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British policy toward the spanish civil war 1936-1939

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BRITISH POLICY
TOWARD THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR
1936 - 1939

by
John Foreman

A THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Faculty

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Table of Contents.

Introduction.....P.3.

Chapter One : Strategic Interests and Appeasement...P.19.

Chapter Two : Non-Intervention.....P.89.

Chapter Three : Interests and Policies.....P.225.

Conclusion.....P.346.

Bibliography.....P.421.

Map : The Mediterranean and Black Seas.....P.51.

Abstract of: British Foreign Policy Toward the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939. John Foreman.

From the outset, one must decide what one means by the term 'Britain' and what one considers is involved in the formulation of 'policy'. Britain cannot be merely taken to be the political leadership of Britain, while foreign policy formulation is a group activity in the fullest sense. The decision-makers responsible for foreign policy stand between the national community which they represent and the international society in which they must advance national policy goals. One of the tasks which face decision-makers is, therefore, to manage the tensions that arise from the incompatibility of the values and interests of the national community with those of the other actors in the international system.

Britain, in the latter 1930's, faced a threat from Germany, Italy and Japan to her Imperial interests which she did not have the military resources to meet. As a result to avoid becoming involved in conflicts and to attempt to alleviate such possible conflicts became a cardinal aim of British foreign policy. This was the essence of the policy of appeasement. Spain became one conflict which threatened to cut across appeasement of Italy and Germany, who committed themselves to obtaining victory for the Nationalists in Spain. The British Government attempted to remove this obstacle by accepting the intervention of Italy and Germany in Spain.

This led to tensions within Britain since a variety of factors had led to the emotional commitment of the British people to the Spanish cause. As a result, Britain became the prime mover in the establishment of a Non-Intervention Committee, whose supposed task was to limit intervention by outside powers in Spain but whose main purpose was to shield the British Government from the outraged conscience of the British nation.

However, the British wanted to be hoodwinked. Fundamental changes in the economic substructure and social attitudes were creating a New Britain indifferent to the realities of the outside world and fully supporting appeasement, even while carrying the moral attitudes of an older age. In carrying out a policy that the majority wanted, British policy went through many twists and turns to satisfy an uneasy conscience.

Indeed, the main lines of policy were carried out in the traditional diplomatic channels away from publicity. British policy toward Spain was a function of the policy of appeasement and as such a matter for direct negotiation between Britain and Italy and Germany. As it became clear that Franco would win, the British Government in secret negotiation with the Nationalists undertook to protect its economic and strategic interests in Spain.

In its superficial aspects, British policy was the result of the need to manage tensions; in fact it was the result of the need to remove Spain as an obstacle to better relations with Italy and Germany.

INTRODUCTION.

"Fiction there is - and history. Certain critics of no little discernment have considered that fiction is history which might have taken place, and history fiction which has taken place. We are, indeed, forced to acknowledge that the novelist's art often compels belief, just as reality sometimes defies it. Alas! there exists an order of minds so skeptical that they deny the possibility of any fact as soon as it diverges from the commonplace. It is not for them that I write."

(Andre Gide - Lafcadio's Adventures)

The outcome of any attempt to state and explain the content and nature of British foreign policy toward the Spanish Civil War will depend in part on the conceptual framework of decision-making that is adopted. The simplest is to conceive foreign policy as consisting of a series of decisions made by a group of responsible people in response to problems that present themselves in the adjustment of the relations of the state for which they are responsible, with other states present in the international arena. This approach has the virtue of simplicity, but also its vices. Decision-makers do not exist in a vacuum, judging each new problem purely in terms of the elements

present in the new situation. As a conceptual framework, this approach does not allow for the accomodation of the complex elements present in the decision-making process.

George Modelski, in his study of the formulation of foreign policy, correctly rejects this approach as inadequate.¹ Two broad areas of the foreign policy formulation process point to the inadequacy of the approach:

(1) The individual, or group of individuals, responsible for foreign policy formulation, in fulfilling that function are responsible to the community, or at least to elite groups within the community. A decision-making process within a political society performs the function of articulating and aggregating conflicting interests present in the community, and interests are aggregated throughout the whole structure of the political structure of the community, not merely at the top-most levels. As Almond and Coleman state: "...the aggregative function may be performed within all the subsystems of the political system-legislative bodies, political executives...bureaucracies, media of communication, party systems, interest groups of the various types."² One should, therefore, not merely concentrate on the desires and the goals of the decision-makers, but also upon the structuring of the entire political process and the interests which are fed into it. Certain decisions will be of more interest to certain groups than to others (the question of Britain's possible participation in the war in Vietnam would be of less interest to industrial groups and trade unions, than would the question

of entry into the European Economic Community,) and thus each new problem presented by foreign events presents different tasks of interest conciliation: "One must describe in more detail the type of problem, the type of decision, with which statesmen are called upon to deal. Their specific activities are determined by the sort of functions they are required to perform, and therefore the concept of the tasks and duties of policy-makers gives a more correct view of their activities, and of the responsibilities arising from their unique position as intermediaries between their community and the international society, than the concept of 'decision-making' "³

(2) No problem faced by decision-makers can be seen as being independent of the total syndrome of world events, past and present; neither can decision-making on one particular problem be independent of peoples' ideas on the dimly perceived future, which makes necessary planning for such contingencies as can be foreseen. In fact it is totally unrealistic to conceive of foreign policy as a series of problems; foreign policy forms a continuous flow of activity - actions taken on one problem, having led to the formation of a 'policy' must effect actions taken on another problem, since peoples' minds are not totally compartmentalised, and the institutionalisation of foreign policy planning and execution tends to lead to bureaucratic inertia. Having reacted to a problem, success, or lack of success with that reaction will lead to the learning of lessons and the accumulation of knowledge which will

be applied to future problems. This learning process links the past with the present and the dimly perceived future, and provides the continuity in foreign policy (critics often see this as the establishment of preconditioned or 'fixed' irrational responses). The Bay of Pigs fiasco may, in part, be seen as Kennedy inheriting plans drawn up by the previous administration. Johnson's policy towards the Dominican crisis may, in part, be seen as the result of 'lessons' learned from Castro's accession to power in Cuba. "Moreover, often conceived of as a succession of separate responses to world events, 'decision-making' tends to ignore the continuous stream of activities within which decisions are embedded, and pays little heed, in theory at least, to the actions that link one decision to another. A workable conception of foreign policy should put greater emphasis on the continuity of all foreign policy processes; it should be supplemented by emphasis on foresight, on the necessity for constant preoccupation with the future, on what might perhaps be called 'strategic planning.'⁴ " Accumulation of knowledge will not only link actions from one period of time to another, a classic example of which would be Eden's belief that Nasser was a new Hitler come to devil him, and that the lessons learned from the failures (real or supposed) of appeasement should not be repeated. American action in Vietnam may, in part, be seen as a continuation in Asia of policies developed in

Greece and Turkey in the immediate post Second World War period.

The framework, therefore, which will be adopted in analysing the foreign policy of Britain towards the civil war in Spain will be borrowed from Modelski: "Policy-makers fill the crucial role of representative agents (not principles), of intermediaries or go-betweens. Although they are not neutral intermediaries, because their primary loyalties belong to the community, they constitute an essential instrument whose function is mediation between that community and the outside world." ⁵ Decision-makers cannot be conceived of as neutral or the additional reason that they themselves have ideas on what should be the nature of foreign policy. It would be unrealistic to look upon decision-makers as honest brokers, mediating between conflicting interests within the community, uninterested in the outcome. The foreign policy formulating machine is one that embodies a continuity of traditions and concepts that are fed into the decision-making process. In a foreign policy debate in the House of Commons on February 21, 1938, Mr. De Chair raised a pleading voice against the machinations of the British foreign office: " I could not help thinking of the sort of mentality I come across in my exploration into the field of diplomacy, and the type of conversation I used to hear. If I might be allowed to caricature, this was the sort of conversation one used to hear: 'What, not be in the next big war! After all the trouble we have taken to bring it along! Why, this war is

the pet hot-house plant of the diplomatic service. We watered it in 1919, pruned it in the invasion of the Ruhr, and--." At this point Mr. Emrys-Evans was forced to interject: "Is the hon. Member really putting that forward as a serious statement?"⁶ To Mr. Emrys-Evans question one must add an ardent 'Amen', but Mr. DeChair's statement is useful in pointing out the fact that foreign policy is a result of a complex interaction between the desires of interest groups within the community, the distilled diplomatic wisdom, tradition and strategic planning embodied in the foreign affairs department of the civil service, and the personalities and beliefs existing within the elected decision-makers within the community.

The relationship between the internal setting of the community and policy towards the world outside the community is a complex amalgam of the formal structure of the constitutional decision-making institutions, the activities of interest groups and political parties, and the effects of personality. These 'elements' are 'mixed' in various and varying ways within different states, so that the complexities can only be analysed in terms of specific decisions made within specific situations. But for the moment it will suffice to state that the position of the decision-maker is not merely that of a purchaser in the market of the interest group loyalty. The authority of the decision-maker to make decisions places him in the position of a seller, as well as a buyer. The decision-maker is also a creator of opinion within the community, due to the decision-

maker being in a position of authority, with all the trappings of public office and the attendant prestige; the probable important place within an important political party within the state adds to the aura of influence and the ability to mobilise power; and the decision-makers control of the instruments of gathering and analysing information from the diplomatic services, and thus having the spotlight concentrated upon himself as a source of authoritative knowledge within the community (as well as the ability to 'leak' such information as is considered desirable). A political Janus, the decision-maker looks both to the demands of the various interests fed to him by the community, and to the demands of the international system as seen through his sense of logic and value system.

It is necessary to distinguish between various demands that the decision-maker has to take into account when arriving at decisions. These can be grouped under the general headings of the demands of the party system, demands of specific interest groups, and finally what may be termed the general temper of the country - the most difficult for the analyst to pin-point. In a parliamentary system of the type that exists in Britain, the concentration of political power to make decisions within the cabinet and the aggregative two party system protected the legislature from being effectively penetrated by interest group activity, with the result that "...the impact of any single interest group - with the exception of the trade unions - is quite

limited." ⁶ The growing complecity of modern life has led to an alteration in the nature and organization of interest group-activity, and the point of attack by the interest groups on the decision-making process. The ever developing need for the expert specialist in a complex scientific world, becoming increasingly interdependent, has led to decision-making becoming devolved upon the administrative bureaucracies in direct delegation of decision-making power and in the need of decision-makers for advise. "As long as Parliament held the centre of the political stage - as long, that is to say, as political conflicts centred on parliamentary policies - interest groups tended not only to act chiefly through 'interested' MP.s but to be ephemeral, one purpose organisations, chiefly concerned with raising a large volume of public support for important legislative changes. Nowadays, however, they possess much greater continuity and engage in a much wider variety of political activities, for their interests are being constantly affected by governmental actions. The public campaign has been replaced largely by the informal and unostentatious contacts between officials, and interest groups themselves have become increasingly bureaucratished (in short, more and more like the government departments with which they deal), for only the bureaucratic structure is appropriate to the kinds of negotiations groups must carry on to realise their interests." ⁷ One might (with some trepidation it must be admitted) advance the proposition that interest group activity directed at the sta

state's foreign policy has been less affected by the social-service trend of state activity, and that indeed interest group activity is usually directed toward the economic activity of the state rather than its foreign affairs, and that in the area of foreign policy interest activity will tend to remain more informal, and utilize interest group bureaucracies not established primarily to influence foreign policy - such as the trade unions. Contacts will therefore tend to remain more on the personal rather than the institutional level, directed to influencing interested M.P.s, interested members of the Cabinet, and trying to establish a favourable public opinion. Foreign policy in its formulation depends more on the selection of values and estimates of capabilities rather than the demands, for an example, of the laws of economics, and thus some decision-makers in the past have felt confident to rely on their own judgement rather than that of the Foreign Office. (One notable exception would be the question of British entry into the European Economic Community.) Interest groups attack the area where decisions are made, and therefore will concentrate their efforts on the legislature and the cabinet, as well as attempting to influence the tide of public opinion.

An examination of the impact of public opinion on the formulation of foreign policy raise several points for debate. While it may be said, that since one of the primary goals of an elected decision-maker is to maintain himself in power, care will be taken not to alienate significant sections of the population by undertaking unpopular policies it is usually interest rates on mortgages and

increases in pensions rather than foreign policies which decide elections, and so the main planks of election platforms rarely consist of foreign issues. (One exception, the famous Kharki election of 18 over the problem presented by the Boer Republics, merely serves to prove that generally this observation holds true.) The very term 'public opinion' demonstrates the difficulty of the problem. If one differentiates between the activity of interest groups and the influence of public opinion, one must conclude that public opinion consists of the unorganized and incoherently expressed opinions (such as exist) of those too unconcerned to Frankel concludes that: "Positive influence on the conduct of foreign policy is exercised only by organized groups or by the leadership, but the people as a mass exercise an important negative influence through the climate of public opinion of what Gabriel Almond calls 'the mood', which prescribes the limits within which foreign policy can be shaped. Such mood can exclude all practicable choices and leave the decision-makers with prohibitions only. Power of a vague and very real nature is wielded here without any clearly defined responsibility." Baldwin provides with this illustration of a decision-maker being bound within a limited area of action by public opinion: "You will remember the election at Fulham in the autumn of 1933, when the seat which the National Government held was lost by about 7,000 votes on no issue but the pacifist. My position as the leader of a great party was not altogether a comfortable one. I asked myself what chance was there - when that feeling was given

expression lead to stresses in the N.A.T.O. alliance. Thus in any examination of British policy toward the civil war in Spain, one must examine the power base on which British policy was based, and the calculation by the British decision-makers of the risks and gains that accrued from the application of power. In this it is the perception of how much power would be necessary to achieve a desired end, and the perception of risks and gains, that is important.

In any calculation of power resources the problems that present themselves are interrelated - events in one part of the world effect decisions made with respect to a problem in another part of the world, since resources available to these problems are usually scarce (especially in Britain in the Twentieth Century), and have to be allocated to each problem so as to have the optimum effect. The development of the Spanish Civil war added another problem that had to compete for resources, in the context (as we have previously noted) of a general policy-line formulated in relation to other problems. Thus one must concern oneself with the question of to what extent one can talk of 'a policy toward the Spanish conflict', since the policy would to some extent be determined by other foreign policy issues. The extent to which this would be true would depend on the total resources available to the British decision-makers, and the ranking of the Spanish conflict by the British decision-makers among the total of problems faced according to the extent that the

problem affects perceived vital interests (the interests themselves being ranked according to the value-structures of the decision-makers and the community in general). These value structured desirable interests can lead to conflicts in resulting policies: the maintainance of peace - the avoidance of violent conflict with other states - have been two consistent British interests that have conflicted, since the necessity to exert power to maintain the former can lead to conflict with other states.

One may, in fact, be able to postulate the existance of an inflation cycle in the ability of individual problems to purchase attention, as the number of problems faced by the decision-makers increases. In time of world-wide crises as the inter-war period, the perceived importance of any one problem declines as the ability of resources to meet these crises becomes increasingly strained. Chamberlain wrote to Mrs. Morton Prince, his stepmother's American cousin: "Therefore our people see that in the absence of any powerful ally, and until our armaments are completed, we must adjust our foreign policy to our circumstances, and even bear with patience and good humour actions which we should like to treat in a very different fashion."¹⁰

As well as the dispersal of resources in a period of reoccurring crises, a dispersal of the emotional involvement of people in foreign affairs will occur, leading to an inflation of interest and a decrease in the ability of new crises to purchase the commitment of peoples' emotions.

People are able to absorb only a certain amount of headlines on wars, bombing of defenseless civilians, and aggression by foreign states in a period when crisis and violence seem to be the order of the day, and still maintain their social consciences at full strength. Christopher Isherwood has put it this way: "Perhaps I had travelled too much, left my heart in too many places. I knew what I was supposed to feel, what it fashionable for my generation to feel. We cared about everything: fascism in Germany and Italy, the seizure of Manchuria, Indian nationalism, the Irish question, the workers, the negroes, the jews. We had spread our feelings over the whole world; and I knew that mine were spread very thin. I cared - oh, yes, I certainly cared... But did I care as much as I said I did, tried to imagine I did? No, not merely as much."^{11th}

This problem is of special relevance in a study of British foreign policy toward the Spanish conflict, since Spain raised or so it has appeared, the emotional fervour of peoples to a pitch unprecedented during the thirties. This can lead to the theory that tension was created between the emotional desires of the British people which became concentrated on Spain, and the policies adopted by the British decision-makers, basing their policies on a more rational appraisal of the requirements of British foreign policy; Britain thus became 'divided'. Therefore it will be necessary to examine the interrelationship between the Spanish civil war and the climate of public opinion in Britain to see what, if any conflicts were created. It will also be necessary to examine the impact of Spain on the ranking of problems by the British decision-makers, and decision-makers in other countries with whom Britain had to deal,

to see what new problems were created by the reactions of other states to the Spanish conflict.

In view of the fact that British policy toward the Spanish conflict was to some extent a function of policies formulated in relation to problems other than Spain, and this paper will not be able to examine all these other problems and policies in great detail, and examination of the interests and power capabilities underpinning British foreign policy will be made, in order to state the general nature of British foreign policy - to set the Spanish conflict in its general context, as well as to gain insights of special relevance to Spain. The paper will therefore be organized in the following manner:

- (1). An examination of the interests and power resources underlying British foreign policy, and the evaluation by British decision-makers of these interests and power resources - involving an examination of the structuring of decision-making within Britain, and struggles that occurred within that structure between individuals and groups.
- (2). An examination of the interrelationships between the civil war in Spain and the climate of public opinion in Britain and the international community, to see what problems were created for British decision-makers and the policies that were evolved to meet these problems.
- (3). A chronological examination of the nature and development of British policy toward Spain.
- (4). Concluding remarks, including a discussion of the relevance of criticisms made from the vantage point of historical hindsight.

Notes: Introduction

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Chapter One : Strategic Interests and Appeasement.

"Of course, always go to a taxi-driver when you want a sane independent opinion. I talked to one today. He said: 'When we are at war, it'll be the time to start talking about war. Just at present we aren't at war.' Very sound that."

Uttered by Box-Bender, M.P.
(A character in Evelyn Waugh's Men at Arms.)

In the introduction, the problem was raised as to the extent that it was permissible to talk of their being a policy toward the Spanish civil war, since British policy toward the Spanish conflict would bear a direct relationship to British policy toward other problems presenting themselves to the British decision-makers. Thus British policy toward Spain would to some extent be a function of British policy toward Germany, Italy, France and so on. Since it is not possible to examine in detail all of the other areas that were covered by British policy, a solution has to be found to the problem of deciding the nature of the relationship between British policy toward Spain and policies toward other regions. One is faced with the difficulty that if one does not state the nature of British policy towards other areas, how can British policy toward Spain be placed in the general context that is so obviously necessary for a full understanding of the problems faced by British decision-makers.

One solution (not unfortunately a complete one, but it is in the

Britain, and conflicts that developed through the existence of differences of concept within the decision-making process, as for instance between the Cabinet and the Foreign Office, and the outcome of these conflicts.

One may be able to state, as a starting point that the formulation of foreign policy is not merely a matter of will, of the desires of decision-makers to attain certain goals, but also a matter of capabilities, of what decision-makers feel they are capable of attaining. British decision-makers from the beginning of the twentieth century had had to make a continuous reappraisal of the capabilities of the British power structure.¹ The conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902 marked a revolutionary turn in British foreign policy and the evaluation by British decision-makers of Britain's place in the world, as is shown by this statement by Lord Lansdowne in response to a memo by Lord Salisbury urging that Britain should not "...incur novel and dangerous obligations" : "I think...that we may push too far the argument, that because we have in the past survived in spite of our isolation, we need have no misgivings as to the effect of that isolation in the future. In approaching the Japanese we have, indeed, virtually admitted that we do not wish to stand alone."²

The coming of the twentieth century in fact saw Britain's position in the world in transition, in which Britain continued to have the commitments of a world power, while the ability to fulfil these commitments was slipping from her hands. The centre of an Empire

that was represented in all the continents of the world, Britain, in addition, as a small island with a large urban population, relied on world trade to feed her people and thus had to be able to defend against any potential the trade routes that linked her with her sources of raw materials and her markets.

Operating from a world-wide network of strategic bases, the Royal Navy had made Britain for a period the almost unchallenged mistress of the seas. France who had been the main challenger to Britain, was faced by the threat of the developing strength of Germany, and thus had to allocate resources to the maintenance of a large-scale land army, while Britain was able to devote the greater part of her resources to the Navy. In addition the greater industrial power of the British meant that Britain could overhaul the French in the utilisation of technical innovations in naval warfare (such as the introduction of iron-clad ships to replace the 'wooden walls' that had been the traditional safeguard of Britain, and the introduction of the screw to replace sail and the paddle for motive power).

In the early years of the twentieth century, the developing threat of the German navy, which was emphasised by the Agadir crisis of 1911, had led to the conclusion of the Alliance with the Japanese, as Britain found that her navy inadequate for the defense of the home waters as well as the outlying parts of the Empire. Even though Britain emerged from the First World War with her naval position much improved by virtue of the fact that the German Navy lay at the bottom of the ocean, in reality that peculiar set of factors which had enabled Britain to assert its naval supremacy whenever it wished during the nineteenth century had passed away forever with the spread of industrial skills from Britain

Nature of compromises that they fall short of the desired goal) is to examine those factors that under-pinned British policy toward all of the problems that faced British decision-makers, and then to place British policy toward Spain in this context. This will involve a calculation of the relative importance that was placed upon the Spanish conflict by British decision-makers as opposed to other problems that presented themselves. In undertaking this task our attention will be drawn to two main areas of interest: the first being the strategic interests of Britain, and the position that Spain was felt to hold within those interests: the second will be an examination of the impact of these conceptualised strategic interests upon the formulation of British policy toward Spain. The emphasis is placed on the conceptual nature of strategic interests, since an interest is a mental construct without reality except in as much as it exists within a person's mind (Thus one cannot make a differentiation between 'objectively' considered strategic interests and man's 'subjective' consideration of them, since apart from being valueless as an instrument of foreign policy analysis, who is to be the judge of objectivity? The arguments of those who support one's own position are usually to be considered 'objective', those of one's opponents 'subjective'). Thus the first part indicated above will contain an examination of what were generally felt to be strategic interests of Britain, with special weight given to the views of the military planning staffs. The second part will be a more detailed examination of the structuring of these interests within the decision-making process within

to the other parts of the world, and the change in the balance of power within Europe:"... by 1913 Germany had exceeded Britain's total volume of exports (though not her manufactured exports). Already twenty years later Great Britain's production of manufactures had been surpassed by the United States; and by the turn of the century Japan was emerging as a potentially formidable economic competitor, after her incredibly rapid transformation into a modern industrial state in the course of a single generation. Moreover, the greater size and the resources of the United States and Germany, and the very fact that their major industrialization had been later and had therefore made use of more up-to-date methods and equipment, spelled a further threat to Britain's position of world economic leadership..."³

Britain's position as the first state to undergo the industrial revolution therefore proved to be a handicap as she found herself entering the twentieth century with both the equipment and the organisation of her major industries in an antiquated state:" In steel the United Kingdom suffered all the consequences of the general decline in the export trade of iron and steel materials and finished products, and at the same time was unable to fully introduce the necessary large-scale technical modifications and general integration which in this industry have an enormous influence on costs. The result was that the effects

of the European depression in the industry were felt with added emphasis in this country; in addition, the rising world tariffs against the exports of heavy industry turned Britain into the only remaining dumping ground for the products of her competitors. The request by the steelmakers for a protective tariff in 1925 came too soon after the expression of the electorate on the subject of free trade; the request was rejected and the industry could not; therefore, afford to engage in large-scale re-equipment in view of the uncertainty of its markets. Nor was it sufficiently unified to negotiate with its continental competitors a voluntary division of the marketas late as 1928 the average weekly output of British blast furnaces was less than 1,000 tons, while nearly all American and many continental furnaces could produce that amount in one day....It has been said of cotton and it is also true of the iron and steel and other old-established industries, that one of the chief obstacles to reorganisation schemes came from 'the implacability of small but belligerent minorities who have, to a degree far in excess of their importance, been able to delay the process'. The work of combination and absorption gathered momentum, both the acquisition of overcapitalised firms and obsolescent plants prevented the realisation of the full fruits of these activities. At the same time trade organisations, though they had been in existence for a

considerable period, remained extremely imperfect organisations with limited powers, while the National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers itself lacked the authority and functions to give a forceful and unifying directive to industry or to speak on its behalf to the Government. The iron and steel industry, on which depended so much of Britain's commercial prosperity in time of peace, and industrial power in time of war, presented in the year 1931 a disquieting picture of confusion and decay.⁴"

Thus it is that "In a retrospect the year 1914 has seemed to mark the end of an economic epoch... (Even though) by the end of the nineteenth century there had been an awareness that the balance of economic power in the world was shifting. In Western Europe (especially Germany) and in Japan industrialization had been increasing; in the United States the expansion of productive power had been astonishing....

"Such changes were already calling for adjustments in Britain's industry and commerce: the First World War made the process infinitely more difficult. Changes that might have been spread over a generation or more were compressed in a few years. The war produced other changes which might not otherwise have occurred and prevented adjustments that would otherwise have been made. Instead of being gradually adapted to meet foreign competition the staple industries were further expanded to meet a demand that was purely tem-

porary. Post-war demands for the products of Britain's staple industries were indeed lower than those of pre-war years. As a result of the war, economic nationalism flourished, currencies were unstable, some of Britain's customers were impoverished and other customers had established industries to produce the goods - or substitutes for the goods - that they could not get from Britain during the war. Meanwhile the world centre of gravity had shifted further westwards. The war had greatly stimulated the productive power of North America... Many other markets hitherto fed by Britain turned to Japan for supplies....

"Britain's export trade had reached a climax in the years immediately preceding the First World War. In 1913 the favorable balance of payments on current account was about £200 millions... In the nineteen-twenties this balance on current account, this surplus available for investment abroad declined: in the nineteen-thirties it disappeared and became a negative quality. The appearance of an adverse balance of payments was a landmark in the history of Britain's economy."⁵

Britain had been able to extend and protect its Empire by virtue of the fact that there had existed within Europe a balance before the First World War between the major states of Europe which enabled Britain to become the premier colonial power. Outside Europe, apart from the United States and Japan, there was no state of a sufficiently advanced technological and industrial development to offer a

serious and lasting threat to the security of the British Empire. It was not until the turn of the century that Japan became a major naval power at which time as we have already noted, Japan became allied to Britain and the protector of her Far Eastern interests, and as for the United States, the interests of the two countries in the main coincided - the Monroe Doctrine was for a long period only enforced by means of the fact that Britain, no more than the United States, wished to see South and Central American become a target of a scramble for colonies, as Africa later became; Britain's interest was in trade not colonies. But gradually the balance in Europe and the Far East which had served to protect the British interests in these regions from a serious challenge became upset as both Germany and Japan became major industrial powers, and Britain found that though her relative decline as an industrial producing power she was unable to exert that moderating influence that Britain had at times been able and had at times been willing to exert.

As a result of the First World War, the map of Europe had been redrawn, with Austro-Hungary and Tzarist Russia disappearing completely. Neither of these two countries was thus able to act as a counter-balance to the ambitions of the German nation in the latter part of the Nineteen-thirties to dominate Eastern Europe. A major change in the diplomatic alignment in Europe had occurred with the accession to power of the Bolsheviki within Russia, since in the per-

10d before the First World War, France had sought to balance the greater threat that was posed by a Germany united (except for the German Provinces in Austria) by Bismarck's victories over Austria, Denmark and France between 1861 and 1871, by means of an alliance with Russia in the East. The Treaty of Versailles established in Eastern Europe a belt of small nation-states creating a power vacuum into which Germany was able to move aided by the outburst of nationalist feeling that occurred within these small states (with a few exceptions) which effectively prevented these states from uniting in self-defense against the German threat; the Bolshevik re-revolution served to prevent the effective collaboration of Russia, France and Britain to counteract the German challenge the European status-quo, since despite the existence after 1935 of a Franco-Soviet Pact, capitalist-socialist hostility served to keep these three states whose interest in security against the German threat coincided, from effectively concerting their activities.

