95 Ibid 30 January 1937, p 2
96 In early 1937 an English Anglican and Free Church delegation went to Republican Spain to examine the Republic's attitude towards religion and reported favourably upon the freedom of religion in Republican Spain.
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98 Ibid 19 November 1938, p 226.
99 NZH 23 September 1936, p 17; ODT 18 November 1936, p 6; 19 September 1936, p 9; 25 September 1936, p 5; 19 November 1936, p 14; 25 November 1936, p 3; 31 August 1937, p 17; 15 August 1938, p 15; 9 March 1939, p 11; 22 March 1939, p 5; 5 April 1939, p 8; P 13 August 1936, p 8; 19 August 1936, p 2; 4 December 1936, p 9; 5 December 1936, p 20.
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103 Idem.
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- 107 See Chapter 5, p 285-287.
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 149 Tomorrow 15 September 1937, pp 709-711.
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 151 P., 14 September 1937, p 8.
 152 Idem.
 153 Student October 1937, p 6.
 154 Tomorrow 5 August 1937, p 3.
 155 Ibid 15 September 1937, pp 742-743.
 156 Ibid 29 September 1937, pp 742-743.
 157 Ibid 22 June 1938, p 520.
 158 Ibid 6 July 1938, p 550.
 159 Ibid 22 June 1938, pp 519-520; 3 August 1938, p 627.
 160 Ibid 1 March 1939, p 260.
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 162 Ibid 18 August 1937, p 659; 11 May 1938, p 433; 3 August 1938, p 619.
 163 P 21 April 1938, p 14.
 164 Tomorrow 22 June 1938, p 513.
 165 Ibid 6 July 1948, p 549.
 166 P 4 February 1938, p 12.
 167 Ibid 15 January 1937, p 10. See also 17 December 1936, p 10; 5 July 1937, p 8.
 168 Ibid 18 April 1938, p 10.
 169 Ibid 13 July 1938, p 10.
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 171 Ibid 2 July 1938, p 6.
 172 P 29 March 1937, p 10.
 173 EP 17 May 1938, p 10; WT, 3 January 1939, p 5.
 174 EP 19 March 1983, p 8.
 175 Interview with Alun Richards.
 176 Tomorrow 1 February 1939, p 202. See Appendix 3.
 177 NZH 28 May 1937, p 14; 4 June 1938, p 17; 26 May 1938, p 11; ODT 13 July 1938, p 14.
 178 GRA 2 July 1938, p 6.
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 181 Ibid 18 August 1937, pp 648-650.
 182 Ibid 8 December 1937, p 66.
 183 Ibid 19 July 1939, p 608.
 184 Ibid 22 December 1937, pp 105-107. See Chapter 2, p 82.
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 186 ODT 6 July 1938, p 12.
 187 Paul's Study of the Labour Party in power, Humanism in Politics, Wellington, was published in 1946.
 188 ODT 11 July 1938, p 13.
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- 198 J.C. Beaglehole. *New Zealand In The Commonwealth: An Attempt At Objectivity.* Contemporary New Zealand (2nd ed.) Wellington, 1939, p 10.
- 199 F.L.W. Wood. *New Zealand in Crisis.* Contemporary New Zealand, p 227. The collection of surveys of contemporary New Zealand was presented by the New Zealand Institute of International Relations as a Data Paper for the British Commonwealth Relations Conference in Sydney, in September 1938. A number of unbound copies were kept with the intention of adding a supplementary chapter and making the second edition available as a data paper for the 1939 Study Meeting of the Institute of Pacific Relations.
- 200 Christchurch Section Communist Party to Central Committee, 22 May 1938. Item 9. Jack Locke Deposit, Canterbury University Library, Christchurch.
- 201 Tomorrow 12 April 1939, p 359.
- 202 A.R.D. Fairburn to Denis Glover, 1 May 1938. Folder 15. Glover, Denis. MS Papers 418. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. See also F. Sargeson to D. Glover 15 March 1937. Folder 18 Glover, Denis. MS Papers 418.
- 203 See Appendix 2.
- 204 P 25 March 1939, p 20. "Whim-Wham's" verse was answered by G.F. Seward, a persistent pro-Francoist correspondent to The Press. See Appendix 2.
- 205 See above, p352 and Appendix 2.
- 206 See p iv for full text of poem.
- 207 Tomorrow 23 December 1936, p 109; 1 September 1937, p 684; 22 June 1938, p 539.
- 208 Ibid 22 December 1937, p 117.
- 209 Ibid 18 January 1939, p 163.
- 210 Ibid 18 August 1927, p 658.
- 211 Ibid 15 February 1939, p 226.
- 212 Interview with Winston Rhodes.
- 213 Idem.

CHAPTER 7
"FOR SPAIN AND HUMANITY"
AID TO SPAIN FROM NEW ZEALAND

The slogan "For Spain and Humanity" was used by the Spanish Medical Aid Committee in its drive to raise funds to help the Spanish Government. In this sense, it was the application of the fundamental pro-Republican conviction that the Republican cause was the cause of democracy and humanity. But the slogan in its widest sense might equally have been applied to the non-partisan funds that were collected in New Zealand to aid the victims of the war. The National Relief Fund for Spanish Refugee Children (NRFSRC), the Society of Friends (Quakers) Spanish Relief Fund, Red Cross and Salvation Army appeals were based upon humanitarian concern for the suffering caused by the war, particularly in the case of children.

There were many New Zealanders who were not prepared to take sides on the war, yet who were profoundly disturbed by the reports of the bombing of civilian populations and the plight of refugees from the centres of battle in Spain. The non-partisan relief funds provided some means of expressing that concern without entailing political commitment as well. However, before discussion of these non-political efforts to succour the people of Spain, the "anti-Fascist humanitarian alliance" of the SMAC will be considered, as the main vehicle through which aid from New Zealand was provided.

The SMAC was the logical conclusion of the Communist Party's United Front policy, centred round the Spanish Civil War. It aimed at the dissemination of propaganda and the transformation of opinion into concrete action. Like the United Front campaign itself, the SMAC had a wider aim behind its immediate aim of sending aid to the Spanish Government. If non-Communist pro-Republicans could be brought together into a "broad-based" movement for aid to Spain, the co-operation and co-ordination there established could be transformed

into a general coalition against Fascism. But, again like the whole United Front policy, the wider aim of the SMAC was not entirely fulfilled. Although the Committee succeeded in raising enough money to send three nurses to Spain and maintain them there, as well as funding the purchase of an ambulance and a field laundry truck, and although it did unite a good many "progressive" people in its cause, the mainstays of the SMAC's fundraising activities were the Communist Party and the Trades Unions.

The SMAC was another means through which the Communist Party hoped to work with the Labour Party, in pursuit of affiliation. There was, indeed, some involvement from Labour MPs and Labour Party branches. But the establishment of the Standard's "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund", a "rival" for pro-Republican donations, undercut the SMAC's position, and indicated the Labour Party's caution. The "Spanish Relief of Distress Fund" provided an avenue through which Labour Party members could demonstrate their solidarity with Spain's fight against Fascism without becoming too closely involved with the Communist-inspired SMAC. Because so little information on the fund was available and because it was a major part of the Labour Party's response to the Spanish Civil War, it has been considered in the context of Labour Party attitudes, rather than in this discussion of aid to Spain.¹

Investigation of the aims, organisation and activity of the SMAC has been largely based upon SMAC Records held by George Jackson, former secretary of the Auckland SMAC branch (which operated as the National Committee from July 1938) and upon a smaller collection of SMAC-related material in the Jack Locke Deposit. The Jackson collection contains some record of the operation of the Dunedin Committee, which functioned as the National Committee before July 1938. There were also SMAC branches in Wellington, Palmerston North, Napier, Stockton, Invercargill, Hamilton and Te Aroha. The records of these branches, and of the Dunedin Committee, could not be located; therefore, the picture of the SMAC's operation in New Zealand has some gaps.

The Dunedin Committee was the first to be formed, in November 1936. At first it was known as the Dunedin Spanish Relief Committee. The impulse for its formation came from another organisation, the General Spanish Aid Committee (GSAC), whose Secretary was Alex Maclure, the Canadian engineering student later killed in Spain. E.W. (Ted) Hunter was also a member of the GSAC; he was later to become the Secretary of the Dunedin SMAC. Hunter at this time was a member of the Labour Party and an official of the Shop Assistants Union (and later the Tramways Union). Hunter left the Labour Party for the Communist Party in 1939, and it is possible that his views moved much closer to Communism sometime before his change of membership. There is no information available on the GSAC, which was absorbed into the Spanish Relief Committee (later the SMAC), but the involvement of Maclure, sometime member of the Communist Party, suggests that it was the first step in the building of a United Front organisation to aid the Spanish Government.

The Dunedin Spanish Relief Committee was formed at a meeting called by the GSAC on 12 November 1936. At this initial meeting the humanitarian, non-partisan aims of the organisation were emphasised. Nevertheless, it was also clearly stated that the aid would be going to the Spanish Government. The Chairman of the meeting, H.H. Ferguson, Psychology lecturer at Otago University College, said that emotion-tinged words like "Fascism" and "Communism" should be avoided in the interests of clear thinking:

The central fact of the situation was that the Opposition minority in a Government elected by the people had adopted military methods of overthrowing that Government. Those who believed in democratic Government and law and order would be opposed to the military action of a minority in Spain.²

At this stage, there appeared to be no objections to the directing of aid in this manner under the banner of humanitarianism. The President of the Otago branch of the St John's Ambulance Association, Mr J. Ash, attended the meeting and said that he saw no reason why his Association and the Red Cross should not be associated with the organisation, although he warned that he was speaking

personally, as his Committee had not yet discussed the matter.³ A committee was appointed at the meeting to consider the provision of medical aid in the form of a "Red Cross Medical Unit" and to invite the co-operation of the Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Association. It comprised Professor Ramsay and H.H. Ferguson, both of Otago University, Archdeacon L.G. Whitehead (Warden of Selwyn College at Otago University, and an Anglican Minister) J. Ash, J.C. White, District Superintendent of the St Johns Ambulance Brigade, A.C. Dunningham, Dunedin City Librarian, Dr D.G. McMillan, MP for Dunedin West, and Mr D.P. Kennedy, President of the Otago University Students' Association.⁴ A smaller committee established to consider "less technical" matters such as fundraising consisted of people rather more likely to have a definite pro-Republican outlook. Its members were Miss R.P. McKenzie, of the Otago University Independent Radical Club, a Mr Walker, from the General Labourers Union, E.W. Hunter, and a Mr Townley of the Dunedin Council Against War and Fascism.⁵

The image of a broad-based, apparently non-political, humanitarian organisation in aid of the legitimate Government of Spain did not last. When a meeting was held in Christchurch to establish a branch of the SRC, there was an immediate protest from the Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, Matthew Brodie.⁶ In a stormy meeting, Douglas Kennedy claimed that the SRC had received permission from the Red Cross to use their flag on the medical unit, and that Franco could not be assisted because his forces did not constitute the "competent military authority" under which the Geneva conventions stated that Red Cross medical units must serve. He further said that the unit would come under the jurisdiction of the authority in Spain recognised by the British Government.⁷

In the wake of accusations of Communist sympathies and disloyalty to Britain, the Christchurch branch of the St John's Ambulance Association⁸ disassociated itself from the appeal, and the Red Cross launched its own appeal for clothing for Spanish refugee children.⁹

Dr D.G. McMillan, MP; justified the SRC's stand in a letter to The Press:

If we were proposing to send financial or material aid to the combatants, a partisan attitude could be justified, but in point of fact we are making no such proposal

...

It has been asked, why send aid to work in co-operation with the Spanish Government? Apart from the practical and constitutional reasons, the need of the people of Spain is greater than that of the mercenaries who are fighting for a rebel general.¹⁰

McMillan stressed that the medical unit would take no cognisance of political affiliations, but would treat any wounded, a claim that was to be repeated by the SMAC constantly over the next two years.

However, the attempt to gain true humanitarian "respectability" had failed. Thereafter, there was never any question that the SMAC had political motivations as well as humanitarian in the provision of aid to Spain. The first meeting held to establish an Auckland branch, on 20 January 1937, passed a resolution stating that "we send the medical unit not only on humanitarian principles, but as a definite gesture of support to the Spanish Republican Government."¹¹ But even among the "progressive" people who supported the SMAC there were some dissidents. On 17 May 1937, Alexander Miller, a Christchurch Presbyterian Minister, wrote to Charlie Saunders, the Communist Secretary of the Christchurch SMAC:

As you know I have been very much concerned to co-operate in anything that might be done to relieve the suffering of the Spanish people, and readily agreed to join your committee when I was asked to do so. I know the difficulty of all united front activity, but I hoped that effective work on this particular job would be possible. You know also that I agree with the interpretation of the Spanish situation which you, for example, and other Leftists would give. On the method for combatting Fascism I differ very definitely with, say, the Communist Party, but I had hoped that the activities of the Medical Aid Committee would not imply any endorsement of military methods.

... The statements of Nurses Shadbolt and Dodds [in the Workers Weekly] indicate clearly that they regard themselves as part of the militant forces of Republican Spain. Now

they have a perfect right to this attitude, but in view of their attitude it is not legitimate to suggest that they represent a purely humanitarian and non-partisan movement. I am more sorry than I can say that this means I must withdraw from the Committee.¹²

In Dunedin Archdeacon Whitehead also resigned because the SMAC was supporting the military cause of the Loyalists.¹³

There appear even to have been divisions between various branches of the Committees on the best method of presentation of the cause of Spanish Medical Aid. These disputes are significant for an understanding of the national organisation of the SMAC and its position as a Communist "front" organisation. There is no doubt that the New Zealand SMAC generally fitted Hugh Thomas' description of organisations established for aid to Spain: "Behind them all lurked the shadow of the Comintern or of the loyal Communist Parties¹⁴ ... The Committees' nominal leaders were often distinguished and unsuspecting personalities, but were usually served by Communist Secretaries".¹⁵ In Auckland the impulse for the creation of a SMAC branch came from the Otahuhu Railway Workshops, and the prime mover was George Jackson, a Communist, who became the Auckland secretary.¹⁶ The Auckland Chairman was Tom Stanley, also a Communist. In Christchurch Charlie Saunders, an ex-journalist who had been sacked for his political beliefs, was secretary. Saunders said "indestructible Marxism has been my comfort all my life",¹⁷ but his views did not always accord with the Party; he was expelled in 1937, rejoined and was again expelled in 1938, both times for alleged "sectionalism".¹⁸ In Wellington the President was J.C. Beaglehole, the Chairman C.H. Gough, of the Dairy Workers Union, and the Secretary Mrs E. ("Granny") McGowan, also a member of the Communist Party. There were, no doubt, other communists involved in SMAC activities, but it is difficult to ascertain political affiliations, as the other organisations to which Committee members belonged were rarely listed.

This omission makes it difficult indeed to discover whence most of the SMAC's membership came. Its main source of financial support

was the Trades Unions; therefore it can be assumed that many of its members were Trades Unionists. The first Auckland meeting included delegates from the Railway Tradesmen's Association, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the General Labourers Union the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, and the Boilermakers' Union.¹⁹ At the next meeting, delegates from six Auckland Labour Party branches attended.²⁰ However, it is not clear whether these "delegates" were officially so considered by their parent organisations or whether they continued to function as such within the SMAC. In Auckland, the secretary of the Auckland Trades Union Secretaries Association told Jackson that the members of his Association would not direct their unions to affiliate to the SMAC, since it was a matter for individual unions to decide.²¹ The Dunedin Committee later voiced some disapproval of the notion of extending membership to accredited delegates of constituent bodies, considering that it would weaken the voluntary humanitarian image of the SMAC.²² Whether or not unions became affiliated to the SMAC, as Chapter 5 has shown, the appeal was endorsed by the FOL.²³

The SMAC itself, of course, presented its membership as coming from the widest possible basis. Ted Hunter told Nurse Millicent Sharples, in January 1937, that the subscription list showed "support from almost every quarter".²⁴ Charlie Saunders delineated the basis upon which Medical Aid Committees should be formed in a letter to J.E. Lawrence at the Railway Workshops in Invercargill, where a SMAC branch was in the process of being established in July 1937:

You must have some Left schoolteacher, perhaps even a lawyer or two, a clergyman and later possibly you may get also a priest. These are the types to go to, never overlooking that the workers form the solid base for supporting the struggle of the Spanish people.

And so you go to the intellectuals who at first will be naturally hesitant and may even consent only to the use of their names on appeals or collection sheets. You must overcome this hesitation although the way will be hard ... an appeal to the LRC and the local Council of the FOL for direct representation is very advisable.²⁵

In general, Saunders' assessment of the outlines of the SMAC's support proved to be correct. The "spadework" of fundraising and organisation was done by the secretaries and a few other members, often Trades Unionists and possibly Communists as well. With a few notable exceptions, like Winston Rhodes in Christchurch, who was a very active Chairman and noted for his ability to draw a good response (in terms of donations) from meetings,²⁶ the intellectuals and other prominent people who supported the SMAC largely did so by allowing their names to be used in appeals. A pamphlet published by the Auckland SMAC in 1938 had at the back a list of those who endorsed the SMAC's work. The list included several university lecturers, ministers of religion and Labour MPs.²⁷

The SMAC made a point of asking Labour Parliamentarians to take positions on Committees. The Auckland branch asked the Prime Minister, Michael Savage, to act as President, and all Auckland Labour MPs were asked to become Vice-Presidents.²⁸ Savage tactfully refused for the reason that he was leaving New Zealand shortly to attend the Imperial Conference.²⁹ Dr D.G. McMillan acted as President of the national organisation until July 1938, when he resigned due to pressure of work.³⁰ Other Labour MPs who consented to the use of their names were Ormond Wilson, who became MP for Rangitikei in the 1938 elections, W.J. Lyon, MP for Waitemata, C. Morgan Williams, Kaiapoi, E.J. Howard, Christchurch South, J.W. Munro, Dunedin North, and Peter Neilson, Dunedin Central. As noted in Chapter 5, the involvement of the Dunedin MPs possibly owed something to personal connections with Ted Hunter.

Nevertheless, all these endorsements of the SMAC also indicated a certain degree of pro-Republican sentiment. Although the SMAC was part of the Communist Party's United Front campaign, it was not just a "front" organisation established to further the Communist Party's influence. It was, in respect of medical aid to Spain, a bona fide organisation served by many genuinely concerned people who wished to help the Republican Government of Spain. It seems unlikely that many

of the people involved did not know of the SMAC's links with the Communist Party, although the opinions of most about the organisation are difficult to discover. However, a commitment to support the SMAC at whatever level of activity probably indicated that a desire to help the Spanish people in their fight against Fascist aggression outweighed considerations of the SMAC's political bias.

It is also difficult to discover the amount of direction given by the Communist Party to the medical aid campaign. Charlie Saunders made several complaints that the Central Committee of the Communist Party was not giving the leadership it should to Spanish Medical Aid Committees.³¹ It would appear, then, that, in the interest of creating a "broad" United Front movement, direction was largely left in the hands of the individual Communists who played so large a part on the Committees. Differences of opinion about the fundamental nature of Spanish Medical Aid in the first year of its establishment may perhaps be explained by the difficulty of combining a humanitarian appeal, designed to attract as many people as possible, with a pro-Republican stand that had its underlying aim the creation of a United Front. By July 1937, Ted Hunter was insisting that the political aspect of the Movement should be stressed (something that Auckland had accepted from the beginning): "The general line of Fascism must be stated over and over again to convince many folk who still regard Hitler and Mussolini as being very forceful men imbued with ideas of restoring "order" etc. etc."³² However, he noted that "Wellington appear to have disputed the desirability of carrying on an ideological attack upon Fascism". Indeed, it appears that there was a split in the Wellington Committee that resulted in the establishment of two rival committees, possibly because of the political emphasis.³³

The relatively loose organisation of the Committees in their early stages may also be attributed to their "broad-based" nature and possibly to a desire to have them appear as spontaneous upsurges of humanitarian anti-Fascist concern. The official title of "Spanish Medical Aid Committee" was not adopted until July 1937; until this

time the local organisations were known variously as the SRC, the SMAC or the Committee for Medical Aid to Spain.³⁴ The Dunedin Committee, having been the first established and the first to make contact with the overseas organisations through which funds were to be sent,³⁵ acted as the National Committee.

Charlie Saunders envisaged the establishment of "a National organisation which will combine the work for Spain, China and every other victim of aggression ... perhaps a National Council Against War and Fascism".³⁶ Throughout the latter half of 1937, he agitated for a National Conference to establish a constitution for the Spanish Medical Aid organisation, and for the National Committee to be situated in Wellington. He faced considerable opposition from other branches, on the grounds that a Conference would be a waste of money better used for aid to Spain. They argued that a constitution was unnecessary since the organisation's aims and objectives were clear, and that the Wellington Committee could not provide the wide unified basis that the National Committee required.³⁷ The basis of the opposition to Saunders' complaints was best expressed by the Auckland SMAC, which felt that a constitution would hinder rather than help the Committees' activities.³⁸ Political divisions and differing views of the function of the SMAC would naturally have surfaced in discussion of a constitution.

Saunders' insistence that the medical aid campaign should take the most political "line" possible, and should be more directed by the Communist Party, was probably also a little overt for the tastes of his fellow secretaries. While the Communist Party's involvement was an open secret (the Workers Weekly promoted the SMAC in its pages³⁹), the Committees were cautious not to promote the role of the Party too much. In July 1937, George Jackson told Saunders that the Friends of the Soviet Union had asked the Auckland SMAC to jointly sponsor a showing of the pro-Republican film "Defence of Madrid". The SMAC refused on the grounds that "such a course is out of the question for us and would only be playing into the hands of the reactionaries".⁴⁰ Later, Tom Spiller, who undertook a

speaking tour for the SMAC, was advised by the National Centre that no Communist Party literature or any Left literature not connected with the Civil War was to be sold at meetings for Spanish Medical Aid.⁴¹

Eventually, however, a National Conference was held in Wellington on 27 and 28 December 1937. The National Committee had decided that it was time to review achievements and consider carefully plans for the future, in the light of the worsening international situation and signs that the war in Spain would continue for some time.⁴² The Constitution, drawn up at the Conference, was based upon a draft circulated by the Dunedin Committee and did little more than make a formal statement of what was already the accepted practice and attitude of the Committees. Control of the organisation was vested in the National Centre, with a proviso that matters of general policy should be referred to the District Centres, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The National Committee was to be chosen from among the four District Centres, on a majority vote. These District Centres were to co-ordinate between the National Centre and the branches in their areas, respectively Auckland Province, Wellington, Taranaki and Hawkes Bay, Canterbury, Westland, Nelson and Marlborough, and Otago and Southland. The Committee's dissolution was to be decided by the District Centres, again by a majority vote.⁴³ The Dunedin Committee was confirmed in its position as National Committee, which it retained until July 1938. Ted Hunter's election to the position of Secretary of the Otago Trades Council meant his resignation as National Secretary and as a branch secretary of the SMAC. Control of the organisation was shifted to the somewhat reluctant hands of the Auckland branch.⁴⁴

The most notable feature of the constitution was its expression of the ideological stance of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee. The constitution stated that the Committee had been established by individuals and representatives of organisations with "differing and to some extent conflicting political views",⁴⁵ united in the concern that the Spanish people were without adequate medical

services. Membership of the Committee was open to all who felt this concern, whatever their political viewpoints, and members were free to express any opinion they held on the political aspect of the Spanish Civil War.⁴⁶ It was stressed that:

Ambulance nurses give recognition to the general practice of the profession, outlined in the Hippocratic oath, of extending their care to all in need of it, wherever they may encounter such need in the pursuance of their duties.⁴⁷

An amendment moved by the Auckland delegate, George Jackson, made perfectly plain the pro-Republican sentiments of the SMAC. The statement of aims and objects included the point that medical aid was to be sent not only on humanitarian grounds, but as a gesture of support for the "legitimate" Government of Spain.⁴⁸ Thus, the opinions held on the political aspects of the Civil War were obviously to be limited to those in favour of a Republican victory in Spain.

The constitution also made plain the twofold purpose of the Committees - to send aid but also to propagandise. It was stated that the aims and objects of the organisation implied "education of the public by demonstrations, meetings and such other activities as may be deemed necessary from time to time". Statements of opposition to the work of the Committee were to be "repudiated".⁴⁹

By the time of the National Conference, the primary aim of the SMAC had been achieved, in the despatch of three nurses to Spain in May 1937. Initially, the SMAC had planned to send a fully equipped medical unit to Spain, comprising one doctor, two nurses, an orderly and an ambulance.⁵⁰ This plan appears to have been abandoned in order to provide concrete evidence of aid to Spain as soon as possible. The cost of sending the three women to Spain was apparently £ 285, although the record of the nurses expenses did not state if all costs were included.⁵¹ While the nurses were still in New Zealand, they were the most valuable aid in the SMAC's propaganda and fundraising activities.

The police interrogation of the nurses only hours before they sailed naturally caused great consternation and indignation in the SMAC organisation.⁵² Almost immediately after the nurses had left meetings were arranged at which resolutions were passed condemning the incident.⁵³ Letters and telegrams were sent to the Ministers of Police, Internal Affairs and Justice demanding explanations and an enquiry into the matter.⁵⁴ Presumably in order to present evidence at the proposed enquiry, the nurses were asked, via the Sydney Spanish Relief Committee, to prepare statements giving details of their interviews with the police.⁵⁵ However, once official explanations had been given⁵⁶ and it was obvious that there would be no enquiry, protests soon died away. The only other indication of police interest in the SMAC was on two occasions in Christchurch, in October 1937 and February 1939, when detectives appeared at meetings.⁵⁷ Since such attention was not paid in other centres, it seems likely that any concern about Christchurch SMAC activities came from local police officials rather than from the Minister of Police himself.