In addition to the alteration in the diplomatic situation within Europe, which became accentuated as Italy gradually emerged into the camp of the revisionist states, France had found that to progressively increasing extent during the course of the nineteenth century that she was declining in relative power terms to Germany, in this case equating the power base with the relative population and industrial levels of the two countries, and excluding other considerations, such as alliance potential or diplomatic prestige:

"...France began with a marked head start over all other countries. During the Napoleonic era and until the middle of the nineteenth century France was one of the most economically developed nations of the world. From then on, despite a wealth of resources and skilled labour, her economy declined in comparison with almost all the countries of Western Europe. Her total national income between 1870 to 1940 rose by about 80 per cent; that of Germany increased by five times; that of Great Britain three and a half times. In the years between the two World Wars (1918 - 1940) investment declined to a point below zero - that is, France was living on her capital, using her factories and equipment without replacing them in full. She was going through a period of disinvestmentIn 1800, France had the largest population of any country in Europe and the Americas, excepting only that of Russia. The Napoleonic armies were recruited from, and supported by, 26 million French men and women, when England had only 11 million inhabitants, the United States five and a half million, and the German states, including Austria, about 23 million. France maintained the population advantage until about 1860, when she had about 38 million. From then on, her population remained virtually static. In 1940, for instance, it was almost exactly 40 million, while that of the United States was close to 150 million, Great Britain 50 million, Germany (West and East, but without Austria) 65 million. In the years between 1930 and 1940 the French population actually declined - that is, there was an excess of deaths over births."⁶

The decline of the ability of Britain to protect what were considered her vital interests parallels, and was in part caused by the decline of France relative to Germany, since this decline created a continuing danger with the turn of the nineteenth century of the establishment of a German hegemony within Europe which would threaten the freedom and independence of the Low Countries, an area, which since it is situated opposite to the Thames Estuary, has been of special interest to England since the time of Elisabeth I. The establishment of the German potential for the establishment of a hegemony in Europe had its counterpart in the rise of the Japanese position in the Far East. Japan expanded its

industrial potential during the twentieth century, despite the problems presented by the depression of the nineteen-twenties. In the period 1914-1930, the population of Japan increased by twenty-five per cent to sixty-five million, while the national income increased fourfold, allowing a high level of investment in the economic sector. In the same period there occurred a forty per cent increase in the production of raw materials (which was greatest in agricultural raw materials) and industries based on imported techniques from the West (such as chemical, engineering and iron and steel industries) although relatively on a small scale, began to grow in importance. In the thirties greater emphasis was placed on developing metallurgical and chemical industries: steel production increasing in the period 1929-1936 from two and a half million tons to five and a half million tons. After the Japanese conquest of Manchuria and the establishment of the Manchukuo puppet state, this region was developed into an important area of chemical and metallurgical industries for Japan. Through a series legislative enactments Japan in the second half of the thirties sought to control the development of industry within Japan, with the accent being placed upon those industries necessary for the development of Japan's military strength. By the Emergency Funds Adjustment Law of 1937, government approval was needed for capital outlays of more than £50,000; In 1936 and 1937 the Major Industries Control Law was revised to strengthen its coercive features, while the 1938 General Mobilisation Act

gave the Government unlimited powers to regulate the economic life of the nation. Thus concludes Lockwood "After...1937, the whole network of industrial and trading associations became simply a part of the machinery by which the Japanese economy was mobilised for war."⁷

The developments in industrial and technological progress in other regions of the world and the changing distribution of population meant that Britain found old concepts that had guided the direction of British foreign policy had to be abandoned. We have already seen that Britain could no longer remain aloof from undertaking commitments of military and naval cooperation with other states. This possibility was ended by the rise of German dominance in Europe, which led to the alliance with Japan in 1902, and the Entente with France in 1904. Though the defeat of Germany in the First World War meant a temporary respite, Britain could no longer return to that position that she had occupied in the nineteenth century of concentrating her resources upon the protection of her Imperial interests: "At the end of the war ... the British Government considered it neither necessary or possible to maintain fleets of adequate strength in both the western and the eastern hemispheres. It was accordingly decided that the British fleet should be held in a central position in European waters, from which it could reinforce the Far East as and when required."⁹ One cardinal feature of British policy had to be modified through the inability of Britain's resources to give effect to it, and that was

the maintainance of naval superiotity over any potential threat to the security of Britain defense or her trading routes.

Though the German Navy had been limited by the Treaty of Versailles to 15,000 men, the treaty provisions were circumvented, as naval organisations were disguised as civil ministries, the order to destroy the coastal fortificatuons was never carried out and orders were placed for submarines to be built in Finland and Spain. The period from 1925 to 1932 marked the beginning of the period of serious reconstruction, with the cruiser Emden being launched in 1925 and a large building programme initiated. The first of the pocked battleships was laid down in 1928, the building of submarines continued, with their crews trained under the guise of anti-submarine training, and preparations were even made to develop, a fleet air arm. As soon as Hitler acceded to power in Germany in 1933, Admiral Raeder was given a free hand to press on with the reconstruction programme, although the pretence of naval limitation was kept up until the signature of the Anglo-German naval agreement on the 18th of June, 1935, by which the Germans agreed to limit their naval construction to thirty-five per cent of British strength, except in submarines, in which they were accorded parity but agreed not to build up to forty-five per cent unless a situation arose which made it necessary. The latter promise was not kept, as the British Director of Naval Intelligence was able to inform

the First Sea Lord. His statement that the German submarine strength was thirty coastal and twenty-nine ocean-going boats was only three more than the correct total, a figure than meant that on the outbreak of the war in 1939, the German U-boat strength was only one less than the British total of fifty-seven operational submarines.¹⁰ Captain Roskill (from whom this story of the development of the German Navy is entirely borrowed)¹¹ concludes

"...although greatly inferior to the British fleet in numbers, the German Navy consisted almost entirely of modern warships. The Royal Navy, on the other hand, was still equipped with large numbers of ships whose design dated back to the 1914-18 war. Some had been modernised, others had not. But the age of the British ships and of their weapons, taken with the Navy's world wide responsibility for the defense of our shipping, went a long way toward counteracting our superiority in numbers." ¹²

In assessing the strategic threat posed by the German fleet, one must note that Britain was faced not only by a challenge by Germany, but by Japan and Italy. The problem confronting British decision-makers was thus that they were presented with a threefold challenge to the strategic and political status quo, in a situation where Britain's resources were already overstrained. (Or rather the resources that British decision-makers were prepared to allocate to defense spending were insufficient to meet the strategic requirements.) On May 23, 1934, Japan announced that she was not prepared to accept a renewal of the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 and the London Naval Treaty of 1930, which together had sought to contribute to the maintainance of

international peace in the Far East and to prevent this region from being subject to a naval arms race.¹³ On December 1934, Japan gave notice of the Intention to terminate the Washington Naval Treaty, so that on December 31, 1936, the limitations that had been imposed by the Washington and London agreements upon the level of naval armaments and fortifications in the Far East lapsed.

Notice had been given by Japan in a Foreign Office statement of April, 1934, that she considered she had a special interest in the regulation of the affairs of the Far East and that she was claiming the right to establish an 'Asiatic Monroe Doctrine' in the Far East in contradiction to British interests:

"Any joint operations undertaken by foreign Powers even in the name of technical or financial assistance at this particular moment after Manchurian and Shanghai incidents are bound to acquire political significance. Undertakings of such nature, if carried through to the end, must give rise to complications...Japan therefore must object to such undertakings as a matter of principle....Supplying China with war aeroplanes, building aerodromes in China, and detailing military instructors or military advisors in China or contracting a loan to provide funds for political uses would obviously tend to alienate friendly relations between Japan, China, and other countries, and to disturb peace and order in Eastern Asia. Japan will oppose such projects." 14

Despite the fact that in 1932 the Chiefs of Staff had recommended that the assumption that there would be no major war for ten years should be abandoned, and gave the warning that "...it would be the height of folly to perpetuate our defenseless position in the Far East... the Cabinet expressed no dissent, but said that this should not be taken to justify expanding expenditure by the defense

services without regard to the very serious financial and economic situation." ¹⁵ Britain's defensive position in the Far East was predicated after the First World War upon the existence of a naval base that would be able to hold out for a sufficient period of time against hostile forces to allow a fleet to be sent from European waters, and in June 1921, the Cabinet approved in principle the construction of such a base, there being no such base at that time. Though the site of Singapore was agreed upon, the actual construction of the base was subject to a stop-go-stop policy, which meant that even as late as 1936-7 no work had begun on the second stage of the defensive zone. It was not until 1937 that it was decided that the defense of Singapore involved the defense of the Malayan Peninsular, and was followed by a further report of the General Officer Commanding Malaya, Major-General Dobbie in 1938, that an attack on Malaya from the north should be considered the greatest danger. To rectify this danger Dobbie was allotted the princely sum of £60,000 in 1939. In fact the strategic position in the Far East had been determined by the conclusion of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, since "...the rebirth of the German fleet meant that, when her building programme was completed, the greater part of the British fleet would have to be retained in home waters regardless of the events in the Far East." ¹⁷ Thus purely from the point of consideration of the

defense of the British position in the Far East, peace in Europe became a prime consideration of British decision-makers. The importance given to the British Far Eastern defensive position can be gauged from the review of Imperial Defense made by the Chiefs of Staff in 1937, who made it plain that in their opinion Japan ranked second to Germany as a possible enemy, while Italy was ranked third; they continued that even though the size of the fleet sent would be determined by home requirements, a fleet would have to be sent to the Far East, "Even though the British position in the Eastern Mediterranean would be precarious...this weakness...would not be nearly as serious as the surrender of British sea power in the Far East..., leaving the coast of India, Australia, and New Zealand, the the sea routes to these Dominions open to attack."¹⁸ In addition to the purely strategic consideration, there were the economic interests that Britain had in the far East. British interests in the Far East were the most extensive and the longest established of any other western state, and would be seriously effected by any attempt on the part of the Japanese to establish economic 'protectorates'. Britain had invested in China more than one thousand million dollars, with \$46,000,000¹⁹ invested in Tientsin alone. This region was in addition an important source of raw materials for Britain that became closed with the Japanese conquest of this region:

"Within four months the balance of supplies as between the allies and Japan altered completely in the case of three important materials: rubber, hard hemp, and tin. In the Philippines Japan gained the only source of manila hemp, and in Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies and neighbouring territories ninety per cent of the world's crude rubber resources, just over sixty per cent of its tin and a significant quantity of sisal, a substitute of manila hemp in many uses. The allies loss of tungsten, chromite and silk were less overwhelming but nevertheless serious, and imports of other materials such as antimony and hardwoods were likewise reduced, though to a lesser extent." 20

Britain, as a world wide power, had to have a global strategy to give optimum utilisation to her resource base. The limited nature of the resources that Britain had at her disposal meant that a system of priorities had to be established as to the regions that formed part of the strategic network of Britain's Empire and trade route complex. Thus it was that there was an interaction between the actions of the Japanese in the Far East and the civil war in Spain. Both presented threats to the security of the British strategic position, and both had to be evaluated in terms of the threat presented with the premier threat presented by the growing dominance of National Socialist Germany in the second half of the nineteen thirties. To a country that has inadequate resources to meet challenges from various areas of the world, each threat must be considered a relative one - there can be no consideration of each individual trouble spot without consideration of the total strategic position, and it is only in these terms that British reaction to the events in Spain following the attempted pronunciamiento by a group of Spanish

generals on July 19th, 1936.

The Economist of November 28, 1936, raised the important question of the effect of a victory by Franco upon Britain's freedom of movement in the Mediterranean:

"We suspect that the Government have made up their mind that, at whatever cost, they will refuse to be drawn into war over Spain, as they refused to be drawn into to war over Manchuria or Abyssinia. For indulgence over Manchuria and Abyssinia the bill already presented to us includes the stultification of the League of Nations and the crystallisation of something like a new Triple Alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan. In the Spanish case, the first item on the bill, if General Franco is carried to victory on the wings of his backers, will be the loss of our British naval command of the Mediterranean. Without attempting to say whether peace is worth such a price we must surely all agree that the price is very high."

We will not at this point attempt to answer the question of whether the assumptions upon which the British Government base its policy meaningful, but rather to examine the considerations with which the British Government had to deal. The strategic position occupied by Spain and Italy are once again very conveniently summarised by the Economist (of October 24, 1936 :

"In a communique which signor Mussolini laid before a Cabinet Council at Rome on October 10th, the head of the Italian State has announced to the world a formidable intensification of Italy's efforts to strengthen her armaments on land, at sea, and in the air. Between the lines of the document it can be noted that the Italian announcement is a reply to the declarations made by Sir Samuel Hoare...that while this country has no intention of evacuating the Mediterranean, but means to ensure that her hold on this essential line of maritime communications between different parts of the British Empire shall at least be as strong as ever...The truth is that the short route between the British Isles and India, Australia and New Zealand - a route which has been under British strategic control ever since the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 followed the opening of the Suez Canal in

1869 - is now traversed by the cross route from Italy to the Italian colony of Libya. It is also shadowed in the Levant, Suez Canal and Red Sea by the new Italian imperial highway from Genoa or Naples to Massawah. Italy now considers herself as much entitled to protect her maritime route to Ethiopia as Great Britain may be to protect hers to India; and it is impossible for both Italy and Great Britain to simultaneously to possess the desirable margin of superiority in strength over all comers in these waters, the new situation that has been created by the Italian conquest of Abyssinia is big with possibilities of a most dangerous Anglo-Italian Competition. In this competition Italy is much less at a disadvantage than she would have been 30 or 40 years ago, owing to the potency of air-power in the narrow seas. Malta, and perhaps even Aden, is already overshadowed by the wings of the Italian air force; and our British command over the Straits of Gibraltar has now been placed in jeopardy by the entente between Italy and the Spanish insurgents."

The element of a challenge to the British naval position in the Mediterranean was repeated by Mussolini in a speech on November 1st, 1936, when he declared that Italy was "an island which juts into the Mediterranean" and that while the Mediterranean was for Britain "a road, one of the many roads, a short cut rather whereby the British Empire reaches more rapidly its outlying territories," for Italy "it is life. We do not intend to threaten that road, we do not propose to interrupt it, but, on the other hand, we demand²¹ that our vital interests should also be respected."

As a result of the Italian challenge to the traditional British position, relations between the two countries steadily deteriorated following the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, Bingham, the United States' Ambassador in London reported on March 25, 1937, that:

"There has been a steady deterioration of Anglo-Italian understanding. The recent massacres in Abyssinia, Mussolini's rearmament program, his declarations to the

Mussulman world upon his arrival in Libya, and the question of the Italian coronation envoy have all re-kindled public opinion in this country. Meanwhile the denunciation of Italy from British pulpits, the British Broadcasting Company's characterisation of the recent reversals in Spain as 'a second Caporetto' and the tone of the press generally have all tended to incite Italian resentment against England. In the estimate of one of my colleagues English animosity toward Italy at this moment is greater than public feeling against Germany...I understand that the Statement by the Italian Ambassador in the Non-Intervention Committee ...that Italy would not be willing to discuss the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain has further incited public opinion...Foreign Office points out that the German volunteer position in Spain appears to be somewhat liquidated 'leaving Mussolini to hold the bag' and that, by this recent statement of the Italian Ambassador, Italian Volunteers in Spain must in a measure appear as units of the Italian army and as such queries whether they can be left there unsupported." 22

At this point the extent of the Italian challenge to the Position of Britain will not be examined in great detail, it will be sufficient to note that it included diplomatic intrigue and radio propaganda from the Bari Broadcasting station against the British position in the Near East, and the enforcement of the garrisons of Libya which offered a potential threat to the security of Britain's position in Egypt.

The effect of intervention by Italy and to lesser extent Germany in the civil war in Spain, offered yet another threat to the security of the British communications through the Mediterranean. Bielfeld, from the German Embassy in London reported on July 31, 1936, that the British were anxiously watching the situation in Spain, since they see "...dangers for the interests of Britain in a victory by the rebels, above all for her Mediterranean interests. It is feared that a government formed by the Spanish rebels would

seek the closest ties with Italy and that such a government might grant naval bases for the Italian fleet, for example on the Balearic Islands or in the port of Ceuta, which is opposite the harbour of Gibraltar."²³ Straus, the United States' Ambassador in France, reported on July 31, 1936, that: "Concerning the German angle to this situation (the civil war in Spain), our informant appeared to give credence to the report that General Sanjurjo had some time ago offered to or actually concluded an arrangement with Hitler whereby if the Insurgents were successful Germany would be granted a naval base at Palma."²⁴

A British Foreign Office Memorandum of October, 1938, estimated that there were 40,000 Italian troops in Spain, while the Italian airforce had 2,200 men in Spain and the Balearic Islands, together with 250 machines.²⁵ Dodd, the United States' Ambassador in Germany, reported as early as December 4, 1936, that: "The British Embassy here states confidentially that it has received a report from the British Consul at Seville that about 5,000 Germans passed through that city a few days ago on their way to join the Spanish Nationalist forces and that although they did not wear uniforms they were equipped with rifles and some artillery pieces. It is understood that prior to this or about the 20th last month a German anti-aircraft detachment consisting of some 700 men with equipment was landed at Cadiz. Most of the Germans despatched to Spain appear to have some connection with the

German Army either as reserves or as regular soldiers who while technically on a leave have 'volunteered' for service abroad." ²⁶

In the House of Commons on July, 1937, the question of guns being mounted in Spain opposite Gibraltar. Winston Churchill stated:

"...I would in the most general terms, dealing with the general aspect of the Mediterranean, say, if there is any idea that the mounting of guns to dominate or cover the Straits of Gibraltar is not a matter of first consequence to us, that it is. You could hardly have anything of greater importance to the British state and to the general problem of British Imperial defense...But this does not stand alone. There is the general question of our position...in the Mediterranean. It is not only Ceuta and Algeciras Bay; there are the Balearic Islands; there are the conditions which are being established at Malta, placing the whole question of the defense of that island in a new light. There is the small rock of Pantellaria which is being fortified and made a powerful airbase....I wish merely to say that guns at the mouth of the Mediterranean cannot be considered apart from the whole process of fortification that is going on right to the Eastern end of Leros and Rhodes, right down to the Red Sea at Massowah, the whole of this creating day by day and month by month a position that we have never had to face before." 27.

Though it was true that in the war plans that were drawn up by the Admiralty prior to the Second World War it was accepted that British mercantile traffic would be diverted to the long route via the Cape of Good Hope, Gibraltar still maintained its cardinal importance from the ability to deny to enemy forces free access to the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar and thus enforcing the blockade of Italy through the capture of enemy merchant vessels and the controlling of the carriage of contraband of war to the enemy

in neutral vessels. Gibraltar would remain strategically important in the defense of the vital north-south Atlantic trade route, which was the partial responsibility of the North Atlantic Station, with its headquarters at Gibraltar. 28

The strategic importance of Spain was not confined to Spain's geographical position on both sides of the Western entrance to the Mediterranean, but also from its position on the southern flank of France, and thus able to create, if so desired in Spain a totally new strategic balance in Europe. Straus reported on July 31, 1936, that:

"Blum appearing before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate yesterday admitted frankly that the French Government had at first seriously considered acquiescing in the request of the Spanish Government for assistance in the way of aeroplanes and amunitions. In this connection our informant said that the Franco-Spanish border is in one sense comparable to the American-Canadian border in that it hasnot been fortified (apparent ommission) years; France has not maintained troops there and it is one frontier from which France has felt that here was no danger to be feared. The setting up in Spain of a government of the military dictatorship type might well alter this situation and prove a serious danger to French security. A glance at the map would clearly indicate this an unfriendly regime in Spain could in time of war prevent the transport of troops from French possessions in Africa to Europe through submarine operations from the Spanish coasts." 29

This theme is repated in a conversation that Wilson (the Charge in France) had with Delbos (the French Minister for Foreign Affairs) on August 6th, 1936;

"Delbos said there was no doubt in his mind that both the German and Italian Governments had made arrangements with the rebels which in the event of the latter's success would give these Governments bases in Spanish Morocco and the Spanish Islands 'thereby cutting of our communications with North Africa.'" 30

Thus there existed the danger of France finding herself

confronted on the South as well as the East and South-East by a fascist government, and in that situation becoming paralyzed in her relations with the fascists by the threat presented, or even succumbing to fascism through the growth of fascist organisations within France. Britain would thus be deprived of her main ally on the continent of Europe, and have to watch as the balance of power swung irretrievably to the fascist states. It should be remembered that France represented not only a powerful counter to the threat of German aggression on the mainland of Europe, but also a major naval power, commanding a dominating position in the Western Mediterranean. Thus states Captain Roskill:

"Our (British) control of the western basin of the Mediterranean was greatly simplified by the presence of the greater part of the French Fleet in those waters, and by its well-placed bases in southern France and on the North African shore. Accordingly it was agreed with our ally that the western basin should be a French responsibility. This enabled greater British strength to be allocated to the eastern Mediterranean without unduly weakening the Home Fleet." 31

It is therefore clear that the attempted coup d'etat by the Spanish generals and the aid given by Italy and Germany represented a serious menace to Britain's strategic position in the Mediterranean and that British diplomacy would have to be directed toward mitigating any possible harmful effects that would follow a victory by France. One can indeed trace the diplomatic efforts (as we will in a later part of the paper) made with this intent: The Anglo-Italian Joint Declaration of January 2nd, 1937, by which the two governments: "Recognise that the freedom of entry

into, and exit from, and transit through, the Mediterranean is a vital interest both to the different parts of the British Empire and to Italy, and that these interests are in no way inconsistent with each other;

"Disclaim any desire to modify or, as far as they are concerned, to see modified the status quo as regard national sovereignty of territories in the Mediterranean;

"Undertake to respect each other's rights and interests in the said area."³²

In an exchange of notes between the two countries on December 31, 1936. Ciano confirmed "...the accuracy of His Majesty's assumption, namely, that, as far as Italy is concerned, the integrity of the present territories shall in all circumstances remain intact and unmodified."³³

Similar assurances were given by Italy to Britain in the Anglo-Italian Agreement of April 16th, 1938, together with an agreement of April 16th, 1938, together with an agreement to exchange annually information regarding major changes envisaged in Italian or British troops in the Eastern Mediterranean, Red Sea or Gulf of Aden, and to grant notification of any intent to build naval or air bases in the Eastern Mediterranean. The British diplomatic activity was also present in the Non-Intervention Committee, where attempts were made to get the withdrawal of foreign volunteers from Spain. On March, 1937, Hassel (The German Ambassador in Rome) reported that Ciano had informed him of the following:

"Since the British have brought up once again in the London Non-Intervention Committee the idea of withdrawing all volunteers, he repeats the request that German representative be instructed to sabotage it. Ciano added that behind the British move there was presumably the ulterior motive of obtaining from Italy a guaranty to withdraw following the conclusion of peace, if withdrawal now should prove impractical. This was what England was really interested in" 35

However in the evaluation of the influence of strategic factors upon the direction of British policy toward the civil war in Spain, and those who became involved in it, one must revert to the earlier proposition that was made, that Britain as a world power had to develop a world-wide strategic concept as the basis of strategic planning. In her reaction to Spain Britain had to bear in mind events in other parts of the world, as far away as the Far East. The British Admiralty had to provide for the protection of British shipping"... along the thousands of miles of our highly vulnerable ocean trade routes which in the words of the war plans, are 'vital to the life of the Empire', In 1939 some 3,000 deep-sea dry cargo ships and tankers and about 1,000 coasting vessels, totalling 21 million tons, were registered in Britain and the average number at sea of any one day was 2,500. The need for a large number of cruisers to defend this great total of widely dispersed merchant ships requires no emphasis. For many years after the First World War the Admiralty had insisted that seventy cruisers was the smallest number with which we could meet our responsibilities. Yet, from one cause or another, this minimum was gradually whittled down until, in 1939, our effective strength - including the Dominion Navies - was only

fifty-eight." ³⁶

Samuel Hoare, who became First Lord of the Admiralty in June, 1936, was confronted with the urgent problem of naval rearmament. In his memoirs he states:

"The fleet had never recovered from the economies made at the end of the First World War and in the years between 1925 and 1935....year by year the old ships became obsolete and the new ships were not built. Our cruiser strength, for instance fell from 51 in 1922 to 47 in 1926 and 48 in 1927, although the Naval Staff insisted that the minimum standard for safety was 70. In spite of the recommendations of a strong Cabinet Committee under the chairmanship of Birkenhead in 1925 that five a year should be built, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chirchill, had the number reduced to eight in four years, and further diminished by a later cut to three. It was not surprising in this atmosphere of Unilateral disarmament that the Labour Government of 1929 agreed to anticipate the scrapping of five valuable ships, all completed in 1914 and with many years service before them, to postpone until 1937 the replacement of our older battleships and to limit our cruisers and destroyers to a number that suited American prestige rather than our own needs. This was the *damnosa hereditas* from which the navy was suffering until March 1935...The Abyssinian crisis had thrown a spotlight on its (the navy's) many deficiencies. The Naval Staff had then pointed out the extreme danger of tying up the Fleet in the Mediterranean at a time when the Japanese were threatening British interests in the Pacific..." 37

One must conclude therefore that while it was clear that a victory by Franco, and therefore Italian and German intervention in Spain, and the possibilities of Italy and Germany obtaining bases on Spanish territory constituted a serious threat to Britain's strategic position, any action by Britain to prevent the occurrence of these possibilities was fraught with dangerous consequences, especially since Britain would have to act against Italy, whose leader, Mussolini had publicly staked his prestige upon a victory by Franco.

Those factors which would seem to have made it imperative for Britain to act to prevent her strategic position in the Mediterranean declining any further, also made it seem imperative that Britain do nothing that would necessitate the use of naval or military force, especially against Italy.

Italy occupies a particularly strategic position in the Mediterranean, jutting out into the centre of the sea, and also in possession of the island of Pantelleria, roughly equidistant between Sicily and Tunisia. Moreover the advent of the bomber meant that Malta would, under heavy air attack be in all probability unusable as a naval base for the British. Thus once Italy could no longer be regarded as a reliable friend the question of a naval base became acute. Hitherto the Royal Navy had counted on being able to use Gibraltar and Malta, but, when the Cabinet in 1937 decided that Italy could no longer be considered a reliable friend, another base where docking and repairs could be carried out had to be found. The decision in April 1937 was Alexandria as the main fleet base, but the position at Alexandria was far from satisfactory, in the facilities available to ships and in the defenses against hostile forces. If Alexandria was to function as a repair base for a fleet with heavy capital ships, it required a suitable graving dock, which would entail the deepening of the Great Pass channel, and while much had been done to improve Alexandria during the Ethiopian crisis, to improve the harbour and defenses by dredging and laying

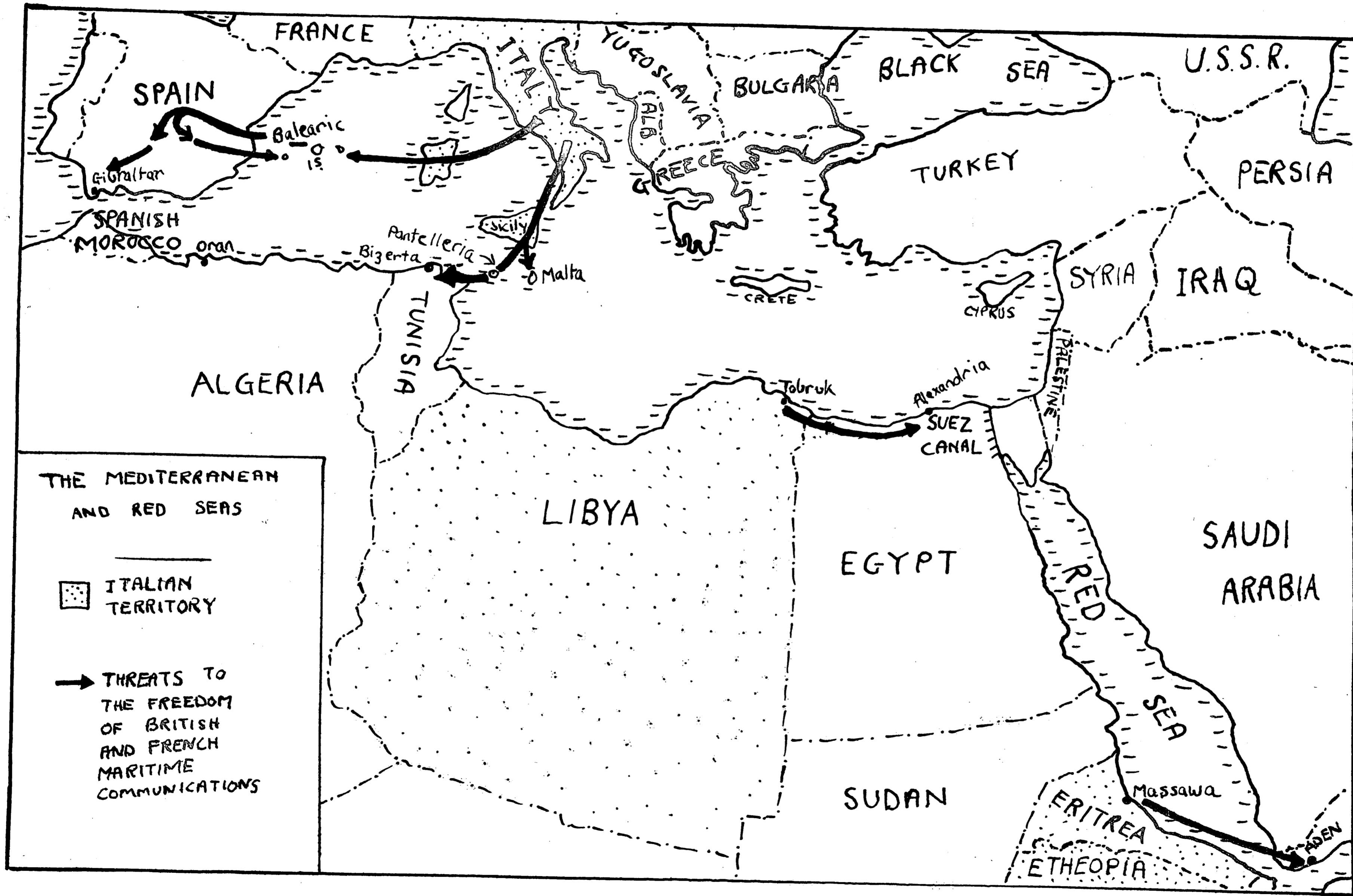
mooring buoys, booms and nets, nothing had been done in the two years between to improve the docking and repair facilities. The defenses against air attack were negligible. The Italian aircraft in Libya were superior in numbers and performance, and could be more easily reinforced from their metropolitan base. There were no fighter aircraft or air defences in Egypt, and this could only be rectified by removing the necessary equipment and machines from Britain where they were desperately needed. Highly vulnerable targets, beside Alexandria and Cairo, existed in the Oil refinery and storage installations at Suez; the port and docks at Port Said; the port facilities and shipping in the canal. The air raid precautions were far from complete and there was therefore the risk of heavy civilian casualties. The only defenses that could be placed against air attacks for the fleet and these targets would be an air attack on the Italian airfields at Cyrenaica; however the Italians had introduced their Savoia 81 bomber, believed to possess a faster top speed than the British fighters and with a 200 mile greater range than the bombers stationed in the Middle East, which meant that advanced landing grounds would have to be made available close to the Egyptian frontier, which in its turn posed the problem of the defence of these landing grounds. Their defence would require the ability on the part of the Army to operate to the westward, while the defence of the Nile delta would require that the enemy be met to the East where the problems of supply

would be eased and those of the enemy increased. Tobruk was too far to the West, so the port of Matruh had been chosen during the Ethiopian crisis as an advanced base and airfield, though it had a low cargo-handling capacity and was unreliable in winter. This base also presented a very vulnerable target to air attack. The Army also presented a pessimistic picture. The reinforcements that had been sent from Britain during the Ethiopian crisis had been withdrawn; many of the British units were below their war strength and their peace stations were far removed from the Western desert. The Egyptian Army was still in the early stages of re-equipping and training, while the Italians had placed two corps of metropolitan troops in Libya - four divisions in all, of which two were fully motorised.³⁸ In addition to this this extension of the docks at Gibraltar to take heavy ships would take another two years to complete, and the air defences there and at Malta³⁹ were still in the process of modernisation.

Captain Roskill demonstrates the purpose of maritime strategy:

"The aim of maritime strategy is not so much to establish complete control of all sea communications, which would be an ideal hardly attainable until final victory was almost won, as to develop the ability to establish zones of maritime control wherever and whenever they may be necessary for the prosecution of the war in accordance with directions of the Government. And a zone of maritime control means no more than ability to pass ships safely across an area of water which may be quite small in extent or may cover many thousands of square miles of ocean." 40

Thus it was clear that Italy through the use of aircraft



could establish a zone of control in the Central Mediterranean, as she did in fact during the Second World War.⁴¹ In addition to this the excellent central position of the Italians would go a long way toward counter-balancing their numerical inferiority in ships.⁴²

In addition to the Italians being able to establish a zone of control over the Central Mediterranean, they would, by the use of aircraft and submarines operating from Italian East Africa, be able to establish a zone of control over the Red Sea, which would be the last remaining sea link with Egypt in the event of the Mediterranean route being closed to British shipping. The security of Aden therefore remained a prime consideration, but was under the threat of Italian air craft. There existed as well the general danger of an Italian advance from Ethiopia into the British possessions East Africa and the Sudan. Events during 1937 did nothing to reassure British military and naval planning staffs, events which seemed inconsistent, as Major-General Playfair notes, with Italy's desire expressed in the Anglo-Italian Agreement of January 1937, to further the ends of peace and friendship with Britain:

"For example there were hostile references to the United Kingdom in the government controlled press derogatory broadcasts in Arabic; and reference by the Fascist Council to increased military expenditure and a greater measure of self-sufficiency. There were also the decisions to set up a High Command in North Africa, with control over land, sea and air forces, and to form a Metropolitan army corps in Libya; and there was an announcement that the Italian Navy must add to their battleships and other types so

to be capable of operating on the high seas. The Chief of the Air Staff declared in the Senate that great changes had taken place in the strategical employment of the Italian Airforce; the centre of gravity had been moved towards the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean; consequently all air bases in those zones had been strengthened -- Sicily, Sardinia, the Aegean Islands, Pantelleria, and Tobruk. Massawa and Assab were further developed and the native army in Etheopia continued to expand. The campaign of anti-British propoganda and intrigue was particularly voilent in the Middle East and the Levant, and in a proclamation by Marshall Balbo to the Arabs of Libya it was proclaimed that the Duce was now the protector of Islam, and as such exalted the Muslim people." 43

It is in this complex of world-wide strategic relationships, together with the special position that Italy occupied in the Mediterranean, that British reactions to the civil war in Spain and her relations with Italy must be set. On the outbreak of the Spanish civil war, the Chiefs of Staff emphasized the need for the restoration of peaceful relations in the Mediterranean and hoped that nothing would prejudice the restoration of friendly relations with Italy. ⁴⁴ As Italy gradually moved into the alignment with Germany and Japan, with her accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact of Japan and Germany in November 1937, the British Chiefs of Staff renewed their three power warning:

"...insisting that our interests lay in a peaceful Mediterranean and that we ought to return to a state of friendly relations with Italy. Without over-looking the help we should hope to receive from France and other possible allies, they could not forsee the time when our defence forces would be strong enough to safeguard our territory, trade, and vital interests against Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously. They therefore emphasized the importance, from the point of view of Imperial defence, of any diplomatic action that would reduce the number of our potential enemies and give us allies.

"No sooner had this warning been given than Italy

announced her withdrawal from the membership of the League. The British Chiefs of Staff, with the prospect of three major enemies ever in mind, recorded their opinion that the military situation then facing the British was "fraught with greater risk than at any time in living memory, apart from the war years" and that an immediate acceleration of the armament programme was essential." 45

Thus British decision-makers were caught between two conflicting policy goals: one the protection of the British position in the Mediterranean; the other the avoidance of the use of force. Ribbentrop, the German Ambassador in London gives us his opinion of the affect of this dichotomy of interest upon the British Foreign Secretary, Eden, in a report of July 1937:

"No serious complications for the general European situation are to be expected from the present tension non-intervention policy. England desires peace, as does France also; in spite of the sharp line followed at present neither of them will push things to the limit. We can count on this as an absolute certain factor and can make our future decisions without being influenced or disturbed.... In a speech yesterday Eden mentioned England's anxiety over her position in the Mediterranean and her sea route to East Asia and stated that the integrity of Spanish territory was an important question for Britain....

"The intervention of large, wholly German and Italian military units...would therefore in the present general political situation, involve the danger of weious complications. Additional arms and air aid to Franco from Italy and from us without the despatch of larger contingents of volunteers would in my opinion not cause any serious complications." 46

The picture that thus emerges is one of Britain moving through a period that offered great risks to the security of the defensive system of the British Empire and to the trade routes which lined Britain to her food sources, to her raw materials and to her markets. Foreign policy is such a

a situation had to be shaped to accord to the realities of Britain's situation, and have as its basic goal the avoidance of war. But one must in following this analysis beware of the dangers of adopting a too deterministic position, since policy decisions do reflect the interaction between the decision-maker and his environment (an environment in which the decision-maker is included as a formative agent). The appeasers were not impelled towards the policy of appeasement purely because of the weaknesses of Britain's strategic position, but also because appeasement represented a continuation of values held. Having taken the strategic factors into account, one still has to make an examination of the structuring of the value and belief system of the decision-making machine in Britain, and to examine the differences contained within that structuring, the conflicts that developed, and the outcome of these struggles.

There were choices that were made that were determined in part by a belief in what the future role of Britain should be in world affairs. While it is true that Defence expenditure rose from £102 millions in 1932 to £188 millions in 1936 and £280 millions in 1937,⁴⁷ the way in which the money was spent reflected a defensive strategy, in which the armed forces of Britain were to provide for Britain's defence and not to provide a force that would enable Britain to have a voice which would carry weight in Europe.

Commenting on the defence programme on February 9th, 1936, Chamberlain wrote:

"I have had to do most of the work on the programme, which has been materially modified as a result, and I am pretty satisfied now that, if we can keep out of war for a few years, we shall have an airforce of such striking force that no one will care to run risks with it. I cannot believe that the next war, if it ever comes, will be like the last one, and I believe that our resources will be more profitably employed in the air, and on the sea, than in building up great armies." 48

Daladier (the French President of the Council) when he met Chamberlain during the Anglo-French conversations that were held at the Quai d'Orsay on November 24, 1938, saw clearly the direction of Chamberlain's planning and tried to persuade him away from the defensive direction that planning had taken in Britain:

"M. Daladier said that he had listened with interest to the information that Mr. Chamberlain had given him. He knew well the great efforts which was being made by Great Britain, particularly since Mr. Chamberlain became Head of the Government. But he wondered if the problem were being faced from the right angle. He feared that it was not...He wondered, however, whether it was a good idea to put anti-aircraft defence above everything else. He thought not. Obviously, anti-aircraft defence was important, but, in his view, it was better to defend London by having bombers which might go and bomb German towns rather than by concentrating principally on anti-aircraft guns. He did not believe that fighter aircraft were a sufficient defence against bombers." 49

Chamberlain, who had earlier stated that

"...it was their first duty to make Great Britain as safe as possible...(and) that they had decided to give priority to anti-aircraft defences over the demands of land forces", replied to Daladier that "He thought it unwise to underrate the value of fighters and anti-aircraft guns." 50

Chamberlain on October 25, 1936 wrote in his diary:

"We should aim at an Army of 4 divisions plus 1 mobile division, and the necessary drafts to maintain its strength, and no more for overseas work...Territorials should be kept for A.A. defence." 51

If Chamberlain believed that force was the only argument that Germany understood, as he maintained,⁵² it is clear from Chamberlain's concept of the future of British Armaments that Chamberlain wished to rely on persuasion rather than on coercion in his relations with the dictators. This was a deliberate choice on Chamberlain's part, and it reflected both on his belief in the utter futility of war as a means of national policy and also his fundamental desire to maintain the stability of the British economy.

That this armaments policy did constitute a deliberate choice can be seen from this extract from a letter written by Chamberlain:

"If we were to follow Winston's advice and sacrifice our commerce to the manufacture of arms, we should inflict a certain injury on our trade from which it would take generations to recover, we should destroy the confidence which now happily exists, and we should cripple the revenue." 53

Economic considerations in fact did play a central role in helping to formulate British attitudes to rearmament and foreign policy. This role was to a great extent derived from the position of sterling as an international currency, which had "...to be taken into account not merely because of administrative complications, but...also because it was a wartime asset of considerable value. Treasury officials who claimed that foreign exchange control would interfere with the export trade and reduce the country's foreign exchange income were overstating the case. More substantive arguments claimed that as an international banker, London

could to some extent live on its credit.

"The need to economise in foreign currencies was taken for granted, and even post-war indebtedness was an evil to be shouldered only in the clear interest of an immediate war effort. The reluctance to impose controls became a drag on the pre-war preparation, and gave rise to much criticism."⁵⁴

Britain was not able to emulate Schacht's economic miracles in Germany, which provided the means of the rapid rearmament because of the prevailing economic concepts held in Britain, which prevented the imposition of strict controls over foreign exchange, and the adoption of a quasi-wartime economy as in Germany or Japan. Keynes in September 1939 wrote that "Complete control was so much against the spirit of the age that I doubt if it occurred to any of us that it was possible."⁵⁵ Thus it was that "...economic as much as political considerations led them to reject any rigid system of control, for such a system might have had effects upon British trade and finance, so soon after weathering the recent economic depression, they were not prepared to risk experiencing. In the event of war Britain was likely to depend upon her foreign trade for her existence...therefore the Government felt that nothing must be undertaken which would likely to interfere with or dislocate that trade."⁵⁶ It is for these reasons that Inskip (the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence) refused Churchill's demand for a

Minister for Supply to supplement the newly created Minister for the Co-ordination of defence, as Feiling makes clear:

Chamberlain in the debate in the Commons on May 1937

stated: "Although in actual war a Ministry of Supply would be essential...I do not believe that a Ministry of Supply in peace-time will be effective, as the Ministry of Munitions was effective in the Great War, unless you give that Ministry of Supply the same powers" and these Feiling states he doubted whether they would be given, or ought to be, in time of peace.⁵⁷

Eden's commented upon the effect of the economic influence on Britain's rearmament:

"A difficulty which confronted the British Government at this period was that a high priority, too high as is now evident, was placed on the maintainance of our economic security. This argument found particular favour with the Prime Minister and was constantly used by the Treasury; but it certainly made difficulties for the Service Departments whose political chiefs and staffs had to spend many hours trying to curb their demands within Treasury figures which had no particular significance in terms of defence." 58

Having as Chancellor of the Exchequer, transformed an adverse trade balance of £104 million into a favourable balance of £37 million, Chamberlain did not wish the results of his careful husbandry disappear upon the construction of weapons and bring to an end "...much cherished plans for social improvement which were at this time on the verge of blooming into an abundance of expensive blossoms."⁵⁹

One cannot explain Chamberlain's policies in foreign affairs merely in terms of a desire to maintain a stable economy or a wish to see his social welfare schemes become a

a reality. His policies basically derived from his hatred of war and his steadfast determination to do all that he could to prevent Britain from being engaged in another war. Of war, Chamberlain said that "when I think...of the 7 million of young men who were cut off in their prime, the 13 million who were maimed and mutilated, the misery and the sufferings of the mothers or the fathers...in war there are no winners, but all are losers."⁵⁰ This abhorrence of the destruction of war was harnessed to a blunt sense of realism derived from his radical background of Birmingham and his father, Joe Chamberlain, to an unyielding sense of duty and a selfless dedication, and an impatience with those who did nothing while the country and Europe seemed to be slowly drifting into war.

The most dominant impression given by Chamberlain in his attitude to foreign policy is that of the essentially Radical attitude to foreign affairs, his devotion to the welfare of the British people, and the over-riding sense of urgency. Samuel Hoare draws us this picture of Chamberlain's approach to foreign policy:

"Just as between 1924 and 1929, when he was Minister of Health, he had set before himself a five-year programme of social security, with each stage clearly marked at the appointed time, so in 1937, when he became Prime Minister, he had in his mind an equally concrete programme of international security based on definite action, and concentrated, stage by stage, upon carefully selected points in the foreign front. It was typical of his mentality that in November, 1925, he was ready within a few days of becoming Minister of Health with a programme of no less than twenty-five Bills of social reform, and that by 1929 he had successfully carried them all to the Statute Book. In 1937, he was equally determined to concentrate his analytical and methodical mind upon the crucial points in the foreign front. A period of drift

In Europe had made more urgent than ever the need of a concrete and concerted programme for preventing a catastrophe." 61

Thus one should not catagorise Chamberlain's foreign policy as being determined by the military weakness of Britain, but rather as a function of Chamberlain's desire to give direction to British foreign policy -- to move in an active role toward the solution of those problems that seemed likely to disrupt the peace of Europe.

Hoare felt:

"...it would not be correct to say that our military weakness was the principle cause of the Munich Agreement. The over-riding consideration with Chamberlain and his colleagues was that the very complicated problem of Czechoslovakia ought not to lead to a world war, and must at almost any price be settled by peaceful means." 62

In April, 1938, in front of a Birmingham audience (to whom, according to Feiling, Chamberlain always spoke his mind most freely) Chamberlain said

"We pass no judgement here upon the political system of other countries, but neither Fascist nor Communist is in harmony with our temper our creed... And yet...do not forget that we are all members of the human race, and subject to the like passions and affections, and fears and desires. There must be something in common between us if only we can find it, and perhaps by our very aloofness from the rest of Europe we may have some very special part to play as conciliator and mediator. An ancient historian once wrote of the Greeks that they had made gentle the line of the world...I can imagine no nobler ambition for an English Statesman than to win the same tribute for his own country." 63

Spain, with outbreak of the civil war, became to Chamberlain a possible threat to the peace of Europe that ought thus to become a subject of Britain's role as a

mediator and conciliator. We shall examine this aspect of British policy in a later chapter, and the special problems that presented themselves in the fulfilling of this role, together with attempts to arrange a four-power meeting similar to that which met in Munich in September, 1938, to settle the Czechoslovakian question.

In an examination of British policy between 1936 and 1939, one should avoid the temptation to draw a too rigid division of the period into three different periods which accord with the changes of personality that occurred in the offices of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, thus:

- (1) Through 1936 to May, 1937, Baldwin as Prime Minister and Eden as Foreign Secretary.
- (2) May 1937 to February 1938, Chamberlain as Prime Minister and Eden as Foreign Secretary.
- (3) Following Eden's resignation in February, 1938, his position is filled by the Earl of Halifax, while Chamberlain remains as Prime Minister.

The temptation to place too much emphasis upon the above divisions should be avoided because of the continuity of influence upon the decision-making process given to certain members of the ruling party in British through the functioning of a parliamentary system of government. To state the proposition simply, the influence of any member of the Government upon any decision made will depend not only an individual's official position given to him by the office that he holds, but also upon his position of influence within the ruling party. The dominant position of Chamberlain within the

Conservative Party acted establish some degree of continuity during the changes of office that we have noted above.

Hoare (or Viscount Templewood as we should now call him) notes that Baldwin after 1935, having won the election seemed to be a tired man, constantly talking of his impending retirement, seeming to lose much of his interest in current politics.⁶⁴ Tom Jones had lunch with Baldwin in February, 1937 and "...found him counting the hours like a schoolboy in sight of the holidays. 'I shall sleep for a week when I get out of this', he groaned. He is just caretaking for Neville."⁶⁵ As early as March, 1935, Chamberlain wrote to his sister, Hilda: "As you will see I have become a sort of Acting P.M. - only without the actual power of the P.M. I have to say 'Have you thought' or 'What would you say' when it would be quicker to say 'This is what you must do'"⁶⁶ Macleod is therefore able to conclude with a considerable degree of truth that "As Baldwin's health deteriorated during 1936 and a date was put to his retirement, the Chancellor's (Chamberlain's) grip upon the whole range of policy perceptibly tightened."⁶⁷ A point which Chamberlain confirms in this entry in his diary of October, 1936. "I am sending for people and endeavouring to conduct business as if I were in fact P.M."⁶⁸

Hoare notes that Chamberlain's position in the Conservative Party was unassailable, and derived in part from his control of the party machine:

"Like his father before him, he kept his hand on the party machine. When the Party's fortunes were at a low ebb in the days of MacDonal'd's second administration, he reconditioned the organisation and appointed new men to manage it. The Party's policy was constantly in his mind, and no Conservative Minister ever took a more detailed interest in election programme." 69

Even in 1939, the Government Whips were able to assure Chamberlain that no Conservative Prime Minister ever had so strong a hold on the Party in the Commons. 70

Chamberlain's dominant position in the Conservative Party gave him a continuous influence on policy in foreign affairs, even when Chamberlain was only the Chancellor of the Exchequer. According to Macleod, Chamberlain in November, 1936, arrived at a Cabinet meeting to find his colleagues undecided on the issue of whether to grant belligerent rights to both sides in the Spanish civil war, and persuaded the Cabinet to stick to non-intervention, and to introduce legislation to prevent British ships from carrying war materials to any Spanish port. 71

When he became Prime Minister, Chamberlain set about to implement his programme for the pacification of Europe, in the course of which he gradually became opposed in his ideas with those of Eden, his Foreign Secretary. The basic disagreement between the two arose from the question of the conditions that should exist before conversations should be undertaken with Italy in an attempt to reach a general appeasement of the Mediterranean.

The position of Eden can be best seen in his personal explanation to the House of Commons, of the reasons for his resignation from the office of Foreign Secretary, made on 21 February, 1938:

"The immediate issue is whether...official conversations should be opened in Rome now. It is my conviction that the attitude of the Italian Government to international problems in general, and to this country in particular, is not yet such as to justify this course. The ground has been in no respect prepared. Propoganda against this country by Italy is rife throughout the world...more-over, little progress, in fact, though much in promise, has been made with the Spanish problem. Let me make it plain. I do not advocate that the Government should refuse conversations with the Italian Government...yet we must be convinced that the conditions in which these conversations take place are such to make for the likelihood, if not the certainty, of their success. I contend that these conditions do not exist to-day...it is my contention that before His Majesty's Government open official conversations in Rome with the Italian Government...we must make further progress with the Spanish problem; we must agree not only on the need for withdrawal and on the conditions of withdrawal - we have had assurances enough of that in the past - but we must go further and show the world not only promise but also achievement. The withdrawal must have begun in earnest before these conversations in Rome can be held on a really solid basis good will, which is essential to success...if the desire of the two parties be to reach agreement on all subjects outstanding between them, including Spain, I am quite confident that it is the best method to persue. It is the traditional method of diplomacy to prepare for conversations before they are formally opened. It is seldom right to depart from the traditional method, which has been tested by time and experience. It is certainly never right to do so because one party to the negotiations inimiates that it is now or never. Agreements that are worthwhile are never made on the basis of a threat. Nor in the past has this country been willing to negotiate in such conditions." 72

The position of Chamberlain and those of his colleagues who were of the same opinion was clearly expressed by Halifax, then Lord President of the Council, to the House of Lords on the 24th of February:

"It is a perfectly intelligible argument that was employed by Mr. Eden in another place...that if previous undertakings have not been observed it is a waste of time to conclude others. But I venture to think that in an atmosphere clouded by misunderstandings and suspicion, such simple logic as that is not necessarily conclusive. We have simple logic as that is not necessarily conclusive. We have only to see what happens between individuals differing in outlook and tradition and intellectual process to realise how easily misunderstandings between nations grow. And however good any of us may have felt those reasons to be, there was some reason to believe that the Italian Government on its side felt that on one pretext or another we were concerned to postpone the conversation...the Prime Minister, rightly as I think, held that, if it could be achieved, the right thing to go for was to reach an agreement, and that if understanding could be reached and if confidence could be re-established the conditions that Mr. Eden thought necessary to secure in advance would follow."

The differences between Chamberlain and Eden reflected in part the radical quality that was present in Chamberlain's attitudes to problems which he faced, his impatience with as being too slow or tied by convention or tradition to pre-established methods or solutions. Hoare states that Chamberlain:

"...was so sure that his plan was right, and so deeply convinced that he must carry it through without a moment's delay, that his singleness of urgent purpose made him impatient of obstacles and indifferent to incidental risks. The old-established machine of the Foreign Office did not seem to him to move quickly enough for the crisis that threatened Europe. A foreign Secretary left himself always appeared to be entangled in the web of an intricate Department. The classical methods of diplomacy under which ambassadors interviewed Foreign Ministers and leisurely dispatches passed between distant capitals seemed out of date in the world of dictators, wireless and aeroplanes. Had not the time come, he asked himself, when the British Prime Minister should deal directly with the man who really controlled Italian Foreign Policy, rather than through intermediaries who had no power of their own? Being so completely concentrated upon his plan of action, he did not realise some of its implications, the danger, for

instance, as side-tracking the Foreign Secretary, and dealing with advisors who were not always the accredited experts on foreign affairs." 74

Suspecting the Foreign Office of being guided in its policies by encrusted attitudes - he accused the Foreign Office of persisting in seeing Mussolini only as a sort of Machiavelli⁷⁵ - he preferred to make his own judgements and formulate his own policies, and employed channels of communication with the dictators that lay outside those of the Foreign Office.

Chamberlain is not alone in his appraisal of the ability of the Foreign Office to meet the challenge of changing situations. Anthony Sampson quotes R.A. Butler assaying of higher civil servants:

"They have very silky minds, they've Rolls Royce minds. in fact the civil service is a bit like a Rolls Royce - you know that it's the best machine in the world, but you're not quite sure what to do with it. I think that it's a bit too smooth: it needs rubbing up a bit." 76

Sampson also notes that:

"The Foreign Office have always had an aversion to long-term plans...officials have always thought it mildly improper to put up bold, five-year plans to their political masters. 'I distrust anyone who foresees consequences and advocates remedies to avert them,' said Lord Halifax before the war; and this old English pragmatism is still glorified...."

"Here again we find Rolls Royce difficulties. 'The Foreign Office is like a very sensitive octopus,' said one of its members: 'It's superbly equipped to receive impressions from all over the world, and to react to them with speed and efficiency. But it's not designed to make positive moves.' Only when a new party is elected, and a new set of ideas and attitudes is imported, does the octopus come fully alive, and show itself capable of movement."

Chamberlain wished to give to British foreign policy a radically new direction and he regarded bleakly the ability of the established methods to achieve this. He became convinced that if only he could talk to the dictators personally that the difficulties that lay in the path of appeasement could be ironed out between those who were the real centres of political power in their respective countries. He therefore embarked on a process of by-passing the Foreign Office in the conduct of foreign relations. Upon coming into the office of the Prime Minister, Chamberlain wrote a personal letter to Mussolini declaring his readiness to open conversation not showing the letter to Eden for fear that he would object.⁷⁸ Chamberlain in his diary mentions the use of Horace Wilson as a private intermediary with Grandi,⁷⁹ and Grandi talks of a

"...confidential agent of Chamberlain, who, since the month of October last year (1937), has been functioning as a direct and 'secret' link between myself and Chamberlain. This agent, with whom one may say I have been in almost daily contact since the 15th January (1938),..."⁸⁰

Though one does have to treat Grandi's remarks with caution, and it is possible that Grandi is deliberately exaggerating the extent of his 'secret' contacts with Chamberlain in order to overstate his own importance in the development of British foreign policy, it is clear that Chamberlain was engaged in by-passing the Foreign Office and his Foreign Secretary.

Chamberlain was determined to take the conduct of relations into his own hands, and to set Britain on the course

of appeasement, "...even though it meant losing my Foreign Secretary,"⁸¹ as he told Horace Wilson on October 18th, 1938. Grandi describes the meeting that he had with Chamberlain and Eden on 18th February, 1938, in these terms:

"Chamberlain and Eden were not a Prime Minister and a Foreign Minister discussing with the Ambassador of a Foreign Power a delicate situation of an international character. They were - and revealed themselves as such to me in defiance of all established convention - two enemies confronting each other like two fighting cocks in true fighting posture. The questions and queries addressed to me by Chamberlain were all, without exception, intentionally put with the aim of producing replies which would have the effect of contradicting and overthrowing the bases of argument on which Eden had evidently previously constructed, or by which he had attempted to justify, his miserable anti-Italian and anti-Fascist policy in opposition to Chamberlain and before his colleagues in the Cabinet..."