Once the nurses had left for Spain, the focus for fundraising was upon money for their maintenance in Spain, including the purchase of medical supplies, and on retaining enough money to bring them home again. The propaganda leaflets produced by the SMAC emphasised that the nurses were New Zealand's responsibility and that their heroism should not go unsupported. For the SMAC, propaganda and fundraising naturally went hand in hand. Every appeal for aid to Spain was an opportunity to promote the Republican cause. The SMAC held public meetings, arranged for the screening of the pro-Republican propaganda film "Defense of Madrid", printed leaflets, posters and pamphlets, and arranged radio appeals. Once the nurses had been gone for some time, it was important for the Committees to maintain their fundraising impetus. It is likely that the National Conference was arranged mainly for the purpose of planning a campaign that would stay the distance of a long drawn out war. In 1938, the impetus was kept up by speaking tours featuring returned International Brigaders and others.

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Secretary

the caxton press

A leaflet produced by the Christchurch branch of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee. (Christchurch SMAC Records. Item 6. Jack Locke Deposit, Canterbury University Library, Christchurch.)

The first speaking tour arranged was that of Tom Spiller, a New Zealander recently returned from Spain, and Sister Mary Lowson, an Australian nurse who had served with a medical unit in Spain. They arrived together in Wellington from Australia in early February 1938. Sister Lowson then spoke in Christchurch, Dunedin and Auckland before returning to Australia on 22 February. Spiller went from Wellington to his home town of Napier, where he raised £17.0.0,⁵⁸ and then to the South Island. He spoke in Christchurch, Invercargill, Bluff and surrounding areas, and Greymouth.

Spiller had intended to return to Spain in March 1938. However, he remained in New Zealand and embarked upon another tour for the SMAC, this time in a van purchased by the Auckland SMAC for the purpose of speaking tours.⁵⁹ The van enabled Spiller to visit many small towns that had not been reached by the committee before. It also cut accommodation expenses, since he slept in a tent pitched beside it, when the weather permitted.⁶⁰ After touring the North Island from April to July, and after recuperating from having the van slip off its jack on top of him while he was fixing it, Spiller then toured the South Island from October 1938 until early 1939, concentrating on the Public Works Department camps on the West Coast.⁶¹

Another Australian speaker brought to New Zealand by the SMAC was Mrs Ada Holman, widow of a former Premier of New South Wales. She spoke in Auckland, Palmerston North, Christchurch, Wellington and Dunedin in July and August 1938.⁶² "Taffy" Patterson, a Welshman who had been in the International Brigades, arrived in New Zealand in May 1938 and became very active on the Auckland Committee. While he did not take on such an organised touring itinerary as the other speakers, he travelled up and down the North Island to attend meetings in aid of Republican Spain. George Jackson advised the Secretary of the Hamilton SMAC that Patterson was good at dealing with the "Catholic opposition", so to create more interest in the meeting planned for Hamilton on 18 July 1938, it would be good to raise the opposition with a provocative advertisement, such as "Is Franco Fighting a Holy War?"⁶³

Political differences surfaced again upon the return of one of the New Zealand nurses, Millicent Sharples, in May 1938. There was some confusion about the reasons for her return, and suggestions that she had been sent home because of "unsatisfactory" behavior, most probably political in nature. A speaking tour had been planned for the nurse but it was soon discovered that she was not "politically minded", nor a good speaker. After several months of confusion and exasperation on both sides, the National Centre in Dunedin formally asked the nurse to sever her links with the organisation, although it promised to support her financially until she found a job. One of the major problems had been that the nurse would not accept the Committee's direction. She had also made several unspecified claims about misuse of medical aid funds.⁶⁴

There was some debate within the organisation about the National Centre's treatment of Nurse Sharples. Charlie Saunders accused the Dunedin Committee of "sectarianism" in its decision not to allow her to have a speaking tour.⁶⁵ Earlier, however, Saunders had considered the opening of the "diversionist" NRFSRC appeal a direct result of the nurse's visit to Wellington!⁶⁶ The Wellington Committee was also critical of the decision not to use the nurse for fundraising purposes.⁶⁷ After the National Centre had been transferred to Auckland, there was some feeling among Auckland members that the case should be reviewed. Two members resigned when the Auckland Committee resolved on a majority vote to endorse the Dunedin Committee's decision.⁶⁸ There is no doubt that, although there were faults on both sides, the severance of ties with Nurse Sharples was mainly a result of her political naivete, which made it difficult for the Committee to impress upon her the need to discuss any grievances only within the Committee and to direct her public utterances toward the "correct" kind of appeal.

The SMAC also organised speaking tours for the two other nurses when they arrived back in New Zealand in February 1939. A civic reception in the Auckland Town Hall was arranged for their arrival home. The Auckland SMAC told all sections to ensure that they sent

the broadest selection of welcoming telegrams, and noted that a wide range of speakers, not confined to the "Left", was needed for the meeting.⁶⁹ The short speaking tour the nurses later undertook was described as a "complete success".⁷⁰

Bert Bryan, a returned International Brigader, and Dr D.W. Jolly, who had been a division Commandant Surgeon with a medical unit in Spain, also toured under the auspices of the SMAC in March 1939. The SMAC hoped that Dr Jolly, as a "respectable" professional man, would be able to appeal to groups that had not responded before.⁷¹ The Committee was pleased when a meeting in Nelson was endorsed by the presence of the Mayor and two local Labour MPs.⁷²

By this time, and indeed, by mid-1938 the SMAC's propaganda and appeals had shifted from the provision of medical supplies to aid the Republican cause to the plight of Spanish refugees from Franco. A poster produced by the SMAC in late 1938 showed pictures of refugee camps and exhorted "In the Name of Decency - New Zealand Must Say NO! to Conditions Such as These!"⁷³

Apart from meetings at which collections were taken and pro-Republican literature sold, there were Christmas appeals, circular appeals to all organisations the SMAC thought likely to be sympathetic, such as Trades Unions, and refugee appeals. The Auckland SMAC also published a monthly Information Service which was sent to all Committees for distribution to members, as well as to organisations and individuals the SMAC thought should be aware of its activities. The Information Service usually contained a message from the Auckland Chairman, Tom Stanley, news of any local medical aid events and a monthly balance sheet for the Auckland Committee. The rest of the bulletin was usually devoted to articles about various aspects of the Spanish Civil War reprinted from overseas sources. There were items about the Republican Government's social policies - "Fascists Close Schools While Republicans Open New Ones"⁷⁴ - reports of Fascist atrocities,⁷⁵ articles on the NIC,⁷⁶ speeches by Spanish leaders like Juan Negrin,⁷⁷ and articles on

the medical services in Republican Spain.⁷⁸ Many of these latter stressed that Fascist soldiers would be given aid by the Republican medical corps.

Most of the printed matter used to advertise the need for medical aid, and sold to raise funds, came from overseas, although one-page leaflets and posters were printed in New Zealand. Other pamphlets, leaflets and books came from the Australian Spanish Relief Committees (from whom the SMAC had also obtained copies of the film "Defense of Madrid"), the British SMAC, from the plethora of largely Communist-run aid organisations established in Paris, like the Comité Internationale de Coordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Republicaine,⁷⁹ or from Republican Spain's own propaganda organisations, such as Frensa Extranjera in Barcelona.⁸⁰ Material was also obtained through Left Book Clubs in New Zealand.

The Auckland SMAC also published its own 27-page pamphlet in 1937, entitled Spain's Fight for Freedom.⁸¹ Most of the material in the pamphlet was reprinted from overseas sources. It discussed the social conditions of the Spanish people, the reactionary and oppressive role of the Catholic Church in Spain, the legitimacy of the 1936 elections, and the injustice of the Non-Intervention Agreement. "Murder on the Malaga Road", an account of Fascist bombing of civilians also available in leaflet form, was included in the pamphlet. The foreword was written by the Mayor of Dunedin (until 1938), Rev. E.T. Cox, a trustee of the National Committee. It stated very simply that the Spanish people had finally won freedom from centuries of oppression when their democratic Government was elected and that the war in Spain was "an effort of that corrupt class (Spain's former rulers) to regain the privileges that they have lost."⁸²

In general, the SMAC's propaganda followed closely the conventional themes of pro-Republican belief and was similar in tone and arguments to the propaganda in the Workers Weekly. There was, of

course, rather more emphasis on the provision of medical aid to Spain in the name of humanity. The propaganda in leaflets and posters was at its most political in the first months of the war, when New Zealanders were called upon not only to give generously to support the medical unit, but also to demand a return to international law and to persuade the Labour Government to refuse to accept the Non-Intervention Committee. Propaganda invariably referred to the "legitimate" Government of Spain or the "Loyalists" and depicted the provision of medical aid as New Zealand's contribution to the world-wide struggle against Fascism, and, in addition, as one way of protecting New Zealand democracy. The SMAC's attitude towards the British stance on the Spanish Civil War hovered uneasily between depicting it as a "tragic mistake" or as a conscious policy of aiding the dictators. In the public appeals it was usually the former, but the Information Service, intended mainly for the "converted", took the stronger approach. It often contained diatribes against Britain's non-intervention policy and vilification of Chamberlain. There was some emphasis upon comparisons between New Zealand's Government and the Republican Government of Spain. In the 1938 Christmas appeal New Zealanders were reminded that while they were holidaying in the sun under the beneficent leadership of the newly re-elected Labour Government, the Spanish people were spending their third winter in appalling conditions, fighting for the very social and political liberties New Zealanders took for granted.⁸³

An article written by Willis Airey, for the eighth issue of the Information Service, on 28 March 1938, contrasted somewhat with the generally more strident denunciations of fascism and non-intervention that usually appeared in the bulletin. Airey's message was essentially the same as the SMAC's usual propaganda - that Spain was the present centre of the fight to save democracy and that everyone should stand together to save democracy. However, it was couched in rather more thoughtful terms. Airey pointed out that the threats to democracy came not from the nations Italy and Germany as such, but from forces within civilisation itself, which conditions in Italy and Germany (resulting in part from other nations' policies) had allowed

to come to the surface. In Airey's view, internationalism, not jingoistic patriotic hatred of Italy and Germany, was the answer. If Governments would not act, then people would have to do more themselves and it was not against Italy and Germany and their peoples that the struggle for democracy should be directed, but against threats to freedom everywhere, in whatever form they occurred.⁸⁴

The activities of the SMAC did not cease when the Spanish Republican Government fell in March 1939. George Jackson wrote to all sections that there was more need than ever for their work.⁸⁶ Since mid-1938, the Committee's propaganda had concentrated on the plight of the refugees in France, and most of the money sent overseas was used to buy medical supplies for the refugee camps. The last three issues of the Information Service were entirely devoted to articles about the refugees; the slogan "For Spain and Humanity" was replaced by the legend "To Aid the Refugees" on the last issue, in July 1939.

The campaign to aid the refugees centred not only around raising money for their support, but also on persuading the government to allow some refugees to immigrate to New Zealand. The French Government had threatened to return the refugees to Spain; the New Zealand Government was also requested to make representations to the French Government to guarantee the refugees' right to asylum in France, and to advocate at the League of Nations that provisions concerning the Czechoslovakian and Austrian refugees be extended to include those from Spain.⁸⁶ In August 1939, an appeal was sent to all Labour MPs asking them to use their influence with the Labour Cabinet to enable skilled workers to immigrate to New Zealand.⁸⁷ Most of the replies indicated that there was some measure of sympathy with the Committee on this matter. The most positive response was from John A. Lee. At that time, Lee was involved with the State Housing project, and he was in favour of admitting as many skilled workers "as the country can absorb".⁸⁸ However, the Government, although it gave the matter "careful and sympathetic consideration", decided that it could do nothing to aid the refugees.⁸⁹ The

Committee's request for an immigration permit for Willi Remmel, a German International Brigader whom the New Zealand nurse, Renee Shadbolt, had befriended in Spain, was also refused.⁹⁰

The Government did agree to allow child refugees to enter New Zealand, if their adoption by New Zealanders could be guaranteed by the Committee. The children had to be proven to be well in minds and bodies, and guaranteed not to become a charge upon the state; twelve were to be allowed to immigrate to New Zealand.⁹¹ Unfortunately, by the time the government had considered the project, in November 1939, it was three months too late. The Committee had been notified in July, by the Office pour l'Enfance,⁹² that the French Government would not allow child refugees to leave France, considering itself morally responsible for them. Instead of adoption, a scheme was organised by which foreign committees sponsored children's camps, "White Corners", in France, at a cost of £50 per month. The New Zealand Committee felt that this campaign would arouse a great deal of sympathy, and would be an ideal way to reach people who might not have given money before.⁹³

However, the beginning of the Second World War put a stop to this campaign. The outbreak of war effectively ended the Spanish Medical Aid Committee's activities. The intense campaigning centred on the refugees, and on the greater threat of Fascism since Spain had been added to its list of conquests, began to taper off almost immediately war was declared. Communications with the committees in Paris broke down, and although the SMAC felt that there was still much that could be done to aid the refugees, threatened once again by the forces they had fled, New Zealanders' attention was focussed elsewhere. Donations to the SMAC fund stopped coming in and by January 1940 most committees had ceased all activities. The National Committee decided to wind up its affairs by July 31 1941 and £350.10.5 remaining in the bank was sent to the Anti-Fascist Relief Committee in London, a body that apparently incorporated all the organisations previously established for aid to Spain.⁹⁴ Although all activities had long since ceased, the Committee was not finally dissolved until March

1943, since the National Centre did not dispose of all its equipment until then. The proceeds from the sale of the typewriters and duplicator, £58, were sent to the International Brigades Association, in London.⁹⁵

It is impossible to calculate the total amount of money raised for medical aid by the SMAC. The only account books available are those of the Auckland Committee, which acted as National Centre after June 1938. The monthly account books show that from the beginning of July 1938 until 20 October 1939, when the Committee began to wind up its affairs, the National Centre received £3319.2.1 1/2. Of this amount, £1567.16.2 were funds sent in by other committees.⁹⁶ The Auckland branch itself raised £1464.19.2 1/2 in the eighteen months from its foundation in January 1937 until the transfer of the National Centre at the beginning of July 1938.⁹⁷ It was claimed that almost £2000 had been raised by December 1937, which would suggest that the total amount was something over £5000.⁹⁸

The source of most of these funds was donations from individuals and organisations. Of all the many methods of raising funds - meetings, film evenings, raffles, exhibitions, and the sale of literature and badges - none raised so much money as the personal appeal. There was a hard core of supporters, often active members of the Committee, who gave generously and consistently throughout the three years that the Committee was active. People who wished to give regularly had their names put on subscription lists held by members of the Committee, and the money was collected monthly. Several organisations, such as the Rationalists' Association and the United Front Social Committee, in Auckland, often donated the proceeds of social functions and meetings to the Committee.⁹⁹

Of the organisations that donated money, the Trades Unions gave the most and were the most regular contributors. This was, in part, the result of the many active members of the Committee who were unionists. For instance, W. Sutton, a member of the Auckland SMAC branch executive and a watersider, organised a group of supporters on

the waterfront. Regular collections for medical aid were held and the Waterfront Sympathisers, as they were known, often gave several sums each month. In 1938 alone, they gave a total of £ 507.1.5 1/2.¹⁰⁰ The Otahuhu Railway Workshops were another source of large donations, no doubt largely because of the efforts of George Jackson, Auckland secretary, who worked at the Railway Workshops.¹⁰¹

As a mark of appreciation for their support, the Auckland section gave the Waterside Workers and the Railway Workshops the two unclaimed prizes from a raffle of oil paintings.¹⁰² Although the Trades Unions might have been expected to give generously in any case, it is clear that the SMAC aimed much of its appeal at the unions. All of the itineraries for speaking tours for the nurses, before their departure 1937 and their return in 1939, and for Tom Spiller and Bert Bryan, included specific visits to railway workshops and to wharves, where there would be a receptive audience.

The SMAC tried every possible means of raising money. It applied for a grant from the Art Union funds but was refused.¹⁰³ Street collections were held in Auckland. In Dunedin, the National Centre organised a Dairy Company appeal in early 1938. The Dairy Companies were asked to contribute goods, which would be sold for the Committee by the Primary Produce Marketing Board and the net profits returned to the Committee. Nineteen companies donated money or goods and five refused to take part in the scheme. Since this appeal went through the Dunedin accounts, there is no record of the final income from the appeal; it was estimated that the return would be about £ 65.0.0.¹⁰⁴

A very strict record was kept of all funds. Receipts were issued for every transaction and expenses were pared to the minimum. As much money as possible was to be sent for medical aid, with the exception of £ 250.0.0 kept back by the National Centre as an emergency fund.

Initially, the funds were sent through the London Spanish Medical Aid Committee. It was envisaged at first that the funds would all be used for the support of the New Zealand nurses in Spain and to aid the hospitals at which they were working. The nurses were attached to the British nursing unit in Spain, so it was only logical that the funds should be sent through the unit's supporting body. Some money for the nurses was also sent, in 1938, to the Exterior Bank of Spain in Paris. However, there was considerable discussion by mid-1938 as to the best place to send the money. The London Committee had not proved very satisfactory. It was reportedly disorganised and subject to internal problems; Hunter felt that "there was apt to be some favouritism" shown by the London SMAC, which "had pet schemes of [its] own" about the uses of the funds.¹⁰⁵ There had been trouble with the transmission of funds to the nurses. Sister Renee Shadbolt wrote to Jackson, in January 1938, that their hospital was without funds because internal strife had caused the British Committee to withdraw its support. They were short of food, and the London Committee "has not contributed a penny to our upkeep since being in Spain".¹⁰⁶ The arrangement had been that the British Committee would support the nurses financially and would be reimbursed by the New Zealand Committee.

On the advice of Phil Thorne, secretary of the Australian Spanish Relief Committee,¹⁰⁷ the New Zealand Committee decided to send its funds through the Comité Internationale de Co-ordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Républicaine, one of a number of interlinking organisations based in Paris and backed by the Comintern.¹⁰⁸ This particular Committee had been established in August 1936, after an international conference on aid to Spain held in Paris. The Committee co-ordinated the activities of the multiplicity of bodies that devoted themselves to specific areas of aid to Spain. The most important were the Office pour l'Enfance, which, as the name suggests, dealt with aid to the refugee and orphan children, and the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale (CSI), which dealt solely with medical supplies. The Co-ordination Committee and its two affiliates were recognised by the Spanish Government, in a

decree of 1 July 1938, as being the accredited foreign agents of the Government for the collection and distribution of aid funds.¹⁰⁹

Unlike Britain and France, where there were separate committees established to deal with almost every different area of need in Spain - food, refugees and medical supplies - New Zealand had only the one organisation. In the face of the appeals coming in from the different organisations in Paris, some decision had to be made as to where the money from New Zealand would be most effectively used. It was decided that the money would be sent to Centrale Sanitaire Internationale, to be used for whatever purpose was most urgent at the time, to avoid the time delay involved in writing to and from New Zealand regarding the application of funds.¹¹⁰ Although CSI dealt solely with medical supplies, the New Zealand Committee requested that its funds be used for aid to children and food supplies as required.¹¹¹ Money for a specific purpose was sent to CSI with a direction as to its use, on the infrequent occasion that it was decided to specify the application of funds.

Most of the other Spanish Medical Aid Committees were affiliated to the Co-ordinating Committee and to CSI by mid-1938. Although the New Zealand Committee began sending funds to CSI regularly in July 1938, it did not become affiliated until December 1938, when it officially became the New Zealand section. This meant that the Committee would receive regular reports of CSI activities and detailed accounts of the aid purchased with its funds; it also meant that 3 percent of its donations went to maintain the CSI staff and office in Paris.¹¹²

However, the sending of funds through CSI did not solve the problem of getting money to the New Zealand nurses. Hunter was informed that funds could not automatically be sent to their hospitals; the distribution of aid was decided only the Spanish authorities, but CSI would see that the nurses were not without support. Now that the organisation of medical services had been centralised, there was a fairer distribution of funds, and the nurses did in fact receive money from CSI.¹¹³

The total amount sent to Spain cannot be estimated without the Dunedin Committee's account books, since money for Spain was sent from Dunedin, until July 1938. From July 1938 until the last payment of £ 40 in October 1939, the National Centre in Auckland sent £ 1530.0.0 in British currency to CSI. With the costs of exchange, the amount actually expended was £ 2190.14.2.¹¹⁴ The money was sent at first through the Exterior Bank of Spain to be credited to the CSI account, but in late April 1939 CSI informed the SMAC that the latest remittance had arrived at the time the Spanish Government collapsed and the money was being held by the Bank.¹¹⁵ The Committee sent an urgent telegram to the High Commissioner in London, W. Jordan, who promised to do all he could to secure payment by the bank to CSI.¹¹⁶ The outcome of efforts to release the money is uncertain. On 30 June, CSI informed Jackson that they expected payment in a few weeks, and that they were most appreciative of the help given them by the High Commissioner's Office.¹¹⁷ However, at a meeting in April 1940 to wind up the affairs of the Committee, there was some question as to whether the money had in fact been released.¹¹⁸ After April 1939, funds were sent through the Comptoir Nationale d'Escompte.

Apart from the money spent on medical supplies, New Zealanders' donations were used to buy an ambulance and a laundry truck. The ambulance was purchased with funds sent by the Dunedin Committee.¹¹⁹ In November 1938 the front-line laundry truck was purchased at a cost of £ 550 sterling.¹²⁰ In May 1938 the SMAC had begun a campaign to buy a mobile operating unit, known as an "auto-chir". Nurse Sharples' speaking tour was envisaged as raising most of the 1150 sterling required. When Nurse Sharples' speaking tour was cancelled, it was decided not to attempt to raise money specifically for an "auto-chir".

The SMAC did encounter some opposition to its fundraising campaign in New Zealand. Apart from the debate surrounding its beginnings in Dunedin and Christchurch, the opposition, mainly from Catholics, seems to have been confined to attendance at meetings in



CSI publicity photo of the ambulance bought by New Zealand SMAC funds (Photo from SMAC Records. Jackson Collection [Private] Auckland.)

order to heckle speakers and ask awkward questions about the Committee's Communist links. Both Charlie Saunders and the Napier secretary, Mrs E. Collins, reported that they frequently had an "antagonistic" Catholic element at meetings.¹²¹ There was also some censorship of radio talks given by touring speakers. According to the Auckland and Christchurch Secretaries, Mrs Holman's radio talks in both cities had to be confined to discussion of her experiences of living in the Balearic Islands.¹²² In Napier a talk by Nurse Sharples was cut so that she could not speak about the bombing of civilians. According to the Napier secretary, the censorship was the result of complaints to the station manager by "prominent local citizens" about her being on air at all.¹²³

In general, it would appear that the SMAC was usually "preaching to the converted". Initial attempts to create the image of a truly humanitarian non-partisan organisation failed and most of the SMAC's support came from committed pro-Republicans. By the time of the Committee's establishment in November 1936, battlelines had already been drawn between pro-Francoists and pro-Republicans and there was never any real possibility of presenting a campaign for aid to Republican Spain as non-partisan. Nor did the SMAC's propaganda and activities have any appreciable effect upon the Government's policies. But its campaign may have stimulated some "arm-chair" pro-Republicans to demonstrate more active support for the Republican cause. Certainly, it seems to have been the stimulus of Tom Spiller's visit to the West Coast that finally decided Stockton pro-Republicans to form a Medical Aid Committee. In the centres in which it operated, the SMAC helped to keep the plight of Republican Spain in the public eye and provided a focus for pro-Republican sentiment and activities. In a limited fashion, the SMAC was a United Front. Even if its day-to-day operation was largely carried out by Communists and Trades Unionists, the very endorsement of its activities by Labour MPs, academics, public servants and ordinary citizens indicated not only pro-Republican sympathies, but also a willingness to work together with Communists in the cause of anti-Fascism.

Those who felt humanitarian concern but did not wish to become involved in a political organisation, could contribute to campaigns run on a purely non-partisan basis. The Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends all collected funds to aid the civilian population of Spain. As well, a specific appeal for victims of the Spanish Civil War was established in 1938.

The National Relief Fund for Spanish Refugee Children was established by the Mayor of Wellington, Mr T.C.A. Hislop, in March 1938. The impulse for the creation of the NRFSRC came from a visit to Wellington by two English artists who had lived in Spain, Mr and Mrs Hugh Robinson. They brought with them photographic and written

evidence of the privations suffered by refugees from the war zones, and appealed to New Zealanders to offer aid, particularly to the child refugees. The Mayor of Wellington called a public meeting on 18 March 1938, in order to discuss ways of proffering aid. From this, and a subsequent meeting on 25 March, a committee was formed that provided the nucleus of the NRFSRC's organisation.¹²⁴ Many prominent citizens of Wellington were involved in the establishment of the fund. Besides the Mayor, who declared his willingness to open a fund in his name, to be administered by the City Treasurer, there were also present at the initial meeting Mr D.A. Ewen, director of Sargood Sons and Ewen, and a former director of the Reserve Bank; the Catholic Bishop of Wellington, Michael O'Shea, and the Rev. W.H.P. McKenzie, M.C. and Bar, pastor of the Wadestown Presbyterian Church, Secretary of the New Zealand and Australian Student Christian Movement, and a member of the Dominion Executive of the League of Nations' Union. Trustees for the fund were Claude Weston, K.C., D.S.O.; the president of the National Party, and Mr W.H.P. Rollings, a Wellington barrister and solicitor. A prominent public accountant, J.K. Purdie, was secretary and Eric Reeves, M.C.; was chairman. It was altogether a very respectable list of sponsors with whose credentials none could find fault. The only member of the executive committee of the NRFSRC whose involvement might have given some cause for concern was Mrs E. McGowan, a member of the Wellington section of the Communist Party of New Zealand and secretary of the Wellington SMAC. Mrs McGowan's participation was, no doubt, in part due to the Communist Party's wish to participate in every form of Spanish aid, but was also motivated by her own very deep concern at the plight of Spanish refugees.¹²⁵

Initially, the committee proposed to raise £10,000, which would be used to help establish a children's "colony" in France, near the Spanish border, to house about 40 Spanish children. (This idea came from the Robinsons and was similar to the proposals made later to the SMAC by the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale). The aid of Walter Nash was enlisted, through W.B. Sutch, to ask the High Commissioner to investigate the practicality of such a scheme and to ascertain

whether there were any reliable organisations to whom the money for the scheme could be forwarded.¹²⁶ It appears that either the scheme became impracticable, or Jordan could not discover such organisations, for the NRFSRC's later publicity merely stated that the money would be remitted to the High Commissioner for distribution to established non-partisan aid organisations.¹²⁷ Not only was Jordan in a better position to decide on the credentials of refugee aid organisations than was the appeal committee in New Zealand, his involvement gave the appeal a semi-official status and reassured contributors of the NRFSRC's respectability.