"At the end of the three hours conversation the two men whom I had in front of me gave the indelible impression that, behind the world, the arguments, the differences of opinion and even the question under discussion, they were playing, or preparing to play for the high stakes of their future destiny in the Government and in the Conservative Party, and that they were forging in their debating weapons for the Cabinet meeting which is taking place at the very moment when I am writing this report, a meeting which for them may be the decisive battle." 82

Ciano in his diary seems to be of the opinion that Eden was preparing to fight back:

"Grandi has taken a step forward in his conversations ...Nevertheless, on Eden's express orders, Perth brought me a very forcible protest about a colonial question of quite minor importance. It strikes an odd note, on the morrow of the London conversations. Everything suggests that Eden, seeing that he had lost the game against Chamberlain, is still trying to muddle things and put back the negotiations back where they began." 83

But Eden never stood a chance against the entrenched position of Chamberlain, and was in fact regarded with suspicion among a wide circle of the Conservative Party for his advocacy of fashionable concepts - as the League of Nations (see Chapter Two, Pp.) - while in the Cabinet Eden occupied an isolated position. Chamberlain described the Cabinet meeting which followed the conversations with Grandi:

"I began by putting my case at some length and Anthony replied rather ineffectively I thought. I then invited each member of the Cabinet to give his views in turn...I then marked them as they spoke. Twenty of us were present...Taking out Anthony and myself, 14 supported me without qualification, 4...with some qualification or reserve. None supported Anthony. When invited to reply he said he could not accept the decision and must resign...On Sunday (the 20th) I asked A, to have a private talk before the Cabinet... This time we were able to agree that the difference between us was vital and unbridgeable...After long discussions in full Cabinet, we suspended our sitting to allow a committee of mediators...to try and accommodate our differences. They however made no attempt to induce me to alter my views, their efforts were directed to convincing Anthony that the differences were less than he made out and that he could with a clear conscience accept the Cabinet's decision and proceed with the talks, merely warning Grandi that a Spanish settlement was essential to an agreement and that the Italians must implement their promise to accept the formula and abstain from reinforcements. Anthony thus bombarded from all sides and very tired, at last begged for an hour's respite to think over his position and we agreed that the Cabinet should wait to hear his decision. About 7 o'clock he came and, greatly to his credit as I think, he informed us that nothing that had been said could shake his decision. Accordingly he went off to write his letter of resignation." 84

With Eden's resignation as Foreign Secretary, Halifax

came to occupy that post, and the formulation of policy receded completely into an inner group of ministers who shared Chamberlain's concepts in foreign affairs: Halifax, Hoare, Simon and Chamberlain. While Hoare states that Chamberlain was not an autocrat who imposed his will on doubting colleagues,⁸⁵ Duff Cooper (who resigned on the 30th September, 1938, over the Munich Agreement) describes Chamberlain as hating any opposition, and states that the Government had come to mean the Prime Minister, Simon, Halifax and Hoare.⁸⁶ Again while Hoare describes Halifax, the Foreign Minister as being not 'yes man',⁸⁷ Lord Strang notes that "An unusual feature of the period after Eden's resignation in 1938 was the extent to which Halifax acquiesced in the Prime Minister's conduct of important business that was proper to the Foreign Office through channels outside the Foreign Office. One cannot imagine Grey allowing Asquith to use someone like Sir Horace Wilson, as Chamberlain did, on Foreign Office Business of first importance."⁸⁸

One aspect of British foreign policy in the latter half of the 1930's is the indeterminate nature of the source of authority for the formulation of foreign policy, which resulted from the gradual undermining of the authority of the Foreign Office. The result of this was the confusion noted

Ciano above in being faced simultaneously, during February 1938, with encouragement from Chamberlain and discouragement from Eden in the matter of the initiation of conversations between Britain and Italy. Eden in February, 1938, was forced to protest the activities of Lady Austen Chamberlain (which Eden stated "were creating confusion"⁸⁹), who was engaged in showing letters to Mussolini from the Prime Minister which stated that Britain was coming around to the idea of the formal recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy, and that conversations to this end could begin at the end of the month.⁹⁰

John Connell has described the process as resulting in the "position of the Foreign Office (being) ironic and humiliating. The high status and great authority which it had achieved in the previous thirty years were gradually taken away from it, not openly and abruptly, but by a gradual process of unacknowledged transference of power. Crisis succeeded crisis; the Spanish civil war, from its dramatic and conspiratorial beginning through to the end of its tortuous and protracted agony, was the origin not only of ideological differences in Britain, but of a number of delicate and complex diplomatic issues, which the Foreign Office was permitted to handle at the executive level; but the far more important policy on these and all other major issues was removed from it to other spheres. Within the framework of British Cabinet government, there could be no complaint if the Prime Minister exercised not merely a supervisory but a con-

trolling authority over foreign policy. Baldwin's fault was that the control which he exerted was occasional and capricious, and that it was subject to the influence of unofficial advisors and of a small (and largely secret) cabal of ministers and officials whose proper fields of responsibility did not lie in foreign affairs. Chamberlain's fault was that he extended and strengthened the influence of this cabal, and added to it his own over-riding authority, his own vigorous but narrow determination to implement a disastrous and dishonourable policy."⁹¹

One can trace differences between the period when Baldwin was the Prime Minister and the period when Chamberlain occupied that office - though as pointed out these differences should not be stressed too far in view of the realities of party politics. It would indeed appear as Connell suggests above that the control exercised by Baldwin as Prime Minister over the formulation was exercised in an occasional fashion. Eden notes in his memoirs that: "The Cabinet did not meet from the end of July (1936) until the beginning of September and British foreign policy was in fact decided in the Foreign Office. Baldwin was not well enough to ... (deal) with any but the most essential business. According to the press, he and I were working in close conjunction. I wrote in my diary on August 24th:

'The communique in the press this morning announcing that S.B. is not coming up to London is a little 'tall', since his constant touch with me has consisted of one letter and

one telephone call this month, and these about my spending spending a weekend with him in Wales." ⁹² Eden also notes that during the latter part of October, Baldwin became increasingly occupied with the impending crisis of the relations of the King and Mrs. Simpson, and told Eden: "I hope that you will try not to bother me too much with foreign affairs just now." ⁹³

But it would appear that Baldwin did intervene to give direction to British policy. Tom Jones (the Samuel Pepys of the Cliveden set) records in his diary on July 27, 1936, that: "S.B. was much affected by the Spanish troubles. 'I told Eden yesterday that on no account, French or other, must he bring us in to fight on the side of the Russians.'" ⁹⁴ Jones notes as well that on June 8th, 1936, he "Saw Horace Wilson at No. 10 at 6.40. He had just reported to S.B. my weekend adventures (in which Jones, together with Lord Lothian discussed with von Ribbentrop with possibilities of a meeting between Baldwin and Hitler) ...S.B. replied that he...was in favour of meeting Hitler but was of the view that the meeting should be kept quite open....He had seen Eden and it was agreed between them that Eden should also think hard over the weekend. S.B. is willing to go to Berlin, accompanied by Eden. I warned H.W. that the interviews must not get mixed up with the apparatus of the Foreign Office, as one of its objects was to escape it." ⁹⁵

The lines of authority in foreign affairs, as has been stated before run indistinctly and unevenly, with the exist-

of two co-existing spheres in which foreign policy was formulated: the sphere centred on the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Office; and the sphere centred on the Prime Minister and his own private group of intimates. Horace Wilson appears as a connecting link between the Administrations of Baldwin and Chamberlain, following from an Imperial Conference held in Ottawa in 1932, confined to matters of Imperial economic policy, the chief consequence of which was, according to Vansittart (the Permanent Under-secretary at the Foreign Office) that "...Horace Wilson made his name their to my subsequent cost. He had enormous talents, a pure personality and a sanctas simplicitas in foreign affairs. His winning ways captured S.B. from me and spellbound Neville Chamberlain with whom he shared incomprehension of such ugly ideas as mine." ⁹⁷ Vansittart traces his increasing isolation from the centre of political power: "The longer I was in office the less I counted with Baldwin, who was the real head of the Government. Nothing could alter my devotion for him, but the others were sapping his former affection for me with rumours that I was wild and hysterical, the very defect that he most dreaded, being so highly strung himself. I never thought that he could be estranged by conflicting convictions, but somehow we met less often and less amicably.... Since S.B. set out to play the Briton, he could not feel comfortable consorting with a passion he condemned. No wonder that in contrast he called Horace Wilson 'wise, calm and serene'. Since Baldwin also thought that Tom Jones embodied 'the wisdom of the ages', there was hardly a point on which our

judgements coincided." ⁹⁸

With the advent of Chamberlain to the Premiership the vagueness of the lines of authority gradually distill into the clearer outlines of the dominance of Chamberlain. In the period that Eden was Foreign Secretary the relations between Eden and Chamberlain gradually began to worsen as Chamberlain extended his grip upon the formulation of policy. During January the issue of Chamberlain's rebuff of an initiative by Roosevelt designed to influence the state of world opinion, led to the relations of the two men becoming seriously at odds. Eden states that "Chamberlain apparently believed with increasing conviction that our approaches to the dictators were likely to lead very soon to genuine settlements. I expostulated with him, but only received the reply that the Foreign Office was not sincere in its efforts....We were now head on and this brought out in the Prime Minister's character a streak of ruthlessness reminiscent of his father, Joseph Chamberlain. He was evidently determined to see the whole American business only in the context of his impending talks with the dictators. In this sense, Roosevelt, our French allies and I were all in the same boat. We were all held to be obstructing these negotiations, in which Chamberlain had dogmatic faith." ⁹⁹

With the promotion of Vansittart to the position of Chief Diplomatic Advisor to the Government, where he was isolated both from the Foreign Office and from Chamberlain who did not seek his advice, and the resignations of Eden

and Viscount Cranbourne (the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) - Vansittart departing in January of 1938, and Eden and Cranbourne in February of the same month -- Chamberlain, as he told his friend Rushcliff, had "won through" ¹⁰⁰; Chamberlain's then became the influence that moulded the direction of British foreign policy and his will prevailed without the inconvenience of conflicting spheres of authority. Chamberlain's influence, as we have seen, was that of a man whose thoughts were dominated by the strength of his hatred of war and his belief that by personally intervening in the established methods of diplomatic intercourse he would be able to divert the course of events. He was perhaps justified in his belief that the Foreign Office was bound to too great a degree by pre-established concepts and that new direction and impulse had to be given to the flow of British foreign policy - the Rolls Royce needed to be ruffled a little. But Chamberlain in placing himself outside the established methods of diplomatic activity and in by-passing his Foreign Secretary, placed himself outside the total picture of European events - he had released his hold on the 'octopus' and the total range of impressions of foreign events. As Lord Strang makes clear: "It is unlikely that any Minister who had the whole world within his purview would have so long persisted in such an opinion: but Mr. Chamberlain was dealing only with one part of foreign affairs, which must by their very nature be regarded as one whole. If he had had to explain from day to day the progressive development of his purposes to the

French, United States, Soviet and other Ambassadors and to the Czechoslovak Minister, and had been obliged to watch and to respond to the impact of his actions upon governments and peoples throughout the world, as a Foreign Secretary must do, he might not indeed have modified his policy, but he may have seized its implications better than he perhaps did." ¹⁰¹ To Chamberlain Italy and Germany occupied the centre of his mind to the exclusion of other problems, which only became relevant in as far as they impinged upon the relations of Britain with the Axis countries. Thus in Chamberlain's mind Spain became a function of Britain's relations with these two countries and became considered purely in these terms : British policy towards the Spanish civil war under Chamberlain therefore became dominated by the necessity to remove the Spanish conflict as obstacle to the development of the new era and to the development of the appeasement of Europe. But to achieve this goal Chamberlain still had to bear in mind the opinion of the remainder of his countrymen - the degree to which Chamberlain's concepts of the Spanish civil war were shared by the British people will occupy our attention in the next chapter - a consideration of the problems that presented themselves to British decision-makers as they attempted to implement their policies toward the Spanish conflict

Notes : Chapter One.

1. While being aware that the use of the term "power" could upset the semantic susceptibilities of some, I find its use unavoidable. Having used the term, I will take this opportunity to guard my flanks. In using the word "power" I mean nothing more or less than the ability to influence others to act in accordance with ones wishes. The power structure will consist of those elements upon which a state can call to achieve the objective for which the power is being exerted. These elements of power may consist of the use or the threat of the use of physical coercion, diplomatic skill, economic relationships, lingering prestige of a more glorious era, or whatever means one state has at its disposal to persuade another to its way of thinking. It must however be recognised that the latter half of the 1930's was an era in which it was considered among contemporary British political circles that physical coercion bore a special position, in the relations of Britain with the Axis states, viz., Chamberlain: "...force is the only argument that Germany understands."
2. Lord Strang, Britain in World Affairs (Praeger, New York, 1961), pp.250-251.
3. P.A. Reynolds, British Foreign Policy in the Inter-War

Years (London, Longmans, 1954), p.2.

4. J. Hurstfield, The Control of Raw Materials, History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series, W.K. Hancock ed., (London, H.M.S.O., 1953), pp.14-15.

It must be admitted that by 1935 the British Iron and Steel Federation had been set up with power "...to support and co-ordinate the activities of the associations and to give effect to the will of the industry in the matters of general policy", but, concludes Hurstfield, "...compared with its competitors abroad, and particularly with the steel industries of Germany and the United States, the British iron and steel industry had a long way to go both in the intergration of its structure and in the application of the results of technical progress." Hurstfield, supra, p.24.

5. E.L. Hargreaves and M.M. Gowing: Civil Industry and Trade, History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series, W.K. Hancock, ed., (London, H.M.S.O., 1952), pp.5-6.
6. Roy C. Macridis, Foreign Policy in World Politics (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp.61-62.
7. The information above on the economic structure of Japan in this period has been taken from G.C. Allen, A Short Economic History of Japan (London, Allen and Unwin, 1958). Press
8. W.W. Lockwood, The Economic Development of Japan,

(Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954).

9. Major-General S. Woodburn - Kirby, The War Against Japan, Vol. 1, The Loss of Singapore, United Kingdom Military Series, (London, H.M.S.O.), p.2.
10. Capt. J.W. Roskill, The War at Sea, Vol. 1. (London, H.M.S.O., 1954), p.59.
11. Ibid, pp.51-59.
12. Ibid, p.58.
13. On the 6th. of February, 1922, Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy and Japan signed the Washington Naval Treaty. The Treaty was designed to contribute to the maintainance of general peace in the Far East and to reduce the burden of competition in naval armaments. By the treaty, the signatories agreed that capital ships in their respective navies should be maintained in the ratio of 5 for Britain and the United States, 3 for Japan, and 1.6 for France and Italy. Under Article XLX, Great Britain, the United States and Japan agreed not to establish any new measures to create new bases or to increase the facilities in this area. The areas covered by the agreement were:
 - (a) for Great Britain - Hong Kong and any insular possessions east of the 110° meridian (except such areas as were adjacent to the coasts of Australia, New Zealand and Canada);

- (b) for the United States - her insular possessions in the Pacific, excepting those adjacent to the coasts of the U.S.A., Alaska (excluding the Aleutian Islands), the Panama Canal and Hawaii;
- (c) for Japan - her insular possessions and territories in the Pacific.

The Marianas, Caroline and Marshall Islands were not mentioned for the reason that since these islands were under mandate to the League of Nations, Japan was responsible to that organisation for the maintainance of the 'status quo'. The significance of these islands was that they lay across the United States' lines of communications and were clearly of great strategic value to Japan were she to be involved in a Pacific war. No enforcement machinery was included in the Washington Treaty and Japan was in a position where she might disregard the treaty with impunity once she so desired. The fact that neither Britain nor the United States could construct naval bases nearer to Japan than Singapore and Hawaii, and that Japan possessed those Pacific islands listed above, meant that the Japanese defensive position was extremely strong. The effect was to strengthen as well as to acknowledge the impregnability of Japan from naval attack by Britain or the United States; the security of Japan's communications in time of war with her new continental possessions were thus assured. Short of

combined Anglo-American naval action, there was little assurance that any independent action by Japan could be curbed. The London Naval Treaty of April 1930 laid down a holiday among the five naval powers in the building of capital ships, together with a limit on the numbers and the uses of submarines. Britain, the United States and Japan laid down a 10 : 10 : 7 ratio for cruisers. These provisions were strongly criticised in Britain as endangering British security, and in particular the fact that Macdonald had agreed for Britain to a one third reduction in the minimum cruiser requirements by nearly one third in order that agreement could be reached. It was felt in many circles that this number of cruisers would be insufficient to safeguard Britain's commercial routes and strategic position throughout the world.

14. G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, A Short History of International Affairs (London, Oxford University Press, 1960), pp.322-323.
15. Major-General S. Woodburn-Kirby, The War Against Japan, Vol.1, p.67.
17. Ibid, p.13.
18. Ibid, p.17.
19. H.M. Vinacke, A History of the Far East in Modern Times (New York, Crofts, 1942).
20. Husrtfield, op. cit,
- 21.

21. J.W. Wheeler-Bennet (ed.), Documents on International Affairs, 1936 (London, Oxford University Press, Anually), p.84.
(Cited hereafter as Documents....).
22. United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1937, Vol. 1 (Washington, U.S.G.P.O.), p.18.
(Series cited hereafter as American Documents....).
23. United States, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. 111 (Washington, U.S.G.P.O.) p.18.
(Series cited hereafter as German Documents....).
24. American Documents, 1936, Vol.11, p.451.
25. Great Britain, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, E.L. Woodward and R. Butler, eds., Series 3, Vol.111, (London, H.M.S.O.), p.315.
(Series cited hereafter as British Documents....).
26. American Documents, 1936, Vol.11, p.586.
27. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol.326, Cols.2929-2930.
28. War at Sea, supra, pp.41-43.
29. American Documents, 1936, Vol. 11, p.40.
30. Ibid, p.468.
31. War at Sea, supra, p.42.
32. Documents, 1937, p.87.
33. Ibid, pp.88-89.

35. German Documents, Series D, Vol. 111, p.250.
36. War at Sea, supra, pp.42-43.
37. Viscount Templewood, Nine Troubled Years (London, Collins, 1954), pp.206-207.
38. Much of the above has been abstracted from:
I.S.O. Playfair, The Mediterranean and the Middle East, Vol. 1., pp.3-10.
39. Ibid, p.10.
40. War at Sea, supra, p.3.
41. Ibid, p.3.
42. Ibid, p. 61.
43. Playfair, Mediterranean and the Middle East, p.8.
44. Ibid, p.7.
45. Ibid, p,11.
46. German Documents.
47. K. Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London, Macmillan, 1946), p.313.
48. Ibid, p.314.
49. British Documents, Series 111, Vol. 111, pp.292-293.
50. Ibid, p.293.
51. Feiling, op. cit, p.314.
52. Ibid, p.344.
53. Ibid, p.314.
54. R.S. Sayers, Financial Policy, History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series (London, H.M.S.O.), pp.226-229.

55. Ibid, p.227.
56. A.J.Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol.3 (London, Oxford University Press), p.473.
57. Feiling, op. cit, p.318;
See also: Lord Strang, Britain in World Affairs, p.324.
58. Rt. Hon. The Earl of Avon, Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Facing the Dictators (London, Cassell, 1962), p.564.
59. Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol.3, p.462
60. Feiling, op. cit., p.320.
61. Templewood, op. cit., p.258.
62. Ibid, p.289.
63. Feiling, op. cit., p.321.
64. Templewood, op. cit., p.195.
65. Thomas Jones, A Diary with Letters (London, Oxford University Press, 1954), p.316.
66. Iain Macleod, Neville Chamberlain (London, Frederick Muller, 1961), p.165.
67. Ibid, p.194.
68. Ibid, p.195.
69. Templewood, op. cit., p.376.
70. Ibid, p.377.
71. Macleod, op. cit, p.194.
72. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol. 332, cols.45-48.

73. Documents, 1938, Vol.1, pp.25-26.
74. Templewood, op. cit., p.259.
75. Macleod, op. cit., p.210.
76. Anthony Sampson, The Anatomy of Britain Today (New York, Harper-Colophon, 1966), pp.262-263.
77. Ibid, pp.328-329.
78. Macleod, op. cit., p.211.
See also: Earl of Avon, Facing the Dictators, p.554.
79. Macleod, op. cit., pp.216-217.
80. Malcolm Muggeridge (ed.), Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, (London, Odhams, 1948), pp.164-165.
81. Macleod, op. cit., p.215.
82. Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, pp.182-183.
83. Ciano's Hidden Diary, (New York, Dutton, 1953), p.77.
84. Macleod, op. cit., p.216.
85. Templewood, op. cit., p.375.
86. Duff Cooper, op. cit., pp.226-227.
87. Templewood, op. cit., p.280.
88. Lord Strang, Britain in World Affairs, p.321, n.25.
89. Earl of Avon, op. cit., p.573.
90. Ciano's Hidden Diary, p.68.
91. John Connell, The Office (London, Allan Wingate, 1958), p.243.
92. Earl of Avon, op. cit., p.404.
93. Ibid, p.410.
94. Thomas Jones, op. cit., p.231.

96. Ibid, p.218.

97. Lord Vansittart, The Mist Procession (London, Hutchinson, 1958), p.442.

See also: The Earl of Avon, op. cit., pp.561-563;

R.J. Minney, The Private Papers of Hore-Belisha (London, Collins, 1960), p.99.

98. Ibid, p.443.

99. Earl of Avon, op. cit., p.554.

100. Feiling, op. cit.,

101. Lord Strang, Home and Abroad (London, Andre Deutsch, 1956), p.126.

Chapter Two : Non-Intervention.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean -- neither more nor less."

Through the Looking Glass, Lewis Carrol.

In this chapter we shall be examining the inter-relationships between the Spanish civil war, the structuring of political opinion in Britain and the international system (with emphasis on the meaning and realities of the policy of non-intervention that was officially adopted by Britain and the international community). The purpose will be to examine the problems faced by the decision-makers in Britain arising from the interaction of the Spanish conflict, British public opinion and the international system, together with the policies that were developed to meet these problems. In this task, a theoretical formulation of the problems faced by a decision-maker of a state not directly a party to the internal war will be used as an introduction, so that the possible policy choices and the implications

and difficulties of implementing these policies may be made explicit. The theoretical formulation will be drawn from a research monograph by George Modelski entitled The International Relations of Internal War.¹

The chapter will reflect a belief that in the examination of the policy of Britain towards the Spanish civil war, the term 'Britain' must be taken as a collective name for a structuring of individuals and groups embodying values, beliefs and interests. Thus Britain cannot be considered merely in terms of a limited number of decision-makers, such as Eden or Chamberlain, and British policy cannot be considered merely in terms values and goals of a limited number of decision-makers. The nature and content of British policy can only be explained in terms of the total structuring of political opinion within Britain, together with the organisations and institutions through which this political opinion is aggregated and articulated to the center of decision-making power within Britain.

In the course of this chapter, it will be necessary to examine propositions put forward by various people that the structuring of British attitudes towards the Spanish conflict, or the attitudes held by certain groups or organizations had a decisive impact upon the content and direction of British policy towards

Spain in this period. One such view is that put forward by Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London from 1932 to 1943. Maisky, having described in his memoirs a Soviet statement of October 7th, 1936, in which the Soviet government had listed a series of alleged violations by Portugal of the Agreement on Non-Intervention, goes on to declare:

"The British workers were openly sympathetic to us, and this could not but find its reflections within the Labour Party. For the first six weeks of the Spanish war the Labour Party Leaders remained obstinately silent, avoiding the adoption of any clearly defined attitude. Only when further silence became impossible did they summon, on 28 August, a meeting of the Labour Members of Parliament, the Party executive, and the General Council of the T.U.C., at which it was decided:

"First, to maintain a policy of neutrality in the Spanish war.

"Secondly, to resist the running of a mass campaign in support of Republican Spain (which the Communists were insisting on).

"The leadership of the British labour movement thus allied itself, in effect, with the policy of 'non-intervention' being followed by the British government....

"However, the nearer the rebels drew to Madrid and the more obvious the intervention of the Germans and Italians on Franco's side became, the higher rose the wave of protest against 'non-intervention' among the British and French workers. From 5 to 9 October the Labour Party's annual conference was in session in Edinburgh. The Soviet government statement which has been quoted above came in the middle of its deliberations. This demarche on our part aroused a fresh outburst of indignation in proletarian circles against the blockade of the Spanish Republic. The masses were plainly ready to do battle, which did not suit the leadership of the Labour Party at all. But the impression

made by the Soviet statement of 7 October was too great, and the Edinburgh conference could not ignore it. The Labour bosses began to manoeuvre: the Leader of the Labour party, Attlee, and his deputy Greenwood visited the Prime Minister and demanded urgent investigation of all accusations regarding the violation by some powers of the Agreement on Non-Intervention, and, in the event of such violations being established, that the Republican government of Spain be accorded the right to buy arms abroad. The meeting with the Prime Minister was reported to the Conference, which considered itself satisfied and passed the final decision of the Party's line on the 'Spanish question' over to the Executive. And the latter, after the Conference, 'found no justification' for any change in its previous position.

"So the leadership of the Labour Party sabotaged the true feelings of the masses. This was repeated, regrettably, on subsequent occasions. Throughout the whole course of the Spanish war the Labour Party as a whole (I am not speaking of the individual honourable exceptions) played a treacherous role towards Republican Spain, and its example was followed by other socialist parties. And now, many years later, looking back over the events of those days, one sees with singular clarity what a large share of responsibility for the triumph of Fascism in Spain must be borne by the Second International..." 2

The first proposition stated by Modelski is that there are international components of internal wars, that there in fact develops within the structuring of the two belligerents an organization designed to accommodate and strengthen these international components. Modelski argues "that in internal war, the structures of at least one party to the conflict already have, and the others acquire international

components. The incumbents al ways, and by definition, have international connections, simply because they are in charge of legitimate machinery of the state, which includes the diplomatic and other international networks; the insurgents, by virtue of having to approximate the incumbents as closely as possible in order to supplant them, must develop the same machinery."³

Modelski examines what he terms "...the essential structures of the political system--the structures of authority, solidarity, culture, and resources..."which in the course of an internal war become "split as it were, in two and both the incumbents and the insurgents find themselves in due course endowed with a new set of at least rudimentary political structures."⁴

Those responsible for decision-making within the two competing groups"...by nature of their work, and because of the kind of men they are...always are, and properly so, exposed to and subject to international influences. (1) Both the incumbents and the insurgents operate in that network of external relationships which constitutes the international environment. The incumbents deal with foreign representatives and travel abroad in the normal course of their everyday duties. The insurgents... in the course of the internal war... must maintain a foreign policy and a network of relationships with foreign powers. Engaging in these

contacts, neither side can avoid entering into a close political association with at least a few other states. (2) For certain areas of decision-making, the process of recruitment tends to favor men with foreign experience or background, and even more so during an internal war. According to Lyford Edwards, "It is a matter of common knowledge that in every social upheaval that the party attacked claims that the trouble has been stirred up by outside agents and agitators."⁵

As with the structure of authority, so with the other structures of a political system, Modelski finds that these structures either contain or acquire international components. The structure of political solidarity (or in Modelski's alternative formulation, the incumbents or insurgents' "reference group" or "Political community."), "Only in the most exceptional case...coincide with the boundaries of a political system such as that of a nation-state. Normally it is both smaller and larger than such boundaries would suggest. Those who are united in interest with either the incumbents or the insurgents never all belong to one political system: the activation of the solidarity structure, and the conversion of potential into actual support, especially abroad, therefore are among the chief tasks of the leaders of internal war.

Among the external components of the reference group should be counted foreign governments, and organizations (including for example, private individuals and corporations) who aid and support either side; foreign members of political and ideological movements to which parties in the internal war may be affiliated, and others who together with the incumbents form a solitary grouping on whatever basis is necessary...⁶"

The cultural and communication structures extend beyond the confines of the political system in which the internal war is being waged. As Modelski states, "...the language and the style of an internal war are, as frequently as not, borrowed from abroad. The ease of communication which is the product of the cultural structures is an essential cement of political organization; it welds together the political elite and facilitates the co-ordination of their followers; it brings mass and international support to the fighting forces. Some of the most crucial communication lines of an internal war run abroad and as such become the targets of the most vociferous attacks because, if they are cut, the other party has scored a victory and may have achieved the isolation of its opponents."⁷

The final structure considered by Modelski is that of the resources of the political system, which are stated to "...normally extend beyond the frontiers of one political system. The incumbents have their

alliances and other political associations and the military and economic aid they produce. They have commercial and non-commercial connections and enterprises abroad. Their arms are supplied, as often as not, by foreign public or private manufacturing enterprises. But the insurgents' external resource base is even more important, primarily because it represents that section of their assets which is beyond the control of their opponents. A foreign base of operations is usually indispensable as a source of funds, manpower, and supplies, and as a final refuge in time of defeat.⁸

The structures discussed above comprise the international components of the political system divided by internal war, components which are mutually reinforcing, "...the presence of an international component in one of the internal-war structures sets up pressures for 'internationalizing' the other three structures."⁹ In order to more effectively analyze the processes whereby an internal-war becomes internationalized, Modelski constructs an intervention model¹⁰ to demonstrate the forces that are at work. Modelski's model is based on the following simplifying assumptions : that there is ample time for the internal-war to be internationalized; that the actors involved are roughly

equal in power; rationality and skill on the part of the decision-makers; perfect international mobility of resources and communications. Modelski states that there exists a fundamental conditional of disparity in an internal war, with the result that when the weaker party exhausts its internal resources, on its attempt to overcome its opponent, it will invite outside aid. Thus the demand for foreign aid is inherent in the situation. The action of one state inviting foreign aid leads its opponent to take counter international measures: seek to disrupt the actual or potential alliances of its opponent and counter them with alliances of its own. In this fashion a system of alignment will begin, transforming the struggle inside one political system into a struggle between political systems. As the search for outside aid leads to move and counter-move, the internal war becomes a matter of international concern, especially if international alignments are aggravated and external war threatens. This stage represents the internationalization of the internal war i.e. subject to international discussion; the role of mediator and reconciliator can be played either by states or international organizations. From this Modelski concludes that there exists three foreign policy choices open to decision-makers within a third state: (1) helping the weaker party--usually,

but not always the insurgent--and thus embarking upon subversion; (2) helping the stronger party--usually, but not always, the incumbents--and thus engaging on on foreign aid; (3) attempting to mediate between the warring factions.

One of the most interesting of Modelski's conclusions is that there "...is no fourth alternative, no way for the "second" country to avoid involvement in internal war. Even through a country may decide not to act at all, to do nothing and to say nothing, then by this very fact it, too, helps--sometimes unwittingly--to mould the course of the process: for by refusing to act, it helps the stronger party to suppress the weaker, irrespective of the merits of the case. This is the meaning of Talleyrand's celebrated definition of non-intervention: 'a mysterious word that signifies roughly the same thing as intervention.' Hence there is no internal war without intervention." ¹¹

Before we go to apply the conclusions reached by Modelski to the problems faced by British decision-makers confronted by the internal war in Spain, there is one other element examined by Modelski that will state these problems in their fullest context, and that element is the international system, or more precisely, the attitude of the international system towards the political viewpoints of the two parties in the internal war. In examining the processes

whereby the political system can influence the internal war, Modelski states that: "Most of these processes are covered by the vague term 'climate of international opinion'--which, at any given time, favours or condemns certain types of national endeavor."¹² This influence is classified into three types: (1) diffusion and encouragement; (2) isolation and suppression, and (3) reconciliation. As in the policy- choices open to individual states, there is no fourth alternative of non-intervention, as this constitutes encouragement to the stronger side.¹³

The problems that Britain faced in formulating its policy toward the Spanish civil war will be divided approximately into problems derived from the impact of the internal war upon the international system and the attitude of the international system toward the internal war. These divisions are for convenience only, since these problems are mutually reinforcing.

From the analysis of the previous chapter, the conclusion was drawn that Britain's interest in the latter part of the thirties lay in preserving the stability of the international system and in preventing, if possible, the outbreak of hostilities between states in any area that involved British interests. With Britain's resources already over extended in relation to the extensive world-wide commitments that Britain had developed, there was no desire to see

an open international conflict develop in Spain into which Britain might be drawn. Non-intervention offered a solution to this particular problem, but its implementation provided problems that were partly derived from the mechanics of internal war. As we have noted in our examination of Modelski's theories on internal war, the boundaries of political solidarity for participants in an internal war only in exceptional cases correspond to the boundaries of the political system divided by the internal war; during the Spanish civil war the boundaries of political solidarity extended so as to include individuals and groups within Britain itself. A partial explanation of this will lie in the fact that since the insurgents and the incumbents were eager to obtain resources from outside powers, and groups and states exterior to the conflict that were supplying these resources sought to minimise the possibility of international action to prevent such intervention, insurgents, incumbents, and intervening groups and states sought to legitimise their actions by stating that they were acting to protect the collective interests of the international community. The participants in the struggle sought to justify their actions in terms which they knew would have wide international appeal to individuals, groups, and decision-makers within states which were likely to play a role in the conflict.

The Republican Government on September 15, 1936,

appealed to the governments participating in the Non-Intervention Accord of August 1936, in terms of the danger that intervention by Germany and Italy held for European peace and security, "convinced that this Government will not wish to admit silently such a violation of law and of international practises on the basis of a political system which would introduce in Europe the law of unbridled violence and would put world peace in grave danger, giving a death blow to the principle of collective security, requests the raising of the embargo established on the export of arms destined to the Spanish Government and a rigorous prohibition of supplying war material to the rebels." ¹⁴ The struggle of the Republicans against the Nationalists was represented as the struggle of democracy against the forces of Fascism, while the nationalists claimed to be defending Western civilization and Christianity against God-less communism. On October 7, La Passionaria* spoke before the Annual Conference of the Labour Party held in Edinburgh, and ended her speech:

"Now we are going to leave you, with our hearts very

* The famous communists orator, otherwise known as Senora Isabel de Palecia. She spoke perfect English.

comforted. We thank you for your sympathy, and your support. We know that we are holding your hand over the distance. But if you wish this atrocious war to end soon, come and help us. Think of the precious gift that is being wasted -- of the lives of our youth. Do not tarry, Now you know what the situation is in Spain. Come and help us. Come and help us. Scotsmen, ye ken noo."¹⁵ Hugh Dalton comments: "It was a magnificent performance, and it swept the whole Conference to its feet... As we dispersed, after this dramatic intervention in our conference, there were cries from some of the delegates: 'What about non-intervention now?' And immediately efforts were begun, with influential support, to have the whole Spanish question raised afresh and Monday's vote reversed."¹⁶ (The vote referred to was a resolution passed on the first day of the conference endorsing the report of the National Council on Labour declaring that non-intervention would reduce the danger of a general war in Europe.

On July 25, 1936, Kirk, the United States' Charge d'Affairs in Rome, reported that:

"Italian officials are outspoken in their concern over the situation in Spain. They point out that the uprising there combined with the communist tendencies already manifest in France constitute a very real threat of Bolshevism in the West and that the Soviet Union itself with its reported military preparedness and its reputed financial resources indicates from that direction a constantly growing threat to the social order in Europe and the Balkans.

Unofficial opinion couples expressions of anxiety over these increased communistic activities with reference to the evidences of harmonious relationship between Italy and Germany and stresses the view that cooperation between the two countries would form a bulwark against the spread of Bolshevism both from the East and the West." 17

Pope Pius XI, placed the weight of the Catholic Church behind the Nationalists, santifying in some eyes the act of rebellion, in an encyclical letter given on March 19, 1937, which proclaimed:

"Even in countries such as our beloved Spain, where the pestitial has not yet had time to beget the while of its monstrous brood of calamities, it has none the less aroused a frenzy of crime and violence. We have seen not merely one church here, or there, nor merely one monastery here or there laid in ruins, but, wherever possible every church, every religious house, every trace of the Christian religion, even though connected with the most precious monuments of civilization, has been beaten to the ground." 18

Propoganda machines were created by both the belligerents to spread their respective bersions of the struggle in Spain. K.W. Watkins in his study of the effect of the Spanish civil war upon British public opinion,* quotes the testimony of Antonio Bahamonde, a well to do Catholic publisher,

"I had the duty of propogandizing in Badajoz that in Malaga they had assassinated, during

* K.W. Watkins - British Divided (Thomas Nelson, London, 1963.)

the seven months of 'red' domination, some fifteen thousand persons, of rightist tendencies that they had assassinated all the nuns after violating them.. Of Malaga we said the priests had been killed and hung on meat hooks in the butchers shops with a card attached to them on which were written: 'Pork for Sale'.

"At Granja de Torre-Hermose (Badjados) upon the entrance of the 'Nationalists' who had met strong resistance, they had naturally found evidence of battle, and a number of slain left abandoned in what had been the field of battle, which they had immediately had transferred into the cemetery, and which were barbariously profaned. They opened the stomach of a dead woman and gouged out the eyes of one of the dead men, crushed in the head of another with a rock, and seperated the arms and legs of another from the trunk. The Burgos brothers (official photographers) were with the column and took a number of photographs from different angles. These photographs have been spread around the world as examples of the terrible crimes committed by the 'reds' in Granja de Torre-Hermosa." 19

Bahamonde also cites other examples of 'red' crimes staged at Almendralejo and Seville which were released to the world.

The Republicans were also busily engaged in creating a veil of propaganda that would obscure the true nature of the conflict. Watkins cites the evidence of the testimony of Auther Koestler, who, when engaged in writing Spanish Testament at the same time Otto Katz was writing The Nazi Conspiracy in Spain, related that Willy Muenzenberg would "pick up a few sheets of the typescript, and shout at me: 'Too weak. Too objective. Hit them! Hit them hard! Tell the whole world how they run over their prisoners with tanks, how they pour

petrol over them and burn them alive. Make the world
20
gasp with horror!"

The Republicans were aided in this task by individuals and organizations in countries such as Britain intent on presenting the Spanish conflict as a confrontation between the Fascist and the Anti-Fascist forces in the world. Of these one of the most important was the Left Book Club, which published both the books mentioned by Watkins above. The Left Book Club, founded by the publisher Victor Gollanz in March 1936, had as its purpose to unite Socialists, Communists, and Liberals in the struggle against Fascism. In his first editorial, Gollanz stated that: "France had, indeed, for a long time now been an example and an inspiration. It has not been merely a question of the drawing together of Socialists and Communists, or of the union of these two wings of the Labour movement with the Radicals; it has been rather a question of the mobilization of all men and women of good will against the threat of
21
Fascism."

As Julian Symons notes, the idea behind the Club "...was broad and simple in outline. A member sent no money with his subscription form; for half a crown a month he received, through his book seller, or direct, the choice of the month in a limp orange binding (price to the public, in stiff covers, was seven shillings

sixpence, or more), and he received also a copy of the Left News, which combined the characteristics of the Left wing magazine and a catalogue for advertising and discussing Gollanz books.²² The choice of the month was made by three men, described by A.J.P. Taylor in the following terms: "Gollanz, at this time, saw no enemies on the Left; Strachey took his instructions from the Communist party, if not himself a member; Laski the third was a Marxist though he combined this with being a prominent member of the Labour Party. The books chosen usually followed the communist line."²³ With a subscription of something like 60,000,²⁴ and a network of local discussion groups, whose number at the movement's peak reaching well over 1,000, (with theatre, film, music and poetry groups loosely associated)²⁵ the effect as described by Julian Symons was to create "...a climate of opinion in which automatic responses were engendered by certain words - capitalism, Fascism, landlords, unemployment."²⁶ Taylor speaks of this as "...a formidable achievement - a membership ten times greater than the I.L.P., or Communist party had ever secured, solidly based on intellectuals, particularly school teachers, throughout the country... Now the Left Book Club was diverting highminded school teachers into reading communist tracts when they ought to

have been joining the Labour party and working for it." ²⁷

But if we are to account for the effect of the Spanish civil war upon public opinion if the rest of the world and especially in Britain, it cannot be done purely in terms of the activities of these agents of propoganda. It must also be explained in terms of the psychology of the times. Herbert Matthews, foreign correspondent for the New York Times, in Spain during the civil war, wrote in the 1950's long after the civil war had ended, that: "The Spanish civil war was, indeed, 'an international war fought on National soil, but it was much more than that. We, looking back and revisiting the Spain we knew in the lurid, passionate days of the 1930's, can now see that even those who fought in the name of Anti-Fascism or Anti-Communism were at least in part rationalizing their emotions. What lingers now is the profoundly Spanish nature of the conflict." ²⁸ What were these emotions, and what were they based on? A partial answer is to be found in the changing structure of the world after the First World War, and people's perception of the events that were occurring around them.

If one first attempts to examine the structure, economic, social, and political, of British society in the inter war period, and the interaction of the forces within that society with the conflicts generated by the Spanish civil war, the most relevant framework for this examination is to be found in the ~~class~~ structure existing within Britain and the

tensions released by the stratification of the fabric of society into groups differentiated by their income level, social status, and political allegiance. As Taylor notes:

"England had always been class conscious, perhaps more so than most European language where accent was determined more by class than by region. The English were the only European people who sorted themselves out by class at meal times: the masses took their principal meal at mid-day, their betters in the evening. Even the drinkers of beer divided automatically between the saloon and the public bars." 29

The Industrial Revolution born in Britain in the late Eighteenth Century gave birth to an industrial proletariat alienated from the rest of society by their poverty and by frustration derived from an inability to change their material position through political means. G.M. Young describes it in these terms:

"But all the while Industrialism had been coming over England like a climatic change...It is possible to imagine with Robert Owen, and orderly evolution of the rural village into the industrial township, given the conditions which he enjoyed at New Lanark, a limited size and a resident, paternal employer... But any possibility of a general development along these lines was lost in the change over from water to steam power, in the consequent growth of the great urban aggregates, and the visible splitting of society for which the Enclosures had created a rural precedent, into possessors and the proletariat. The employers were moving into the country; their officials followed them into the suburbs; the better workmen lived in the better streets; the mixed multitude of labour, native or Irish, was huddled in slums, and cellars, sometimes newly

run up by speculative builders, sometimes, like the labyrinth around Soho and Seven Dials, deserted tenements of the upper classes...Lying outside the orbit of the old ruling class, neglected by their natural leaders, the industrial territories were growing up as best they might, undrained, unpoliced, ungoverned, and unschooled," 30

While the working class desire for the expression of its developing class consciousness led to the attempt to organise frustration and incoherent aspirations into movements such as the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, formed in 1834, and the Chartist movement formed in 1836, to get for each man in equal vote, these movements and the rioting that usually followed upon their failure (and the unrest among the agricultural labourer class, manifested, for instance, in the Labourers' Rising of 1830), led the middle and upper classes to become increasingly aware of the threat posed by the masses who provided their prosperity:

"Looking back from the serene and splendid noon of mid-Victorian prosperity, Kingsley wrote of the years when 'young lads believed (and not so wrongly) that the masses were their natural enemies and that they might have to fight, any year or any day for the safety of the property and the honour of their sister' Young lads will believe anything. But men old enough to remember the French Revolution, or the Committee of Secrecy and the Six Acts of 1819, had their fears, too, when they reflected that as the country became more and more dependent on machines, its stability turned more and more on the subordination and good will of the savage masses which tended to them." 31

The prosperity of the mid and latter Victorian period saw the peaceful development of the organization, self-

confidence, and political and economic influence of the working classes. Elie Helevey draws us the following picture of the change:

"Every year, since 1868, the parliament of the working class met in one or another of the large towns...The meetings were attended by Members of Parliament and British and foreign economists who were received with the upmost respect and courtesy. The speeches were usually dignified, the debates methodically conducted under the strict control of the chair, and the delegates concluded the discussions by passing a number of resolutions which reflected every year the feeling that prevailed among the trade unionists... The reasonable and order spirit which mark the proceedings are the more remarkable when we consider the great and constantly increasing numerical strength of the unions. About the year 1895, a million trade unionists sent delegates to the Congress. And the total membership of the unions of the United Kingdom, including those which were not represented at the Congress, was estimated at one and a half million -- that is to say about, about a fifth of the entire number of adult male workers. There was nothing like it in any other great nation."³²

With the establishment of a political party to represent the interests of the working classes in 1892, named the Independent Labour Party, the means for the peaceful accession of the lower classes to political power was established. But however peaceful the latter part of the Nineteenth Century may have been, social violence was endemic as to later periods, liable at any moment to be brought to the surface in times of economic decline, as may be witnessed by the demonstrations in London that culminated in

'Bloody Sunday' of November 13, 1887, and the London dock strike of 1889. Thus, while in many respects the First World War may appear as the great divide in the development of British socio-political history, many of the essential elements of the 1920's and 1930's were developments of trends that formed the shape of English history in the nineteenth century.

Desmond Young has remarked that those who fought in the First World War "...had been brought up in the last years of the christian ethos. Even those who did not consciously believe at least accepted a traditional standard of behaviour."³³

According to Mowat, "The war increased the difficulties which the churches had been facing long before it began. Church attendance had been declining, and the claims of religion had been challenged by the advance of scientific knowledge and secularism of thought."³⁴ While Taylor states that "Since creeds had ceased to divide, class stood out all the more sharply"³⁵, it is doubtful that religion had been purely a unifying factor within Britain. A clergyman wrote in 1895: "The Church of England gives the working man nothing to do. He feels no intergral part of her, that he has no vital connection with her, that he is not built into her structures, but is left, a loose stone, lying about for anyone to tumble over."³⁵ The classic path taken by many people,

in certain parts of Britain, upon shifting upwards from one economic class to another, has been to abandon the Labour party for the Conservative Party, and the non-conformist Church for the Church of England.

While education was becoming increasingly available to a wider range of people, it did little to soften the barriers of class. "Education, usually, a solvent, produced in England a further hardening of the class lines... After 1918 all children received full-time education to the age of 14. An increasing though still small, proportion continued their education in adolescence, and an increasing, though very small, proportion went to universities. This was, however, not achieved by opening the existing doors wider and wider until they admitted everyone. It was done by developing a different, and mainly inferior, education for those who had previously received none. Thus class differences were not only maintained, they were made clearer and more effective than before." ³⁶ Captain Grimes, a character in Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall, describes the operation of the public-school system, which produced Britain's upper classes: "Besides you see, I'm a public-school man. That means everything. There's a blessed equity in the English social system..that ensures the public-school man against starvation. One goes through four or five years of hell at an age when life is bound to be hell anyway, and after that

the social system never lets one down." ³⁷

The world in the 1920's and 1930's presented itself to many as a world of change, in which the established order was in a state of flux. The First World War, according to Arthur Manwick, was

"...a steep and sharp waterfall in the course of British history. All the economic, social cultural, and political forces which have moulded twentieth-century Britain were already in flow before 1914, but the war accelerated them with such suddenness and turbulence that they were transformed on a gigantic scale.

Furthermore, the war hit British consciousness with traumatic force, leaving bitterness and cynicism in its train. In this sense it immenseable more shattering on its effect than the Second World War: the thirties were equipped with the knowledge of the horrors of total war unimagined by the relatively placid Edwardian and Georgian Britain. Each year from 1914 to 1918 twice as many combatants were killed compared with each year from 1939 to 1945. The sacrifice seemed grossly unequal: while profiteering was rampant at home, civilians not linked, as in the second war, through suffering the parallel menace of aerial bombardment. Bitterness, division, cynicism, were aggravated by growing doubts as to the competence of the military and political direction of the war." 38

While, looking back to the twenties and thirties stability (almost immoveability) seems to be the keynote of the structure of British society, people perceived the world around them in terms of change, and of forces which stretched out from one nation to another rending at values and beliefs held, and institutions and ways of like that form the basis of peoples existence. The future could no longer be clearly predicted as in the

period before the War. Taylor talks of people thinking that they were living in "a disintegrating society."³⁹

Mowat in more encrusted phraseology puts it this way:

"No man of middle age and comfortable means, contemplating the condition of things in the early twenties, would agree that the post-war England bore much resemblance to the country he had known before the war. The old order had passed away, the halcyon days of the privileged classes. The war had cut across everything. 'Change and decay in all around I see. 'It was easy for the casual observer to sum up his impressions in the words of the hymnal, and ignore the manifold evidences of stability which were present.'" 40

Peoples' lives had been affected in the details of their existence rather than in the substance, but the details seemed to symbolize the end of what appeared to have been, in retrospect, a golden era. It is hard in this age to take the following letter seriously, but at the time it represented the common predicament of the upper and middle classes facing a difficult period of readjustment to a changing environment:

"The Editor, The Sunday Times.

Sir--Cannot you say a few words for the poor householders who cannot get servants? The Labour Bureau is perfectly useless, and employs thousands of girls who ought to be in domestic service, and training for the future. In my own experience, one girl asked for £55 a year, and had never been out before. It is monstrous that girls are paid for jobs while men are paid for doing nothing.

A Londoner."⁴¹

The Britain of the 1920's and 1930's saw the eclipse of the English landed society. Death duties and income tax compelled the breakup of the large estates,⁴² so that The Times, in May 1920, declared:

"England is changing hands...Will the profiteer buy it? Will it be turned into a school or institution? Has the mansion electric light and modern drainage?... the old people, knowing here is no son or near relative left to keep up the old traditions, or so crippled by necessary taxation that they know the boy will not be able to carry on when they are gone, take the irrevocable stip."⁴³ The same Britain also saw the development, fed by an increase of real income per head of population of about 24 percent (or 20 percent per occupied person)⁴⁴ of a new class of modern civilisation, the mechanics, armen, radio experts, film producers, popular journalists, industrial chemists."⁴⁵

Seymour Lipset and Reinhard Bendix have posed the question of whether increased social mobility, such as was occurring during the inter-war period will automatically lead to a more healthy society. They state that:

"This theory appeared, and continues to be persuasive, in those societies in which the widening of opportunities produced by industrialisation coincided with the amalgamation of aristocratic and newly rising bourgeois groups and hence with the stubborn retention of quasi-feudal privileges. Though the evidence is lacking, it seems reasonable to suppose that such privileges actually retarded the growth of opportunity: even if they did not, it is quite undisputed that opportunities were available only

to those who accomodated themselves to a middle - and upper-class sytle of life, which, for many people at least, aggravated rather than alleviated their psychological problems. The bitterness of class feeling in many European societies certainly derives from the dondescension and arrogance with which members of the old or newer upper classes endowed all their contacts with 'inferiors'....

"But it appears hazardous to base future studies of social mobility on the intellectual legacies of a nine-teenth century argument. If it is true, as we have tried to show, that all developed industrial societies are characterized by a high rate of social mobility, it becomes questionable whether future studies of his phenomena should be based on the implicit simple assumption that more mobility is a good thing. Is it? To assume as much as much is to ignore the abundant evidence of the social and psychic cost of a high degree of social monility: a cost that is probably high in terms of the combativeness, frustration, rootlessness, and other ills that are engendered..." 46

Certainly there should be no reason to doubt the assumption that the class which feels its dominant position within society, and in the case of the traditional upper-class in Britian the basis of its economic well being, to be threatened, will react to protect that position. As Lipset and Bendix state: "Men and women occupying positions of high status generally endeavour to preserve their privileges for their kin and heirs; a 'good' father is one who tries to pass the status he enjoys on to his children..."⁴⁷ This class not only saw their economic status undermined, but saw also the emergence of a strong political party representing the dispised 'mases', proclaiming revolutionary socialist platform. The sixth Duke of

Portland saw the thirties in this light: "Fifty years ago there was little or nothing of vital consequence at issue between the Liberals and Conservatives...Now...there is no longer a powerful and moderate Liberal Party standing between the National Parties and those who support socialist and communist principles."⁴⁸

Thus to a highly class conscious country was added the extra divisive factor of ideological conflict, in which socialism was identified with the machinations of international Bolshevism. The impact of the Zinoviev letter on the defeat of the Labour Government in the general election of October 29, 1924 has certainly been over-emphasised, but it does reveal that many in Britain linked the left in Britain with the cause of Moscow. The General Strike of 1926 again revealed the bitterness and hostility that had developed in Britain. The Daily Mail attempted to print an editorial labeling the strike as "A revolutionary movement", and not to be "tolerated by a civilised government" and called on all "law-abiding men and women to hold themselves at the service of King and country."⁴⁹ The British Gazette (the newspaper issued by the government during the strike) issued statements that seemed to be declarations of war on the working classes: "All ranks of the Armed Forces of the Crown are hereby notified that any action which they may find it necessary to take in an honest endeavour to aid the Civil Power

will receive...the full support of his Majesty's Government." "the situation is becoming more intense and the climax is not yet reached...An organised attempt is being made to starve the people and to wreck the state, and the legal and constitutional aspects are entering upon a new phase."⁵⁰

While the mid and later twenties were characterised by industrial unrest and militant trade-union activity, gradually in the thirties a new dimension was added by developments within other countries. The onslaught of the Japanese upon Manchuria in 1931 and North China in 1936, the advent of Mussolini and the Fascists to power in Italy and the attack upon Ethiopia in 1935, the rise of Hitler to power in Germany and the subsequent rising level of Nazi demands and aggression, and the development of the civil war in Spain, led people to believe that the world as they knew it was in flux and in danger of disappearing beneath either a Nazi-Fascist, or Bolshevik tide, according to whether their political loyalty lay to the left or to the right. Peter Kemp (who entered Spain to fight on the Nationalist side) recalls that: "When I came down from Cambridge in June of that year (1936) the pattern of European politics was confused and obscure. The foundations of peace seemed in danger of collapse..."⁵¹

George Orwell (who fought in Spain on the Republican side) puts it more graphically: "And yet I've enough sense to see that the old life we're used to is being

sawn off at the roots. I can feel it happening. I can see the war that's coming and I can see the after-war, the food-queues and the secret police and the loudspeakers telling you what to think. And I'm not even exceptional in this. There are millions of others like me. Ordinary chaps that I meet everywhere, chaps that I run across in pubs, busdrivers and travelling salesmen for hardware firms, have got a feeling that the world's gone wrong. They can feel it cracking and collapsing under their feet." ⁵²

Class and ideological differences gained a new dimension and were transmitted onto the stage of international affairs were interpreted in class and ideological terms. "Consciences which had been already stirred by the unemployed grew even more insistant at the tyrannies of the Nazi rule. The two emotions merged into one. Hunger marchers filled the streets one day; demonstrators against Fascism followed on the next. Economic discontext was no doubt still the main driving force, with anti-fascism as a top-layer. But there was an important change of tone and emphasis. Social questions, though still important, slipped into second place. Those who had begun by applauding the hunger marchers, were now concerned to halt capital-⁵³isms march to war."

Spain in a peculiar way came to represent, to

symbolize, the struggles, hopes, fears, and frustrations that had become transmuted into international terms. It is not easy to account for this development. Perhaps because of propoganda by both the protaganists; perhaps because of the voilence of the struggle, the particular virulence of civil-wars, in which a nation seen to rend itself in two -- this made all the more graphic by the reports of countless atrocities, the attacks on churches and religious persons, and the merciless bombing of defenceless cities; and perhaps because in Spain the issues were posed more clearly. Spain in the thirties was a microcosm of the political forces and philosophies existing in Europe in the period: anarchist, socialist, communist, democrat, fascist. One side were ranged the forces that, to some, seemed to stand for stability, order, and the defence of the established system against the forces of change; on the other were the forces, that for others, seemed to mirror their own struggle for a better life, for a utopia that would mean an escape from the imperfect world in which they lived. Orwell describes his first visit to Barcelona in these terms:

"It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the Anarchists; every wall was scrawled with the hammer and sickle and with the initials of the revolutionary parties...Every shop and cafe had

an inscription saying that it had been collectivised; even the bootblacks had been collectivised and their boxes painted red and black. Waiters and shopwalkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared...Tipping had been forbidden...The revolutionaries were everywhere, flaming from the walls in clean reds and blues that made the few remaining advertisements look like daubs of mud...And it was the aspect of the crowds that was the queerest thing of all. In outward appearance it was a town in which the wealthy classes had practically ceased to exist...Practically everyone wore rough working clothes, or blue overalls or some variant of the militia uniform. All this was queer and moving. There was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways that I did not like, but I recognised it as a state of affairs worth fighting for." 54

John Sommerfield described the reason why he became a volunteer in Spain in these words:

"...we did not come to Spain for romantic adventures, but to help win the war - not only from a sense of solidarity with the Spanish people, but because we all realised, whatever our political views, that the issues of this struggle are of significance for ourselves and the whole world is facing today...a conflict that must decide in this century whether the enormous new powers that science has given to the human race are to be used for the organization of decay or for life, for mechanised barbarism or a new advance of the human spirit." 55

Watkins quotes this letter from a father to his daughter:

"Now I want to explain to you why I left England. You will have heard about the war going on here. From every country in the world working people like myself have come to stop Fascism here. So although I am miles away from you, I am fighting to protect you and all children in England as well as people all over the world." 56

It is possible to see with the aid of hindsight

that the world was not to be saved from fascism in Spain, but those who fought in Spain and those who sympathised with their struggles felt that they were part of the vanguard of history, a crusade that for those whose sympathies were with the nationalists was to preserve the old and sacred order, and for those who defended the Republic was to help create a brave new world. Arthur Koestler portrays this belief exactly in these words: When the International Brigades saved Madrid on November 8, 1936, we felt that they would go down in history as the defenders of Thermopylae did; and when the first Russian fighters appeared in the skies of battered Madrid, all of us who had lived through the agony of the defenceless town felt that they were the saviours of civilisation." ⁵⁷

The impact of the Spanish conflict has been seen as dividing further an already divided nation; internal war within one state leading to conflict within Britain, as a civil war of an earlier period had - the American civil war. Here is a description of that earlier civil war in its effect upon Britain:

"British opinion was utterly divided....The upper classes naturally preferred the Southern gentleman to the hard-headed Yankee businessman....It was the British working classes of the industrial regions who most wholeheartedly supported the North....The policy that the British Government hoped to be able to follow was simple enough. 'For God's sake', said Russell in the Commons, 'let us, if possible, keep out of it.' This required, among other things, a careful choice of diplomatic language."⁵⁸

Non-intervention in the face of the Spanish conflict

had its precedent.