The NRFSRC's method of collecting funds also reinforced its respectability. The original fund was administered by the office of the Mayor of Wellington, and other city, town and borough councils were requested to establish their own "Mayor's funds" for the collection of donations, which were also solicited through the Dominion's newspapers. With the establishment of local funds, administered by local bodies, it was hoped that more people would contribute than if money had to be sent to Wellington. The NRFSRC requested that subscription lists be placed in public areas of local body offices so that people visiting the offices would be made aware of the appeal. It was also hoped that local bodies would become involved enough with the appeal to organise fundraising activities such as street collections.¹²⁸ As well, the NRFSRC obtained permission from the Public Service Commissioners to circulate subscription lists throughout Government departments. Money collected in branches outside Wellington was to be credited to the Mayor's fund in that area, if it existed. On closure of the appeal all monies were to be sent to the Wellington City Treasurer, who would then pass them to the NRFSRC for disbursement.¹²⁹

The appeal was launched at the beginning of June 1938, with notices in every major newspaper in the Dominion and circulars to all local bodies, and, by 18 July 24, towns had agreed to open "Mayor's funds". The appeals in the newspapers and in the letters to local bodies were based solely upon the plight of homeless children in

Spain, with no mention of the causes of and participants in the conflict. The letterhead of the organisation featured a picture of a child standing amid rubble with ruined buildings and bombers in the background. The circular to local bodies began:

The grim stories of war-stricken Spain that daily feature in our newspaper columns never tell us of the war behind the headlines - the war that thousands of homeless orphan children wage against death by freezing in the Winter and death by starvation every day. They do not understand this war. They take no part in it. They merely suffer from it - powerless to help themselves. They can be helped only by people outside Spain.¹³⁰

Despite the respectability of the NRFSRC's origins and sponsors, the appeal was received with suspicion in some quarters. The image of the Civil War as a political battle and the association of the Republican cause with Communism, as well as the obviously politically motivated SMAC appeals, created a certain amount of wariness on the part of some local bodies. Accordingly, in his second circular to town clerks, on 18 July 1938, the NRFSRC chairman, Eric Reeves, noted that Peter Fraser had agreed to become patron of the fund. He hoped that this would provide the further assurance of Government sanction that some local bodies needed. The support of a cabinet minister, he felt, "should further commend the appeal to the people of New Zealand". If this were not enough, he noted also that the Catholic Bishop of Wellington had approved of the fund, surely the most incontrovertible proof that the fund and its committee were not in the least associated with Communism. Even so, the Committee felt it necessary to publish a statement in the Dominion's newspapers totally disassociating itself from the SMAC and reaffirming its non-partisan, and semi-official status. There is no record in the NRFSRC's files of the incident, if any, which provoked this disclaimer.¹³¹

If some city and town councils were suspicious of the NRFSRC's possible links with Communists, some Communists were equally suspicious of the activities of the fund. The Workers Weekly agreed to publish the NRFSRC's initial public appeal, but clearly regarded the fund as trespassing on the SMAC's already well established

territory.¹³² Charlie Saunders wrote to National Secretary, Ted Hunter, accusing the NRFSRC of being "diversionist". The people organising the appeal, he felt, "must be suspect to us", and Mrs McGowan's presence on the Committee was "all to the good"; presumably he meant that she could be relied upon to ensure that the money was dispersed properly.¹³³ Saunders, quick to react to real or imagined obstruction, clearly saw the donation of money for aid to Spain as a political act and was concerned that all monies collected in New Zealand should go to the Republican side in the war.

In fact, despite Saunders' and other Communists' suspicions, the fund fulfilled a necessary purpose in the movement for aid to Spain. Apart from providing an outlet for purely humanitarian concern, the fund also probably attracted the donations of those who were more or less pro-Republican in sentiment, but either through pacifism or distrust of the politics of the SMAC felt they could not participate in SMAC appeals. Thus the fund tapped sources not available to the SMAC and so increased New Zealand's contributions for the aid of Spanish refugees.

Although it had been hoped that the fund would be closed in August 1938, requests for the final collection of funds were still being made in October,¹³⁴ and the appeal was not officially closed until 30 January 1939. The original target of £10,000 was never reached; even given that it was a nationwide appeal, the original plan to raise such a large amount in only two months was impossibly optimistic. The total money received was £3313.7.2, of which £1324.4.1 was received from the Wellington metropolitan area. After an honorarium of £210 paid to the secretary and miscellaneous costs (stationery and postage), the total amount remitted to the High Commissioner was £2440.0.0. The cost of exchange into sterling was high and £600.0.0 of the money raised was used for that purpose.¹³⁵ There is no record of the organisations the High Commissioner chose to receive the money.

Another non-partisan, solely humanitarian, fund was established

by the Society of Friends in New Zealand (Quakers). An International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees had been established by the Quakers in December 1937, but, even earlier, Societies of Friends in many countries had been helping the refugee children of Spain through the Friends Service Council, based in London. Most of the money raised before the establishment of the International Commission for Child Refugees appears to have gone to the Save the Children Fund. The New Zealand Society of Friends began raising money in February 1937, when the Christchurch Two-Monthly Meeting pledged to assist "where the way shows clear".¹³⁶ Funds were raised primarily by appeals on behalf of the Save the Childrens Fund (until December 1937) in the correspondence columns of newspapers and by personal donations. The total amount of funds raised is unknown; however, by July 1937 £ 300.0.0 had been sent to the Friends Service Council.¹³⁷ The fund appears to have been administered by the Christchurch Meeting. In February 1938, a further £ 249.0.0 was remitted to England,¹³⁸ and in 1939, the Auckland Society of Friends reported that another £ 200.0.0 had been raised in the 1939 Christmas appeal. The report stated that over £3000.0.0 had been sent to England by the National Fund, mostly to the International Commission, but some also (£ 250.0.0) directly to the Friends Service Council in London.¹³⁹

Like the NRFSRC, the Friends' Spanish Relief Fund fulfilled a valuable function in eliciting donations from those who were not prepared to give money to a political organisation like the SMAC. Although the Christchurch SMAC suggested collaboration on an appeal for Spain to the Christchurch Friends, it was "reluctantly" decided that a joint appeal might jeopardise "our desire to help all refugee children irrespective of partisanship and without discrimination between the forces which are at war". However, the meeting also decided to inform the SMAC that individually members of the Meeting would be glad to help in any way they could. For the Quakers "suffering was the only qualification" for aid.¹⁴⁰

Society of Friends' appeals were directed towards arousing

sympathy for homeless and orphaned children and emphasised the need for food and clothing.¹⁴¹ So too did Red Cross Appeals, which began in November 1936, and particularly requested donations of warm clothing. The Red Cross especially asked the Junior Red Cross of New Zealand to help the children of Spain. Appeals also stated that "No distinction is made between the two factions in Spain, as the needs of both sides are great".¹⁴²

The Salvation Army appeal was made specifically in respect of the Basque refugee children, who had been evacuated to Britain prior to the rebel capture of Bilbao in May 1937. The Salvation Army in England had taken charge of 100 of the 4000 children sent to Britain and asked New Zealanders to help with the weekly cost of 15s per week, per child. Lieutenant Commissioner F. Adams, of the Salvation Army in Wellington, said:

... here is a sudden and altogether unexpected emergency arising out of a stupid and wicked war, and the lives of thousands of innocent children are at stake. Thanks to England many are being brought out of the Basque country and succoured by a people on which they have no claim other than that of common humanity. We have taken on similar burdens in the past and, please God, we will take on others, and that we may do so I make this appeal.¹⁴³

Although all of these appeals were simply based on distress at the suffering of children, and other civilian refugees to a lesser degree, it might be argued that essentially most of the funds raised went to help Republican Spain, in one way or another. As one of the Society of Friends' appeals pointed out, most of the refugee camps and children's camps in Spain itself were in Catalonia, many around Barcelona.¹⁴⁴ Catalonia remained a Republican stronghold until the final stages of the war - Barcelona did not fall until January 1939. As depicted by the NRFSRC's letterhead, the image of the sufferings of the civilian population in many people's minds was that of aerial bombardment, most of which was carried out by the rebels' forces, and usually by German and Italian planes. It is possible that some of those who gave money to humanitarian appeals were registering their protest against the Fascist method of waging war.

It is impossible to calculate how much money was raised in New Zealand for aid to Spain, since figures for the SMAC and Friends' appeals are approximate, and the amounts collected by the Red Cross and the Salvation Army are unknown. Estimates based on SMAC, NRFSRC and Friends' figures show that these three organisations alone raised over £ 11,300. The Standard's appeal and the Watersiders' donation to the International Federation of Trades Union bring the total to approximately £ 12,000. Over half of this money was donated specifically to aid the Republican cause in Spain.

Donations of money were one of the few ways in which New Zealanders could tangibly express their concern about events in Spain. The response to the SMAC appeals demonstrated the degree of commitment to the pro-Republican cause among New Zealanders, especially the Left. Contributions to non-partisan relief funds indicated that even some New Zealanders who did not take sides on the war felt its impact. Pro-Republicans, anti-Fascists and humanitarians alike heeded the call "For Spain and Humanity" and, in so doing, showed that the Spanish problem had been "brought home".

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CHAPTER 8
"SPAIN'S FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT":
NEW ZEALANDERS IN SPAIN

Inspired by their beliefs, spurred by a sense of adventure, men and women from many countries became personally involved in the Spanish Civil War. Most of their aid went to the Republican side. Hugh Thomas estimates that the total number of foreigners who fought in the International Brigades was about 40,000, although there were never more than 18,000 in the Brigades at any one time.¹ There are no estimates available for the other volunteers who aided the Republican cause - the nurses and doctors who staffed medical units funded by sympathisers in their own countries, or the men and women who drove ambulances, carried water to the troops and helped in refugee camps. Apart from the German and Italian "volunteers" in the Nationalist forces, there was also a much smaller number of real volunteers for Franco's cause, including 600 Irishmen, some Britons, Frenchmen and White Russians.²

New Zealand did not go unrepresented among the "legions of babel" who fought for the Loyalists, nor among the medical units. And one New Zealander is known to have fought for Franco. There are some difficulties in discussing the personal involvement of New Zealanders in the Spanish Civil War. There is, first, the question of what constitutes a New Zealander. The daily press and propagandists claimed as "our own" some who were not New Zealanders by birth, but who had lived here for some time prior to going to Spain, and others, who had been born here, but who had been away for some time before heeding the call of Spain. For the purposes of this study, both categories have been treated as New Zealanders, not least because that was how they were regarded at the time in New Zealand. If one were to confine the criteria to the New Zealand-born who had left New Zealand intending to go to Spain, discussion would be restricted to less than half those known to have been in Spain. Several of the

New Zealanders who went to Spain were not in New Zealand when the war began. It is, therefore, impossible to discuss their involvement in terms of the war's impact on the New Zealand scene. Their participation in the war can only be seen in the light of their personal backgrounds, motives and experiences, both in Spain and on their return to New Zealand.

There was also considerable difficulty in locating New Zealanders who had been in Spain. By the 1980s many were dead or impossible to trace. The SMAC Information Service, in 1937, gave the names of 15 New Zealand International Brigaders. Of that number, two were Australians and one a Welshman, all of whom had come to New Zealand after service in Spain. Of the 12 remaining, no information at all could be found on two J. Alexander and Pat Murphy.

There were undoubtedly others of whom the SMAC did not know. Research uncovered several other names, but, again, the people could not be traced. One suspects that some New Zealanders who fought in Spain may not have returned to New Zealand after service there, but remained in England and joined the British forces in World War Two. The search for New Zealanders who had fought in Spain was also complicated by the fact that some International Brigaders of other nationalities have settled in New Zealand since the war. Often promising leads proved fruitless when the International Brigader proved to be a Dutchman or Englishman, who had come to New Zealand after World War Two. The experiences of these men have not been discussed.

It is interesting to note, that during the search for New Zealand Spanish veterans, many people claimed to have known someone who wanted to go but could not afford the fare, or who almost got to Spain, or who changed his mind. "Brim" MacKay got as far as France but could not get over the Pyrenees.³ William Girling-Butcher was persuaded out of the idea:

I was turned down in the Empire Flying Training Scheme ...
and sought flying opportunity. My mother's brother, an

Irish-Spaniard, was an engineer at Oviedo mines in Basque country and he soon disillusioned me. Far from a Holy War it was the Army plus the Church versus Communism and the workers with the Catalans and the Basques seeking autonomy.⁴

Despite the reference to a "Holy War", it had been Girling-Butcher's intention to join the Republican Air Force. One letter, in answer to an advertisement in the RSA Review for Spanish veterans, claimed that two "well known businessmen" from Palmerston North trained in the Soviet Union for warfare in Spain, but reached Spain too late. This story could not be substantiated. There were New Zealand Communists in Russia in the late 1930s, but it is not likely that they were there for military training.

This chapter will discuss the personal involvement of those New Zealanders whose stories could be discovered: ten International Brigaders, four nurses and a doctor, and one New Zealander who fought for Franco. Almost all the sources on these people are published sources. Only one International Brigader and one nurse could be interviewed. Of the others some had died or were too old and ill to permit an interview; most could not be traced. Letters home that were published in newspapers, interviews on their return to New Zealand and reports of addresses at SMAC meetings have provided most of the information. Because the New Zealanders were so small a contingent in Spain and were attached to other national groups for their service, studies of the International Brigades and even publications from the British Battalion (with which most, but not all, the New Zealand Brigaders fought) provided little additional material, apart from context.

The two International Brigaders about whom least could be found were Jack Kent and Bernard Grey. Jack Kent was reported drowned in June 1937. He was one of some 300 International Brigaders in the S.S. City of Barcelona, which had left Marseilles with supplies and volunteers only to be torpedoed shortly before making port. Kent's name appears in the Roll of Honour in W. Rust's Britons in Spain, a

slim volume, published in 1939, that presented a Communist history of the British Battalion in Spain.⁵

Bernard Gray's name did not appear in any Workers Weekly or SMAC list of New Zealand volunteers. When Dr D.W. Jolly returned from Spain in 1939 he mentioned having met a Gray from Wairarapa who was driving an ambulance.⁶ In conversation with W. Girling-Butcher, Gray claimed to have been a mercenary and rejected any association with Communism. He further claimed that in World War Two he was prevented from rising above the rank of warrant officer because of his Spanish record.⁷ Bernard Gray died of emphysema in early 1980.

Griffith Campbell Maclaurin was the first New Zealander to die in Spain, at Madrid on 10 November 1936. Maclaurin was a graduate of Auckland University College and of St John's College Cambridge. According to a memoir in Kiwi, an Auckland University students' publication, Maclaurin had been a conservative on his arrival at Cambridge in 1932 and had, in fact, joined the University Conservative Association. A trip to Germany in 1935 created not only an intense dislike of Nazism, but also awareness of the shortcomings of the present social order.⁸ Maclaurin gradually moved toward the Left and by the time he graduated and was teaching mathematics, he had become a Socialist. Later, he joined the Communist Party and gave up teaching to open a Radical bookshop in Cambridge. He had planned to go to Spain before the rebellion, perhaps in order to see the performance of the Popular Front Government.⁹

The Workers Weekly published Harry Pollitt's account of Maclaurin's decision to go to Spain. Pollitt, British Communist Party leader, claimed he had heard that Maclaurin was a skilled machine gunner and had asked the young Communist to go to Spain; "without a moment's hesitation comrade Maclaurin gave up everything he held dear and went".¹⁰ No other sources mentioned Maclaurin's ability with machine guns, but it is possible that he had had some military training in New Zealand. At any event, he died manning a machine gun when the International Brigades were cut off during the defence of Madrid.

In a sense, Maclaurin was New Zealand's John Cornford. Much was made of his promising career in mathematics and the fact that he had given it up to devote himself to an ideal, in whose cause he had died. So early a death in a war that was still only a "nine-days wonder" in New Zealand could not fail to have had some impact here, not only among those who knew him. His parents, who had not known of his decision to go to Spain and who apparently had not shared his political convictions, later became associated with the Auckland branch of the SMAC. The memoir in Kiwi expressed its admiration for his decision and courage: "We may not agree with the cause for which he sacrificed all, but we cannot do else than pay a tribute to his honesty of purpose."¹¹

The death of Alex Maclure on the Aragon front, in October 1937, drew a similar response from those who had known him at Otago University. Maclure was a Canadian who had come to New Zealand to study at the School of Mines at Otago University College, where he became known as "Otago's tame red". He was associated with the Communist Party in New Zealand, although it is uncertain whether he was a member. One contemporary believes that he may have joined but was later expelled for refusing to accept Party direction.¹² Maclure was active in the cause of the Spanish Government while he was in New Zealand. He was one of the founding members of the SMAC in Dunedin and also promoted the cause of the Loyalists on the College campus. (In October 1936 Maclure attempted to have a resolution of sympathy with the Spanish Government adopted at a Student Council Meeting; the motion was lost.¹³)

Maclure left New Zealand for Canada at the end of 1936, leaving some with the impression that he was planning to go to Spain.¹⁴ It was later reported that he had travelled to Spain via Montreal. In a letter published in the Grey River Argus, he reported that he and some others had attempted to get into Spain by sea, but had been intercepted by a patrol and were being held in a French jail. However, he reported that the townspeople supported them and that they were not wasting time while in prison, as they had "an elected

political leadership and two study class groups".¹⁵ After his release Maclure managed to get into Spain, where he intended to join the blood transfusion unit run by a Canadian, Dr N. Bethune. However his school record as a "crack marksman" resulted in his joining the fighting ranks.¹⁶ Both Critic and the Workers Weekly reported that he was a member of the American Lincoln Battalion; Tom Spiller, another New Zealand Brigadier, met Maclure in Spain and was certain that he was with the MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion, which had both Canadian and American membership. Both were a part of the XV Brigade, as was the British Battalion. The Workers Weekly reported Maclure wounded and missing in action in August 1937 (incidentally, misprinting his name as Arnold Maclure), but in September received a postcard from him, in which he reported meeting "another New Zealander, Wm. MacDonald".¹⁷ News of his death at Fuentes de Ebro, near Saragossa, on the Aragon front in October was received in early 1938.

Critic recorded Maclure's death with great regret and paid tribute to "his enthusiasm, his sincerity and his moral fearlessness". As in the Kiwi obituary for Maclaurin, Critic noted that even those who held no brief for his beliefs must respect his giving up his life for his ideals.¹⁸ The Student, magazine of the Student Christian Movement, also published a compassionate obituary. Maclure had been well known to SCM members in Dunedin, having been wont to engage them in debate on the relative merits of Communism and Christianity. He had even participated in some Christian camps. His death, said the obituary, was "a very real martyrdom", in that he died for his beliefs. The death of Maclure caused some soul-searching questions for those SCM members who had known him. His readiness to sacrifice himself, for the cause he believed to be just, raised questions about their own loyalties, and was an example of the kind of wholehearted dedication that Christians too should practice.¹⁹ In the words of an SCM member who knew Maclure, news of his death was "something of a grief and a challenge".²⁰

Maclure and Maclaurin both held Communist views, and their impulse to go to Spain was born out of their beliefs. Fred Robertson was another New Zealand Communist who died in Spain. Reports of his death after only three days on the battlefield at Jarama Valley, near Madrid, were received in April 1937.²¹ Robertson had left New Zealand in April 1936 in the company of Tom Spiller. They had planned to travel to Germany and the USSR, and worked their passage to England on a ship, Robertson as a seaman and Spiller as a trimmer in the engine room. Robertson, like Maclure, was not New Zealand born. Of English parentage, he had spent his early life in the Middle East. He came to New Zealand in the late 1920s and worked on the Mohaka Viaduct and in several jobs in Napier. Newspaper reports recalled that his contribution to rescue efforts during the 1931 earthquake in Napier had been highly praised.²² Robertson and Spiller had met through the Napier branch of the Communist Party.

Tom Spiller recalled that their ship had stopped at the Canary isles en route to England, and that there the two were warned by Spanish Communists that there would soon be trouble in Spain.²³ Because he and Robertson went separately into Spain, Spiller did not know of Robertson's experiences in Spain. Nor did Robertson send any letters home before his early death.

There is considerably more information about Tom Spiller. He was probably the best known of New Zealand's Spanish veterans, at the time and to the present day. Spiller returned to New Zealand from Spain in 1938 and made a lengthy and comprehensive speaking tour of the country under the auspices of the SMAC. In the 1970s and '80s he was interviewed by newspapers, radio and television about his experiences in Spain. He was also the only International Brigader available to be interviewed for this study. Most of the following discussion of his experiences is based upon two interviews conducted in 1980, with additional information from his letters home published in the Workers Weekly and newspaper reports of his addresses. Latterday interviews with the media proved to contain substantially the same information as the 1980 interviews, demonstrating that his



Tom Spiller (seated) with fellow International Brigaders
(Photo courtesy of Mr F.A. Mace.)

memories had become fixed along certain lines. While this is a common process, it is possible that in Spiller's case it was begun by the constant repetition of themes during his propaganda tour in 1938.

Spiller's companion Robertson reached Spain by the simple expedient of signing on as a seaman on a ship calling at Barcelona and deserting there. Tom chose another method favoured by Englishmen. He bought a day return ticket to France, and once there, signed on as a volunteer at Communist Party headquarters in Paris. His unused return ticket was passed on to someone who needed to go to

England. Spiller recalled, that initially, he had attempted more orthodox methods. He claimed that he had applied for a passport and was turned down because it was suspected that he intended to go to Spain. (He had not needed a passport to travel to England because he was a Commonwealth citizen.) Spiller had become involved with the British Communist Party as soon as he arrived in England and had been arrested in the Cable Street riot of 4 October 1936; thus, it is quite possible that he was known to the authorities as a Communist and a likely recruit for the International Brigades. He further claimed that, when he boarded the channel ferry, he was questioned by M15 and warned against going to Spain, but allowed to continue his trip. He and other recruits travelled quite openly to the Franco-Spanish border by train and he arrived in Spain in January 1937. After a period of training at Albacete, International Brigade headquarters, he joined the British Battalion at Jarama. He later fought at Brunete. Spiller had had some military training in New Zealand and was made a Lieutenant in charge of a machine gun squad. He also spent some time at an Officers' and NCOs' training camp; he could not recall the whereabouts of this camp but thought it might have been at Madrigueras. (Madrigueras was a village near Albacete which housed International Brigaders.) The American Robert Merriman was his commanding officer at the training camp, which places his time there at some point between Jarama in February and Brunete in July, since Merriman was replaced by the Englishman Thomas Wintringham in June 1937.²⁴

After Brunete, Spiller was asked to become a scout for the British Battalion. However, before he took up this position, it was decided to send some veterans out of Spain to recruit more volunteers, and he was asked to go to Australia. This purpose was carefully glossed over on his return to New Zealand, and in his speeches here. Spiller said that for a short time before leaving Spain, he was seconded for duty to a prison camp for deserters from the Brigades, near Albacete. Spiller claimed that, while in this camp, he saw no executions or illtreatment of prisoners. He refused to be drawn on whether any of the prisoners were there for

"political" offences, although he remarked that the political education classes were complicated by the fact that the commanding officer spoke only Russian, and much time was wasted in translating his talks. Spiller did, however, complain that the food was poor and not sufficiently nourishing for the programme of physical exercise the prisoners were supposed to undertake.

After a short time at the prison camp, Spiller left Spain for England. He arrived in Australia in early January 1938. There he made a short, but strenuous, lecture tour aimed at getting volunteers to go to Spain. He claimed that in three weeks he had recruited 80 men. If true, this was made more remarkable by the fact that recruiting had to be carried out covertly.

Spiller then returned to New Zealand with Sister Mary Lowson, leader of the Australian Medical Unit in Spain, who was to undertake a short speaking tour for the SMAC. Spiller encountered some official notice on his return. When the "Awatea" berthed in Wellington he was taken aside by police and asked how long he was planning to stay in New Zealand. He was not the first International Brigader to return to New Zealand,²⁵ but he was the first who was clearly affiliated with the Communist Party, which may account for the interest shown by police. There may also have been some suspicion about the purpose of his visit, although Communist Party publicity about his return carefully made no mention of his recruiting activities in Australia.

Spiller did not actively campaign for volunteers in New Zealand. The Communist Party in New Zealand did not direct its propaganda towards encouraging young men to volunteer for service in Spain, although it was eager to point out that there were New Zealanders who had gone to Spain. A report from Palmerston North, in March 1938, that Spiller had recruited 20 young men for the Brigades aroused disapproving comment in one weekly paper.²⁶ However, Spiller attributed this story to a hoax telephone interview given by an acquaintance representing himself as Spiller.

Initially, Spiller's plans had been to conduct a short speaking tour with Mary Lowson and then to return to Spain, via Australia. He went from an "official" reception in Wellington to his home town of Napier and from there to the South Island, where he spoke in Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, Bluff and districts, and Greymouth. He completed the tour by speaking in Palmerston North and then at a number of meetings in Auckland.

Although a farewell dance was held for Tom on 25 March 1938, in Auckland, he did not return to Australia. Instead he embarked on another tour for the SMAC, this time in a van equipped with loudspeakers that had been purchased by the Committee for touring purposes. It enabled Spiller to visit many small towns that had not been reached by the Committee before. Spiller toured the North Island from April to July 1938, then spent some time recuperating from an injury received while fixing the van. From October 1938 until early 1939, he toured the South Island, concentrating on the Public Works Department camps on the West Coast. This time, he was accompanied by his wife of two months.

When interviewed in 1980, Spiller did not give any clear reason for his decision not to return to Spain, although he did say that by mid-1938 he thought that there was not much point, as he considered that the Government "had had it" and could not win. However, this opinion may have owed something to hindsight and probably did not reflect Spiller's feelings in 1938. His return to Spain had been planned originally for March 1938. It is likely that the Communist Party decided that he was of more use as a propagandist in New Zealand than a soldier in Spain, particularly with the expense attendant on sending him back. There may also have been personal reasons, since Spiller met his wife during his first speaking tour. He was, indeed, valuable as a propagandist. A lively and down-to-earth speaker, he described himself as a "rabble-rouser", able to draw a response from a crowd. His speeches about Spain, reported in the Workers Weekly, concentrated on the role of the International Brigades as idealists and anti-Fascists. They closely

followed the standard pro-Republican "line" on the war, but were also tinged with a more specifically Communist perspective. In an interview in Sydney just before his return home, he denounced the Trotskyists:

You've only got to speak to the workers or peasants anywhere. They refer to them for what they are - Fascist agents, spies and terrorists carrying out Hitler's and Franco's dirty work.²⁷

He was also at pains to stress the applicability of Spain to the New Zealand situation:

... the speaker ... drew a very interesting comparison between conditions in Spain in February to July, 1936, and those existing in New Zealand at the present time, stressing the dangers of any complacency and apathy in the workers and farmers in New Zealand.²⁸

Spiller's speeches, however, made no mention of the attitude of the Labour Government in New Zealand, in contrast with other Brigaders' later speeches. By 1938, the Communist Party was not concentrating much of its propaganda effort on encouraging the Labour Government to take a firmer stand on the war. The omission may also have reflected Spiller's personal views, for his encounter with the police had merely reinforced his opinion that the Labour Government did not really support the Loyalists.

In 1980, after 42 years of hindsight, Spiller's views on the war had not substantially changed. He still retained a basically Communist perspective on the war. His time in Spain had not brought disenchantment with the ideas or methods of Communism. Indeed, until his death in late 1984 he was a committed Communist and active member of the Socialist Unity Party, a Russian-aligned Communist organisation. It is impossible to say, however, how much his memories had become conflated with the propaganda he was exposed to in Spain, and afterward, and which he himself disseminated in his speaking tours. Nevertheless, this consideration should not detract from his sincere commitment to his beliefs, nor the courage of those convictions that sent him voluntarily to risk his life in Spain.

Bert Bryan was another working-class Communist who went to Spain. Information about his experiences comes solely from his letters to the Workers Weekly and from reports of interviews and speeches Bryan gave after he returned to New Zealand in 1939. Bryan worked his passage to England in late 1937, but did not reach Spain until early 1938. He told a meeting at Canterbury University College that he had had to spend three months in England trying to get to Spain. The unspecified difficulties he experienced in reaching Spain were attributed to the "obstruction" of France and Britain.²⁹

Once in Spain, he trained for only 10 days at Tarragona before fighting with the British Battalion at the Ebro River. Bryan's reasons for going to Spain were self evident from the tone of his letters to the Weekly. He was a Communist and saw in Spain a battle between the workers and Fascism. He told a SMAC meeting in Wellington, in May 1939, that "when he knew the Spanish war had become not a civil war but a war for national liberation he knew that Spain was the place for him".³⁰

The Weekly reported that Bryan had once been on the staff of the Red Worker, the Workers Weekly's predecessor, and, indeed, his letters home read like those of someone accustomed to writing propaganda. Letters to the Weekly from other International Brigaders also contained propaganda, or created an image of the war that was in keeping with the Weekly's view, but Bryan's letters were almost "straight" propaganda. They lacked the immediacy of others' letters; they were much longer and appeared more like the observations of a partisan reporter than a soldier. Bryan sent the Weekly accounts of battles, a description of a May Day celebration and of the farewell for the International Brigades in Barcelona. After he had left Spain, he sent the Weekly a discussion of the second Ebro retreat intended to justify the Negrin Government's and the Communist Party's policy. The article stressed the difference between the second retreat, "fully understood by a people and an army 100 per cent united behind the Government of Negrin", and the first "disorganised retreat march with its crisis in the Government and a disunited

people".³¹ The crisis in the Government had resulted in a continued compromise between Negrin and the Communists, which probably explained the necessity to justify the retreat.

Passages in other letters also reinforced the Communist image of the war and, particularly, applauded those aspects with which the Communist Party in Spain had been concerned. Bryan noted co-operation and consultation between officers and men in the International Brigades, the "democratic" army.³² His description of the Brigades' farewell in Barcelona contained a passage lauding the new Republican army.³³

Nor did Bryan forget to direct his remarks at the New Zealand anti-fascist movement:

As as I walk along I reflect, with a feeling of pride, that the New Zealand Government and the people of New Zealand who are behind that Government, are not a party to the treachery of Chamberlain.³⁴

When he returned Bryan told the Weekly that the Spaniards spoke of New Zealand as "that great little country". This comment was in marked contrast to Tom Spiller's remark that he had so much difficulty in trying to explain to Spaniards where New Zealand was that he eventually gave up and usually said he was an Australian.³⁵ One suspects that Bryan's comment had more to do with the Communist's final frenzied appeals for New Zealand support for the Republicans than it did with the truth.

Not unexpectedly, Bryan also reinforced the Weekly's propaganda about the primary role of the Communist Party in Spain in resisting the rebels:

On all the main problems of the war it was recognised as the only Party with a firm and definite plan, as, for example in the question of unified command of the army, of a united people's army in place of the separate trade union and party militia.³⁶

Bryan left Spain when the International Brigades were withdrawn in October 1938. He worked with pro-Republican organisations in England before leaving for New Zealand. Unlike Tom Spiller, Bryan seemed to have no difficulties with the New Zealand authorities, rather the contrary. He wrote to the Weekly that "the N.Z. Government have booked my passage on the "Rangitata" ... the N.Z. Government have treated me well and I had an interesting talk with Mr Jordan about Spain".³⁷ By this time, January 1939, with a Nationalist victory likely and the end of the war in sight, the Government had less to fear from pro-Republican activity in New Zealand. Jordan, sympathetic to the Loyalists anyway, was not likely to be too compromised by an act of hospitality toward a New Zealand International Brigader who apparently lacked the fare back to New Zealand.

Once in New Zealand, Bryan became involved with the SMAC and undertook a short speaking tour together with Dr D.W. Jolly, also recently returned from Spain.³⁸ His speeches, like his letters, repeated the standard line on the war. He gave no hint of any dissatisfaction with the Party's attitude in Spain, or its image of the war. Yet Connie and Pat Birchfield, close friends of Bryan, who were also members of the Communist Party from the 1930s until 1956, claimed that the war had left him disillusioned.³⁹ Mrs Birchfield felt that the fighting itself had "a bad effect" on Bryan, in that he suffered greatly from the sight of woundings and death under fire. She recalled that he was an idealistic, principled young man and that he was most upset that on a visit to Harry Pollitt he was treated like a "nobody" rather than "an anti-fascist hero". The Birchfields claimed that, by the time of his death in 1961, Bryan had become an alcoholic.

Charlie Riley was the oldest of the New Zealand International Brigaders, most of whom were in their twenties or early thirties. Riley was in his forties. Born in England in 1893, he came to New Zealand in 1913, but left again at the outbreak of World War One and enlisted in the British Army. After serving at Ypres and in

Palestine he returned to New Zealand. For a time he studied engineering at Canterbury University College and became an active member of the Labour Party. In the Depression of the 1930s Riley was involved with the Unemployed Workers Union in Christchurch and became a member of the Communist Party. He was arrested several times in connection with his political activities, once for hoisting the Red Flag in a public place. He also spent some time in Paparua Prison, after having been convicted of possession of seditious literature in 1932.⁴⁰

When the Spanish Civil War began, Riley was in Australia working as a miner at Tennants Creek. In "All Quiet on the Spanish Fronts", his unpublished history of the war, Riley claimed it was the news of the death of Felicia Browne (a British Communist) in Spain that decided him to join the International Brigades. He was convinced that the war was no longer a domestic quarrel but a war between Spanish democracy and a foreign invader. Thus, being "a confirmed anti-fascist and a lover of democracy withal ... I considered that having equal rights with an unwanted invader I had a personal right to be there too".⁴¹

By his own account, Riley walked to Darwin from Tennants Creek so that he would have enough money for his passage to Sydney. At Port Kembla, he signed on a tramp steamer as fireman and worked his passage to Cardiff. From there he went to Spain, using the same method as Tom Spiller. However, in contrast to Spiller's account of travelling openly through France to the border, Riley and his fellow volunteers were convoyed secretly in trucks to the Pyrenees, over which they had to walk for 14 hours before arriving in Spain. Spiller had travelled earlier, before border controls were rigidly enforced.

Riley arrived in Spain in time for the battle of Brunete in July 1937. He later fought with the British Battalion at Teruel and on the Ebro. He was wounded in the Ebro offensive (late June 1938) and, by the time he had convalesced, the International Brigades were being withdrawn.

In an interview with R. Grover of the Alexander Turnbull Library Riley claimed that he was a "shock brigadier", which, he said, was the equivalent of a senior NCO. His previous military experience and engineering and mining background, combined with the fact that he was "politically sound", enabled him to reach this rank.⁴²

Riley had been expelled from the Communist Party in New Zealand in 1932, for "factionalism",⁴³ and it is not clear whether he rejoined before going to Spain. While in Spain he joined the Spanish Communist Party. A letter to the Workers Weekly attested to his "political soundness" and acceptance of the Communist view of the war. He told the Weekly that he was a "Stakhanovite bombing instructor", and that he was doing all he could to help his comrades to become "first class proletarian soldiers fit to be forerunners in the class struggle". The letter also reinforced the popular image of the International Brigades as a "democratic" army, when Riley described the battalion as having party meetings and discussing in "friendly fashion" what to do to improve the company: "We are all for each and each for all." This comment provided the Weekly with a perfect quote for its headline. Riley also said: "Little did I think even four years ago that the real struggle was so near at hand and here I am now a veteran in the real armed struggle against Fascism."⁴⁵

Back in England, Riley became involved with British pro-Republican organisations and, on behalf of Australian veterans, undertook a correspondence with British Government officials over repatriation of wounded British Battalion soldiers. He condemned the British Government's policy as a betrayal of the ideals fought for in World War One:

We consider that the foreign policy of this country eclipses the moral prostitution of any previous historical period since "the flood", the more heinous today in view of the fact that axiomatically we of this generation cannot plead ignorance.⁴⁶

Riley also engaged in correspondence with New Zealand officials,

urging the establishment of a Spanish refugee appeal. He also wrote to the Labour Party asking for the Spanish workers who had fought for democracy be supported by the New Zealand workers. The response was negative, and Riley was so angered with the Government's and Labour Party's attitude that he had the letters published in Canta, the Canterbury University Students' paper.⁴⁷

Riley returned to New Zealand via Australia in early 1939. He spoke at SRC meetings in Australia and became involved with the SMAC in New Zealand. Like Spiller, he complained of some harrassment by officialdom. He recorded that, in Australia, "special political police reporters" attended meetings, but he made no specific claims about harrassment in New Zealand.⁴⁸

On 3 September 1939, Riley enlisted for his second round against Fascism and went with the First Echelon of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force to Egypt. He was invalided out of the forces in 1942. He remained committed to the cause of the working classes all his life. It is unknown whether he continued as a member of the Communist Party.

Apart from Jack Kent and Bernard Gray, whose political affiliations are unknown, all the New Zealand International Brigaders discussed thus far were Communists. There were other New Zealanders in Spain whose political views were less developed, and whose primary motive in joining the International Brigades appeared to be more a sense of adventure than of political commitment.

William Madigan was a Wellington seaman who arrived in Spain via America. According to a letter he sent to the New Zealand Freelance, Madigan had entered America "without worrying about the immigration formalities".⁴⁹ In fact, he had deserted his ship in San Francisco in January 1937.⁵⁰ This letter to the Freelance is almost the only information available about the 23-year-old Wellingtonian. Although the Workers Weekly mentioned Madigan when it received news that he had been wounded, it gave no further

information.⁵¹ Why or how Madigan arrived in Spain is unknown; it is possible that he enlisted in America, for he fought with the Lincoln Battalion. His letter repeated propaganda aimed both at the Battalion itself and the American public, that did little to cast light on his motives: "Don't think that I am a "soldier of fortune" ... I came to Spain with the same ideals as Lafayette had when he fought for the Americans in 1776."⁵² This comment did, however, indicate a receptivity to such propaganda. Madigan's letter was written while he was still in training and was concerned mainly with his Spanish surroundings. It contained no other political comment, although the Freelance reported that enclosed with it was a propaganda pamphlet describing the training of the International Brigaders. There is no information on where Madigan fought in Spain. In July 1938, the Workers Weekly reported him seriously wounded; he later died of these wounds.

The fact that Madigan wrote to the Freelance rather than the Workers Weekly, suggests that he was not a Communist, nor had links with the Party. The Freelance article reported that Madigan had once before left his ship in America and wandered about that country until being arrested and deported. Therefore, it seems likely that an adventurous spirit played some part in Madigan's decision to go to Spain.

Captain E.N. Griffiths was another New Zealander whose motives for going to Spain seemed more adventurous than political. Eric Griffiths' dashing career made him the subject of no little interest in the daily and weekly newspapers, when he returned to New Zealand in June 1937, after serving as a fighter pilot for the Spanish Government's Air Force. The Weekly News described him as "an international thrill-hunter when he was barely out of his teens".⁵³ Griffiths had been a member of an air circus in New Zealand in the early 1930s and then had spent some time in China ferrying planes and fighting for various war lords. In 1933, he had joined the second Byrd expedition to Antarctica. Later, in England, he had been involved with an attempt to form an Abyssinian Air

Force.⁵⁴ When the war in Spain began he was employed in delivering Dehavilland Dragons to the Spanish Government until the British Government brought an end to such activities. In August 1936, he joined the Spanish Government's Air Force. Wounded by an explosive bullet in September 1936, he spent some time training Spanish pilots before leaving Spain. The Weekly News reported that Griffiths had returned home to marry, having proposed to his fiancée from Madrid.⁵⁵ This action only served to enhance Griffiths' romantic adventurous image.

Although his service in Spain appears to have been largely the result of a love of flying and an adventurous spirit, Griffiths' experiences in Spain left him with some firm convictions about the war. In one newspaper interview, he called the Non-Intervention Agreement a farce.⁵⁶ His discussions of aerial warfare in Spain emphasised the role of Italian and German pilots and aircraft in the war. Sympathies engaged by Griffiths' descriptions of the poorly trained, ill-equipped Government forces, outnumbered two to one by modern Italian and German planes, may have been tempered by another comment. Griffiths claimed that the penalty for cowardice in the Loyalist airforce was to be shot.⁵⁷ He was also convinced that the Government would win although his reasons for this belief were never clearly stated, beyond his respect for the spirit and dedication of the Loyalist pilots.

These comments, reported in the daily and weekly press, did not reveal any deep political commitment to the Spanish Government's cause, other than an apparent dislike of German and Italian involvement. This may be partly explained by the newspapers' focus on Griffiths' adventurous history; his personal experiences made for a better story than his political views about the war. A short interview in Tomorrow revealed a slightly more political analysis from Griffiths. He dismissed the idea that the war was religious as "bunk", giving as evidence the involvement of Moors and his observation that the Spanish people were the most religious people he had encountered. He also denied that there was any truth in the

claim that the "reds" had started the war, citing the early involvement of German and Italian pilots and planes.⁵⁸

However, Griffiths did not become involved with the SMAC to any great extent, although he spoke at some meetings in Wellington, including one joint meeting with Spiller and "Taffy" Patterson, in April 1938.⁵⁹ Instead, it was reported that he was planning to go to Hollywood as a stunt flyer and technical advisor for any films set in Spain. His lack of deep involvement with pro-Republican organisations in New Zealand suggests that he had no deep commitment to their cause, and perhaps also that they did not feel that his attitude was political enough to be of use to their campaign.

There is scant information on William MacDonald, who also fought in Spain. In December 1938, the Otago Daily Times published an account of an interview with MacDonald in London, on his return after the withdrawal of the International Brigades. In this interview, MacDonald said that he had been in Spain since January 1937, having gone with the intention of joining the Republican airforce. Instead, he was attached to the Lincoln Battalion and fought with them at Jarama, where he was wounded. He met two New Zealanders, Dr D.W. Jolly and Sister Una Wilson, while recuperating from a shoulder wound. He later fought at Brunete, and then was transferred to the transport section. He spent the rest of his time in Spain driving water trucks and ambulances, first with the Lincoln Battalion and, then, with the Italian Garibaldi Battalion.

MacDonald claimed to have no political affiliations; he was signed on as an "anti-fascist", as were most Brigaders without party affiliations. The interview produced no remark more political than a complaint that, although the Brigades had been withdrawn, Germany and Italy were still sending aid to the rebels. MacDonald also condemned the "ruthless" bombing of civilians as the worst aspect of the war.⁶⁰

It seems that MacDonald may have been motivated by adventurism

and a warlike spirit. He had been about to apply for Spanish nationality, in order to enter the Tank Corps, when the withdrawal of the Brigades was announced, because he "would have welcomed another kind of warfare". The interview also contained the curious information that MacDonald was about to return to Spain to become a photographer with the Propaganda Department of "the National Government". There was some confusion of titles in the newspaper item, with another reference to the "Nationalists" that could only have meant the Loyalists, so one must assume that MacDonald was not joining Franco's propaganda department. It is unlikely that he would have been welcomed in Franco's Spain or that he would have wished to join Franco's service.

There are two other sources of information that may relate to MacDonald, although it cannot be proven absolutely. In July 1937, the Evening Post published excerpts from letters from "a young Wellingtonian" to his mother and brother,⁶¹ and, in August 1937, the Workers Weekly printed a letter from an unnamed New Zealand volunteer.⁶² Some information in the letters tallies with that in the MacDonald interview. The unnamed Brigadier had entered Spain in January and fought with the Lincoln Battalion. He had been wounded while on patrol with five others, four of whom had been killed; MacDonald said he was wounded while on patrol and four companions had been killed.⁶³ The letter in the Weekly mentioned having met Dr Jolly and two New Zealand nurses after having been wounded at Jarama. If these letters were from MacDonald, they testified to a slightly more political perspective, or an absorption of Brigades propaganda. He wrote to his mother, "I hope you tell anyone who asks where I am that I am in the Spanish Army fighting Fascism", and told his brother, "I am not a Communist nor do I belong to a "Red Army"; I am a member of the Spanish Government Army ...". The letters stressed the good conditions and organisation of the Brigades and also repeated the standard Communist line about the purpose of the war, to fight Fascism rather than bring about revolution:

... everywhere the people of Spain ... are as one in their desire to crush Fascism. That is the first and most important task. When that is finished then the Spanish People can decide their own destinies and form of Government.⁶⁴

The letter to the Workers Weekly indicated that the writer had had little to do with the Communist Party. It was headed "Dear Sir", rather than the "Dear Comrade" used by the Communist Brigaders, and urged the Weekly to do all it could for the Spanish people: "You will be helping the legal Spanish Government which is a Government of the Popular Front and is representative of all the Spanish people."⁶⁵ It lacked the assumption of the Weekly's familiarity with the war that set the tone of Communist Brigaders' letters. These two letters, whether from MacDonald or somebody else, demonstrated an unquestioning acceptance of the Communist "line" on the war and had rather the air of "duty" letters, written for the consumption of people at home.

There is also some mystery about MacDonald's background. Tom Spiller met MacDonald in Spain, and claimed that MacDonald had said that he had left New Zealand under a cloud in 1934 after robbing a bank in Palmerston North. This story could not be substantiated. An advertisement in the RSA Review for New Zealand Spanish veterans received a response from an ex-seaman, who reported that MacDonald had been a shipmate on the "Pat Hunter" in 1935 and 1936, having signed on in Wellington in late 1935.

Of these ten New Zealand International Brigaders, the later views of only two, Spiller and Riley, are known. Both appeared to retain convictions about the war formed when they were in Spain. Of the other eight, only hearsay evidence suggests that Bert Bryan experienced some denting of his ideals in Spain. All of them, Communists, anti-fascists or adventurers, presented a remarkably uniform image of the war on their return to New Zealand, or in their letters home. The International Brigades were an important and effective part of pro-Republican propaganda about the war in Spain.

They were depicted as the "democratic" army, voluntarily risking their lives in Spain for the sake of an ideal, heroically helping to stem the tide of Fascism. The New Zealand International Brigaders who returned to New Zealand did little to dispel this myth. Among those whose stories are known were none who had friends punished for political "deviationism", or who had any complaints about the political or military discipline in the Brigades. It is certain that, had any dissatisfaction been voiced by New Zealand veterans, it would have been given coverage by either the daily or weekly press. Those who were not Communists demonstrated some acceptance of the image of the Brigades, which was not only promoted outside Spain, but within the Brigades themselves. Small wonder, then, that Bert Bryan may have been angered by being treated as a nobody, instead of a hero, by Harry Pollitt; after all, it was only what the men had been told.

In New Zealand the myth of the heroic idealists was supplanted in a small way by a peculiarly New Zealand image. Tomorrow's interview with Eric Griffiths and Salient's with Tom Spiller⁶⁷ presented both men as laconic, self-deprecating heroes, only doing what they had to do in going to Spain. In other words, the archetypal "Kiwi" hero, man of action, but few (albeit well-chosen) words, in the pioneering "do-it-yourself" tradition. In Spiller's case at least, given his skills as a "rabble-rousing" orator and the fact that his interview occupied almost a whole page in Salient, the image appears to have been rather in the writer's mind than in reality.

In a sense, the label of hero has some truth. Even if the Brigades were a Comintern creation, and their value lay as much in their use as a propaganda instrument as in their military exploits, the fact remains that these New Zealanders joined them voluntarily and risked their very lives in a war from which they could have remained aloof. Most did fight for an ideal; that others saw their ideal as hollow, does not deny their own conviction. It was in this manner that the deaths of Maclure and Maclaurin were received by some of the people who had known them. Perhaps these deaths swayed some



Dr. D.W. Jolly, New Zealand doctor with a British Medical Unit in Spain. (Photo from SMAC Records.)

minds towards the pro-Republican cause; perhaps, also, Tom Spiller's speeches did so. Certainly his speaking tour on the West Coast resulted in the establishment of several SMAC branches along the Coast, although it is most likely that his visit merely gave the last push to minds already convinced, but hitherto lacking in means of expressing their pro-Republicanism. Most of the Brigaders who returned to New Zealand arrived too late to have much impact on the formation of pro-Republican belief in their own country; however, their reports may have strengthened it, and resulted in larger collections for the aid of Spanish refugees.

New Zealand was also represented among the medical personnel in Spain. The SMAC sent three nurses in May 1937, and two other nurses and a doctor also served in Spain.

Dr Douglas Waddell Jolly went to Spain with a British Medical Unit. He had qualified as a doctor at Otago Medical School and then went to England. It appears that Jolly was not a Communist, but a dedicated anti-fascist. On his return to New Zealand in 1939, he told both the Workers Weekly and daily newspapers: "My sympathies were completely with the Government; that was why I went to Spain and I saw nothing there which altered my mind. It was definitely a Fascist war ..."⁶⁸

While in Spain, Dr Jolly was attached to a mobile field surgical unit, which dealt with cases too urgent to be evacuated to front-line hospitals. According to Nurse Dodds, one of the New Zealand nurses in Spain, he had a reputation as "a damn fine surgeon".⁶⁹ He held the rank of Division Commandant Surgeon. During his time in Spain Jolly contributed the foreword to a propaganda publication about the work of the medical units in Spain, entitled We Fight Death, an indication of his acceptance of the Communists' direction of the medical units and their image of the war. One passage from the foreword was clearly an example of Communist inspired propaganda about political "discipline":

Those of us who are only anti-fascists and have had no previous experience of difficult and dangerous work in political parties find in this life a new significance. The necessity of learning by painful experience that personal affairs cannot be considered before the needs of the objective situation is a discipline which must make all of us better men and women, better nurses and better doctors.⁷⁰

Of course, there is no way of knowing if Jolly actually wrote the foreword himself and, if he did, it would certainly have had to be passed by the censors. However, his willingness to participate in SMAC-organised speaking tours in New Zealand suggests a commitment to the standard pro-Republican view of the war, which also suggests willing involvement in the writing of the pamphlet.

Little is known about Jolly's time in Spain. Because he was working with a mobile surgical unit, he was not stationed in any

particular area, but moved around the fronts according to where the unit was needed the most. Nor is it known when he arrived in Spain, but MacDonald's mention of meeting him after being wounded at Jarama, indicates that he was in Spain by January or February 1937.

He returned to New Zealand in early 1939, and made a short speaking tour with Bert Bryan on behalf of the SMAC. A non-Communist, but anti-fascist, doctor who supported thier cause was very useful to the SMAC, which hoped that he could appeal to groups the Committee had hitherto not reached.⁷¹ If Jolly's views, were indeed, seen by some sections of the public as more authoritative than those of working-class Communist International Brigaders, then the SMAC must have been pleased with his comments as reported in the papers. Jolly attacked non-intervention, claimed that the Spanish Government was not Communist, and emphasised the contribution of Germany and Italy to the rebels' war effort.⁷²

Jolly's later opinions on the war are unknown. He did not remain in New Zealand, but returned to Britain and served with the British Medical Corps during World War Two. He practised in Britain after the war. Jolly wrote a book, published in 1941, based on his experiences in Spain, Field Surgery in Total War.⁷³ However, it was concerned solely with the medical and surgical techniques developed during the war and made no mention of his own personal experiences or political views. The format was that of a textbook, and it was no doubt designed for immediate use in World War Two, as well as for a record of the medical advances made in Spain. Thus, the absence of autobiographical and political material is not surprising.

Of the five New Zealand nurses who worked in Spain, most is known about the three who were sent by the New Zealand SMAC. On 18 May 1937, Sister Renee Shadbolt of Auckland and Nurses Millicent Sharples and Isobel Dodds, from Levin and Wellington respectively, left on the "Awatea" to join the British Medical Unit in Spain.