Peter Kemp returned from the front in Spain to find himself involved "...in a bitter and often painful argument with some of my best friends; for the Spanish Civil War aroused in ordinary Englishmen an intensity of interest and partizan feeling unusual in a people notoriously indifferent to the affairs of other lands." ⁵⁹ Sir Winston Churchill has described the effect of these divisions thus: "As between Spanish Nationalists and Republicans, British sympathies are divided. Strong elements in the Conservative Party regarded the cause of Franco as their own. All the Parties of the 'Left' feel outraged by its triumph. But only a small minority would have urged that Britain should actively intervene, and in fact the division is so deep, and balanced that ⁶⁰ no coherent action was at any time possible" But one should not conclude that British policy towards the Spanish conflict was determined by the divisive effect of the civil war on British public opinion. One has to determine the relationship between cause and effect. Did the decision-makers within Britain derive their policy from factors other than the division of public opinion? Was it the content of British policy that led to the division within Britain, rather than a division leading to a certain policy?

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Fenner Brockway gives us this picture of British

attitudes at the outbreak of the Spanish conflict:

"The British Government again adopted the policy of non-intervention - and at first had the support of the Labour Party. The Party conference met in October, 1936 and somehow performed the feat of at one and the same time endorsing rearmament for 'collective security' to protect 'countries loyal to the league of Nations' against 'potential aggressors' and refusing arms to the Spanish Government (a member of the League) against an actual aggressor, General Franco and his Fascist forces! Indeed in the early months of the Spanish civil war the I.L.P. was the only group in Parliament to defend the right of the Spanish Government to buy arms, a right which had never before been refused to any except 'enemy' governments; not even Willie Gallacher, the Communist, supported James Maxton, for at this stage Soviet Russia also subscribed to non-intervention." 61

The Left in Britain in fact did not function as a monolithic unit but was split into fractions which reflected the historical development of British politics and different perceptions within the Left of the lessons to be learnt from that development. Watkins describes the nature of the division and its effect on the course of British policy towards Spain:

"...the division was between the Right Wing of the Labour Party and trade unions, including most of the leaders, on the one hand, and on the other an unofficial and uneasy alliance of the Left Wing of the Labour Party and trade unions, the Communist Party, the Independent Labour Party, and other groups. In fact the very pattern of division that existed on the Spanish Left and did so much to weaken the Republican cause manifested itself in Britain within the context of the very different historical development of the British Left. It did much to weaken the support given to the Spanish Republicans and the effectiveness of the fight against the appeasement policy of the National Government." 62

In fact the division is, in part, derived from the

common predicament of left-wing parties within Britain that the support of the middle class is necessary if left-wing parties are to gain power by constitutional means, and maintain themselves effectively in power. Thus left-wing parties in Britain will divide into those who refuse to compromise their principles, and those who feel that their cause can be best served by gaining office, even if shackled by middle class support. The Chartists in the 1830's and 1840's had been faced with exactly the same problem, and split into two factions: one under William Lovett who sought middle class support, and the extremists under Feargus O'Connor. This tendency had been strengthened in the 1930's in Britain by the General Strike; the Right Wing of the Left drew the conclusions that industrial cooperation and improved production were the methods by which the lot of the working classes could be improved, since the general ultimately only in increased difficulties for the British economy through loss of foreign trade and the permanent closing of some coal mines. The strike had brought to the fore of the Labour movement conciliators, such as Ernest Bevin and J.H. Thomas, which emphasised the move towards a more conservative leadership with the accession to the leadership of a new generation of socialists, represented by such men as Attlee, Morrison, Dalton, Bevin, Gaitskell, and Greenwood. The viewpoint of this group can be

summarised in this attack mad by Dalton on the
Socialists League in 1935:

"Whatever may be true of other countries, I believe that here it is possible to make a peaceful, orderly and smooth transition to a better social order; and that, with a working Labour majority in the House of Commons, five years of resolute government could lay the foundations of that order. Therefore, at the next election, the people would be free to choose whether or not the work of socialist construction should continue. I discount heavily, in this commonsense and politically mature country, all panic talk, whether from the Right or Left, of an inevitable crisis, and all theatrical nightmares of violent head-on collisions, wrecking the train of democracy."63

The Left Wing of the Labour movement in the thirties continued to press for the maintainance of the social and political struggle against the capitalist system, and felt that the working classes had been betrayed by their leadership during the General Strike. A new development was added in the 1930's: the left wing intellectual, derived from the upper and middle classes and free from the working class atmosphere (and even in the case of Auden and Spender at times contemptuous of those for whom the crusade was launched). This new development was described by Taylor as "...basically a revolt of social conscience by intellectual members of the educated class, ashamed of poverty in the midst of plenty."64 When the I.L.P. broke from the Labour Party in 1932, the intellectual members of the I.L.P. formed a new organisation, the Socialist League "...designed to continue the work of the I.L.P. in

association with the Labour Party. The Socialist League was the I.L.P. with a difference. The I.L.P. had been predominantly working class in composition, despite some intellectuals near the top. The Socialist League was intellectual and nothing else, all leaders and no followers. Its branches counted for little; its programme of ideas was all that mattered. It claimed to be thinking for the Labour Party, though in practice much of the thinking met with Labour's disapproval." ⁶⁵

The Left in Britain was thus deeply divided, both in the social composition and motivation of its adherents and in their policies. In fact several conflicts prevented the Left from developing a high level of cohesion: the division between the social revolutionaries represented by Lansbury, Maxton, and Jowett, and the more moderate second generation leadership; the division between the Labour Party and the other organisations of the Left, such as the I.L.P., the Socialist League, and the Communist Party; the division of the Labour movement as a whole into the trade unions, the most direct representation of the political aspirations of the working class in Britain, and the Labour Party, by means of which these aspirations were aggregated, and articulated to the centre of political decision making at Westminster.

The first of these divisions was decided at the

Annual Conference at Brighton held from September 27th to October 4th, 1935, when Dalton, Bevin, Attlee, and Morrison defeated the extremist elements represented by Lansbury and Cripps. Dalton opened the debate on foreign relations, demanding that a stand be made for the League of Nations and sanctions against Italian action in Abyssinia:

"We stand for strong collective action in defence of peace against any aggressor. This policy was reaffirmed last year by a smashing majority at our Southport Conference, but it dates back to the days of the war...The immediate question for us to decide today is: Do we stand firm in the crisis to the policy to which we have so often pledged ourselves, or shall we turn tail and run away...For better or for worse, this country of ours is a Great Power in the world, with great influence in the Councils of the Nations and with correspondingly great responsibilities, not only to our own people but to all mankind. And the question is: Are we going to play the part of a Great Power today...or are we going to slink impotently into the shadows..." 66

Cripps rose to oppose the Executive motion in favour of sanction against Italy, arguing that a capitalist government such as the Conservative one could not be trusted to implement sanctions; only a Labour Government could be trusted to with these measures. Capitalism had produced the last war, and "The capitalist leopard cannot change his spots. "The only possible action could be working class sanctions, under working class control. 67 Cripps in his stand was supported by the Socialist League and by a group of speakers ranging from Ponsonby (who resigned his seat in the House of Lords arguing the practical danger of two armed camps and world war) to Miss Lucy Cox (general secretary of the 'No more War' movement) stating the humanitarian

position against the destruction of war. ⁶⁸

Lansbury, greeted with prolonged applause, and almost the while conference singing 'For he's a jolly good fellow', spoke against the Execution motion on the basis of this Christian pacific faith:

"...I live my life...amongst ordinary people. I see them when I am at home every day; I meet them and know all there is to know about them; and they know about me...If mine was the only voice in this Conference, I would say in the name of faith I hold, the belief I have that God intended us to live peaceably and quietly with one another, if some people do now allow us to do so, I am ready to do as the early christians did, and say, 'This is our faith, this is where we stand, and, if necessary, this is where we will die'" ⁶⁹

Ernest Bevin moved massively up to address the Conference, as Dalton puts it, to hammer Lansbury to death, ⁷⁰ his blunt, direct words destroying Lansbury's position, stating in the process of Lansbury: "...I hope this Conference will not be influenced by either sentiment or personal attachment...It is placing the Executive and the Movement in an absolutely wrong position to be taking you conscience around from body to body ^{71*} asking to be told what you ought to do with it."

The Executive motion was carried by 2,168,000 votes ⁷² to 102,000. On October 8th Lansbury resigned the leadership of the Labour Party, and in the ensuing race to be his successor Cripps had, in Daltons words, ⁷³ "completely cooked his goose." Attlee succeeded Lansbury as Leader of the Party, an event which

seems to mark the enthronement of the principle that the dictates of the electoral system rather than theoretical concepts of socialism were to shape Labour's programme and policy (though one could argue that the Executive's recommendations to the 1934 Conference affirming the party's faith in parliamentary government and change by consent, and a foreign policy based on the League of Nations, would serve as a better 'historical watershed')

The Annual Conference of the Labour Party meeting on October 3rd at Edinburgh, Greenwood, as Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Party, moved a resolution endorsing the Report of the National Council of Labour, which stated that non-intervention should be supported as long as it was loyally carried out by all concerned, with the hope that it would reduce the danger of a general war in Europe. Despite the fact that "Greenwood was very uncomfortable with his brief and was not very effective"⁷⁴ However, in face of the blatant violations of the Non-Intervention Agreement by Germany and Italy Labour's support of non-intervention was dropped, and "...at a meeting of the two Internationals summoned at the request of the National Council of Labour, it was unanimously declared that...there should now be 'an international agreement',

* Dalton uses the word 'hawking' instead of 'taking'... in the phrase "taking your conscience around from body to body..." Hugh Dalton Memoirs. P.69.

to be promoted by the French and British Governments, 'restoring complete commercial liberty to Republican Spain', and that the Trade Unions and Socialist parties in the two Internationals should do all they could 'to prevent the despatch of war supplies to the Spanish Rebels'.

"A meeting of our own Three Executives unanimously endorsed this on October 28th. We stood, henceforth, on the simple slogan 'Arms for Spain.'⁷⁶"

In the House of Commons the policy of non-intervention came under fire from the main body of the Labour benches. During a debate on Spain in the Commons on October 29th Arthur Greenwood launched the Labour attack:

"Will the Prime Minister say that the agreement has been honourably fulfilled by all the States which promised to agree to it? He will not. It has been violated, and the slow motion picture of the non-intervention committee which moves more and more slowly as time goes on means more delay, but public opinion will make up its mind...The truth is that, although the policy of non-intervention was adopted and an attempt made to stop munitions and warlike supplies going to Spain, a large amount of munitions has gone there

"The real problem is that this fight is not one about Spain. Spain has become a pawn in the game of power politics, and no doubt that is one reason for the decision in favour of non-intervention. But had the boot been on the other foot, had there been a Fascist Government faced with a popular revolt from a popular front of the Left, would anybody have suggested the policy of non-intervention? It would never have been suggested. It is within the memory of some Hon. Members

that the British Government intervened with arms and men on the side of the legally constituted government against the wicked Bolsheviks in Russia. That is the other side of the question...The Spanish revolt is a modern form of aggression...What has happened in Spain may well happen elsewhere, and if the revolt succeeds it is almost certain to happen elsewhere. Aggression always grows and grows; its appetite is never satisfied; the more it eats the hungrier it is...I think that in the interests not merely of democracy in Spain, but of the moral authority of international law in Europe and the world, we should return to the policy of taking international law as our basis and restore to the Spanish people the rights of which they were unfairly robbed." 77

Noel-Baker followed a similar line of attack:

"I believe we are face to face with a sordid attempt by Fascist governments to undermine the public and constitutional law of Europe. This is the greatest danger which we and the world face at the present time...the only thing we can do is to give back to the Spanish Government the right to defend itself and to defend those who attack the peace and order of the world." 78

Attlee hit at the Non-Intervention Committee, stating that:

"The work of the Committee does not strike me as being genuine, as if the Committee really set out to do the work at all. They adopted a procedure which seemed to preclude them from trying to get evidence and to have taken no real effort to find out what has happened. They have depended solely on member states choosing to bring forward reports...I am not impressed by the report as to the way in which these investigations have been made. There is no doubt in the minds of most people that there have been gross infringements. Above all there has been delay. In a matter of this kind justice delayed is justice denied. In fact, the party which has not arms to start with has necessarily lost all the way.

"The question is, are we to acquiesce in this farce? Because it has become a farce. It is humiliating position for this country...We sat by and saw Abyssinia crushed; now we are to sit

by and see Spain crushed. It is not merely, however, sitting by; we are, in fact, almost accessories before the fact. Then there is the question whether the danger is really averted, the danger that there may be incidents which may give rise to further incidents and to war; incidents which are likely to arise by attempts to bring in arms and by attempts to stop arms being brought in. But if the agreement is not effective and arms are being brought in, the danger is not averted. I think it is increased. I see no end to this particular danger." 79

However, the shift of Labour policy against non-intervention did nothing to heal the already existing divisions within the left in Britain, but rather tended to harden these divisions. The Labour Party steadfastly refused to consider any move to form any united front to oppose the Government policy toward the Spanish conflict, whether with the groups to the left or the Liberal Party to the right. The Communist Party continued to press for affiliation to the Labour Party, arguing that the failure of the Labour Party in the elections of November 1935, proved the futility of a divided labour movement to affect the ever increasing pace of fascist strength in Europe. In his application of November 25, 1935, Harry Pollitt, while admitting that his party would retain its ultimate revolutionary objectives, insisted that in its determination to fight the National Government, fascism, and war, the Communist Party would work honestly for a working class majority in the Commons. The Labour Executive rejected this appeal on January 27, 1936 stating that the fundamental differences which had been

stated so often before still existed, and that any move to alter their previous position would be taken as a move away from a belief in political democracy.⁸⁰

Two developments led to an increased demand in Britain for a uniting of the Left in opposition to the Conservatives: one was the development of the concept of the united front on the Continent, which led to the establishment in July 1935 of the French People's Front, and in January 1936 the Spanish People's Front;⁸¹ the other was the general opposition within the Left to continuance of the non-intervention policy of the British Government in the face of flagrant intervention by Germany and Italy.

Thus there developed an increasing demand for a united front against fascism, led by groups outside the Parliamentary Labour Party. The Fabian Society reversed its position to become in favour of Communist affiliation and the united front. The Socialist League and the University Labour Federation approved the unity campaign, while in some of the largest trade unions, such as the Engineers and Miners,⁸² considerable support was generated. On January 17, 1936 a Special Delegate Conference of the Socialist League decided by 56 votes to 38, with 23 abstentions,⁸³ to go ahead with the unity campaign, and the official announcement was made to the press by the Socialist League, the Communist Party, and the

Independent Labour Party on the 18th. A mass meeting held at Manchester on the 24th opened the campaign, and was rapidly followed by other meetings in other large cities, such as Cardiff, Swansea, Birmingham, Plymouth, Bristol, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dundee.⁸⁴

The attitude of the Labour Party to the unity movement is demonstrated by this extract from Dalton's Memoirs:

"But, while all this good constructive work going on, Cripps and his Socialist Leaguers were still nattering about a 'United Front' with the Communists and the I.L.P. This was despite overwhelming decisions of recent Conferences. It was a piece of clotted nonsense anyhow, and was to me and others, a most exasperating diversion of the Party's mind and energies...On January 12th, 1937, the National Executive issued an 'Appeal to the Movement' to take no part in this campaign, and recalled that at the Southport Conference in 1934 a recommendation of the Executive had been carried by 1,820,000 votes to 89,000 'that united action with the Communist Party', or its subsidiaries, 'without the sanction of the National Executive is incompatible with membership of the Labour Party, and that the National Executive seek full disciplinary powers from the Annual Conference to deal with any cases that may arise!...On January 27th the National Executive disaffiliated the Socialist League." 85

The "good constructive work" that Dalton refers to was the formulation of electoral programme of the Labour Party, which would be based in Dalton's words on the belief that "Previous programmes...were to be complicated, too miscellaneous and too long. What

we wanted now was something short and simple, on which
our propoganda could concentrate." ⁸⁶ Pamphlets were
published, such as Labour's Immediate Programme in
March, 1937, and the Labour's Pension Plan in August
of the same year, which were designed to appeal to
"...the imagination of great numbers of people,
responding both to their hopes of a better society
and to their sober judgment." ⁸⁷ The Labour Party
Executive was thus basing its tactics and policy
upon the demands of what is considered the
requirements of an image that would have a chance of
success in a future election. Any effective opposition
to the Governments policy toward the Spanish conflict
would require unity of action among all the parties
of the Left including the Communist Party; however
the Labour party refused to enter into any union which
detract from the possibilities of an early electoral
success.

Watkins describes the choice made by the Labour
Party in these terms:

"The tide, overhwlmingly as a result of the Civil
War, was running strongly to the Left. Sympathy
for the Republicans now embraced many outside the
organised Labour Movement. It extended from
the Communists on the Left, Through the Majority
not only of the Labour Party but the Liberal
Party too, as far as the Conservatives such
as the Duchess of Atholl on the Right. But
it could only find a political expression which
would truely reflect its magnitude through
the actions of the two decisive bodies: the
Labour Party and the T.U.C. It was at this point
that the breakdown occurred. The mass feeling
pulled in one direction whilst those who grasped

the levers of the machine tugged in the other. Two alternatives confronted the leadership of the Labour Movement. The first was to pursue a more militantly anti-fascist policy, especially in Spain, which would have strengthened their leadership, and at the same time would have cut the ground under the feet of the Communists. The second was to try and hold back the tide, using the weapons of discipline and expulsion against their dissident members, and by doing so drive many into alliance with, or membership of, the Communist Party....The Leadership chose the second path, and in going so contributed to the supreme paradox of Modern British history. The policies of both the National Government and the Labour leadership in relation to Fasism were to a considerable extent determined by their anti-communism." 88

The division of the British Labour Movement into the Labour Party (representing the interests of the working classes in Parliament) and the trade unions (as the direct representatives of working man) led to less of a dichotomy within the Labour Movement than one would expect, due to the voting system of the trade unions at the Trade Union Congresses. As Watkins points out, the resolutions of the Trade Union Congresses can only be understood in terms of the block (or card) vote. At the T.U.C. the block votes of a handful of large trade unions decide the national policy of the trade union movement, so that once either the Left or the Right has captured the leadership of the large unions, national policy can be dominated, and any opposition effectively blocked, especially given the permanence of political outlook of the large trade unions. In addition these same block votes can obliterate those of the Divisional

Labour Parties. Watkins notes that during the entire period of the Spanish Civil War, the block vote⁸⁹ favoured the right.

The position of Ernest Bevin as Secretary General of the largest of the trade unions, the giant Transport and General Workers' Union (in the founding of which he had been the principal factor), makes him a key figure in the formulation of the policies of the Labour Movement in this period. But it was not merely Bevin's position in the T.G.W.U., nor the fact that in September 1936 he was elected Chairman of the General Council of the T.U.C.m that made Bevin one of the key figures in the formulation of the policies of the Labour Movement; his importance was derived equally from the influence he was able to exert through the strength of his own character. Alan Bullock gives a very clear insight into the sources of Bevin's influence: "

"There were times when the Left hated him, yet there was one thing they could never deny and one thing which he represented and embodied in his own person the character and convictions of the English working classes, prejudice and all.

"Here was one source of his authority. A second was his uncontested position as spokesman of the trade-union stake in the Labour Party and the guardian of the trade-union traditions." 90

A powerful, massive appearance, which, while giving the impression of great strength, was at the same time remarkably expressive of the opinions delivered in a powerful baritone voice, which had been trained in the

art of debate during the struggle to become the leader of the Docker's union. To the members of the unions, who tended to view the world in terms of 'us' the workers, and 'them' the bosses, Bevin epitomised 'us'. It was in this that Bevin's strength lay, in his ability to communicate with the rank and file of the unions in terms of values which they were able to see as theirs; it was this that enabled him to defeat Lansbury, Cripps and others in favour of anti-fascist unity movement.

Endowed with great natural, though untutored, intelligence, Bevin

"...did not suffer fools gladly and his positive personality made it hard for men of lesser gifts to work, and even more, to disagree with him.

"His prejudices were strong and hard to overcome. Fiercely independent, he reacted strongly to any suggestion of patronage, especially from those who were better educated than himself, and he was inclined to look at anyone from another class as an enemy...

"For all his self-confidence, he was highly sensitive to criticism, quick to resent opposition, and to take it as a personal attack. Many said of him that he took everything too personally and could not face opposition without losing his temper...

"He was a man of strong feelings, with a deep instinct of loyalty. No man ever attached greater importance to keeping his word or observing obligations. The unforgivable crime, in Bevin's eyes, was treachery: once he suspected anyone of not playing straight, he could be implacable, and once his confidence was lost, it was almost impossible to recover."

Bevin's character can, in part, explain his opposition

to the unity movement, and the virulence of his attacks upon Lansbury and Cripps, at the Brighton Conference of 1935. Bevin attacked the pair for disloyalty in being members of the policy-formulating bodies of the Labour Party, and repudiating policies which had been agreed upon, and thus forsaking responsibility which they had accepted: "All the speeches that have been made against this resolution ought to have been made last year at Southport and the people who oppose this resolution ought to have had the courage of their convictions and tabled a resolution to the effect that we should have withdrawn from the League of Nations. You cannot be in and out at the same time, not if you are honest."⁹²

Coupled with this belief that once decisions had been reached they should be adhered to, was Bevin's distrust of the Intellectual and especially of Cripps, one of the main advocates of the unity movement. Bevin wrote to G.H.D. Cole (one of the intellectuals of the Labour movement):

"When we have tried to associate with the intellectuals, our experience has been that they do not stay the course very long; hence our difficult... It is necessary to work out our salvation which is the driving force; whether the intellectuals are with us or not, we must carry on. You see the difference between the intellectuals and the trade unions is this: You have no responsibility; you can fly off at a tangent as the wind takes you. We, however, must be

consistent and we have a great amount of responsibility. We cannot wake up in the morning and get a brainwave, when 'father' says turn and half a million people turn automatically. That does not work." 93

Bullock notes that Cripps (who had little experience of men and the problems of a responsible leadership, in contrast to Bevin, and was completely divorced from the life of the working classes) appeared to Bevin as "... the embodiment of all that most exasperated in middle-class intellectuals telling the trade unions and the 'workers' that they ought to do." 94

But there were those willing and able to answer the attacks by Bevin and the Labour Party leadership upon the advocates of the unity movement with equal vigour. Seven M.P.s - Aneurin Bevan, George Srauss, S.O. Davies, John Parker, Cecil Poole, Phillips Price, and Ben Riley - as well as many other candidates and prominent Party members - R.H.S. Crossman, G.D.H. Cole, Frank Pakenham - protested in the following terms:

"We regard it as in keeping with the failure of the Executive to mobilise effectively the opposition to the National Government which exists in the country among members of all parties and among those who belong to no party. There is a grave danger that this failure, if continued, will reduce the Labour Party to political impotence." 95

Michael Foot points to Aneurin Bevan as the most outspoken critic of the Labour Party leadership:

"Since a considerable part of the Executive's counterblast against Cripps consisted of a lengthy compilation of quotations from his speeches delivered throughout the country over a

period of years, he (Bevan) accused Transport House* of using its money to maintain 'a sort of espionage system against members of the Party who do not find favour with the Janissaries of the Party machine'. In particular, he invited the Labour Party to draw 'the last bitter drop of revolution' from what was happening in Spain while the Executive was brandishing its disciplinary weapons. He asked his fellow Party members to mark the following sequence of events. On 27 February Labour had held a demonstration in Trafalgar Square to protest against the Government's intention to recognise General Franco; on Monday, 28 February, Chamberlain announced his decision to proceed with the recognition; on Tuesday, 1 March, Labour moved its vote of censure. But why, asked Bevan, was the Government able to act in such flagrant contempt of the opposition's deepest emotions on a major issue of policy? It was because Chamberlain had no fear of the Opposition in the country and at the polls; so little had been done to breed the respect which an Opposition should be able to extort." 96

To answer the crucial question here - To what extent a united front would have been able to effect the course of British policy to a greater extent than was possible given the actual Labour Party policy? - is an extremely difficult task. Michael Foot (who it must be admitted is likely to be biased in this debate - his statements in general would bring many a socialist blush of shame to those who consider themselves on the Left in Britain) is unable to provide any definite answer that a united front would have been able to effect a radical change in policy:

* Another of Bevin's creations; H.Q. of the T.G.W.U.; also acted as the 10 Downing Street of the Labour Movement.

"The aim was to produce such a ferment of opinion, such hostility to the appeasement policy of the Government that British policy could be diverted from its dangerous course before more damage was done. The truth was that no one could gauge what would be the magnetic effect of a re-alignment of forces on the Left; the claims of both the official leaders and the rebels were unprovable. Maybe the Popular Front was always a desperate and forlorn bid. But what other card in the Socialist hand was there to play? Better this than the infuriating inertia of official Labour the face of calamity. For Bevan, at least, one consideration was paramount: when he said that all must be subordinated to the necessities of the Spanish struggle, he meant it. 'We must accept the implications of the Popular Front alliance,' he said at the May Day demonstration in Pontypool. 'If the National Government remains in office another two or three years we shall rue in blood and tears that we did not take action earlier. The country is faced with two alternatives - the establishment of a Popular Front in this country, under the leadership of the Labour Party, or drift to disaster under the National Government.'" 96

But one is at a loss to find in what way the decision-makers in Britain would have been effected any other policy that the Labour Party may have adopted. John Mackintosh in his study on the British Cabinet argues that

"Direct control in the sense of a capacity the part of the Opposition to eject the Government has not formed any normal part of political life since the 1880s...

It is now accepted that the Opposition cannot expect to dislodge a Ministry with a working majority...

"So, under normal circumstances, Governments are not disturbed by the immediate pressure of the Opposition....

"...Lord Morrison has said that a Government ought and often does listen to the views of its opponents. How far this happens is hard to

assess but there is no evidence that a confident Ministry has altered its views to meet Opposition pressure.

"Like all senior British politicians, Lord Morrison holds that the Opposition must have the opportunity to state its case but that it would be undesirable to concede any actual power to the House of Commons. When Lloyd George said 'Parliament has no control over the Executive; it is pure fiction,' he was not ruling out the influence of particular elements, such as the back-benchers on the Government side, he was describing the force regularly exerted by Opposition criticism in the House of Commons." 97

In fact, as a general rule it may be stated that dissident back-benchers on the Government side are far more likely to have an effect on policy than the Opposition fulfilling its allotted role of criticism. Even Michael Foot is forced to admit that Chamberlain had an impregnable Parliamentary majority, 98 and one could hardly accuse or determination to carry through his ideas on foreign affairs.

If one is to attempt to answer the question raised previously - Was British policy determined by the divisive effect of the Spanish Civil War on British public opinion? - the answer must be that this effect had only marginal direct effect. While Britain was a country divided on class lines and foreign policy was viewed in class terms, the Left itself, while united in sympathy for the Republican cause was divided in itself by the change during the Twentieth Century of the composition of the Labour movement, the conflicting deductions that the various elements composing the

Labour movement, the conflicting deductions that the various elements composing the Labour movement drew from events of the Twentieth Century - such as the General Strike, and the clash of personalities. The economic and social development of Britain had been such during the Twentieth Century that the rigid characterisation of Britain into the Two Britains - the exploited lower classes and the exploiting upper classes was no longer true. The transition was from the jerry-built back to back terraced ghettos that had been the creation of the Industrial Revolution to the New England described by Orwell

"You know how these streets fester all over the inner-outer suburbs. Always the same. Long, long rows of little semi-detached houses - the numbers in Ellesmere Road run to 212 and ours is 191 - as much alike as council houses and generally uglier. The stucco front, the creosoted gate the privet hedge, the green front door. The Laurels, the Myrtles, the Hawthorns, Mon Abri, Mon Repos, Belle Vue. At perhaps one house is fifty some anti-social type who'll probably end in the workhouse has painted his front door blue instead of green." 99

The New Semi-Detached Suburban England developed semi-detached tastes in which the new classless class became alienated from the sense of community and belongingness which characterised the industrial ghettos. Social mobility led to social rootlessness, with a resulting loss of the working class traditions which had provided the driving force of the political militancy of the Labour Movement. A new classlessness led to the loss of the

'world cosmic sense' described by Roberto Michels:

"At first it (class consciousness) aroused in the workers the traces of a vague 'world cosmic sense' and an ethical cosmopolitanism. 'Their country is the world', exclaimed Bulwer in 1833, entranced by the wage-workers of England whose hearts beat for foreign and subjugated peoples like the Polish, the Irish, and even the Negroes of Jamaica. Thus the English proletariat gradually felt itself to be a people, so as to speak, a human aggregation clearly distinct from the other classes of the population. One of the most acute observers of rising English industrialism, the German Engels, formulated in 1845 in definite terms the thesis that in every country the middle class had more ties of affinity with the other middle classes of the world than with the workers who lived next door or even under the same roof." 100

The world of the new England that developed was limited in its horizons to more material plane, and the hearts of the workers began to beat at the sight of "...filling stations and factories that looked like exhibition buildings, of giant cineams and dance-halls and cafes, bungalows with tiny garages, cocktail bars, woolworths, motor-coaches, wireless, hiking, factory-girls looking like actresses, greyhound racing and dirt tracks, swimming pools and everything given away for cigarette coupons."