Volunteers for the medical unit had been advertised for almost as soon as the Dunedin Committee was formed. The total number of applicants is unknown; however, the report in the Freelance at the time of the nurses' departure, that hundreds of applications had been received,⁷⁴ must have been the result of, either, journalistic licence, or wishful thinking on the part of the SMAC. In April, Ted Hunter, Dunedin branch secretary, reported to his counterpart in Palmerston North that five nurses had volunteered, with the possibility of a sixth.⁷⁵



The three SMAC-sponsored New Zealand nurses. From left Isobel Dodds, Renee Shadbolt and Millicent Sharples (Photo from SMAC Records.)

The applicants, two from Auckland, two from Wellington and one from Levin, were interviewed by the secretaries of their local SMAC branches, and final selection was made by the Dunedin Committee on the basis of the secretaries' reports. A panel of three comprising Ted Hunter, a Dr Jutton and Dr D.G. McMillan, MP; Chairman of the SMAC, chose the three on the criteria of "experience, general suitability in view of our purpose, and representation from as many areas as possible".⁷⁶

The second criterion of "suitability" was a rather vague term, and could have covered a wide range of possibilities, but despite the political nature of SMAC's aid, it does not seem to have had the connotation of political suitability above all else. Sister Shadbolt and Nurse Dodds were sympathetic to the Republican cause and came from "suitable" Left backgrounds. However, the third nurse, Millicent Sharples, seems to have been totally ignorant of the situation in Spain, even of the general nature of the opposing forces, let alone the complex political permutations of the war. In a letter to Ted Hunter, she asked a series of questions that revealed her lack of knowledge, not only of what was happening in Spain, but of the political affiliations of the SMAC:

Do we support the Rebels or the Loyalists? Are the Loyalists anti-labour or what political party do they represent? Are we nurses from N.Z. with the British or actually with the party in Spain opposed to the British Government? Is there any risk of being disloyal to the British flag?⁷⁷

A variety of interpretations could have been made of the relationship between the Spanish Republican Government and His Majesty's Government in Britain, depending largely upon one's political views, and the ambiguities of the situation. Ted Hunter's reply to the nurse's third question was rather ingenious, as well as being a clear indication of where the SMAC stood on the matter of British support for the Loyalists:

... assuming that the N.Z. nurses will be attached to an already established British Medical Unit supported and sanctioned by the British people there is no question of it

being in opposition to the British Government ... Actually it is in the best interests of the British Govt and the British Empire generally that we assist the Spanish Govt to save it from destruction at the hands of the Rebels and the foreign invaders ...⁷⁸

Thus, for Nurse Sharples, at least, the decision to nurse in Spain was not a political act at all. It was not made to demonstrate a strong feeling of support for the Spanish Government, but rather, one supposes, made from a humanitarian concern for the suffering in Spain. Mrs Isobel McGuire (nee Dodds), the only member of the nursing unit still living, suggests that Nurse Sharples also had a somewhat more romantic idea of nursing in a war than did the other two nurses.⁷⁹ Millicent Sharples was reluctant to provide much material for propaganda purposes before the nurses left for Spain. (The only published statement purported to be from her was so political that, given the evidence of her earlier letter, it can only be assumed that it was, in fact, written by the SMAC.)⁸⁰ Therefore, her reasons for volunteering for nursing duty in Spain are less easy to discover than those of the other two nurses, who both provided the SMAC with statements to give the press.

Renee Shadbolt and Isobel Dodds were more aware of what was happening in Spain and both were sympathetic to the Republican cause. They both came from "Labour" backgrounds; Nurse Dodds' father was "a committed socialist", and she herself belonged to the Left Book Club.⁸¹ Yet, their volunteering was also not primarily a political act but rather, as the New Zealand Herald put it, "in pursuit of the high traditions of their calling".⁸² Renee Shadbolt, aged 28, had nursed for eleven years and, as a qualified sister, was the leader of the nursing unit. She was undoubtedly the most politically minded of the three; C.F. Saunders, secretary of the Christchurch branch of the SMAC, described her as "politically very well able to hold her own", and the tone of her letters from Spain to Ted Hunter suggest strongly her commitment to "the cause". Even so, the most striking note in her press statements in May 1937, was the humanitarian element, the desire to alleviate suffering. To the Herald she said:

Personally I do not know whether any great question of political adherence was involved but from what I have been able to read all my sympathies are with the Loyalists in their struggles for their country ... I only hope that I shall be able to perform some useful work in Spain ... we feel that we can be of some service to people in need.⁸⁴

Her comments to the Standard were decidedly more political in tone, as could be expected, given the nature of the newspaper. But what was almost a paean to the cause of the Spanish Government, also revealed her view of her own role in Spain as essentially one of service to the suffering:

I go gladly, hoping that my aid experience will be of some value in alleviating the suffering of Spain ... I feel that if man can sacrifice his all for [an] ideal ... then surely women can do something we can at least offer our nursing experience. Suffering has no nationality so my services are there for friend and foe alike ...⁸⁵

Mrs McGuire recalled the "Florence Nightingale" concept of their jobs, which she felt most nurses had at the time: "You know, we were almost brainwashed with the idea of service ... handmaidens to the doctors, servants to the patients."⁸⁶ Furthermore, the epitome of this training for service was to nurse in wartime. Added to Nurse Dodds' main impulse to be of service to the wounded, and her sympathy for the Republican cause, was an interest in travel - "so if you're young and interested in travel and you carry a torch, off you go!" Isobel Dodds was an anti-fascist, but, "I was a nurse first; we went there to nurse".⁸⁷

The sense of youthful idealism that Mrs McGuire recalls as being a major part in her volunteering to go to Spain was apparent in her statement to the Standard:

There is in everyone, hidden or otherwise, some spark of idealism which at some time or another influences the life of an individual. This was perhaps the reason I started nursing, and now, when I may put that knowledge to some real use in a land divided by civil war, which threatens democracy. I am proud that I should be one of those to help in unfortunate Spain.⁸⁸

Even after some time, that spark had not dimmed, for she wrote to her sister: "I'm glad you're going nursing ... And when you are through we will run off together and win whatever war happens to be waging at the time."⁸⁹

Thus, there was a combination of reasons behind the nurses' decision to go to Spain. A sense of adventure and a wish to see the world outside New Zealand, a deep commitment to their profession that fueled a desire to give help where it was most needed and, for the two younger women, a certain amount of political idealism.

The SMAC's aim to give visible aid to the Spanish Government as soon as possible was coupled with the need to have a focus for fundraising in New Zealand, which the selection and despatch of three nurses filled very well. In the last few weeks before the nurses went, they were in the public eye as much as the SMAC could make it so. Particularly in Auckland, whence they departed, but also in Wellington for Nurses Dodds and Sharples, there were rounds of farewell meetings to attend. Some special meetings were arranged with the larger Trades Unions, which gave generous support to the medical aid appeals. The Railway Workshops and the Watersiders' Unions in both Wellington and Auckland had their own meetings for the nurses. A final farewell meeting in Auckland was attended by such luminaries as the Mayor of Auckland, Sir Ernest Davis, and the Chairman of the Auckland Hospital Board. Peter Fraser, who was acting Prime Minister at the time, was invited to attend. He did not, but, instead, spoke to the nurses by telephone later when they were on board the "Awatea".⁹⁰

The departure of the nurses in a blaze of publicity was not without incident. It had its excitement somewhat dimmed by an encounter with the police that had the SMAC and its supporters up in arms. On 18 May, the day of departure, the nurses were summoned from the close of a meeting at the Otahuhu Railway Workshops to the Central Police Station, to discuss matters in connection with their passports. Under regulations just issued in Britain, in compliance

with the Non-Intervention Agreement, British passports were no longer valid for Spain, unless specially endorsed. Entitlement for travel to Spain so endorsed was limited to persons under the auspices of named organisations, of which the SMAC was one. However, the almost immediate discovery of this fact by the police (who said they were acting on a request from the Internal Affairs Department) did not prevent the nurses being held for almost three hours for questioning, ostensibly because they refused to hand over their passports.

They were subjected to intensive questioning, to which the SMAC later objected on the grounds that it was of a political nature, designed to discover the nurses' political sympathies. Indeed, the statements later made by the nurses in Sydney (witnessed by a Justice of the Peace) would seem to bear out this claim. Along with personal particulars, the nurses were asked if they had taken part in any Communist activities, or if they belonged to the Communist Party. Interest was also shown in their reasons for going to Spain, the manner in which they initially came into contact with the SMAC and the length of their acquaintanceship with Tom Stanley, who had driven them to the Police Station.⁹¹

A slightly different tactic was taken with each of the nurses. In Renee Shadbolt's case, the suggestion was made that she was the Secretary of a Communist Party cell, or otherwise deeply involved in Communist activities. Nurse Sharples' political naivete was emphasised, and it was implied that Isobel Dodds was going to Spain to escape the consequences of an unhappy love affair.

Mrs McGuire remembered that the nurses were quite sure they would miss the boat as a result of their detention at the police station from 2.00 pm until 5.00 pm. However, they were released in time for the "Awatea's" departure. The minor storm that erupted in New Zealand over their interrogation has been discussed in Chapter 7.

The nurses spent some time in Australia before departing on the "Mooltan" for London. Their passage around Australia appears almost

like a minor form of "royal progress". At every city into which the ship called, the nurses were feted by the local Spanish Relief Committee (SRC), the SMAC's Australian counterpart. They were a valuable focus for propaganda and fundraising in Australia, as they were in New Zealand. They spoke at meetings and lectures, and on radio stations, and had teas, lunches and dinners with local dignitaries and women's organisations. As well as using the nurses for propaganda, of course, the Australian SRCs were looking after them for their fraternal organisation, and showing their appreciation of, and admiration for, the women's decision to serve in Spain.

Not everyone appreciated the nurses' cause, or the publicity surrounding them. Renee Shadbolt reported that "some fool of a man" had told Nurse Sharples that the "Mooltan" had been bombed on an earlier trip (a plane flew overhead when passing the Bay of Biscay), and "he thought that the publicity we were getting was imperilling the safety of the other passengers".⁹²

After their "royal" reception in Australia, the nurses were rather taken aback to find no one to meet them in London; they had to find their own way to the offices of the London SMAC. Here they were not so much of a rarity as in New Zealand, or even Australia; yet, they were a focus for propaganda at meetings and lectures while they were in England. The High Commissioner for New Zealand, W.J. Jordan, was a fellow guest at a dinner held by the Ladies Union, but, in keeping with the Government's cautious attitude to associating itself with the Republican cause outside the League of Nations, it appears that there was no official welcome for the nurses from New Zealand House. On 15 July the three women left for Spain, travelling from the French border to Barcelona with an American ambulance convoy.

At first, all three were stationed at a base hospital at Huete, in Central Spain near Cuenca, some 300 to 400 miles from Valencia. However, in October 1937, Nurse Sharples was posted to the Aragon front. Her ability to drive meant that she was useful as an ambulance driver. Little is known about her time in Spain, for she

did not write to the SMAC as Renee Shadbolt did, nor were any of her letters passed on to the SMAC, as were those of Nurse Dodds to her family. What is known comes from newspaper reports after her early return in May 1938. (The other two remained in Spain until the withdrawal of the International Brigades, and arrived back in New Zealand in early 1939.)

When Nurse Sharples returned to New Zealand, she told the Herald that she had not been based at any one hospital, but had "moved around from pillar to post" as the front had changed. Her interview with the Herald also indicated that her understanding of the war had broadened somewhat:

People make me laugh here when they talk about civil war. It might have been one when the fighting first started but now from what I can see they are fighting Italians and Germans.⁹³

Yet, her concern centred most around the people of Spain, their suffering under the "indiscriminate" bombings by the rebel forces, and their courage and determination to win.

The circumstances of her return to New Zealand were somewhat confused, and her relations with the SMAC were to remain in that condition. She had been told that she was being sent home to raise money for a mobile field surgery, or "auto-chir" and was then to return to Spain. Neither the New Zealand nor the London SMAC were informed of this decision before the nurse left Spain.⁹⁴ From the considerable correspondence in SMAC files on the matter, it appears that Nurse Sharples may have fallen foul of the political discipline exercised over the International Brigades and international medical units in Spain. Sister Shadbolt informed the Committee that Nurse Sharples' conduct had been such that it was deemed necessary for her to be recalled. However, she could offer only hearsay evidence of unsatisfactory and unprofessional behaviour.⁹⁵ The Australian nurse, Mary Lowson, was asked for information, and replied that there was a good deal of

rumour-mongering and political rivalry among medical personnel. She reported that one source had both criticised Millicent Sharples for her complete lack of political awareness and commended her courage and dedication under bombardment.⁹⁶ Perhaps the most telling comment came from Winifred Bates, an Englishwoman collecting propaganda material for the London SMAC, who had met the three nurses at Huete:

Millicent never really grasped the disciplined conditions of life here. She was willing to endure much, but one needs more than endurance in a war like this. One needs vision and a highly skilled knowledge. Millicent was kind and generous but there was much that she did not understand ...⁹⁷

Political naivete and a strong personality that did not take kindly to direction were perhaps the reasons for her failure to "fit in" in Spain. Her association with the SMAC once back in New Zealand was fraught with the same problems. Nurse Sharples had returned to New Zealand with a deep commitment to sending aid to Spain and a burning desire to return to nurse in Spain. She also brought with her some grievances. She resented having been sent back when she could have been aiding the suffering in Spain, and also had some complaints about the use to which medical aid funds were being put in Spain. However, although she alluded to misuse of funds, she never made clear the basis of her complaint.

The Committee, naturally, did not wish her to raise this issue publicly, but had considerable difficulty in convincing her not to do so. Her sense of grievance was strengthened when the SMAC appeared reluctant to organise a speaking tour to raise money for the "auto-chir". In fact they had decided that, as she was a poor speaker and had little grasp of the political issues they wished to stress, it would be better to limit her speaking to small informal gatherings.⁹⁸ They also had the added problem of her urgent wish to return to Spain, with or without money for a mobile surgery.

The nurse, by her own account "a woman of action", grew more

"disgusted with the organisation" as it refused to allow her to organise her own speaking tour or to return to Spain.⁹⁹ The SMAC, in turn, became exasperated with her refusal to accept their direction, although Ted Hunter acknowledged her sacrifice and courage in going to Spain.¹⁰⁰ Eventually, in June 1938, it was decided that she should return to her home district of Hawkes Bay and go about raising funds in her own way; she was to be attached to the Napier branch of the SMAC and to receive financial support from the Committee.

However, Nurse Sharples also refused to accept the direction of the Napier Committee. In July, the branch secretary informed Hunter that "the foolish remarks of an irresponsible woman" were putting the branch's operation in jeopardy.¹⁰¹ The secretary claimed that, when Nurse Sharples had given a radio talk in Napier it had been "censored" by the station manager, but when a SMAC meeting had been informed of this censorship, the nurse had then denied it. The denial made the members of the executive who had accompanied her to the station, and then raised the matter at the meeting, look like liars: "this is serious as they are well known in the working class movement here and you know how damaging a lie like that can be".¹⁰² The nurse had also told some SMAC members in Napier that the Co-ordinating Committee in Paris had allowed monies to fall into Franco's hands. As a result, several unions were threatening to withdraw from the Committee.

The National Committee in Dunedin decided that Nurse Sharples had become more of a liability than a focus for fund raising. She was accepting their financial support, but not their direction, and was, in fact, discrediting their cause. Thus, she was formally requested to return to private life and sever her connections with the SMAC, which, however, accepted financial responsibility for her until she could find a job.

However, this was not the end of the matter. Nurse Sharples went to Wellington and aired her grievances to Dr McMillan, and engaged

the sympathies of the Wellington SMAC secretary, Mrs McGowan. In September she appeared in Christchurch and then Auckland, making the same claims about the misuse of funds and the Committee's mistreatment of her. She had earlier threatened to sue the Committee for continued financial support.¹⁰³ By October, the situation had died down somewhat; the SMAC's files carried less correspondence to do with Nurse Sharples and no further communications with the nurse herself. There is no record of what happened to her after this time.

Although Ted Hunter dismissed as "absurd" the suggestion that Nurse Sharples' severance from the SMAC was because of her unwillingness to follow a particular political line, the problem of political understanding was a factor in the whole rather unsavoury affair. The nurse obviously did not understand the SMAC's desire to present a United Front, nor probably its political basis per se. Misuse of funds was a serious claim and a sensitive issue, perhaps particularly for Ted Hunter, since correspondents to the Otago Daily Times had sometimes questioned the destination of monies raised. As has been discussed in Chapter 7, the New Zealand Committee did its best to see that its money went to its own nurses, but had little control over the distribution of funds once they had left New Zealand. Moreover, it was not an issue to be aired in public. Not only could the SMAC's "enemies" use such a charge against it; those of its membership who were not Communists could have also become disenchanted.

It would be tempting to see Nurse Sharples as a victim of the "political discipline" imposed by the Communist Party in Spain over the International Brigades, and even in New Zealand by the SMAC's leadership. In a sense, she was indeed a victim of this discipline, but her own personality also played a part in the situation, especially with regard to the SMAC. Her letters to the Committee revealed a very determined self-willed woman, who did not appear to be willing to accept any direction at all. This was particularly galling to the Committee, since it was, after all, supporting her

financially. There is no doubting Nurse Sharples' sincere concern for the victims of the war in Spain; her political naivete might not have been such a problem had she not been so set on her own methods of operation.

The other two nurses appeared to accept the political and military discipline under which they were placed. They complained about censorship of their letters and they were affected by political and personal divisions among the medical personnel, but this seemed to have no lasting effect on their perceptions of their role in the war. In early 1938, both wrote that "due to internal strife" and certain "unpopular people" the London SMAC had withdrawn all financial support from the hospital at Huete. Renee Shadbolt further informed George Jackson that the London Committee had not "contributed a penny to our upkeep since being in Spain".¹⁰⁴ However, it seemed they reserved their resentment for the London Committee rather than becoming disillusioned with the political divisions among the international aid organisations in Spain. Once the New Zealand Committee had decided to send its funds through the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale in Paris, and the medical service had become more centralised under the Spanish Government, the nurses made no further complaint.

The nurses were stationed at Huete until early 1938, although they had tried to get postings to Madrid so that they could work in a front-line hospital. The hospital was evacuated when it was feared that a rebel offensive might cut the road between Madrid and Valencia, and the nurses were sent to a spa outside Barcelona to help establish a new hospital for International Brigaders. In June 1938, they were sent for a month's holiday in England. When they returned, they were sent to a hospital at Mataro in Catalonia, where they spent the rest of their time in Spain.

Their letters gave evidence of poor food and working conditions. Nurse Dodds suffered from gastric ailments and later recalled that their conditions were "really very primitive". Yet, her lively and

descriptive letters home gave no hint of regrets or disillusionment with the "cause". One, in particular, revealed a rather romantic image of a Republican village, with children singing the "Internationale" on their way to school and soldiers whose hearts were warmed by "the knowledge that they are fighting for what they know to be Right and Truth".¹⁰⁵ Although she went on to describe her own words as sounding like "mush", it was obvious that this self-styled "sentimental" imagery was a fundamental part of her feelings about the war. Both nurses were very matter of fact in their letters about the conditions under which they worked, and they constantly stressed their admiration for the Spanish people's bravery and determination to resist Franco.

Apart from nursing and helping to teach Spanish girls the rudiments of nursing, the two New Zealand women also undertook some propaganda work. In November 1937, they were sent to Madrid to give a radio broadcast. Besides giving them an opportunity to help the Republican cause, it was also a chance to revel in the unaccustomed luxury of "spring beds with crisp clean linen".¹⁰⁶

After the nurses were withdrawn from Spain with the International Brigades, towards the end of October 1938, they planned to remain in England and find private nursing work for a time before travelling in Europe. They were especially interested in going to Russia. However, it proved impossible to find nursing work, and they reluctantly decided to return home in January 1939, having spent their time in England working for the London SMAC.

The nurses arrived home on 20 January 1939, to a flurry of meetings of welcome, including a mayoral reception in Auckland, hosted by the deputy mayor, and a dinner attended by many of Sister Shadbolt's former patients. They were still attached to the SMAC, which had pledged to support them until they could obtain nursing positions. In February 1939, they embarked upon a speaking tour organised by the Committee to raise funds for food for Loyalist Spain and for the refugees in France.

Not everyone welcomed the nurses with enthusiasm and admiration. The mayor of Westport was reported to have refused to chair a meeting in that town at which the nurses were to speak. Mr J. Kilkenny believed in the adage, "charity begins at home". He thought that the nurses would have been better advised to stay at home, where they were needed as urgently as in Spain, or else at least look no further for humanitarian work than Australia, at the time devastated by bush fires, and whose people were "the same flesh and blood as ourselves". The fact that Australia had not been raging with bush fires when the nurses left was apparently lost on Mr Kilkenny, who went on to say:

... as a member of the Crippled Childrens Society I found that much work was necessary to relieve and alleviate the pain and suffering of the affected children of the nation and the anxiety of their parents. That in itself is a man-sized job for capable nurses without interfering in other people's business.¹⁰⁷

Kilkenny's insularity and ethnocentrism closely paralleled the editorial attitudes adopted by some newspapers, such as Truth or the Observer. Mrs McGuire recalled that a certain amount of ill-will was encountered on the speaking tour, especially from Catholics. She felt that a general impression that the Spanish Government was Communist, and that the Spanish people were all Communists, led to the nurses being treated with a certain amount of suspicion.

After the speaking tour was over, Renee Shadbolt maintained contact with the SMAC and worked with the organisation in its attempt to induce the Government to allow refugees from the war to enter the country. After a SMAC-sponsored holiday, in April 1939, she returned to nursing, and later became a matron at an Auckland hospital. Isobel Dodds married in 1940 and went to England with her husband. She returned to New Zealand in the 1970s and presently lives in Wellington.

Despite the hardships encountered, the problems with money, mail and food, and the tiring work, the two nurses' enthusiasm for their work never flagged. While the time they spent in Spain could not be described as a directly "politicising" experience, in that they did not return to New Zealand holding political views more radical than when they left, neither did it disillusion them. They returned to New Zealand as convinced of the justice of the Republican cause as when they had left, if not more so. Their experiences did strengthen their commitment to the Spanish Government, but primarily from a personal and humanitarian point of view. It is difficult to differentiate the humanitarian impulse from the political commitment. Admiration for the Spanish people's and the International Brigades' courage and determination, and hatred for the indiscriminate bombing by the rebels and their German and Italian allies, went hand in hand with anti-fascism. Yet, the nurses' first impulse to go to Spain was born of humanitarianism, and their concern for the Spanish people remained essentially humanitarian in nature, reinforced by what they had seen in Spain and coloured naturally by a general anti-fascist, "pro-Left" outlook. The time spent in Spain was, for Mrs McGuire at least, an intensely personal experience, rather than a political one.

There is scant information on the other two New Zealand women who nursed in Spain. The only evidence about Dorothy Morris, formerly of Christchurch, appeared in an article in the The Press, in May 1937. She had been in Spain since February 1937, with a British medical unit under the supervision of Sir George Young, a former British diplomat and Professor of Portuguese at the University of London. The unit had at first been stationed in Catalonia, but, after the fall of Malaga, had been moved to Almeria to organise relief hospitals. The letter gave little evidence of her political views, for it was mainly describing the unit's experiences in establishing relief hospitals around Almeria. The nurse did, however, describe the International Brigaders as "a very fine type indeed" and "very well organised".¹⁰⁸

Sister Una Wilson went to Spain with the Australian medical unit. Accounts of her experiences in Spain appeared in a pamphlet published by the Australian SRC, entitled From the Battlefields of Spain.¹⁰⁹ They were in the form of letters home to Phil Thorne, secretary of the Sydney SRC, and to nursing friends, and included large extracts from her diary. Excerpts from the pamphlet were published in the Herald in July and September 1937.

Sister Wilson was stationed at a front-line hospital in Madrid, which received casualties directly from the battlefield. Her letters and diary notes revealed the strain and dangers faced by nurses in Spain to a far greater degree than did the letters of the two SMAC nurses. Indeed, some of the diary entries had an almost nightmarish quality. During the Jarama, offensive the hospital was under almost constant bombardment and was receiving as many as 600 casualties a day. Sister Wilson and another Australian nurse were often the only theatre sisters available; therefore they worked day and night. In any case their beds were usually occupied by wounded soldiers: "I used just to flop down on the theatre floor or somewhere if there happened to be a couple of hours to spare."¹¹⁰

The physical and mental strain of the work was exacerbated by Sister Wilson's inability to tolerate much of the Spanish food. In late March 1937, after two months of intensive work, she suffered a nervous breakdown and temporary amnesia and was sent for a holiday in Barcelona. Yet, these experiences did nothing to diminish her enthusiasm for her work. She wrote to nursing friends in July 1937:

I shudder myself to think that I might not have come ... if they don't pop me off this time just think of the almight experience. As a matter of fact I'm itching to get back to the Front now, that's how it gets one.¹¹¹

She also took the opportunity to reassure a Catholic nursing friend that there was "not an ounce of truth" in reports of atrocities.¹¹² Una Wilson also had nothing but praise for the organisation of the hospitals and the treatment of the nurses. She emphasised the fact that there was "no distinction of any kind.

Doctors, nurses, soldiers and everyone live under precisely the same conditions".

No further information about Una Wilson could be found. If she returned from Spain, it is likely that she went back to Australia rather than New Zealand. Her experiences, even more than the other nurses', revealed the dedication to their work that was the basis of their travelling to Spain. And perhaps a line from one of her letters best sums up their feelings about the war: "[we] have been through untold hardships, but have the satisfaction of knowing we have given our utmost."¹¹³

Franco also received a New Zealander's aid. Philip Cross returned to New Zealand in early 1938, after having spent some time with the rebel forces in Spain. In interviews with the Freelance and NZ Radio Record, he gave little indication of his motives for doing so. Cross was an actor and film maker, and sometime bullfighting apprentice, who had left New Zealand in 1928 to roam the world. When the rebellion began, he was in Spain with an Anglo-Spanish film company, making a film in the small village of Alcala de los Gazules: "Most of the able-bodied men in the village joined the Royalist army and the five men in the company joined up with Franco as well."¹¹⁴

It is possible, then, that Cross had little choice in the matter, if the whole village was pro-Franco, although as a foreigner he could have evaded being pressed into service. He told the Freelance that he joined Franco's army in the company of the brother of a Spanish actress with whom he worked.¹¹⁵ This man and another with whom he fought were Castilian aristocrats; perhaps their attitudes towards Franco's rebellion had an influence on the New Zealander, and combined with an adventurous nature, and proximity, to send him into service with Franco.

Cross was reluctant, at first, to talk much about his war experiences with the newspapers. However, he gave the Radio Record

his opinions about Franco. He claimed that Franco was not a Fascist, but "a Spaniard through and through", who would not give away one inch of Spanish territory to Germany or Italy. He pointed out that they had been paid already in raw materials, which removed the necessity for either territorial or commercial concessions when Franco won. He was also of the opinion that Franco would restore the monarchy in Spain.¹¹⁶

Cross was with Franco's army in the early stages of the war. He fought in the siege of Madrid and was captured by the "Reds" at Boadilla, and sentenced to death by firing squad, but was reprieved when the Moors took the town. He was later wounded and invalided out of the army. He returned to England, where he claimed to have worked with the General Relief Fund for Distressed Women and Children in Spain. (This organisation would appear to be the same as the "[Entirely Neutral] Relief Fund for Distressed Women and Children in Spain", on whose behalf Lady Austen Chamberlain had requested butter from Nash in 1937.¹¹⁷).

After his initial interview with the Radio Record in April 1938, Cross wrote two articles for the paper about his experiences in Spain. The first, published in May 1938, was entitled "I Listened for the Firing Squad" and described his capture at Boadilla and subsequent escape.¹¹⁸ The article was mostly concerned with Cross' interior thoughts as he waited for execution by the "Reds", along with two Castilian noblemen, Jacinto and Roberto, some "Regulars" of Franco's army and several Moors. Cross made little reference to the "Reds" in his article except to note that they were attacking "in Russian style - led by Russians". He also made little comment about his fellow prisoners, except to note that noble Castilians knew how to die. Cross' second story about the war was one of the more curious "atrocities" stories to reach New Zealand. Like many atrocity stories, this one, which appeared in the 22 June 1938 issue of the Radio Record, was fundamentally about sex.¹¹⁹ It concerned a young Spanish actress, Pastora, daughter of a noble Castilian family and sister of his friend Jacinto.

The story could almost have been a script for one of the films Cross had made. He had been in Madrid, he said, searching for an actress to play against his leading actress Maria, Victoria. In the Cathedral he saw the perfect face. Because she was obviously a Castilian aristocrat he could never even speak to her, let alone ask her to act in a film. However, by an extraordinary coincidence, he met her again that night outside the Giralda tower. She recognised him as "Felipe", her brother Jacinto's friend, and because he was known to the family she was allowed to act in the film.

When the war began, her brother took her to Madrid for safety (which was rather odd, since Madrid was to become a bastion of Republican resistance). He and Cross joined Franco's army. Later Cross left for England and worked with the General Relief Fund. He and a friend, Guillermo Ros, were sent by the Fund to Barcelona to make a film showing the Fund's work for victims of the war. There he encountered Pastora again, in horrifying circumstances. She had been taken hostage, he said, to prevent her family from supporting Franco. (Rather late in the day, since her brother had been with the rebels from the outset.) Because she had been an actress she was forced to work as a "frivola", a naked dancer and "singer of lewd songs", in a Barcelona cabaret filled with the "ruffians of every European nationality". Cross claimed that after the abdication of Alfonso in 1931 the Republic had allowed such vices and, by 1936, almost every cafe had its "frivolas".

The story ended in tragedy. As Cross was leaving for England, his Spanish friend pressed a letter into his hand and told him to read it on the boat. The letter said that Pastora's father had been killed in Madrid. On learning that she no longer needed to be a hostage for her father's life, Pastora had shot herself.

It is difficult to ascertain the truth of this story. It had all the hallmarks of a manufactured atrocity story, with its central element of sex, and the degradation of womanhood so often ascribed to the Loyalists. There is no evidence to support Cross' claim that

naked dancers appeared in cafes all over Spain, before or after the war began. Nor is there any record of actresses, dancers, singers or aristocrats being forced to dance naked before Republican soldiers, although instances of this may have occurred. As George Orwell noted in Homage to Catalonia, in Barcelona, at the beginning of the war, the Anarchists closed most of the cabarets and brothels down.¹²⁰ The allegation had a faint echo of the Nazi propaganda about the licentiousness and decadence of the Weimar Republic.

There was also a discrepancy between Cross' two stories. In his tale of capture by the Loyalists Cross mentioned a Jacinto Guerrora; in his other story, "the sister of Jacinto, my soldier friend", was Pastora Soler.

Nevertheless, a germ of truth may have been embellished to make a better story. Cross' tale of a Castilian noble-woman's humiliation cannot be proved or disproved. Truth or untruth, it revealed that he felt some commitment to Franco's cause, in that he was disposed to show the Republicans in a bad light. Yet, that commitment did not seem to be related to any religious beliefs. Cross did not have his views published in its the Catholic newspapers. After his brief appearance in the newspapers in 1938, Cross could not be traced. He told the Freelance that he was planning to make a film for New Zealand's centennial in 1940, but it does not appear that he did so.¹²¹ It seems likely that he did not stay in New Zealand, where opportunities for either acting or film-making were scarce.

Given New Zealand's distance from the conflict, it is not surprising that the number of New Zealanders who participated in the war, in whatever capacity, was so small. Nor is it surprising that, of those whose point of departure is known, most arrived in Spain, not from Antipodean shores, but from points much closer to the scene of battle. Because there were so few New Zealanders in Spain, and because so little is known about the political or social backgrounds, motives, or reactions once in Spain, of some, it is difficult to generalise from their accounts to any conclusions about what they represented.

Certainly the Communist Party and the SMAC presented the International Brigaders and the SMAC-sponsored nurses as representatives of the united, anti-Fascist, pro-Republican Conscience of New Zealand, and doubtless many New Zealand pro-Republicans agreed with this image. In their mix of Communist, Leftist, anti-Fascist and humanitarian motives, the International Brigaders were probably representative of New Zealand pro-Republicanism. The relative unity of opinion among returned International Brigaders and nurses, in terms of their continued support of the Republican cause, did also, in a sense, reflect pro-Republican opinion in New Zealand. None, apparently, returned to New Zealand disillusioned with what they had seen in Spain, except, perhaps, Bert Bryan who did not make any public complaints (and evidence of whose disillusion is only hearsay). Among pro-Republicans in New Zealand, also, there was little evidence of the political dissensions among the Left, that marred the Republican war effort, being transferred to the movement in support of the Republican cause. In both cases, the unifying factor in opinion (if not in co-ordination of activity) was the concern that Fascism should not triumph in Spain.

Philip Cross, however, did not appear to be representative of pro-Francoist opinion in New Zealand, which was mainly Catholic. Had he been a committed Catholic pro-Francoist, it is likely that he would have made some reference to the crusade for God in Spain, or to the "Communist plot". Nevertheless, in his "atrocities" story, Cross certainly represented a significant element in the pro-Francoist presentation of the war.

The impact of the returning International Brigaders, nurses and one pro-Francoist on non-aligned New Zealanders is difficult to assess. Coverage in daily and weekly newspapers of some experiences indicates some interest, but this was only natural. Newspapers often reported the more general observations about the "outside" world of New Zealanders returned from overseas. Thus, it is not surprising that New Zealanders who had been involved in such a violent and

politically interesting foreign war should have been reported in the press. It is notable that the popular weekly papers, the Freelance and the Weekly News, concentrated upon the less political of the International Brigaders, Madigan and Griffiths. Most of the New Zealanders who had been to Spain returned too late for their stories and opinions to have much impact, in terms of creating pro-Republican sentiment, although concern about the bombing of vicilians and the plight of Spanish refugees from Franco may have been increased. Of those who returned earlier, Griffiths was not a major feature in the SMAC's or the Communist Party's propaganda campaigns and Spiller was, more or less, "preaching to the converted" in his speaking tours.

Of those who died, Maclaurin was the most widely reported, possibly because his death came so early in the war and also because of his status as a "New Zealand intellectual". Note has been made also of the impact of Maclure's death upon his contemporaries at Otago University. All the deaths would have aided in "bringing home" the war to New Zealanders.

Some distinction has been made between motives essentially political and those based on adventurism, but all of these New Zealanders who went to Spain were, in a sense, adventurers. It is surely indicative of an adventurous spirit to choose to become involved in a war that one might safely regard and discuss from a distance. If they represented anything, they all surely indicated a sentiment shared by the Labour Government, pro-Republicans and pro-Francoists, that Spain was "our" concern, and that, whatever the outcome for Spain and for Europe, it impinged on New Zealand as well.

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- 2 Ibid pp 794-795. Thomas does not give figures for volunteers with Franco, apart from the Irishmen.
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- 5 Rust, W. Britons in Spain. London, 1939, p 194.
- 6 P 18 February 1939, p 16.
- 7 Correspondence with W. Girling Butcher, 31 January 1980.
- 8 Kiwi 1937, pp 79-80.
- 9 NZH 10 December 1936, p 14.
- 10 Workers Weekly 9 April 1937, p 22.
- 11 Kiwi, op. cit.
- 12 Angus Ross interview, 1982.
- 13 Critic 25 October 1936, p 1.
- 14 Critic 5 March 1937, p 9.
- 15 GRA 10 July 1937, p 4.
- 16 Critic 4 March 1938.
- 17 Workers Weekly 13 August 1937, p 1; 17 September 1937, p 1.
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- 30 Workers Weekly 12 May 1939, p 4.
- 31 Ibid 13 January 1939, p 1.
- 32 Ibid 18 November 1938, p 3.
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- 98 E. Hunter to G. Jackson, 7 April 1938. Auckland SMAC Records.
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- 100 E. Hunter to G. Jackson, 7 April 1938. Auckland SMAC Records.
- 101 E. Collins to E. Hunter, 1 July 1938. Auckland SMAC Records.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 M. Sharples to E. Hunter, 23 July 1938. Auckland SMAC Records
- 104 R. Shadbolt to G. Jackson, 28 January 1938; Isobel Dodds to Family n.d. Auckland SMAC Records.
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CONCLUSION

This study has been entitled "Bringing It Home". The most obvious way in which the war was "brought home" was in the development of pro-Francoism and pro-Republicanism in New Zealand, and in both groups' application of the issues of the war to the New Zealand scene. In this sense, it might be argued that "Non Interventionists" were more concerned to "keep it away". However, their opinions upon matters relating to the war, such as the relative merits of the British and New Zealand Governments' policies demonstrated that, even indirectly, the war had some influence upon their thinking. It is considered that there were differing degrees of "bringing home" the war in New Zealand, but that expression of opinion on the war and any manifestation of concern about it showed that it was seen by New Zealanders as having some significance.

However, there are few indications that the Spanish Civil War had any great or lasting impact upon the minds of most New Zealanders, just as there is little evidence to suggest that more than a minority became involved in the issue. The conflict was soon overshadowed by the greater war that pro-Republicans had predicted, even if the Communists by that time were no longer calling for a coalition against Fascism, but instead for opposition to an imperialist war.

The New Zealand response to the Spanish Civil War is not quantifiable; in the absence of opinion polls there is no way of knowing what percentage of New Zealanders even knew about the war. F.L.W. Wood's contention that "to many New Zealanders, as to many Englishmen, the Spanish Government seemed to stand broadly for the humane and liberal and democratic principles shared by the British and New Zealand Labour Movements"¹ may have been influenced to a degree by his own perceptions of the war and those of the people with whom he associated in, for example, the League of Nations Union and

the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs. Nevertheless, it is clear that the conception of the Popular Front Government as the legitimately elected constitutional authority of Spain had some influence in creating sympathy for the Republican cause, as well as concern about the British non-intervention policy. Furthermore, perceived similarities between the New Zealand and Spanish Governments' social-democratic, reformist policies were a factor in the development of a pro-Republican response among the Left. The Communist Party's image of a war between democracy and Fascism was generally adopted. However, it has been shown that the considerable unity of opinion about the war demonstrated by the Left did not lead to an equivalent unity of action.

Of all the international crises of the late 1930s that aroused concern about the increasing menace of Fascist military aggression, the Spanish Civil War was the most ideologically identified and politically divisive. In this respect it appears that the existence of a Labour Government in New Zealand at the time both contributed to and worked against the establishment of a United Front of pro-Republican opinion. The Communist Party's insistence that New Zealand had a special part to play in the international campaign for solidarity with the Spanish Government echoed a less specific feeling among Labour's supporters that the triumph of social democracy in New Zealand might also have some influence upon the international scene. There is also no doubt that an attack on a progressive Government in Spain was considered to have a bearing on the situation in New Zealand, even if most on the Left did not go so far as to imagine that their Labour Government's opponents were planning an imminent military revolt.

On the other hand, obvious Communist involvement with pro-Republicanism and public identification of the Republican cause with Communism meant that the Labour Party and the Government were cautious in their espousal of pro-Republicanism. Caution was influenced both by concern about the reactions of Catholic Labour voters and by Labour's long-standing avoidance of any association

with Communism. There is no evidence that the divisions between PSUC, POUM and Anarchists in Spain specifically exacerbated divisions among the Left in New Zealand, although events in Spain may not have contributed to the healing of any rifts. However, the attitudes of the Labour Government and of the Standard show that the issue was "brought home" by Labour, but not to the extent of treating it as a matter for debate within the Labour Party or among the electorate in general.

Despite the limitations upon the creation of a United Front, the Spanish Medical Aid Committee still enjoyed some success in bringing together the diverse adherents of pro-Republicanism, although it is obvious that the SMAC was mainly Communist-led and received the majority of its donations from Trades Unions. But others also were active in the SMAC or gave their names in endorsement of the medical aid campaign. The collection of enough money to send three nurses to Spain and to fund the purchase of medical supplies, an ambulance and a field laundry truck provided tangible evidence of some New Zealanders' commitment to internationalism and democracy. The new Zealanders who fought in the International Brigades or worked with medical units in Spain demonstrated the greatest commitment to Communist or anti-Fascist ideals. Their opinions and experiences contributed to pro-Republican propaganda in New Zealand: none who returned cast doubt upon the accepted view of the war in Spain.

The Spanish Civil War had a significant part in the Communist Party's Popular Front policy. The qualified success of the pro-Republican solidarity campaign helps illuminate the role of the Communist Party in New Zealand in the late 1930s. However, the Communists also used other issues in the drive to create a Left coalition against Fascism, particularly the Sino-Japanese war. There is scope for more study of the development of the Popular Front ideology and the influence of the Communist Party, perhaps in a comparison of the responses to the two wars.

If suspicion of Communism limited the response to

pro-Republicanism in New Zealand, dislike of Franco's Fascist allies militated against any widespread espousal of his cause. Catholic pro-Francoist complaints about the daily press' treatment of the war in Spain indicate that their view was not generally accepted, particularly in terms of propaganda's minimisation of the level of German and Italian involvement. Daily newspapers may have approved of British non-intervention policy and appeasement in general, but they discussed Italian and German aid to the rebels in tones of marked disapprobation.

Discussion of pro-Francoism has shown that it was fundamentally a religious response, mainly concerned with the survival of Catholicism in Spain. Anti-Communism was, of course, an essential element in Catholic attitudes, but it too was generated by defence of the faith and the belief that Communism posed the greatest threat to religion. It is impossible to ascertain how many Catholics shared the inclination towards Fascism and admiration of Mussolini's Italy demonstrated by some Catholic letters to daily newspapers, or indeed, if it represented deeply felt political views or simply, again, a reaction to Communism and a choice between the lesser of two evils.

Catholic pro-Francoists, like pro-Republicans, saw the Spanish Civil War as demanding the concern of New Zealanders. The fears aroused by the attack on the Church in Spain were translated to the New Zealand scene, in accusations of anti-Catholicism among pro-Republicans (some of them justified) and warnings about the influence of Communism in New Zealand. There is, unfortunately, no evidence available that might indicate whether the Spanish Civil War contributed significantly to the development of Catholic Action in New Zealand; the war was certainly used by the Catholic press to urge Catholics of the necessity for more active lay involvement in the work of the Church. Nor is there any evidence that the Labour Governments "limited pro-Republicanism" caused many Catholics to choose between their religious and political allegiances, although Catholic views did influence the Labour Party towards caution in its public stance on the war.

Imperial link is indicated by the fact that the Statute of Westminster, conferring sovereignty upon the Dominions, was not adopted legally until 1947.

The differences between the New Zealand Government and the British Government over conduct of foreign policy in the late 1930s had as much to do with different ideological perspectives as they did with Labour leaders' desire to make use of the sovereignty that the Statute of Westminster allowed. In respect of relations between New Zealand and Britain over policy on the Spanish situation it now appears that there may have been more to the Eden-Jordan "blue-pencil" incident than previously supposed. While not conclusive evidence of British pressure on New Zealand policy-makers, the "Nash Papers" speech does, however, indicate considerably more disapproval of British policy than Jordan's delivered speeches at Geneva or even the private communications between the two Governments ever expressed.

The division of opinion in New Zealand over the British non-intervention policy and the Labour Government's approach to foreign affairs was a significant feature of the New Zealand response to the Spanish Civil War. Pro-Republicanism (and, to a lesser degree, pro-Francoism) reflected an internationalist outlook and growing involvement by New Zealanders in the problems of the "outside world". Pro-Republican questioning (and in some cases condemnation) of British policy grew from and contributed to a re-examination of the nature and value of New Zealand's relations with Britain. "Non-Interventionist" attitudes reveal the intensity of some New Zealanders' attachment to Britain and to a certain extent, the "mythologising" of the British tradition in New Zealand.

The Spanish Civil War, then, was not a major issue in New Zealand. Nevertheless, New Zealanders' responses to the war help illuminate the impact upon New Zealand of the ideological conflicts of Europe, and the manner in which New Zealanders viewed the world and their country's place in the international community.

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Map showing provinces of Spain and cities, towns and villages mentioned in the text.



APPENDIX 1

Documents relating to the New Zealand Governments
Policy on the Spanish Civil War

- 1-1 Text of a Memorandum sent by Geoffrey Bing to R.M. Campbell, and passed to Walter Nash.

SPAIN

Notes by Geoffrey Bing
14.2.37

1. The report by Reuter's correspondent at Gibraltar that Italian troops landed at Malaga from an Italian battleship and the similar reports in the official Italian press, for the first time openly admitting that Italian troops are fighting against the Spanish Government, is of great importance and makes immediately urgent the question of foreign intervention in Spain.

2. Up till now, though everybody knew that German and Italian troops were in fact assisting Franco, the governments concerned had done something to hide their interventions. Now for the first time Italy blatantly and openly parades the dispatch of troops to Spain.

3. The sending of troops to fight against the Spanish Government is an act of war within the meaning of the Pact of Paris (Kellogg Pact) and is an offence under the Covenant of the League of Nations. Even though Germany and Italy have recognised General Franco and withdrawn their recognition from the legitimate Spanish Government, they nevertheless, under international Law, still owe duties to that Government so long as it remains in existence. They cannot, by a mere declaration, escape from the duty they incurred when they originally recognised the Spanish Government. But if they have committed an act of war against the Spanish Government they have, by violating the Pact of Paris, which is, together with the Covenant of the League of Nations, regarded by the leading authorities as the corner-stone of post-war Public International Law, committed a serious offence against all those other nations who are parties to the Pact of Paris.

4. New Zealand was with Italy one of the original signatories of the Pact of Paris. Therefore, by violating the Pact Italy has, under International Law, committed a serious offence against New Zealand.

5. This violating of the Pact of Paris affects New Zealand in two ways:

- a. The effect of German and Italian assistance to the Rebels is to place Germany and Italy in positions from

which they can command the strategic routes of Imperial communication. The whole scheme of Imperial Defence is built upon the assumption that the status quo will be preserved in the Mediterranean and in the North Atlantic. It is obvious that, even if Germany does not actually occupy the Canaries and Italy Malaga, if Franco is successful he will be in no position to enforce his neutrality against Germany and Italy were either of those two powers to be engaged in war. Spain's position, if Franco wins with German and Italian assistance, will be similar to that of Greece in the last war, who was unable to assert her neutrality against the Allies who, though Greece was nominally neutral, occupied and used Salonica as a base. In short, no declaration by Italy or Germany to respect the status quo can affect the actual situation if in fact Spain is held down by their armed forces.

b. The open flouting of International Law and the disregard of this flouting by the nations of the world must most adversely affect the position of the smaller nations who depend for their safety upon the enforcement of a world system of Public Law and Justice.

6. New Zealand has a right and a duty to prevent these violations of International Law. She can act in two ways:

a. As a member of the League of Nations she can bring the matter before the Council of the Assembly under Article Eleven of the Covenant. Owing to the stand which New Zealand took over the Abyssinian question she is already regarded by the other countries of the Empire, and by the smaller nations, as one of the leaders in the movement to preserve, through the League, the rules of International Justice.

b. As a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations she can raise the question direct with the British Government. She had, indeed, the best right to do so because she is, possibly even more so than Australia, likely to be affected by any interference with Imperial communications.

7. Were New Zealand to make a forceful protest to Great Britain on the effect on Imperial relations which, under the present circumstances, a victory for General Franco would have, it would have a very considerable effect in England. If New Zealand were to express herself strongly in favour of the British Empire opposing violations of International Law of the type now being practised by Germany and Italy in Spain, this would rally all those forces in England like the League of Nations Union, which sincerely believe in the League, but which have been rendered confused and

consequently impotent by the interminable international negotiations centering round the Non-Intervention Committee.

8. The British Government's policy of continuing to support the Non-Intervention Committee and thus, in fact, allowing arms and troops to be poured into Spain by Germany and Italy while the legitimate Government is deprived of all assistance, is only possible because the opponents of this policy of drift have no common rallying ground. Were the lead to be taken by New Zealand it would unite Imperialists like the Duchess of Atholl, that great body of centre opinion which supports the League of Nations Union and the Labour Movement. It was the union of these forces which, it will be remembered, destroyed the Hoare-Laval Plan. If they were again united over the Spanish issue the British Government would be again compelled to change their policy.

9. In the present situation the vital factor is the attitude of the British Government. If they were to withdraw their support from the Non-Intervention Committee and allow France to supply arms and give assistance to the Spanish Government, the Spanish Government would win. Other things being equal neither Germany nor Italy are at the moment sufficiently equipped, nor geographically are they so placed, as to make it possible for them to provide unlimited help to General Franco. Their assistance to Franco is only of vital importance because the Spanish Government can get no help from the democratic powers. Alternatively, if the British Government were to enforce, as they could easily do, an impartial blockade of Spain and thus really put in motion the Non-Intervention Agreement, the Spanish Government would likewise win. The very fact that Franco has to import so many foreign troops shows that he has not sufficient support within the country to win without foreign aid.

10. The present situation is extremely urgent. If Italy's open violation of International Law is allowed to pass without challenge by the countries most affected by it a precedent will be set up and it will be impossible when the next violation arises to draw the line. Italian and German control of Imperial communications threatens New Zealand perhaps more than any other Dominion. The situation of the Spanish Government is far from desperate, given a little more time they may be able to organise a large enough army to defeat General Franco, but they cannot do this unless some check is placed upon the influx of foreign troops to support Franco. The situation in England at the moment is such that a gesture by New Zealand would rally all the forces opposed to the policy of surrender to Germany and Italy now being practised by the British Government and would, in my firm opinion, be decisive in altering the policy of great Britain and in saving the Spanish Government. On the New Zealand Government, as Socialist, rests perhaps an especial responsibility.

I'm afraid this note is rather long but I thought it best to set out all the points. I have prepared a short legal memorandum in case anyone expresses any doubts about the legal conclusions which I have stated rather badly. If you either need it or would like to see it could you telephone me and I will have it sent you.

NOTES ON LEGAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN GERMAN AND ITALIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE SPANISH REBELS

Aggression

A hostile act done by one State against another State may be merely an offence against the wronged State or, in certain circumstances, it may be an offence against other Nations.

Thus, under public International Law, Germany and Italy were forbidden to supply arms to the Rebels in Spain. In the early days of the revolt when these countries supplied munitions to General Franco before they had even recognised him as a belligerent, they were committing a serious offence against the Spanish Government. This was not, however, necessarily an offence against other Nations. But a point does arise when the assistance given by an outside Power, nominally neutral, in a dispute between two other Powers, reaches such an extent that it becomes an offence against not only the wronged Nation, but against other Nations as well. This point arises when one Nation takes "armed action" against another Nation. For "armed action" in the view of most of the leading authorities on Public International Law is the equivalent of "war" within the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Pact of Paris.

The Pact of Paris

The Pact of Paris, or the Kellogg Pact as it is often called, was an agreement originally entered into by the British Empire, U.S.A., Germany, France and Italy, and subsequently joined by most other nations including Spain, not to "resort to war" except in certain closely defined circumstances. Any country, therefore, which resorts to war in contravention of its terms, commits an offence not only against the country against which it goes to war, but against all the other signatories to the Pact. "A breach of its provisions" says the leading authority on Public International Law "constitutes an International wrong against all its signatories who thereupon, without electing to go to war, become entitled to such redress as the principles of State responsibility warrant. (Oppenheim: "International Law"; Vol. II. Fifth Edition.)

Covenant of the League

Even where no actual "resort to war" has taken place, the threat of war imposes certain obligations upon all members of the League of Nations. Article Eleven of the Covenant declares that war, or any threat of war, whether immediately affecting any Member of the League or not, is a matter of concern for the whole League. The Article goes on to say: "It is also declared to be the friendly right of each member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or the Council, any circumstance whatever affecting International relations which threaten International peace or the good understanding between Nations upon which peace depends." (It is under this Article that the League has already considered the present dispute in Spain).