The New England through the continuing development of the revolution in industrial technology, and the development of the social welfare programs that had been initiated by the Liberals at the turn of the Century and which were so dear to Chamberlain's hear. As the industrial development of Britain reached the stage of

old age*, with the increasing development of the tertiary sector, population migrated from the coalfields, which had been the location of the major industrial urban centres of the nineteenth century, to the Midlands and South East England. The development of a new range of industries in Britain based on the development of electricity as a source of power, occurred at a time when British industry was feeling the challenge of foreign competition and began to attend more to the home market. Therefore new industries became located near the greatest area of purchasing power - the Midlands and London area. This foreign competition reinforced the already existing tendency for these new industries, because there was a relatively small loss of weight of material in the processes of manufacture and relatively small weight of material operative, to become located at the source of consumption rather than the source of the raw material. The process became mutually reinforcing as the Midlands-Home Counties region developed as a source of skilled labour for these new industries. Service industries and the tertiary sector of industry expanded more than any other during the Depression, and naturally the bulk of this expansion occurred near the area of greatest population - the Midlands-Home Counties region. The service industries actually

* The term 'old age' is borrowed from G.T. Penner in a study of the relationships between industries in industrial regions.

increased their employment figures during the Depression and in the period of recovery employment rose in these industries by 40 per cent as compared with a general rise of employment of 10 per cent.¹⁰²

The migration of population to this region and the expansion of industry within this region led to the coining of the term 'the axial belt' of England to which E.G.R. Taylor drew attention in 1932,¹⁰³ and which followed from Professor Fawcett's demonstration in 1931 and occurred in the Midlands and South-East England.¹⁰⁴ Between 1931 and 1937 half a million people migrated to London and between 1933 and 1937 five sixths of all new factory space was built in the London Area. The result was that London, with 1/127th of the area of the country had 1/5th of the population. The area of the axial belt, which may be defined as the region bounded by the four towns of Gravesend, Hazelmere, Colwyn, and Naresborough, with a population of 25,500,000, contained fifty-seven per cent of the total population, in a density of 1650 per square mile.¹⁰⁵

Graduated taxation and the developing social welfare system acted to diminish inequalities in incomes, a process which had already been initiated by the rise of real wages which had occurred during the thirties. Mowat concludes that in the period 1924-1938 there was an increase of real income of about 24 per cent or 20 per cent per occupied person. Real wages per head

had risen about 17 per cent or 9 per cent including the unemployed. Mowat also notes that while in 1913 the working classes paid out more in taxes than they received in social benefits, by 1935 the working class received more than it paid out by 91 millions. Taxation and social benefits redistributed between 200 millions and 250 millions. The effect was to raise the income of the working class by 8-14 per cent.¹⁰⁶

While there was serious unemployment, it was in the main regionally distributed in the older industrial regions which relied on heavy industry: South Wales, North-East England, North Lancashire, and Central Scotland. In 1936 57 per 1000 workers were unemployed in North-East England, and 281 in the Rhondda, in Glasgow perhaps half the population were unemployed.¹⁰⁷ Thus the unemployment was felt and seen by the majority of people only as story in the newspapers, and perhaps a sight of the Jarrow hunger marchers as they made their way to London. For those who were unemployed the dole "...kept people alive, and it kept them on the safe side of discontent and thoughts of revolution. Many people, particularly the young married men, were better off on the dole than on the low wages which they could earn if employed - especially if work was intermittent. For one thing, unemployment payments involved the whole system of family allowances, to

which industry was a stranger. In a study of young men in Cardiff it was found that 34 per cent of the single men and 45 per cent of the married men had received in their last job less in wages than they were receiving in unemployment allowances.¹⁰⁸"

So while unemployment seems to be the main characteristic of the Thirties, in fact the great majority lay in maintaining and enjoying this new, fuller life. The troubles of unemployment and the struggles that were going on in foreign countries, while disturbing and even 'shocking', were distant events that did not ruffle the main fabric of peoples lives. Orwell paints this little picture of the increasing introspection of the British people: "I had a look at the paper, but there wasn't much news. Down in Spain and over in China they were murdering one another as usual, a woman's legs had been found in a railway waiting room and King Zog's wedding was wavering in the balance."¹⁰⁹ The football scores occupied a far more important place, with the chance of winning on the pools. In a world where violence in foreign countries came to be expected as the normal state of affairs, it was only a minority which felt that it had any relevance to their lives. Ernest Bevin working for the interests of his workers, was far more representative of the working classes than Aneurin Bevan, who felt that something should be done to aid the Republicans in Spain.

It is for this reason that Taylor is able with
Justification to write that:

"In his lazy fashion, Baldwin truly represented the decade. The ordinary Englishman, never attending church or chapel probably without a Bible in his house, and yet expecting his children to swallow unquestioningly a Christian education, was an exact parallel to the statesman who made speeches supporting the League of Nations and never thought of asking the chiefs of staff how the League could be supported. Facade became a reality for a generation trained in cinema palaces. Men believed the phrases they heard and they themselves used. Churchill really thought there was a glorious Indian empire still to be lost; Baldwin really imagined he was defending democratic values; Left wing socialists really anticipated in Fascist dictatorship. So the watchers in the cinemas really felt that life was going on among the shadows on the screen. Of course no one supposed that the tinny words would take on substance or that even the most menacing figures among the shadows could reach out and hit the audience on the head. This is what happened before the decade ended. The pretence turned out to be no pretence. Or perhaps it merely eclipsed the real life underneath." 110

One doubts the extent to which one can meaningfully talk of Britain being divided by the Spanish Civil War. There existed an elite who felt the impact of the war on their lives for various reasons, but for the rest involvement was only talk deep. The Labour Party, while clamouring for resistance to the Fascists was still able to de vote against rearmament, and demand that conscription should not be reintroduced. This is not to denigrate those brave souls who were willing to give their lives for the Spanish people, but they merely represented a salve for the conscience for the great

majority. Michael Foot gives us this picture of the reaction of reaction of some members of the Labour Party to the Conference at Edinburgh:

"At the end, the whole Conference sung the Internationale. 'Then comrades, come rally' that was too much for Jennie Lee. She crept miserably out of the hall and stumbled into Aneurin. He looked haggard and in no condition to stand punishment. He looked as if he had just dragged himself from the torture chamber. And he was not the only delegate who felt like that. Out they came, singly and in groups, the most unhappy and guilty looking collection of people I have ever seen. Their very misery made me hope again. If they felt like that something could still be done. 'A short while later she strayed into the Caledonian Hotel where the Executive was staying, She looked on the company, metaphorically spat and left as swiftly as she could...she heard footsteps behind her and turned to face Aneurin. 'Jennie, 'said Nye who had witnessed the scene at the Caledonian, 'you really must cultivate the gift of social hypocrisy.'" lll

But can one accuse the Labour Party Executive of social hypocrisy. One should beware of the temptation to analyse the policies of the Labour Party in this period in terms of Michels' iron law of oligarchy, in which:

"By giving themselves leaders, the workers create with their own hands new masters, whose principal means of domination consists in their technical and intellectual superiority and in the inability of the masses to control the execution of their commands to the leaders...the mechanism of the socialist party offers to the workers, thanks to the numerous salaried and honorary positions of which it disposes, a possibility of making a career, which exercises on them a force of considerable attraction. Now, to the degree that the political calling becomes complicated and the rules of social legislation multiplied, there is imposed on the leaders of political parties an existence more and more professionalised, based on a continuously widening

knowledge, savoir-faire, routine, and sometimes delicate finesse. This is why the distance between the leaders and the led grows constantly greater. Thus one can place one's finger upon the flagrant contradiction which exists, in mature parties, between democratic declarations and intentions, on one hand and the concrete oligarchic reality, on the other. Hence the continuous raising of conflicts, often Shakespearean in character, in which the comic borders on the tragic. It may be said, therefore that the organisation constitutes precisely the source whence conservative current débouch upon the plain of democracy, causing devastating inundations which render that plain unrecognisable."112

The temptation to use Michels iron law of oligarchy as the sole analytical factor in explaining the splits that occurred in the Labour Movement should be resisted, because of the difficulty of demonstrating the proposition that the views of the leadership of the Labour Movement were out of joint with those of the rank and file membership. Both Watkins and Maisky* claim that the block, or card voting system was undemocratic in that it failed to give an accurate picture of the true feelings of the mass membership of the Labour Movement. This is certainly true, but it still does not answer the question as to whether the majority of the Labour movement wished to see any other alternative policy adopted. Can one rebut Dalton's argument that those at Edinburgh who became widely excited over the Spanish issue did not "...even dimly, comprehend how unrepresentative they were, on this issue, of the great mass of their fellow countrymen." ¹¹³

At the 1936 Trade Unions

* Ivan Maisky. Soviet Ambassador in London 1932-43.
See Spanish Note - books, p.50n.1

Congress held at Plymouth from 7 to 11 September, the amendment tabled by the Furnishing Trades Association to the leadership's non-intervention resolution, wished "the General Council to call upon the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Labour and the Socialist International to launch a great campaign to force the democratic countries to abandon the deceptive policy of neutrality, which the fascist dictators are not observing, so as to enable the Spanish Government to get the arms that will enable it to strike a blow for European peace and democracy"¹¹⁴ The amendment lost by 3,029,000 to 51,000 votes, which even considering the card vote seems overwhelming. David Cattell gives us this opinion of the attitude of the rank and file membership of the Labour Movement to the Spanish conflict:

"The circumstances and reactions among British Labour circles...were very different from those in France....(a) very significant difference in the position of the two groups was the attitude of the rank and file of the Labour movements. While in France they staged daily demonstrations in favour of the Spanish workers and frequent strikes against Blum's policy, the British workers manifested only the slightest interest. W. Lawther of the Mineworkers' Federation and B.A. Bagnari of the Clerks and Administrative Workers described this apathy at the Trade Union Congress held in Plymouth during September, 1936:

Mr. W. Lawther: !...It is now nearly eight weeks since the rebellion started in Spain, and before going further into the question I should like to draw to the attention of the Congress the fact that while the Spanish workers are sacrificing their lives in the defence of democracy it cannot be

said that the Trade Union and Labour Movement of this country has done all it could have done in support of the Spanish workers...It is true that already some £13,000 has been collected, but it is also true that there has not been one big meeting or one big demonstration organised by the General Council or by the National Council of Labour in support of Spain and to explain the facts of the situation...'

Mr. B.A. Bagnari:!!...The General Secretary told us we have raised £13,000. Let us analyse what this means...It means almost exactly seven-eighths of a penny per member of the Trade Union Congress. Is your democracy worth-seven-eighths of a penny?.. The result of this indifference was that neither the rank and file nor the labour leaders desired to take a strong stand on the Civil War, even though their general sympathies were for the Spanish Workers."115

One should rebut the argument of Maisky that "...the leadership of the Labour Party sabotaged the true feeling of the masses." ¹¹⁶ One should rebut the argument for the reason that the masses did not wish to go beyond the policies which the Labour Party adopted. There is little substantial evidence of 'sabotage' or 'social hypocrisy'; those that argued for a more militant policy toward the Spanish conflict represented a minority, albeit an extremely vociferous minority, backed up by the organisation of the Left Book Club. For various reasons this minority was motivated by a highly developed 'world cosmic sense': the communists through their analysis of world events in terms of universal socio-historical forces; the Independent Labour Party and dissident members of the Labour Party such as Bevan, through the fact that they existed as an anachronism - representatives of the remaining areas

which retained their proletarian characteristics in an age that was rapidly moving towards the ideal of suburban uniformity, areas that through the economic distress of these old industrial regions retained a belief in working class solidarity, not merely expressions of sympathy; and the intellectuals of the Socialist League awoken by the pangs of social conscience to the sufferings of the world around. These groups and individuals existed on the fringe of the main body of the Labour Movement, an activist wing that cannot be considered representative of the mass. This can be explained in part in terms of the observation by Frankel that "...people can be divided into a predominant inattentive majority and a small attentive minority. Alred O Hero introduced a dividing characteristics four criteria, enumerated in order of increasing rarity: interest, information, realistic analysis and action." ¹¹⁷ Related to, and reinforcing the disinterest of the majority is the tendency of the mass of a party to follow the leadership in its policy - the organisational factor demonstrated by Michels. In the case of the Labour Movement in the thirties, any individuals or groups desiring an active line to be taken towards the Fascist intervention in Spain were faced with the problem that domestic and international policies are interrelated. An inherent contradiction had developed in the Labour Movement through the ignoring of this fact: to call for support of the League of Nations and resistance to Fascist

aggression abroad conflicted with the pacifist current which flowed strong in working class traditions, and the demands which had been voiced long and loud against rearmament and the reintroduction of conscription. The paradox was that those who advocated support the the Republicans in Spain were those who had been the most vehement apostles of pacifism battling against the support of the League given by the leadership of the Labour Movement. When in September 11, 1935, Hoare pledged Britain's allegiance to the principles of the Covenant "Bevan remained unimpressed. Along with Stafford Cripps, the Socialist League and the pacifist section of the party, led by George Lansbury, he insisted that no capitalist government of Baldwin and Chamberlain could be entrusted with the worker' in the making or threatening of war...their fear (was) that the Labour Party would be sucked into a full bi-partisan defence and foreign policy with a Capitalist Government whose purposes they could neither share nor control. Britain's policy, said Bevan, in the same speech at Birmingham, is that of 'the successful burglar turned householder. If I am going to ask the worker to shed his block, it will not be for medieval Abyssinia of Fascist Italy, but for making a better social system"¹¹⁸

Attlee, Bevin, Greenwood, Dalton, Citane, and Morrison were not social hypocrites because the

majority of the class they represented, were bent on enjoying the fruits of an increase in income, and the new worlds opened up by the cinema and the automobile. Social conscience found its outlet in the hat passed around for the Spanish refugees and resolutions in favour of the heroic workers fighting to uphold democracy in Spain.

Brand lists some of the humanitarian acts undertaken:

"The National Council established and maintained a base hospital while the Socialist Medical Association and a number of trade unions financed ambulances. Women knitted thousands of garments. A milk fund reached £31,000; £120,000 was raised to aid refugees; the mine-workers contributed £55,000 to be used especially for orphaned children of Asturias miners. People adopted Basque children, and by 1937 some 4,000 were in England for safety."¹¹⁹

Non-intervention suited the worker of the new Britain that was emerging in the axial belt of England, and the policy of the Labour Party never meandered far from a non-intervention policy, and condemnation of the Government's actions. Even after October, 1937, when the Labour Party dropped its support of the Non-Intervention Committee, the new line did consist of little more than that the Spanish Government should be allowed to buy arms in Britain. The slogan 'Arms for Spain', which Labour adopted shows the extent of the commitment to the Republican cause. The resolution which was adopted by the Executive of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions in October of 1937 stated that an International Agreement should be promoted by the British and French

Governments to restore complete commercial liberty to Republican Spain, which would "...thus enable the Spanish people to bring their heroic struggle to a victorious conclusion." ¹²⁰

Toujours les autres les poitrines, les Anglais les machines.

McKensie makes clear the fact that any attempt to over-emphasis the oligarchic tendency of political parties in Britain, or to draw a picture of the mass membership of the Labour Movement wishing to go in one direction, but being pulled unwillingly in the other, does not accord with the reality of party politics. The Executive of the Labour Party has been the area where policies are formulated but the opinions of the mass to provide limits upon which policies can be undertaken:

"The Labour Party's devices for ensuring the ascendancy of the Parliamentary Party and its leaders...have depended on the existence of a bond of confidence between the parliamentary leaders and a sufficient number of leading trade unionists to command preponderant support for the policies of the party leadership at the party conference...in all normal circumstances, Labour's parliamentary leaders (who, like their Conservative opposite numbers, will take into account the currents of opinion within all sections of the party in the course of determining their policies) are likely to be sustained by majority support in the P.L.P. and the NEC, and in both the trade union and the constituency sections of the mass organisation, Except on the rarest occasions in the history of the party it has been a Centre-Right majority in the PLP which has carried the day against a Left minority within each of the constituent elements of the party." 121

In fact it was "...a policy-decision process which

conveyed the public impression that the Labour Party's parliamentary leaders were repeatedly on the point of destruction at the hands of their more militant supporters" ¹²² which leads to an exaggerated statement of the divisions within the Labour Party and the divisive effects of the Spanish conflict on that movement.

Much of that which has so far been postulated on the Labour movement can also be applied to the Conservative Party on the right wing of British politics. Divisions existed, to which the Spanish conflict gave an added prominence. The division was not an equal one. It did not divide the Party, but merely divorced a militant minority from the mass of the Party, which, contented with the policy of non-intervention, followed behind the leadership. The extent of these divisions and the difficulties which resulted for the leadership were, however, of a much lesser order than in the case of the Labour Party. This was due to the traditions of the Conservative Party, the less ideological content of the Right and the class composition of the Conservative Party.

Loyalty to the Party leadership has always been one of the keynotes of the Conservatives, an invisible bond setting the limits of conflict within the Party and threatening the future political career of anyone stepping outside (though Churchill, with the aid of the Second World War, did manage to overcome the taint of disloyalty, a task which Iain Macleod has found beyond himself at the

moment). An example of the limiting effect of Party loyalty is to be found in this little story of Conservative discontent During the days of 1939, when it appeared that Chamberlain might grant Franco belligerent rights:

"Mr. Duncan Sandys, M.P., Churchill's son-in-law, had for some months been one of the few backbench Tories daring to show a tremor of independence. He called a meeting in London designed to rally the nation's youth in support of a new, more robust national policy. Fleet Street guessed that the move had been made on Churchill's prompting; might it not indicate that the rebel Tories were at last prepared to rebel? But the meeting ended in derision. 'I and my friends', said Mr. Sandys at the close, 'would not be here if there were any question of turning out Chamberlain.' If this was the standard of audacity among the most audacious Tories, what hope was there from them?"¹²³

Eden's resignation speech, which was remarkably restrained reflects the same preoccupation with the effect of his actions upon the position of the Party:

"My Rt. Hon. Friend has strong views on foreign policy, and I respect him for it; and I have strong views too. Since we are, as I know, both of us conscious that those views have resulted in a divergence, not only of aim, but also of outlook and of approach, it is clearly in the national interest that unity be restored at the earliest possible moment."¹²⁴

This speech was hardly calculated to rally the country behind a new policy in opposition to Chamberlain. Bevan's comment on the speech was:

"If Eden had been big enough he could have ruined Chamberlain."

To which Foot adds in his usual tone:

"Instaed it was the most polite resignation speech of modern times and left not a ripple on the political waters."¹²⁵

The Conservative M.P., Mr. De Chair, during the debate which followed Eden's resignation, offered this conclusion:

"....it should be recognised that there have been for a long time two quite distinct elements in the Conservative Party in this House. There has been the element represented, if I may say so without offense, by the Noble Lady Member of Perth and Kinross (Duchess of Atholl), the hon. Member for West Leeds (Mr. V. Adams), to a less extent by the hon. Member for West Leicester (Mr. Nicholson), and others who like them, want us to fight allcomers - in support of Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Negus, Chiang Kai-shek, and every other cause of that description in the world. The other element, which is more sound and very much larger, believes wholeheartedly in the common-sense attitude of the Prime Minister in his approach to foreign affairs."¹²⁶

As with the Labour Party, it is possible to divide the Conservative Party (as indicated by de Chair) into a loyal majority and an activist fringe not prepared to admit the infallibility of the Prime Minister on all matters of foreign policy. During the period of Baldwin's leadership of the Conservative Party, there was no serious opposition to his policies. The mood of the party can be gauged from this declaration by the chairman of the 1935 Annual Conference:

"Last year at the conference and at the mass meeting ...the then President (of the National Union) in his speech had to tell Mr. Baldwin that there were a certain number of complaints and differences on matter of policy between members of our party. Thank God, I can assure the Prime Minister that every man, woman and child in the Conservative Party stands solidly behind him at the present moment. We have seen in that great conference which has just closed the unanimity of the Conservative Party and we can assure you sir that how ever difficult your task we are behind you to a man."¹²⁷

* Otherwise referred to as the 'Red Duchess'.

Representing the other side of the class divide from the Labour Party, the members of the Conservative Party were not drawn, through class affinity, to identify with the Republican cause. In fact class affinity served to make ardent supporters of Franco many of the Tories, as did the Catholic faith. The fact that non-intervention aided those in Spain who declared that they were struggling against an invasion of communist ideology and anti-Church atrocities, led many on the right in Britain to support non-intervention. During a Commons debate of October 29 1936, Mr Denville, in reply to a statement by Mr, Gallacher that "...if we are in support of arms for the Governemnt of Spain it is to defeat the forces of Fascism and assist peace and progress",¹²⁸ retorted:

"Does the hon. Member mean by peace and progress the murdering of 15,000 Christains because of their faith and the burning down of their churches? If so, I should like him to justify that action."¹²⁹

In the same debate, Mr. Emmott was able to argue:

"I can imagine no greater danger to Imperial interests than the establishment in the Iberian Peninsular of of a government whose whole ideology is inspired by bitter hostility to Imperialism and to the British Empire as the greatest example of modern Imperialism. Regard this matter, if you will, on this basis, and I say that the balance of Imperial advantage is on the side of the establishment of a fascist state to the establishment of a communist state."¹³⁰

Those of the opinion of Messrs. Denville and Emmott, since non-intervention favoured the rebels, sought to argue that non-intervention in the Spanish dispute was

occurring to an equal extent on both sides and therefore of no concern to Britain. Mr. Wise during the debate of December 1, 1936, on the Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Munitions to Spain) Bill, felt that even though Germany, Italy and Russia were violating a non-intervention agreement and breaking international law

"...(it) is surely no reason why we should involve ourselves in danger merely to satisfy some desire that the Spanish Government be fully equipped with munitions. Many of us on this side of the House, although we desire to preserve the most complete neutrality, and we do not think to assist either side would think it less embarrassing if General Franco should win the war than if the Communist Government did (Voice: 'There is no Communist Government there') - not because we particularly desire to see another Fascist state in the Mediterranean, which indeed we do not. But the international implications of the Government are likely to be far worse than the international implications of a Fascist victory: and as our interests are to remain at peace we naturally 131 prefer the less embarrassing side to be successful."

This fear of the spread of communist influence in the Mediterranean led many of the Conservative Party who were otherwise opposed to the appeasement policy of Chamberlain to develop a schizophrenic attitude to the Spanish conflict, torn between fear of both the Communist and the Fascist perils. Churchill, in a Commons debate of November 1936, stated:

"...but for Russia and but for Russian communist propoganda and intrigues which for more that six months racked Spain before the outbreak, the Spanish horror need never have occurred...It would be a crime to call upon British and French soldiers, or upon the good peoples of these two countires to go to the aid of such a country. Why it would be worse than a crime it would be a futility." 132

Churchill had already proclaimed in August of that year:

"A revived Fascist Spain in close sympathy with Italy and Germany is one kind of disaster. A Communist Spain spreading its tentacles through Portugal and France is another, and many will think the worse."¹³³

Churchill, however, had many an occasion to elaborate on the dangers that a Franco victory would entail for Britain:

"Large howitzers and many secondary guns have been mounted on both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar at Algeciras and Ceuta...the potential condition of the highway of the world remains in the most serious form...Conditions in the Balearic Islands are in the last degree unsatisfactory...We should make it clear and make it clear in good time that we could not agree to the doors of the Mediterranean being closed in our faces, and that we shall have to range ourselves against any who tried to do it...."¹³⁴

This ambivalent attitude did much to weaken the position of those Conservative backbenchers who might have been expected to uphold the interests of Britain in the face of the challenge by Italy and Germany. Fear and dislike of communism, as well as Party politics, isolated those few critics who remained from the main body of the Conservative Party. At the other pole from these critics stood those intent on a violent campaign of denunciation of the Republicans, and who were castigated in this leading article in the News Statesman of August 1, 1936:

"More sinister is the daily magnification of atrocities by the Rothemere press. Most of the tales of horror picked up from refugees are the familiar stuff: they did service against Germany during the war, against Russia after it, and now they are used against Spanish socialists. No doubt they satisfy Colonel Blimp, but they will carry no weight with thoughtful people. More significant is the attitude of The Times and other reputable Conservative papers...The Times has dropped the disreputable term 'rebels' and substituted 'anti-government forces' and its leading article last

Wednesday contained an astonishing collection of statements, the most remarkable suggestion being that Soviet agents fomented the trouble, and that 'prominent Russian Communists foretold so long ago as the Spring that Spain would be in a state of chaos by a date in July.' Are we to infer that the Bolsheviks deliberately engineered General Franco's 'war of liberation from Marxism.'¹³⁵

Any attempt to limit the intervention of Germany and Italy in the Spanish conflict was equated in the eyes of many Conservatives with what they considered to be the foolish nonsense of the League of Nations. The attempts of the Spanish Government to obtain support for its cause from the pulpit of the League found very little response from the Conservative Party. Any attempt on the part of Eden to implement any form of effective supervision of a non-intervention agreement through the League of Nations would inevitably run into opposition from the mass of the Conservative Party. This was in part a question of the inter-action of party politics and partly a matter of personalities within the Conservative Party. R.B. McCallum points out that the adoption by the Labour and Liberal Parties of the League cause merely served to increase the hostility of many right-wing members towards that organisation:

"In fact, the Conservatives were so bored with the endless talk of the League enthusiasts, whom they regarded as fools and cranks, that they had no clear idea of the issues. They took extreme and most pacifist views as representative of the whole. The result was that when the crisis came with Italy in 1935 they started to find that the League which they supposed to be an

institution, vague and unreliable, for the avoidance of war, was an institution for which they might have to fight. And their irritation was intense when they observed that those who were telling them to fight were the Radical politicians who, as it seemed to them, had been the enemies of all military preparation. They were now actually telling the fighting classes to go into action. The relatives of naval officers on the Mediterranean station suddenly realised that their men were to be thrown into the front line at the demand of the people who had starved the fleet and poured contempt on military activity. The Labour Party, through leaders like Dalton and Attlee was saounding the call for battle. The Liberals under Sinclair were no less vocal, and the Liberals in the eyes of the Tories were experts in the art of stinting the Navy since the days of Glastone and Cobden." 136

The attitude of the right-wing of the Conservative Party toward the League can be seen from these pronouncements by Leo Amery:

"I gather that the Government's view would be that all such considerations (the barbarous nature of the Abyssinians and the traditional ties of friendship with the Italians) have been superseded by the fact that Abyssinia was, with Italian support, allowed to slip into the League, and that they are bound at all costs, and whatever sacrifice of old friendships and risk of future enmities, to 'try out' the League - not the League of conciliation which was all they believed in last year, but the League of forcibly preserved peace as preached by Lord Cecil, and the framers of the so-called Peace ballot, to which they now seem to have been converted. They are making, to use Mr. Anthony Eden's phrase, a test case. Well, what has the test proved so far? If there was ever a case where the aggressor has given such ample notice of his intentions it was here. Here was the war of conquest openly advertised and organised for the best part of a year ahead... This was not a case of the League being taken by surprise. It knew months beforehand when Mussolini meant to strike. But in spite of all Mr. Eden's efforts to hustle them, nothing would induce the Council of the League to face the facts of the situation or to come to any decision about them. When the war began they got as far as considering the draft of a report to the effect that Mussolini did not seem very conciliatory. The only thing that they had achieved in all these months was, in accordance with the recognised red tape

Geneva procedure, to impose an embargo on arms and munitions being sent to Abyssinia! So far then the League machinery has not only failed absolutely to prevent war, but such help as it has given has been to the aggressor... The only result I can foresee from purely economic sanctions is that they will probably decide Italy to leave the League, and that they will mean considerable loss and dislocation of trade for those who enforce them for the benefit of those who do not. They aren't going to stop the war." 137

The right-wingers attitude towards Eden, the champion of the League, is again provided for us by Amery:

"I had, in fact been critical of Simon for not insisting with sufficient force on compelling Eden to keep in line with his own more realistic attitude, and took the first opportunity I could tell Hoare that his hopes of success depended entirely on 'pulling Anthony back by his coat tails'."