It is important, therefore, to examine the facts of German and Italian intervention to see whether they amount to "armed action" against the legitimate Spanish Government, or at least to a threat of war within the meaning of Article Eleven.

Italian and German recognition of Franco

The Italian and German recognition of the Rebels as the sole legitimate Government in Spain cannot affect their duties under International Law towards the Spanish Government. They cannot avoid their responsibilities towards this Government merely by withdrawing their recognition of it.

Italian and German Intervention

There can be no doubt that the troops sent to Spain are not volunteers, and indeed when the British Government first referred to these troops in the House of Commons they did not use the term "volunteer" for them. It is well known that they are recruited by the Government in Germany and Italy, paid regular wages, transported in Government transports, their correspondence from Spain passes through the Ministry of War in their own countries, and when they are killed their relatives have been informed through the Government of either country. It is submitted that the dispatch of these troops constitutes "armed action" and is a breach of the Pact of Paris. If the view is taken that the Pact of Paris only applies when war has actually been declared, the dispatch of troops must, nevertheless, be a threat of war within the meaning of the Covenant of the League and therefore a matter of concern for every Member.

Threat of War and the British Empire

The leading authorities on Imperial Constitutional Law hold that it is impossible for one part of the Empire to remain at peace while another part of the Empire is at war. (See Keith: "Constitutional Law in the British Dominions".) Therefore, every Member of the Empire has a particular interest in seeing that peace is preserved and, secondly, in seeing that Great Britain so orders her Foreign Policy that she is not placed in a position in which, in the event of war breaking out, it will be impossible for her to defend the Empire.

All these considerations make it essential for the Members of the Empire to insist upon a policy based upon International Law rather than upon the agreement which is the basis of the Non-Intervention Committee.

The Non-Intervention Committee

The Non-Intervention Committee does not administer International Law. Its sole object is to enforce an agreement made between the European Nations. This agreement provided that certain nations, particularly England and France would deny to the legitimate Spanish Government the opportunity of purchasing arms in consideration of a promise by other Nations, particularly Germany and Italy, that these latter would not violate International Law by supplying arms to the Rebels. (Later the legal position became more complicated by the German and Italian recognition of Franco, but in the main the function of the Non-Intervention Committee remains the same.) The sole object of the Non-Intervention Agreement is to carry out a bargain made between the Nations of Europe which does not arise out of their obligations under International Law and which is indeed inconsistent with them. The only duty which any Nation can owe to the Non-Intervention Committee must arise from some agreement with the other Nations relative to that Committee. It cannot possibly arise under International Law.

The existence of the Non-Intervention Committee cannot release any Nation, whether they are party or not to the agreement which set up the Committee, from their duties and obligations under International Law towards both Spain and their fellow Members of the League and co-signatories of the Paris Pact. The existence of the Non-Intervention Committee has, however, very much confused the issue, it being assumed that the Committee would implement International Law and that, therefore, no further duty lay on other Nations.

It is submitted that the only solution is now to return to International Law and deal with the Spanish question on that footing rather than on the footing of the

on-Intervention Agreement which has been violated by one of the parties to it.

Nash Papers 1084/003.
National Archives,
Wellington

1-2 Text of a draft speech prepared for the League of Nations Council meeting on 28 May 1937, but never delivered.*

DRAFT

It would be impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the situation revealed to us by the hon. delegate for Spain. There can be no doubt or dispute about the following facts:

1. In so far as the struggle in Spain is a civil war it was caused by the rebellion of Generals who broke their oath to the Republic which provided constitutional means of allowing for a Government's removal. These Generals set out to break democracy and to destroy their country's freely accepted constitution and the Government which the Spanish people had elected. They did not hesitate to wage war on women and children, to bombard open towns and helpless civilian populations, and to commit the crowning horror and infamy of the destruction of Guernica.
2. If that were all, the civilised world might be content to deplore the tragedy of Spain, and to make well-meant although futile efforts to diminish the horrors of the conflict. But it is very far from being all. From the day of its outbreak on July 19 to the present day the struggle in Spain has not been merely or even primarily a Spanish civil war. The evidence that it is fomented and organised from outside is strong. The aeroplanes that crashed in French Morocco on July 30, on their way to the rebels, bore papers showing that they had been taken out of a foreign Government air force and assigned to this purpose on July 17. That was twenty-four hours before the Spanish military rebellion broke out.

The evidence that the rebellion has continued so long and caused so much anguish and death only because of the assistance given to the rebels from outside, is overwhelming. In the light of documents submitted to us, with photostatic copies of the originals, by the Spanish Government, there can be no doubt whatever of the presence in Spain, waging war against the lawful Spanish Government, of several divisions of foreign troops.

* Passages underlined indicate those that were marked in the margin of the original document.

3. That is the situation. That situation constitutes external aggression against the territorial integrity and political independence of Spain, which is a Member of the League of Nations. Last December the Council of the League of Nations stated that -

"It is the duty of every State to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of other States, a duty which, for Members of the League of Nations, has been recognised in the Covenant."

The Council further affirmed that -

"Every State is under an obligation to refrain from intervening in the internal affairs of another State."

Since then, as the Spanish Government so truly states in its note to the League of May 20 which has led to the present meeting of the Council -

"the development of foreign intervention in Spain ... has assumed such proportions that without any kind of doubt it constitutes circumstances rendering it necessary for the Council to proceed with the examination of the question which was the subject of the extraordinary session of December 1936."

4. In examining this question today it is necessary to realise that the present situation is no longer what it was in December. Even then it was such that first the British and French Governments and then the whole Council declared that it constituted a threat to peace. Today the situation is much worse. On present lines, I am told, both sides expect the war in Spain to last another two years. At the rate at which international relations have been deteriorating, largely as a result of the policy pursued with regard to Spain, I do not believe world peace can stand the strain for anything like such a period. I believe that the policy of drift which is being pursued will, if continued, constitute as accessories to another world war.

5. The salient fact in the present situation was stated as follows in the Spanish Government's note to the League of March 12.

"The statements of the Italian officers and men taken prisoner during the last few days in the Guadalajara Sector confirm beyond possibility of denial the presence of regular military units of the Italian army sent to fight on Spanish soil in flagrant violation of the provisions of Article X of the Covenant whereby Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League".

6. The policy of refusing the Spanish Government its right under international law to buy arms and munitions in order to put down the rebellion would have been harsh and unjust, even in case of a purely Spanish civil war. But it would not have been contrary to the Covenant, and it might even have been justified in the real or presumed interests of peace. But this policy, which with partial impartiality known as "non-intervention", constituted disregard of the plain duty of all Members of the League the moment it became clear that the Spanish rebels were receiving military assistance from foreign powers. Since the invasion of Spain by a foreign army it seems to me impossible even to pretend that the policy of so-called "non-intervention" is anything, or ever has been anything else than conniving at a Fascist war of aggression for the purpose of destroying Spanish democracy and reducing Spain to the status of a Fascist province.

7. I think, therefore that the time has come to take this matter out of the hands of the Non-Intervention Committee and to put it into the hands of the League. Neither the composition nor the record of the Committee are such as to inspire confidence in its ultimate success. Spain is not represented on it although this is literally a life and death issue for Spain. On the other hand, the Powers are represented on it who are the head and front of the offence to which the Committee is supposed to be endeavouring to put an end. The Non-Intervention Committee is a body on which the aggressors are represented but not the victim of aggression. It is a body that meets in secret and so is not subject to the pressure of public opinion.

It is a body which was set up after the Covenant and international law had been disregarded and it apparently does not even consider itself bound to secure respect for the obligations of the so-called non-intervention policy that it was established to apply. It prohibited the export of munitions and aeroplanes to Spain several months ago and yet Guernica furnishes terrible proof that they continue to arrive to the rebels. The Council of the League, in its December resolution, asked the Non-Intervention Committee "to take appropriate measures to ensure forthwith that the fulfilment of the said undertakings is effectively supervised". And yet since that date not only have the rebels continued to receive arms, aeroplanes and munitions, but a foreign army has invaded Spain and the whole situation is today infinitely worse and more dangerous than it was last December.

When the Spanish Government brought this matter before the League last December there was sudden activity in the Non-Intervention Committee and much vague talk of mediation and cessation of hostilities, effective application of non-intervention etc. The moment the Council was ended the

Committee relapsed into the state of coma that had previously characterised its proceedings until the Spanish Government appealed to the present Council meeting. Since then there has been more activity in the Committee and more talk about an armistice and about the withdrawal of volunteers. But what guarantee have we that history will not repeat itself? How do we know that if the Council passes another resolution leaving the whole matter in the hands of the Committee the state of coma will not once more supervene while intervention in Spain assumes fresh and still more horrible forms and the world drifts a stage further on its fatal course toward another great war?

8. I am sorry to say it, but I am losing faith in the Non-Intervention Committee. In my opinion the time has come to apply Article X of the Covenant by which we are all bound. By that Article all Members of the League are obliged not only to respect but also to preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of Spain. As for the Council, Article X says that:

"In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled."

I believe the Council ought to give that advice now. I believe that its advice ought to take the form of a declaration that it is now the duty of all Members of the League to help the Spanish Government to preserve its territorial integrity and political independence against external aggression, by giving it all the facilities it requires for obtaining arms and aeroplanes and recruiting volunteers.

9. But I realise that the Governments that have assumed the heavy responsibility of inventing and applying the policy of so-called non-intervention may not have been so impressed by the uniform and disastrous failure of their policy as I have been. Therefore I would suggest that the Council should allow a time-limit during which a final attempt should be made to bring about the withdrawal from Spanish soil of the present army of occupation, as well as of genuine foreign volunteers, and to make effective the obligations that should prevent aeroplanes and war materials reaching the rebels. But I want the Council to bind itself beforehand to meet again and to consider action under Article X, if this final effort is unsuccessful.

Therefore I beg to submit the following draft resolution.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

The Council,
After hearing the observations made before it,

I

Recalling the terms of its resolution of December 13th, 1936.

Noting that the situation in Spain has become even graver since the adoption of that resolution and now constitutes a contravention of Article X of the Covenant.

Recalling the obligations of all the Members of the League under that Article.

Regrets that the Committee of Non-Intervention in London has hitherto been unable to secure faithful observance of the undertakings not to intervene in Spanish internal affairs.

II

Considering that an attempt to secure the removal from Spain of all foreign armed forces of any description has been in progress for some months.

Recommends the Members of the League represented on the London Committee to spare no pains to bring about this withdrawal as speedily as possible.

And decides, in case such withdrawal has not been completely effected within two months, to meet again with a view to considering the advice it should give to the Members of the League under Article X of the Covenant.

10. I recognise the primary political responsibility of the Great Powers. But I ask in return that my own country's responsibility as a Member of the League, as a democracy and as a member of the British Commonwealth should be recognised and respected. To go on disregarding the Covenant in this situation can, my Government believes, lead only to disaster. It cost ten million dead and twenty million wounded to bring the Covenant into existence. It may cost the world an even more frightful price to treat the Covenant today as a scrap of paper. Those of us who value democracy as essential to civilisation cannot any longer stand idly by and watch a war of aggression being waged against a sister democracy which is a fellow-member of the League. Nor can my country as a member of the British Commonwealth fail to declare that an independent and democratic Spain, bound by the ties of friendship and the obligations of the collective

system to the British Commonwealth, is for us a vital interest and that it would be intolerable for us that Spain should become the vassal of a Fascist power. Therefore, while the details of my resolution are not perhaps of primary importance my Government cannot be satisfied with any text that does not give effect in some form to the principles which I feel it is essential to uphold, and that it will be my reluctant duty to vote against any resolution that does not embody those principles. It is better that the Council should fail to reach unanimity on a resolution and that public opinion in my own country, in the United Kingdom and in the other democracies should be aroused to the issues at stake, than that another sham resolution should deceive public opinion into believing that anything effective was being done to stop the war of aggression against the Spanish Republic, while that war continued and the world went on drifting to disaster.

Geneva,
28th May, 1937.

Nash Papers, N209,
National Archives, Wellington

1-3 William Jordan's speech to the League of Nations Council, 28 May 1937.

I am sure we all feel the responsibility of the position in which we find ourselves at this table of the Council of the League of Nations. We have made a definite pledge with a purpose. The eyes of the world are on the Council at this time. Whatever the matter in dispute may be, whatever the cause of the conflict, the people of the world are shocked at the dreadful happenings in Spain, and the situation at the present time surely calls for some action.

When it was announced in the papers of the world that the League was to meet this week, prayers went up from millions of people for the success of our deliberations. I am sure that the members of the Council are conscious of the responsibility which falls upon them by being here and having to deal with this matter.

As it is a function of the League to safeguard the lives of people, to maintain peace, and to uphold lawful and constitutional Governments against invasion and the violence of outside Powers, it is now undoubtedly time that some decision in the Spanish situation was taken if the League is going to act at all in the matter ...

Authoritative evidence which has been made public recently shows that the military forces of outside Powers

are operating in Spain. Is it the determination of those Powers to operate in opposition to the fundamental principles which the League was established to uphold? We have before us the report of the Spanish Government; which contains one hundred documents, alleging that at least one Power has a fully equipped army in Spain committing acts of aggression not only against the people of Spain, but also against the political independence of that country, and submitting weighty evidence in support of the allegations. Do we question the authenticity of these documents? If not, the evidence which they furnish must be received and treated with the utmost gravity by the Council.

There is no need to detail independent reports which show what is happening in Spain. I will merely mention a report published by four prominent women in the United Kingdom, three of them members of Parliament, and also the report of a representative religious delegation. Some of the foremost of the Christian men and women of the United Kingdom visited Spain recently for the purpose of obtaining first-hand knowledge, and any one who reads these and other reports must agree that what is going on in Spain to-day is one of the most flagrant challenges to the authority of the League which has occurred in its history.

On the other hand, we have received a copy of a statement by General Franco charging the elected Government with being supporters of anarchy and crime, but submitting no evidence in support of the statement. From this table last December the question was asked, What case is there from these people who claim that the election in Spain was irregular? The question was asked, Why do they not come forward and make a statement? How can the League Council be expected to know the details and how can these people be respected by the Council if they fight and kill the citizens of one of the League members, and at the same time withhold from us evidence of what they say is the cause of the trouble?

Whatever the political views of the elected Spanish Government may be, is there any justification for the invasion of Spain by an outside Power? The only action taken so far by any power associated with the League appears to be the imposition of an embargo which has handicapped the Government and strengthened the hands of its aggressors.

What is the Council definitely going to do? We have heard a speech on the prospects of success for the work of the Non-Intervention Committee. We are informed that a report was presented last Wednesday. We have heard that the Governments of Europe cannot be satisfied that the objectives of the Non-Intervention Committee have been realised until the last foreigner has been withdrawn and until that unhappy country has been allowed to settle her

own destinies in her own way. It has been said that the main purpose of this meeting of the Council is to uphold and endorse the work of the Non-Intervention Committee, to emphasise our wish for the early withdrawal of all foreign nationals from Spain, and ourselves to determine to do all in our power to facilitate the result. That sentiment is shared by all the members of the Council. We pray for the success of the Non-Intervention Committee and we are determined to do all in our power to facilitate the result, but when we say we will do all in our power I ask the question, What action, if any, is being taken? In other words, are we making progress? I hope we are.

The representative of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom says that Spain should be allowed to settle her own destinies in her own way. The representative of France said, inter alia, that the Spanish people are no longer sole masters of their own destiny. So we come back to the point we have in mind, the welfare and independence of the people of Spain. This does not mean acres, cities, and harbours, but the welfare of the people - men, women, and children. The people are our concern: they are their own concern.

We would fain ask that a committee of the Council be set up to act forthwith, but we have been assured that the Non-Intervention Committee will go beyond the matter of non-intervention: it has been said that the Governments of Europe cannot be satisfied until the last foreigner has been withdrawn from Spain, and until that unhappy country has been allowed to settle her own destinies in her own way.

Could we then from this Council table ask the Non-Intervention Committee definitely to extend its powers? Could we ask that the Non-Intervention Committee, while endeavouring to secure the cessation of hostilities by the withdrawal of foreign combatants forthwith, in accordance with the hope so admirably expressed here, should also endeavour to restore peace and good order, and then have again a democratic expression of opinion by the Spanish people?

I repeat that the future welfare of the Spanish people is their own concern and, speaking as a democrat, I express the wish that the desires of the Spanish people should be consulted. Would it be within the power of the Council to operate directly, or through the Non-Intervention Committee so that, the cessation of hostilities have been achieved, the people of Spain could be assured of their own form of Government and that for a while the League might offer to assist in order that peace may be restored the more quickly? Having secured the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of foreign combatants, could it not be left to the people of Spain to decide? That is to say, could

there not be a consultation with the people, whose business it is?

Surely we all agree that this matter could better be settled by reason than by guns. We should like a direct approach to those concerned asking that they cease hostilities, because only by reason and not by force can peace be maintained. The earth is being menaced by the danger of an attempt to govern by force. The only satisfactory form of Government is a Government elected by the people - when a Government occupies its position at the request of the governed.

Surely there is ingenuity enough in the League of Nations, and sincerity and ability enough among the peoples of Spain, for such a proposal to be put into operation. If we cannot do this, we cannot do something bigger. If, however, the people of Spain could be consulted, when once the horror of war has been removed, there would be some hope of happiness, peace and security for their lives and homes.

A.J.H.R., 1937-A, A-5^B, pp.32-3

APPENDIX 2

NEW ZEALAND POETRY ABOUT THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

- 2-1 Pro-Republicanism versus pro-Francoism in verse: "Whim-Wham" and G.F. Seward in the The Press

Killed by Kindness

The Spaniard loves his Franco,
 His leader brave and good,
 And weeps to think that Franco
 Should be misunderstood.
 Such Honesty and Justice!
 Such Tenderness and Charm!
 How COULD they think of Franco
 Contriving any Harm!

The Spaniard found his Franco
 A little rough at first,
 He didn't know the kindly Heart
 Behind the Shrapnel-burst;
 But Goodness wins the Battle
 With Evil in the End,
 And now the Fascist Butcher
 Becomes the Spaniard's Friend.

Good Franco did not spare them
 The Chastisements of Love;
 His High Explosive Blessings
 He sent them from above;
 And when he shelled his People
 And bombed them in their Beds,
 He did it for his Country,
 To save it from the Reds.

They swore him their Allegiance
 As who, in fact, would not,
 Aware that a Refusal
 Would mean their being shot:
 In shattered streets they cheered him
 While Banners overhead
 Broke out for Franco's Welcome
 And mocked the loyal Dead.

"Whim-Wham", The Press,
 25 March 1939, p.20.

Arriba Espana

When Spanish life was threatened
 By hordes of foreign foes
 Who gulled some Spanish workers
 And led them by the nose
 Then Franco raised his standard
 Tho' not for hope of gain
 For justice and religion
 To save the soul of Spain

What Whim-Wham knows of Franco
 Is just what he's been told
 By lying cable-fakers
 Who sell their souls for gold
 Yet truth cannot be hidden
 Today the fact is plain -
 The victory of Franco's
 The victory of Spain

Today the lie's uncovered
 And Negrins gang has fled
 They took the treasure with them
 They left behind the dead

The "reds" of all the nations
 Have hurried home again
 And Spain, tho' sorely wounded
 Is happy, clean and sane.

G.F. Seward, The Press,
 28 March 1939, p.14.

Sir,-

Mr G.F. Seward's Views
 Are, of course, not News
 He is always making himself plain
 About Spain.

The Case for Franco shows
 Up badly in Prose,
 And if anything rather worse
 In Verse.

If "Cable-fakers" have sold
 Their Souls for Gold
 Why does not General Franco too
 Buy a Few?

Such Mercenary Swine
 Would not draw the Line
 At helping such a noble Crusade
 If paid.

Mr Seward has shown
That I'm not the only one
Who can write Humourous Rhymes
At times.

Being so versatile
I hope he will think it worthwhile
To answer with equal indignation
Our illustration.

"Whim-Wham", The Press,
29 March 1939, p.3.

2-2 Denis Glover in Tommorrow

Variations on a Theme

Pastorale

The little polecat sat and wept,
while all the forest stood quite still:
and still the little polecat wept
great tears that trickled down the hill.

At length he made a move to rise
upon his four world weary legs,
then turned upon the moon his eyes
as round and sad as two poached eggs

and said to her, O Moon (he said),
you are my only friend, I think,
now tell me, passing overhead,
tell me Diana, do I -

But at the awful word he paused,
and tears again began to flow:
he dared no word for fear it caused
an answer other than a No.

Her face was clouded in a frown
as thoughtful as a brooding night;
then Diana smiled, and looking down,
she comforted the beast with light.

My little polecat, then she said
my poor wee introspective skunk,
fight back those tears, lift up your head
- someone's been feeding you the bunk!

There is a statesman of today
whose plots extend from pole to pole,
a man whose lightest words betray
a pestulent and putrid soul

Approach him not: but let me say
beside this mummy with a squint
you's stand as sweet as summer hay,
as fresh as flowering mint.

Gigue

There was a time, we must suppose,
when every Englishman was glad
to beat the bully and the cad
protect the little bullied lad
and punct the bully's nose.

Disdaining talk of compromise
no Englishman then gave a fig
to find the bully very big
- he danced a pugilistic jig
and blacked his cowardly eyes.

But there's no virtue in such a folly,
so Neville Chamberlain instead
invites the thug to go ahead
- and sitting on the victim's head
he pokes him with his broolly.

Coda

If Neville were a butchered sheep
I wouldn't give a button:
condemned while living as a man
he'd be condemned as mutton.

Tomorrow
1 February 1939, p.202.

2-3 Verse play by R.A.K. Mason, written for a SMAC memorial meeting for New Zealanders killed in Spain.

International Brigade

On the stage is a refugee peasant women, child in arms.

(The words are spoken through a microphone off stage, simply and unemotionally.)

(WOMAN'S VOICE)

Throughout the centuries
our ruling classes
ignorant, fanatical, merciless.

And throughout the centuries
we have fought back unflinchingly

never quite victorious,
yet never defeated.

And one day not long ago
we moved to ease those oppressors
off from our bent shoulders,
to trim a little those nails
that scored and scarred our faces.

You know how they answered,
the nobles and the wealthy
and all their mean instruments -
the six generals and their kidney,
violators of their oaths,
traitors to their country.

You know their answer -
knives of the Moors,
rifles from Italy,
aeroplanes from Germany,
gold from France and Britain.

We had planted peace
and friendship and freedom,
yet they were but sprouting
when came the horror,
when came the misery,
anguish, torture, torment.

Spain fought back,
but our men and women -
yes, we women fought too -
we were untrained, ill-equipped,
betrayed at home by our false leaders,
betrayed abroad by lying governments.

Yet a people's torment
found friends of the people:
to our aid they came
from mine, wharf, desk, ship, farm, factory -
from Peru and Canada,
Australia, England, Sweden,
France, Mexico, the States -
from the furthest ends of the earth.

These were not conscripts,
these were not drugged by ignorance,
these were not adventurers,
these were not mercenaries:

But free, straight, with wise eyes,
young fellows whistling,
like our own sons whistling home from work -
like your son or my son.

In our dire need they came to us,
 lived with us, endured with us,
 starved with us, fought with us,
 and many suffered wounds with us,
 and many died with us,
 and many died

Some say the body will live again,
 some say the soul will live again:
 this much no one can doubt -
 as their bodies will live for ever
 in our undying earth,
 so their souls will have life for ever
 in the lives of their fellows.

Their spirit shall live for ever,
 go singing on to the end of time,
 laughing and cheering as once again it marches,
 marches through your veins and my veins,
 ours and our sons and daughters for ever.

The blood of the International Brigade
 no longer fumes from behind the stone walls
 on the rocky hillsides
 among the grey olive trees,
 yet still their voices call saying:

(MAN'S VOICE)

Do not weep for us, friends,
 as though we had died in vain;
 but live you with double strength,
 one being for us who have lost our strength.

Spain is not defeated:
 Spain will fight on
 the fight of humanity,
 though in other forms:
 these invaders will go out by the same road
 as Hannibal went and the Romans,
 as the Moors went and Napoleon -
 and with them will go all traitors
 who sold their own land
 to oppression and darkness.

And in their struggle
 let you in other lands
 still send aid to their exiles,
 above all that the children
 may live the lives we have lost:

As La Pasionaria pleaded
 saying "Women of all the World!
 sisters all! mothers all!"

do not let our little ones
perish of hunger:
answer our cry!"

That is the word of La Pasionaria
and that is the word of the International Brigade -
of the living and of us dead,
of us who are dead
yet still live in you:
send aid to the exiles,
above all to the children.

(WOMAN'S VOICE)

O you who are opposite to us on earth,
you in your Spain of the Southern Seas
with sun and mountains and sparkling waters,
to you I send the message,
a woman of the Spain of the North:

From your land too men hastened
to stand beside us in our need
and fight in mutual cause,
and of them too were some who died

Stand in their honour.

(ALL STAND)

Stand in honour of them
and of their comrades who died:
stand in their honour.

They shall live in us all,
by our words, thoughts, and actions,
through time without end:

Truly the tomb cannot contain them,
the grave will not hold them:
these dead live for ever.

SMAC Records,
Jackson Collection (private),
Auckland.

APPENDIX 3

THE SPANISH MEDICAL AID COMMITTEE
Constitution and List of Endorsements

3-1 Draft Constitution of the New Zealand Spanish Medical Aid Committee 1 December 1937.

ARTICLE 1 - Name

The name of the organisation shall be the New Zealand Spanish Medical Aid Committee.

ARTICLE 11 - Aim and Objects

The Spanish Medical Aid Committee is comprised of representatives of organisations and individuals having differing and even to some extent conflicting political views, with entire agreement of the necessity and urgency of sending medical and ambulance attention to the people of Spain, where the need is great.

Their adherence to the Committee does not indicate the abandonment or reconciliation of their general and various political view-points, but it is the recognition that on this particular question they are unanimous.

The appeal was launched primarily to send ambulance aid to the Spanish people. In war such units must be under the control of one or other of the combatant armies, and those who initiated the movement were concerned that the Spanish people were without adequate services.

Ambulance nurses give recognition to the general practice of the profession, outlined in the Hippocratic oath, of extending their care to all in need of it, wherever they may encounter such need in the pursuance of their duties.

The Committee desires from its members only an adherence to the general object for which the appeal was launched, and leaves every member free for the expression of its views as to the political aspect of the present war in Spain.

This implies:-

- (1) The organisation throughout New Zealand of groups having aims in common with the Committee.
- (2) The education of the public by demonstrations, meetings and such other activities as may be deemed necessary from time to time.

(3) The repudiation of statements made by individuals, organisations, or otherwise, calculated to belittle and nullify the work of the Committee.

(4) The sending of medical assistance, food, and clothing to the Spanish Government.

(5) Support and maintenance of any individuals sent under Section (4).

(6) Close co-operation with the British Medical Aid Committee and similar organisations in other countries.

(7) The formation of such sub-committees as shall be deemed necessary from time to time.

ARTICLE 111 - Basis of Co-operation

(1) Any group in any area of New Zealand prepared to carry on effective work in line with the Aim of the Committee may be recognised on the following conditions:-

(a) It shall adopt as its Aim the Aim set out in Article II and shall embody this in its Constitution.

(b) It shall adopt the name New Zealand Spanish Medical Aid Committee (..... Branch).

(c) Its membership shall be open to all desiring to further the Aim of the Committee.

ARTICLE 1V - District Centres

(1) There shall be four District Centres in New Zealand to carry out the objects of the Committee in each District and to form a connecting link between the National Committee and the Branches of the Movement in this District.

(2) The District Centres shall be known as:-

S.M.A.C. (Auckland Centre)
 S.M.A.C. (Wellington Centre)
 S.M.A.C. (Christchurch Centre)
 S.M.A.C. (Dunedin Centre)

And shall include the districts commonly known as:-

Auckland Province
 Wellington, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki Provinces
 Canterbury, Westland, Nelson, Marlborough Provinces
 Otago, Southland Provinces

(3) Membership of the District Centre shall be open to all people invited by the existing committees and who signify their intention of active co-operation.

(4) Each Centre shall appoint such offices and sub-committees as it shall deem expedient for the furtherance of the objects of the Committee.

ARTICLE V - National Centre

(1) The control, management and direction of the movement, except as herein modified, shall be vested in the national Centre; provided that matters of general policy must be referred to all District Centres for consideration and recommendation before decision by the National Centre.

(2) The National Centre shall be that District Centre chosen from time to time by a majority decision of the four District Centres.

(3) Until such decision is settled or in the event of failure to decide under Section (2) the Dunedin Centre shall be deemed the National Centre.

(4) The National Centre shall appoint such officers and sub-committees as it shall deem expedient for the furtherance of the objects of the Committee.

ARTICLE VI - Conferences

(1) Conferences of the Committee for the discussion of work and progress shall be held only when urgent need arises, and expenses shall be arranged where possible independently of the funds of the Committee.

(2) Informal conferences shall be arranged as often as possible not only between Centres but with all Branches when members of the Committee are travelling in the course of their business or otherwise in New Zealand.

ARTICLE VII - Headquarters

The Headquarters of the Committee means the location of the National Centre as it shall be determined from time to time.

ARTICLE VIII - Amendments

(1) All proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Secretary of the National Centre.

(2) The proposed amendment shall be submitted to all Centres by the Secretary of the National Centre.

(3) The amendment shall be deemed carried if agreed upon by three or more District Centres.

ARTICLE IX - Dissolution

(1) The Committee shall be dissolved by resolution agreed upon by three or more District Centres provided that no such resolution shall be deemed to have been passed unless all District Centres have considered and expressed themselves thereon.

(2) The Committee shall be dissolved as from the passing of such resolution and the funds and other assets of the Committee shall thereupon be disposed of according to resolution agreed upon by three or more District Centres.

ARTICLE X - Adoption

This constitution shall be deemed the constitution of the New Zealand Spanish Medical Aid Committee from the date of its ratification by the Committees at present operating in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin and at present known as Auckland Spanish Medical Aid Committee, Wellington Spanish Medical Aid Committee, Christchurch Spanish Medical Aid Committee, Dunedin Spanish Medical Aid Committee.

- 1 DEC 1937

SMAC Records,
Jackson Collection
(private), Auckland.

3-2 SMAC List of Endorsements of the Medical Aid Campaign

Rev. E.T. Cox
 Dr J.P. Hastings
 Rev. Mary Dreaver, J.P.
 Dr R.P. Anschutz
 Professor Sewell
 Dr W.B. Sutch
 Mr P. Neilson, M.P.
 Mr Ormond Wilson, M.P.
 Dr W.J. McMillan, M.P.
 Mr Mark Silverstone, Director Reserve Bank
 Mr W.J. Lyon, M.P.
 Mr N.M. Richmond, M.A.
 National Executive, Federation of Labour
 Mr J. Harris, Librarian, Otago University
 Mr D.P. Kennedy, President Otago University Students'
 Association
 Mr James Saunders, Dunedin
 Rev. W.L.S. Harbour, Dunedin
 Mr J.W. Munro, M.P.
 Rev. H. Hogg
 Mr A. Dunningham, Public Librarian, Dunedin
 Dr Beeby, Christchurch
 Professor Ramsay, Otago University
 Mr M. Cameron, Otago University
 Mr H.H. Ferguson, Otago University
 Professor J. Findlay, Otago University
 Professor Kirk, Victoria College, Wellington
 Professor Marples, Otago University
 Mr D.J. Donald, Victoria College
 Dr J. Renfrew White, Dunedin
 Mr S. Saltzman, Dunedin
 Rev. A.M. Richards, Totara Flat
 Dr O.H. Frankel, Wheat Research Officer, Christchurch
 Mrs A.G. Strong, Dean Home Science Faculty, Otago University
 Mr W.D. Mason, Middlemarch
 Mr C. Soumaras, Dunedin
 H. Winstone Rhodes, Canterbury College
 F.A. Shurrock, Director School of Art, Christchurch
 Hon. J.A. McCulloch, M.L.C.
 Mr C. Morgan Williams, M.P.
 Mr E.J. Howard, M.P.
 Mrs T.E. Taylor
 Dr H.N. Parton
 Mr W.E. Leadley, President Christchurch Returned Soldiers'
 Association
 Mr J. Roberts, Chairman Christchurch Labour Representative
 Council
 Mr H.G. Kilpatrick, Freezing Workers' Union
 Mr A.H. Scales, Furniture Trades Union
 Kennaway Henderson, Editor "Tomorrow"

G.E. Jackson
Spain's Fight For Freedom. SMAC,
 Auckland, 1937, pp 26-27.

APPENDIX 4

Letters from New Zealand Nurses in Spain

4-1 Extracts from Nurse Isobel Dodds' letters to her family

C/o New Oxford Street
London

15th September 1937

Dear Mater and Dad,

The longer I am here in Spain the harder it becomes to write. As I said in my last letter the fighting is not in our area at present and so we are not very busy - in fact this last month we have had a couple of days off duty.

Unfortunately Renee and I cannot be free together so we have just had to manage to amuse ourselves on our own.

My first free day was shortly after I had been sick (by the way I'm hale and hearty now) and so feeling like a rest I spent the day sleeping and reading, and in the evening Renee managed to finish up at 6 p.m. so we took our tea up in the hills. I have previously mentioned how beautiful it is here and the memories of our walks in the evenings will always remain with me when I am no longer in Spain.

10.10.37 Renee and I have just returned from a two day's trip to Valencia. It always seems to be the way but when you are busy there are no nurses, and then when the rush dies down and there is little work we seem to have more nurses, so Renee and I decided that as we have had but two days off these last 11 weeks, and transport was going through to Valencia we would also do a little business in the big city. You see we had left our English money with a girl there and as she was shortly leaving for England and we had no official receipt for it we braved the horrors of the bumpy dusty long trip in the back of an ambulance for a matter of 300 to 400 miles.

Valencia, since we were there last, has increased its military activities. Life goes on in much the same old way, excepting of course with the population now double what it was originally. Accommodation is very difficult to obtain and food is rationed.

Actually I did not feel that food was short. There appears to be enough to prevent everyone from starving but there is none to waste. Also supplies vary and while some

things are more or less plentiful others simply do not exist.

One week bread simply could not be bought, while when we were there bread was plentiful but milk and butter was non-existent and sugar scarce.

A sight which we have become very accustomed to but which nevertheless is none the more beautiful for its familiarity is the lines of people waiting in food queues.

In Valencia as I said food is not plentiful but there is enough of a kind to prevent all from starving. It is however, despite the Government control of the prices, very expensive.

When we were in Valencia before the amount of beggars was appalling. Men, women and grubby children thrust a dirty paw under your nose at every turn, the Government as you can imagine discouraged this as much as they can and actually now there is no need to beg as people who cannot work receive maintenance. Still there is always that certain type, who finding that they can make more by begging continue to do so and crawl to those who care to give.

We have had an English writer staying here with us for the last week or so and she has been collecting material about our Hospital here in Huete. I have read her report and it is very good even if the marvellous comradeship with the village is a little stressed, but I must add that it is very much better than when we came here and every one working in the hospital gets along very well. As Mrs Winifred Bates says there is naturally a struggle between the old and the new life but any difficulties are more than compensated for by the spirit and enthusiasm of the younger people. The girls are especially keen and are quick to learn when once shown how a thing is correctly done, of course some of their ideas of sterility is almost too good to be true but now that these youngsters are being properly taught their work and encouraged in the youth organisations they are going to make the Spain of tomorrow a more healthy and wholesome place.

19th January 1938

Dear Dad,

This note is to you since it is your birthday today - may you have many happy returns. I have been in another hospital in Murcia in the South of Spain for the last month or so, and today or rather last night I started on my way

home to Huete. Transport is a somewhat difficult problem and as the trains are rather slow and always crowded we always travel by ambulance or lorry. However this time a number of old patients were leaving hospital to report to Headquarters and as it happens to be in a town on the way to Huete and I had nursed some of the lads I decided to travel back with them and they could arrange for my transport on the second hope. Unfortunately I chose to ask someone who has a no better knowledge of the Spanish than I have myself, with the result that he got me on the wrong train and I landed stranded miles out of my direction in God knows what town. Also another complication is the fact that in war time people cannot travel around the countryside without a "salvo conductor" which states where you are going and for what. My salvo conductor is for a town some 150 miles away. I have Renee's suitcase which has her name written all over it and my own name on my papers. That is taking a bit of explaining. However, one thing you can always depend on the Spaniards for, and that is they are the soul of generosity and kindness especially to the International nurses and at the moment a fellow passenger is endeavouring to do something for me with the powers that be. He has turned out to be a member of the "Socorro Rejo" which in translation means "Red help" and is something of the same organisation we had during the World War; The Red Cross.

Later. I managed to arrive safely home somewhere after midnight after hitchhiking around Spain riding in ancient burro-carts, ambulances, trucks and trains - what a life! I nearly froze at night since central Spain is so much colder than the Spain where I had been, but fortunately the day was beautifully fine.

Our hospital is very busy again with wounded from Teruel. They are marvellous patients - the best I have nursed so far. We have ----- stationed in our village where they are resting for a few days prior to going on leave to Madrid and like their wounded comrades are an exceptionally fine type. I haven't received any letters from you all for sometime but I suppose they are on the way. At Xmas time I got several Free Lances. It seems so strange to see photos of New Zealand. Sometimes I feel that it is years and years since I left, yet the time passed so quickly. I can hardly believe so much has been crammed into the eight months since I left home. Renee and I are still working together but as I mentioned in earlier letters Aunty (Nurse Sharples) is in some other. We haven't heard from her for ages but we have heard about her from different people. She is just the same and everyone is inclined to treat her as a joke.

Well cheerio for just now,
Love to all,
Salud, Isobel.

Undated

The peasant women wrapped in their black shawls and many petticoats stand huddled around the village pump waiting in turn to fill their urns - a mongrel dog crouches in a doorway as wind comes wailing round the corner. It moans up through the bare leafless trees and they tremble and sway painfully - the dog crouches yet lower in its corner, the women huddle a little more, the children clutch harder their dry crust and the wind wails on - like the moans of the Valiant lying frozen and suffering on the battlefields or the cries of the widows and the orphan children but above it all floats a melody - voices raised in song "The Internationale"!!! Some school children are singing on their way to school, a Chica hums on her way to work in the hospital, there is a tramping of feet, a muffled curse as someone stumbles in the mud, with tin plates and mugs slung from their belts a group of soldiers comes into view. They are part of a battalion stationed as reserves in the village. Their hands are cold and their feet most probably too. Marching will warm their feet and clapping their fingers warm, but their hearts are warmed by the chant of their song and the knowledge that they are fighting for what they know to be Right and Truth and they have within them that inward glow - and the brotherhood of man - and so their voices rise too above the voice of the wind, up over the trembling trees, the church spires and old Moorish Castle on the hill and over the plains and mountain tops out to meet the New Year - and VICTORY!

This sounds like mush that I have written you know the sob stuff story that everyone likes to put across but you realise that all of us must have our sentimental times, so now that it is over I'll tell you something with a few gruesome truths. The village next to us is one of some importance. It is not very large and is dirty and not very beautiful but being on the main road between Madrid and Valencia and a junction for other important centres in itself, gave it some importance, together with two large hospitals, a railway station and petrol stations for supplying gasolene to Government transport this place was in its own way quite a little town.

Some months ago it was bombed but very little damage was done. A fortnight ago the avions dropped a few bombs once more but did little damage. That was the beginning, two or three days later twenty planes bombed the town incessantly for two hours as a military object they failed in so much that they missed the Railway and the gasolene stations which are so important but the hospitals got it in the neck and the complete town was laid in ruins. Hardly a house was left standing and although the amount of deaths

was small in comparison with the damage nevertheless quite a few were killed. I forgot to mention that the warehouses from which the hospitals in the surrounding district receive their food supplies also was in this town and likewise went up in smoke as did their precious and important thing of life - food!

Renee has a letter yesterday from Mr Hunter saying that they had to date (his letter was two months old) sent something like 350 to London Committee. This hospital we are at has, until just recently, been supported by London, but some disputes and due to certain unpopular people, all support has been withdrawn. This places the hospital in a very poverty stricken position with no money from London at all. We feel (that is Renee and I) that the New Zealand money should be sent to this hospital and have tried to arrange through the Administrator some agreement with London, but so far nothing has happened. I know that this letter will be about two months old by the time it reaches you, another two months for a reply, but do I do feel that Sister Shadbolt as representative of our small unit should have some power and authority in stating how the money can be spent to the best advantage for after all we are actually on the job and know just a little better than an office in London.

As usual I send my regards to all my friends and hope that all are well. I hope that you received safely my little box with its gifts for you and posters and odd books. Well, my dears Xmas will all be over when you receive this and I hope it was a Merry one. To you Mum and Dad, happy birthdays! Mave, dear I'm glad you are going nursing - the old school tie and all that sort of thing. And when you are through we will run off together and win whatever war happens to be waging at the time.

Cheers and all that to you all
Salud, Isobel.

SMAC Records
Jackson Collection (Private)
Auckland

3-2 Extracts from letters written by Sister Una Wilson to Phil Thorne, secretary of the Sydney Spanish Relief Committee, and to nursing friends.

Muntaner, 407,
Barcelona.

July 14, 1937.

Dear Phil,

I have a strange feeling that you have not been getting my letters and know for a fact that my family have not received theirs. I am having this posted in France.

My diary speaks the cold truth, and I think it is better for you to get it that way.

February 23: "We had some frightful cases today, just the remains of once healthy men. My God! how brave they are. Every day we are bombed but I am too tired to care what happens. I am in charge of the theatre and sometimes there are as many as ten doctors in it. It is too much really. They are very good to us, of course, and are everlastingly telling me what an excellent theatre Sister I am, etc. They are dears, really, but I am too tired for compliments. Our two chiefs, Doctors L. and D. are very worried about the amount of work we have, but it seems impossible to get another sister who knows the theatre. We have had German, Dutch and Spanish girls, but have had to get rid of them. Thank God I've got Mac." (Macfarlane).

February 24: "Never in my life have I felt so utterly tired, miserable and unhappy. I would be grateful to be caught by one of the machineguns which play about in the air. We seem to wade about in a river of blood without a break. Everyone about me receives mail, and still none for me. I have given up hope of letters."

February 27: "I have just had three whole hours sleep, but when I wakened I could not speak, my voice had gone completely. I looked in my little mirror and was shocked. My face is ashen and wrinkled. Hell! I'm ugly.

"Something terrible happened to me this morning. You see, for weeks now our huge courtyard, every corridor and every bed in the place has been filled with dead and dying. The ambulances have to unload right outside the gates for they cannot get in for bodies. I rush out of the theatre from the dispensary to get something, and I must step over bodies all the way; some dead, some dying, all with horrible wounds awaiting attention, my heart breaks for I know that

lots of them must die before we can attend them. The groaning keeps up day and night. While we work we hear it and forget that we haven't slept ourselves for days and nights. My last sleep was on the 24th at about 10 p.m., for about four hours. Mac had had a sleep so she relieved me for a while. I went to our room about 9 a.m. but found that two wounded occupied our beds. In Mac's was a very young boy with a waxen-like face from loss of blood. He had a severe head injury, in fact his brains were oozing out on the pillow and under the bed was a huge pool of blood. In my bed was a dead man. I turned back the bedclothes and found he had been shot through the stomach. My bed was filled with blood. I had him removed, turned my mattress over and flopped on to it. Shortly afterwards I was awakened by bombs dropping. I looked across at the boy in Mac's bed. He was dead. My whole body ached so much from sheer fatigue I just went to sleep again. In about ten minutes, however, was asked to hop out, that they wanted my bed for a patient. I jumped up and ran to the theatre, where I found Dr D. (with whom I have worked since coming to Spain) I said to him: 'D., I simply must sleep for I'm going mad and I haven't a bed.' He gave me two tablets to make me sleep, put me into his bed which is just off the theatre, covered me up with his big military coat and went on operating again. Dr L. came in and sat on the bed for a while and talked to me till I fell asleep. The last I remember was Dr L. stroking my forehead. He and Dr D. saved my life that time. Since then I have worked without sleep until about six this morning. If I was well it would be O.K., but I'm really quite ill and it takes all my nerve to stand these gastric pains which almost paralyse me every 5 to 10 minutes. All the food here is just swamped in olive oil and the meat full of garlic. I can eat nothing at all just now and luckily get lots of condensed milk.

"Mac broke down completely this a.m. For everyone else work comes to an end, but ours goes on endlessly. We must at this hour begin cleaning huge piles of instruments, scrub the gore of everything, resterilise; only to begin again in a couple of hours time.

"Never in my life have I had to exert such will-power. I felt myself sleeping as I stood up and yet there staring me in the face were the piles of instruments and the theatre - or I should say both theatres (we have two large operating theatres) in a mess and nothing ready. I stood there cleaning instruments. No sound in the building other than the groans of the hopeless cases outside the door - these cases beyond repair, just left to die, when of a sudden I felt I simply must sleep or fall dead on the floor.

"Again I heard the groans of the hopeless cases outside and thought a few hundreds more will be arriving from the battlefield and I'll be called upon to work as though I'd

had a good night's sleep. I went on with the instruments a little longer and then it happened. Like something tearing or stretching in my brain; a terrible feeling and I was wide awake. I went to the kitchen to get some coffee and as soon as I opened the door I heard the usual groans for "Agua". I went round them all and gave them water. One of them managed to drink, others gargled it back to me and two choked and died. I got the theatre all ready for operating and we had begun again about 8 a.m. when Mac arrived. She hardly slept at all, and thinking of me came on duty. I went to the cupboard and took something which I knew would make me sleep in spite of the noise (Evipan tablets, as a matter of fact) and crawled upstairs to find an empty bed, into which I fell. I have wakened almost like a corpse, in appearance, anyhow, but I suppose a face-lift will fix that up after the war.

Now Phil, realise, of course, that this is the sort of thing which happens in our busy times, or did happen. You see, ours is the hospital nearest the front, and we therefore get everything fresh from the field. We, I'm sure, will never have to endure quite the same again, for now there are stacks of nurses in the country.

Barcelona

15th July, 1937.

Dear Phil,

Now this extract from my Diary about May-Day. I actually joined in the celebrations.

1 May: "Life is very nice just now for our battalion has just gone into rest. This place is all flowers and gaiety to-day, all ready for the May Day celebrations. I must be away because I am joining in. First, late evening - I am fagged out from laughing but I must begin at the beginning. I just dashed out this morning in time to catch the procession as it left. I grabbed a bunch of May flowers and ran to join the girls. I walked with the Spanish girls I knew. There were about one hundred of us altogether dressed in snow white carrying a large bouquet of flowers. The procession consisted of about 1000 people all told. First the military people with a band, then us, then the people of the village. We marched through the town, up and down and down and up every street and round the public square. As we went the air was rent with the singing of songs and shouting of greetings to the hundreds who swarmed the streets.

"Suddenly there was quietness and the laughter ceased. As we approached the hill which leads to the cemetery where our soldiers are buried the band played the 'International'. We sang it until we reached the gates where all music and singing ceased. I can assure you it was a solemn procession which entered those gates. When I walked in I gasped. Never have I seen such a scene. The whole cemetery was a blaze of blue flag lilies, all excepting the small, square area where the soldiers lie. We were told to wait on one side and it was a pretty sight to see. Close on 100 girls carrying large armfuls of multi-coloured flowers standing perfectly still in the veritable field of blue flag lilies. We were given our orders for the ceremony and waited while the procession formed a square right round the plot where the graves were.

"The 'Internationale' was again played softly and we approached the graves in files of twos, on past them until we reached the square when we separated into single file and eventually just wandering anywhere sprinkling our flowers over the graves as we went. Most of the flowers were the white May flowers. Soon the whole area, pathways and all was a mass of them with hundreds of black crosses marking the resting places of all the men whom I have met, talked with, and in many cases attended in the theatre.

"Can you imagine the scene? We, sprinkling flowers over the graves while at the edge stood the military men at attention with the village folk forming a background giving the 'Salut' while the band softly played the 'International'. It was a touching scene, believe me. When we had finished all our flowers we stood on one side while speeches in every possible language were made. I understood a little of those in German and Spanish but the rest were wasted on me. Almost every country of the world was represented there to-day. If I hadn't been there New Zealand would have been left out and so I'm quite pleased with myself. When the speeches were finished we marched from the cemetery and back to the hospital.

I have sent many letters home to Phil Thorne describing the large attacks, etc. but I'm afraid he doesn't receive them. We have been through some tough times and its only a fluke that we are alive. Who cares anyhow, I don't, and if they don't pop me off this time just think of the almighty experience. As a matter of fact I'm itching to get back to the Front now, that's how it gets one.

I remember Q - that you are keen about your religion, and remember also the laughably ridiculous atrocities which people there believed to be practised upon the priests and

nuns. There is not an ounce of truth in any of it. Haven't you ever heard the word "Propaganda"? I have seen the nuns, dozens and dozens of them and talked to them. They hold the same positions exactly as they held before the war began, I mean the same nursing position, and the only "outrage" (this would be an outrage only from your point of view, and not from mine) that I can see, is that they are obliged to dress as ordinary nurses and not as nuns. Our hospital here is run by all nuns, I mean ex-nuns. In Tossa, a village near here where I've just spent a week, the old priest lives there are in peace, dressed as an ordinary man of course. He seems to spend his time fishing, etc. It is only the priests who refuse to accept the new ideas who are taken off to prison. That seems terrible to you. Well, it seems terrible to me that if I am caught by the other side I will be shot immediately, even though my work is purely humanitarian. War's war you know. I would love you and C - to be here with me just to see a few interesting examples. This atmosphere is one which any honest minded person simply must approve of, and even though you Q -, are such a sticker for your religion, I know you'll enjoy these bits which are really the teaching of Christ, as a matter of fact Communism seems to me rather closely related to christianity. You know some of the greatest intellects of the world are Communists. Last night at a congress an Oxford graduate spoke from the platform. He had just become a Communist and what amused me is that when he got up to speak, the orchestra played "God Save the King" and everyone gave the left salute. At the congress there were speakers from all the countries, and as each stood up they played the national anthem of his country.

From the Battlefields of Spain.
Spanish Relief Committee,
Sydney,

n.d.

APPENDIX 5

Tables showing the editorial coverage of the Spanish Civil War in six New Zealand newspapers from 1936 to 1939.

Table 1 - Editorials in six New Zealand newspapers on the Spanish internal situation 1936-1939

Newspaper	Year				Total
	1936	1937	1938	1939	
N.Z. Herald	5	5	2	5	17
Evening Post	7	5	5	1	18
The Press	2	3	1	1	7
Otato Daily Times	8	2	4	5	19
Waikato Times	3	-	3	3	9
Grey River Argus	1	-	-	-	1

Table 2 - Editorials in six New Zealand newspapers on International Involvement in Spain 1936-1939

Newspaper	Year				Total
	1936	1937	1938	1939	
N.Z. Herald	15	31	12	5	63
Evening Post	18	33	22	10	83
The Press	9	22	10	4	45
Otato Daily Times	11	21	12	1	45
Waikato Times	10	28	6	9	53
Grey River Argus	3	7	1	-	11

Table 3 - Editorials in six New Zealand newspapers on New Zealand Involvement in the Spanish Civil War

Newspaper	Year				Total
	1936	1937	1938	1939	
N.Z. Herald	-	1	1	-	2
Evening Post	-	-	-	-	-
The Press	-	1	-	-	1
Otato Daily Times	-	2	1	-	3
Waikato Times	-	-	-	-	1
Grey River Argus	-	-	1	-	1

Table 4 - Editorials in six New Zealand newspapers on the Spanish Civil War: Totals 1936-1939

Newspaper	Year				Total
	1936	1937	1938	1939	
N.Z. Herald	20	37	15	10	82
Evening Post	25	38	27	11	107
The Press	12	27	11	7	57
Otato Daily Times	20	25	17	6	68
Waikato Times	13	29	9	12	63
Grey River Argus	4	7	2	-	13

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