Amery's diary commented upon Baldwin becoming Prime Minister that:

"The best feature is the new arrangement in putting Sam (Hoare) at the F.O. where he will have his work cut out clearing up the mess into which Eden got us over Abyssinia. I shall look forward to September when Eden will be sent to Geneva with orders to unsay all his high talk of last month about coercing Italy to respect the 'collective system'." 139

Again, Amery's diary offers us this, written at the time Eden's resignation:

"Neville was in much more effective form than the day before and delighted me by having the courage to say that collective security was dead and only a dangerous sham... Neville's speech is the first breath of fresh air on the Government from bench for a long time. But he couldn't have delivered it while Eden was in the Government, and Eden couldn't have stayed in the Government after that speech, even if there had been no other issue. The speech went down very well and greatly heated the Party." 140

Power to formulate policies and to have them executed, in a Parliamentary political system as exists in Britain,

is not merely a matter of office it is also a matter of being able to mobilise support within the ranks of the party in power. Eden's power base was extremely limited in the Conservative Party, in contrast to that of Baldwin or Chamberlain. Eden and the policies that he advocated could only count upon the support of a limited group of back-benchers, with the result that when the differences over foreign policy between Eden and Chamberlain led to Eden's resignation, the repercussions of that act upon the Conservative Party and British foreign policy were almost negligible, despite the great popularity of Eden among the masses at home and his great reputation abroad. The isolation of Eden within and without office within the Conservative Party was a factor that limited the ability of Eden to shape foreign policy according to his own concepts of foreign policy and to bring his public reputation to bear within Parliament. John Connell notes that upon Eden's accession to the Foreign Office

"...there were many who were dubious or subterraneously hostile. His popular fame was vast and justly earned; but it did not, at this time, stir many echoes in the citadels of power in his own party. To many Conservatives Eden seemed to be the showy spokesman and exponent of many trends and tendencies in international affairs of which they had a deep, instinctive mistrust. It was not in their view at all healthy that he was so loudly praised in progressive circles. Right-wingers like Leo Amery regarded him bleakly." 141

Appeasement of Italy and Germany was the policy that found the strongest response within the ranks of the Conservative members, appeasement whether it be in Abyssinia or Spain.

There can be little argument with the statement of Mackintosh:

"Chamberlain's policy was welcomed by his party and by the public until 1939, and even to then there were few doubts. The only ministerial critic of his earlier actions had been Mr. Eden and he did nothing to rally the dissidents or to build up a different attitude to the assumptions on which the Government's policies were based. At the time of Munich Duff Cooper, Walter Elliot and Oliver Stabley accepted the idea of ceding the Sudetenland to Germany, and were unhappy merely over the methods that were adopted and the guarantees and compensations offered to Czechoslovakia. In the end, only Duff Cooper resigned and he found little response to his arguments... The interesting fact about the policy of appeasement is not the odd objection that it encountered but that Chamberlain could induce such fervent support for it among the ranks and the leadership of the Conservative Party." 142

Appeasement as a solution to the problem of the challenge to the status quo made by Germany, Italy, Japan and even Franco in Spain was the policy that seemed to the great majority of people in Britain to accord to the facts of Britain's position in the world in the Thirties. There is much truth in Duff Cooper's characterisation of the Englishman as disliking "...cold logic or facing hard facts. The English love postponement and have a genius for compromise." ¹⁴³ The English desire to seek a pragmatic solution through the application of logic, reason and good faith to a problem can, when any solution appears to have undesirable consequences, lead to the tendency to avoid seeking a solution to the problem altogether. This tendency points out Duff Cooper was especially evident during the Thirties, when the British people "...believed, as they always do, that war is a fearful catastrophe that must be avoided at almost any cost. Their minds had not been

prepared to accept the idea that any immediate danger existed. To talk as if it did seemed to them unwise, rash and almost indecent - just as in cases of serious illness there are certain dread words which men hesitate to use, as though the mere use of them may evoke what is dreaded. So at this time men preferred to go on muttering vague generalisations about the League of Nations and the Treaty of Locarno, as if they still meant real living things and were not mere dead, empty words." ¹⁴⁴

One may attempt to place the blame on statesmen without statescraft, leaders who did not lead, and that section of the press which embarked on a deliberate policy of deceiving the public as to the true state of the international situation, ¹⁴⁵ but it would be very difficult to support the proposition that appeasement was foisted on the public by a small group of Conservative politicians. Lord Ismay gives us this remarkably honest appraisal of his feelings during the conclusion of the Munich crisis:

"The sands were running out, but that very afternoon Chamberlain made his dramatic announcement in the House of Commons that he was making yet another journey to Germany at Hitler's invitation. Once again one dared that war might be avoided; and when Chamberlain returned two days later when the news that all was settled, the sense of relief was overpowering and almost universal. For myself, I gave little thought at that moment to the price that had been paid, or to the probability that the reprieve was only temporary. All that mattered was that the dreaded explosion, which had seemed so imminent, had at last been postponed. I was in no mood for further work that evening and went home feeling light of heart...on that evening, I defended Munich with the greatest of vigour, and that every afterwards I was so ashamed of it that I deliberately put my head in the sand. I refused to allow myself to think about it, still less to discuss it." ¹⁴⁶

It can be said, therefore, that Britain was divided in its immotional reaction to the Spanish conflict, but not in the desire to remain outside of a new world war. Propoganda and mass communication of a bloody conflict created for the majority of British people a belief in the justness of the republican cause.

However, the Left in Britain were no longer the proletarian masses of the Victorian England, but a new suburbia moving into the dawn of affluence. The remaining vestiges of the industrial proletariat were confined to the fringe areas of South Wales, the North East and Clydeside. The activists in both political Parties were a powerless minority unable to divert their leaderships from non-intervention in Spain. The control of Bevan and Chamberlain was too great. The majority were therefore in favour of doing nothing even while being continuously preached to by the Left (and even a few from the Right) on the immorality or weakness of inaction. While not prepared to act, the people of Britain felt themselves to be guilty of inaction. This led to a guilt complex and the creation of tensions within British society.

In addition, while there was a general desire to gain the benefits of peace, there also existed a general tendency not to accept the price of the avoidance of war.

Honour cannot be maintained without war if that which one equates with honour has to be retained by force of arms. McCallum tells us that "The average Englishman ...did realise, more clearly perhaps than his Conservative rulers, that Mussolini was a tyrant and Englishman have quite a good nose for the genus tyrant since the days when they confronted Napoleon and the days when they learned to love Palmerstone for giving despots the rough edge of his tongue." ¹⁴⁷ Appeasement offered little opportunity for humbling dictators, instead involving the accession of Britain to the demands of the dictators (even the ruler of the despised Italians). Britain had to watch as small nations were swallowed and the principles of the Covenant flouted. Thus serious tensions were created within Britain by the inability, and unwillingness of the British to enforce what was felt to be demanded by the honour of the country, tensions which were heightened by the division of the country into socio-economic classes. When the French prematurely leaked the content of the Hoare Laval plan, a plan which reflected the basic desires of the British people for the peaceful solution of problems, Hoare was sacrificed to the storm of indignation which swept the country and made the scapegoat to ease the national conscience. Duff Cooper illustrates the contradictory nature of the motivations behind British attitudes to foreign affairs at this time:

"The British people were very angry with Mussolini and very sorry for the Emperor of Abyssinia, but they were not prepared to give grounds for war to the former or effective help to the latter. Sir Samuel Hoare and Monsieur Laval sought to give shape to these sentiments by an agreement which, while handing over the substance of Abyssinia to Italy, would have left a shadowy remnant to the Emperor... But before the Duce had time to declare himself there arose a howl of indignation from the people of Great Britain. During my experience of politics I have never witnessed so devastating a wave of public opinion. Even the easy-going constituents of St. Georges division were profoundly moved. My post-bag was full and the letters I received were not written by ignorant or emotional people but by responsible citizens who had given sober thought of the matter." 148

Just as the policy of the Government towards Spain was formulated in the framework of the Government's attitude to Italy, so the reactions of many people in Britain to the Spanish conflict were formed in the light of their attitudes to Italy.

As we have already seen the Spanish civil war was viewed in very emotional terms and became intermixed in the fabric of class feeling within Britain. The social consciences of the majority of people within Britain had been stirred by the struggles of the Spanish people against what appeared to be the ever growing tide of Fascist aggression. While only a minority were prepared to see Britain actively help the Spanish people, sympathy overflowed in a torrent of words. 72 per cent of the British people were in sympathy with the Republican cause, as against 9 per cent for the Nationalists. 149 Thus the British Government, in following out their policy of non-intervention were continuously

aware of the tension created within the country by the contradiction between the emotional outlook of the British people toward the Spanish conflict and the policy of the British Government framed in terms of more rational appraisal of British interests.

Sympathy for the Nationalist cause was not able to determine the direction of British policy toward Spain - this was determined by the general framework of the appeasement of Italy and Germany, but this sympathy was able to determine in part the method by which the policy was implemented and the timing.

One peculiar aspect of British policy toward Spain was the devotion lavished upon the comic-farce of the Non-Intervention Committee established to oversee the policy of non-intervention that had been adopted by the international community following an enquiry by the French of the German, Belgian, Portuguese, Russian, and Polish Governments regarding the matter of a declaration of non-intervention in the affairs of Spain, an enquiry undertaken according to Wilson, the American Charge in France, "largely on the advice of the British...." ¹⁵⁰

There is no intention at this point to trace the inglorious history of the Committee, but rather to offer a few contemporary, and post-contemporary views, of the Committee's activities. The Economist of September 12, 1936, after describing the onward march of Franco toward Madrid, continued:

"Meanwhile, the French Plan for securing the cessation of all aid to either side in Spain by other Governments or their nationals is patently in suspended animation largely owing to the attitude of Portugal and Italy. Both Powers agreed 'in principle' but pleaded ignorance of 'the precise scope' of the plan. As a result, more Italian supplies of aeroplanes and war materials for the rebel forces have been reported during the past week to have been landed in Vigo and Lisbon, for transit into Spanish territory. On Wednesday the first meeting of the 'International Committee for the Application of the Agreement regarding Non-Intervention in Spain' proved a fruitless as its title is imposing - the discussion was reported by an august contemporary to be 'prosaic' - mainly because though the 26 European countries who have imposed an embargo were represented, Portugal was the only absentee. (Incidentally it seems strange that while Viscount Cranbourne, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was the British representative, the Chairman of this important European Committee was Mr. W.S. Morrison, the Financial Secretary to the British Treasury.) The Committee therefore recorded its desire to meet again at some future date."

On October 17, 1936, in reporting the deteriorating position of the Republicans in the face of the material superiority of the Nationalists, the Economist concluded that

"The effective ban on supplies to the Spanish Government which the so-called non-intervention pact constitutes is clearly at present the greatest asset of the rebels."

Halifax in his memoirs quite candidly admits that the Committee did not, and was not designed to, live up to its imposing title:

"The immediate practical value of the Committee on land, as opposed to its action against submarines, was not great. I doubt whether a single man or gun less reached either side in the war as a result of its activities. What, however it did do was to keep such intervention as there was entirely unofficial,

to be denied or at least deprecated by the responsible spokesman of the nation concerned, so that there was neither need nor occasion for any official act by Governments to support their nationals. After making every allowance for the unreality, make-believe, and discredit that came to attach to the Non-intervention Committee, I think this device for lowering the temperature caused by the Spanish fever justified itself." 151

Ivan Maisky who was in the frustrating position of being the Soviet representative to the Non-intervention Committee (whose experiences bear a remarkable resemblance to those of Alice in Wonderland) describes some of the devices employed by the Committee, under the lead of first Morrison and then Lord Plymouth - the British representatives, to ensure that nothing in the work of the Committee should stir the interest of anyone following its activities:

"At the meeting of 14 September the British representative, W.S. Morrison, proposed that a Chairmans permanent Sub-Committee should be set up to consist of the delegates of those countries which were producers of armaments or bordered on Spain. The official task of the Sub-committee was billed as the preparation for the full Committee, with all 27 countries represented, to discuss later and decide upon. This proposal looked very innocent and even quite rational. ...But in actual fact the intention here was something different. As soon as Morrison and Corbin had made their speeches supported this proposal the suspicion came involuntarily to mind that Britain and France were trying to keep all matters connected with non-intervention within the narrowest possible circle, where everything could be discussed 'within the family'. For the same reasons Morrison insisted when the decision to form a Sub-committee of nine members had been taken, that stenographic notes of the Sub-committee's meetings should not be made, only a brief record of decisions taken.

Future practice fully confirmed the rightness of our suspicions.

"To start with, the main activity of the Committee was concentrated in its plenary sessions. In the course of September and October 1936, there were

14 plenary sessions, while the Sub-committee met 17 times, and all its meetings at that period were of a preparatory nature.

"Later on the situation began to change: in 1937 there were 14 plenary sessions called, while the Sub-committee met 69 times. Now all the most important questions were being discussed and decided upon in the Sub-committee, and the plenary meeting was gradually turned into a voting machine which simply rubber stamped the decisions taken in the Sub-committee.

"In 1938 there are 17 meetings of the Sub-committee and one plenary meeting.

"The figures speak for themselves. It was perfectly obvious that not only Italy and Germany, but Britain and France as well, were trying to keep everything that had to do with the war in Spain as far as possible from the eyes of world public opinion, including the eyes of the members of the Committee for 'Non-intervention'.

"Another fact is no less significant. At the very first meeting of the Committee, on 9 September, 1936 Morrison (again), on behalf of Britain, declared 'It is entirely for the Committee to decide...for my part, I would suggest that we get on very well in private'.

"And once again not one of the members of the Committee representing a bourgeois country said a word in opposition. The result was a decision that at the end of each meeting there would only be a short official communique, which was to be of a 'general' a character as possible, that is, was to say nothing...

"(The) question of the 'leakage' of information from the four walls of the Committee became a constant sore point at all the plenary sessions and Sub-committee meetings. I had from time to time to fight off the attacks of the Great Power's representatives, especially those of Britain, Germany and Italy. At last things blew up into a major row, which took place at the meeting of the Sub-committee on 7 May 1937.

"The British representative, Lord Plymouth, took it upon himself to fire the opening shot. He made a long speech, in which he turned the full force of his wrath upon the wretched 'informers' and declared in the most categorical language that Britain could not allow the Committee to be turned into 'an instrument of propoganda'. Plymouth proposed a resolution, to be given the widest possible publicity, that the sole objective source of information on the work of the Committee was to be found in the communiques which it regularly issued." 153 The Committee as Maisky puts it "should be like the ideal Japanese wife, who sees nothing, hears nothing, and says nothing." 154

Britain's attitude to the Committee as demonstrated by Maisky above was not merely a function of a desire by the British decision-makers to remove the Spanish conflict from sight and mind, but was rather a function of the fact that the direction, and method of implementation, of British policy toward the Spanish conflict bore an intimate relationship to the structuring of public opinion within Britain, and the problems presented by the interaction of the Spanish conflict and the international community. There were in fact two sets of temperatures that had to be controlled the temperature of the pro-Republican sympathy, which was reinforced by feeling of outraged national honour; and the temperature of the international community which was inflamed by the various reactions of the international actors to the Spanish Civil War. We shall also consider later that the British attitude toward the Non-intervention Committee was also a function, in part, of a feeling among British decision-makers that far more could be done through the traditional channels of diplomatic intercourse than could be achieved in the Committee, where the presence antagonistic ideologies and the large number of states represented would preclude the achievement of an amicable compromise between conflicting positions.

Woermann, the German Charge d'Affairs in London reported on November 27, 1936, that:

"I know from statements made in an authoritative British Government seeds in the embargo committee a useful means of avoiding possibilities of conflict and that it is therefore encouraging as dilatory action as possible on the part of the committee. At the same time, the existence of the committee offers the Government a comfortable shield against Parliamentary pressures." 155

On September 9, 1936 Bismarck, the then Charge d'Affairs in London had reported of the first meeting of the Non-intervention Committee that

"Today's meeting left the impression that with France and England, the two powers primarily interested in the committee, it is not so much a question of actually taking steps immediately as of pacifying the aroused feeling of the Leftist parties in both countries by the very establishment of such a committee." 156

That the policy of attempting to make the Spanish conflict into a less controversial domestic political question with Britain achieved some success can be seen from this report by Woermann of January 20, 1938:

"In general, the politics has been taken out of the committee to a great extent during the past few months. This has had the result that the interest of the British public has greatly decreased. The time is past when photographers would stand outside the door before each session and when the press carried columns of reports, some true and some false, about the sessions. It can return at any time of course. Apparently the main point of contention, namely, the question whether the volunteers are to be withdrawn or not, is no longer considered a vital question even in England." 157

One function of the Non-intervention Committee therefore as far as the British Government was concerned was to deflect criticism from the British Government from those within Britain who felt that victory of the

Republicans represented either an ethical good or a vital interest of Britain. Just a few of the many examples can be cited to show the function that the Non-intervention Committee served in the House of Commons: on November 5, 1936, the Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, in reply to a question by Mr.

W. Roberts asking for information with regard to Italian armed intervention in Spanish affairs in the Balearic Islands, replied 'Such authoritative information as has come into the possession of His Majesty's Government has been laid by them before the International Committee, and it would not be proper to make a statement while the committee is still examining this information.'¹⁵⁸ On 14 February, 1938,

Mr. Noel Baker asked for information on whether troops withdrawn under the Non-intervention Committee plan would take their arms and ammunition with them, and whether the plans extended to foreigners serving in the naval forces of the two parties, and received this reply from Eden: "As I have frequently informed the House, the proceedings of the Non-intervention Committee are confidential. I am not, therefore at liberty to make a statement in regard to matters which are under discussion by that body."¹⁵⁹

Claude Bowers (the United States Ambassador in Spain, and it must be admitted, an ardent proponent of the Republican cause) has made the serious charge that the

British Government was guilty of deliberate misrepresentation in the House of Commons:

"British ministers were assuring the House of Commons, on their responsibility as ministers of the Crown, that they had 'no information' that any Italians were in Spain. I knew that the British Embassy in Hendaye was informing London to the contrary." 160 It is indeed difficult to reconcile the official denials by Eden of knowledge of the nationality of submarines which were sinking shipping trading with the Republican side in Spain with this message sent by Neurath (the German Foreign Minister) to the German Embassy in Italy: "Please inform Ciano personally that it appears from a statement made by the British Ambassador here that the British have intercepted and deciphered radio messages of Italian submarines operating in the Mediterranean." 161

The answer must be that necessity is the mother of invention, the necessity in this case being illustrated by this conversation between Lloyd George and de Madariaga:

"(Lloyd George) The present Cabinet will not be forgiven for humbling England before Italy. You will see in the General Election of 1939, as Disraeli found in 1880. There are deep-rooted instincts in the English people, that you cannot offend with impunity. They have not been accustomed to bow to the Italians. This led Madariaga to quote a version of Shakespeare which he had passed to Anthony Eden on July 4, at Geneva, in the Abyssinian debate.

'To speak or not to speak - that is the question.
Whether 'tis best to swallow the unswallowable
Uttering words which spit it out in form
While its foul substance poisons our entrails,
Or in a sable silence bury a deed
Which, seen, is an insult to the pure Heavens.'" 162

That in fact the inability of sections of the British public to swallow concessions to the Italians did act as a limiting boundry to the freedom of action of the British Government can be seen from these extracts. On June 2, 1937 the Turkish Ambassador called on Ciano (the

Italian Foreign Minister) with the following message from his (the Turkish) Foreign Minister:

"During a conversation with Eden at Geneva, Rustu Aras (the Turkish Foreign Minister) gained the impression that the English Government intends to make every effort necessary to reach a complete understanding with Italy. If there is a delay, it is due to the fact that large sections of English public opinion are still hostile to Fascism. Eden had, however, declared that as soon as the recent controversies had subsided, it was his intention to make a statement to the Commons aimed at restoring in full the Mediterranean Agreement of January and at preparing the basis for a wider Anglo-Italian understanding." 163

On June 17, 1938, Halifax (the British Foreign Minister) instructed Perth (the British Ambassador in Rome) to make clear to Ciano

"...that a settlement of the Spanish question must precede the entry into force of the Agreement (the Anglo-Italian Agreement of April 16, 1938), and the Prime Minister has given definite pledges on this point. The difficulty remains of defining what constitutes a settlement of the Spanish question. British public opinion cannot be ignored. As Count Ciano will be aware, the Agreement was not universally popular at the time of signature. In the last fortnight the situation has deteriorated to a marked extent owing to the bombing of towns and ships in Spain, for which the British public holds, rightly or wrongly, the Italian Airforce in Spain in part at least responsible. It is therefore out of the question any waning of the pre-condition on which the coming into force of the Agreement was made dependent." On October, 3, 1938, Perth informed Ciano that a necessary precondition to the Agreement coming into force would be a withdrawal of Italian forces from Spain on a scale which "would strike public opinion" 165

It could be argued that British insistence toward the Italians of the difficulties presented by British public opinion was merely a device to gain a better bargaining position by presenting the British Government as being unable, because of this factor, to grant any further

concessions. This report, however, by Woermann to the German Foreign Minister of a meeting of the main subcommittee of the Non-Intervention Committee held on March 31, 1938 reveals a similar preoccupation with public opinion:

"The meeting was obviously called by Plymouth principally in order to demonstrate to British public opinion that the work of the Non-Intervention Committee is progressing. Probably no one believes any longer that a withdrawal of the volunteers can be actually carried out by the methods of the present plan. Plymouth hinted cautiously that he had his doubts regarding the whole plan, by dropping the casual remark that he was aware that the latest events in Spain had clearly put the work of the committee in a somewhat different light." 166

The plan referred to was the British proposal for the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain which will be dealt with later, the events in Spain casually remarked upon were air raids carried out on Barcelona, personally ordered by Mussolini 'to the great indignation' of Franco. 167 Stohrer (the German Ambassador in Spain) described the effect of the air raids thus:

"I hear from Barcelona that the results of the recent air raids on Barcelona carried out by Italian bombers were nothing less than terrible. Almost all parts of the city were affected. There was no evidence of any attempts to hit military objectives in Barcelona. Hundreds of houses and whole streets are said to have been destroyed by the bombs which were evidently of a particularly destructive type. So far 1,000 dead have been counted; it is assumed, however, that many more dead will be found beneath the ruins. The number of wounded is estimated at over 3,000. One bomb is said to have killed a whole group of women waiting in line to get their milk rations, while another one

struck a subway entrance and tore to pieces the people who had sought refuge there...

"According to what I hear, the Red leaders in France are making good use of the heavy losses suffered by the civilian population in Barcelona... Among the international journalists who have seen the results of the air raids in Barcelona there is the greatest indignation, which is apparent in the reports they have sent their papers. In these circles it is said to be the conviction that the indiscriminate dumping of bombs on the city of Barcelona was principally a matter of experimenting with the new bombs." 168

Following these raids, Ribbentrop reports that Count Magistrati (the Italian Counselor of Embassy in Berlin) informed him that Perth had transmitted an aide memoire which stated:

"...the reports regarding the bombing attacks on Barcelona by General Franco's Italian airplanes had created a sensation in England. In view of British public opinion it would be difficult in case of repetition of such attacks to bring the negotiations with Italy to a successful conclusion. The British Government requested the Italian Government to exert its influence on General Franco to the end that such bombing attacks would be discontinued in the future.

"The Earl of Perth had added that a delicate situation would arise for Chamberlain in case the bombing attacks did not cease." 169

It must always be born in mind that one cannot consider British attitudes toward Italy in vacuo, especially when Chamberlain became the British Prime Minister: British policy became directed toward a comprehensive programme of appeasement in which the problems presented by Hitler, Mussolini and Franco became interwoven. Chamberlain wrote to his sisters that, in regard to the question of British ships being bombarded in Spanish ports, I have been through every possible

form of relation and it is abundantly clear that none of them can be effective unless we are prepared to go to war with Franco, which might quite possibly lead to war with Italy and Germany, and in any case would cut right across my policy of general appeasement.¹⁷⁰ Feiling quotes Chamberlain as stating that "If only we could get on terms with the Germans, I would not care a rap for Musso."¹⁷¹ In Chamberlain's mind therefore Anglo-Italian relations were of far to crucial importance the German-Italian relations were of far to crucial importance to the question of whether Europe would be able to survive the German-Italian challenge to the status quo without a major war which would destroy the Europe that those who lived in the thirties knew, for false protestations on the impediment placed by public opinion on the freedom of British action, to have a place in British diplomacy.

This entry in Chamberlain's Diary, written in early February, 1938, while Eden adamantly put forward the view that Italy must make a significant withdrawal of volunteers from Spain before conversations could begin, illustrates the linkage of foreign problems in Chamberlain's mind:

"To intimate now that this was not the moment for conversations to begin would be to convince Mussolini that he must consider talks with us off, and act accordingly...Italian public opinion would be raised to a white heat against us. There might indeed by some overt act of hostility, and in any case the dictatorships would be driven closer together,

the last shred of Austrian independence would be lost, the Balkan countries would feel compelled to turn towards their powerful neighbours, Czechoslovakia would be swallowed, France would either have to submit to German domination or fight, in which case we should almost certainly be drawn in. I could not face the responsibility for allowing such a series of catastrophes." 172

During a conversation between Count Grandi, Chamberlain and Eden on the 19 February, 1938, Chamberlain stated that he would

"...ask the Cabinet to be allowed to announce that the Anglo-Italian conversations have been officially begun without waiting for a previous solution of specific problems or other pre-conditions: In order to facilitate my (Chamberlain's) attempt to obtain a unanimous decision by the Cabinet I nevertheless ask the Duce to see whether he can declare himself to be in Agreement with the British formula put forward by Plymouth and Eden on the specific subject under debate in the Non-Intervention Committee concerning belligerency and volunteers...We would.... then procede as follows: Official opening of the Anglo-Italian conversations to be simultaneous with a statement on the Italian side the Fascist Government agrees with the British Government on the to be submitted later to the Non-Intervention Committee for discussion and approval.'

I (Grandi) asked Chamberlain to make it clear whether he meant by that that the conversation would begin immediately and without awaiting whatever might be the outcome of the British proposal in the Non-Intervention Committee.

Chamberlain replied that I had given an accurate interpretation." 173

Grandi added in his report of Ciano:

"To say that Chamberlain will have an easy task would be inexact. Eden (who had been opposed to Chamberlain during the conversation) has on his side the man in the street, or the 'historical beast' which is always lurking in a large section of the British people, the Left-wing parties, French anti-fascism and Masonry, who sees in him the head of the future British Popular Front.

"All through today, Saturday, 19th, the political atmosphere in London and in the House of Commons is the same as in the days preceding the Hoare-Level crisis of December, 1935.

"Today, in February, 1938, it is over the subject of Italy and of policy toward Italy alone that parties and opinions are excited and divided exactly as they were then, in December, 1935." 174

If Anglo-Italian talks were to continue to a successful conclusion, therefore, the 'historical beast' had to be laid low, and the Spanish question, which had done so much to exacerbate British public opinion, had to be kept, as far as was possible, divorced in the public mind from the discussions that were to be about initiated between London and Rome. Eden's resignation made Chamberlain's task the more difficult, since it was precisely over this point that Eden had resigned and Chamberlain had to admit as much in the Commons. Hoerver, by the device of ostensibly representing the negotiations on the withdrawal of Italian volunteers to be taking place in the Non-Intervention Committee, while in fact the question of the numbers of Italian volunteers to be withdrawn was a matter for direct negotiation between the British and Italian Foreign Offices, Chamberlain was able to proceed with the conversations with Italy shielded from the effects of public opinion by the Non-Intervention Committee.

During the debate in the Commons of February 21, 1938, Chamberlain, in describing the events that led up to Eden's resignation and in particular the above conversation with Grandi stated that:

"I was convinced that a rebuff to the Italian expression of their desire that conversations should start at once would be taken by them as a confirmation of those suspicions...that we had never really been in earnest about the conversations at all...I was equally convinced that once the conversations had started we should find good effects of the new atmosphere in many places, and notably in Spain, where the chief difficulty between us had lain for so long.

"The Foreign Secretary, on the other hand, was unable to agree to any immediate decision. He wished to say in reply that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the moment for the official opening of the conversations had not arisen and that we wished to wait until a substantial withdrawal of volunteers had taken place...At the same time I told the Ambassador (Grandi) that I wished to impress upon him certain points. First of all I told him that the British Government regarded a settlement of the Spanish question as an essential feature of any agreement at which we might arrive. No agreement could be considered complete unless it contained a settlement of the Spanish question." 175

Chamberlain could hardly have said less. Any attempt to have opened the conversations without stating that they would be conditional upon a settlement of the Spanish question would have raised the opposition in full cry and made Chamberlain's position far more difficult. On July 26, 1938, Mr. Chamberlain made the following statement to the House of Commons:

"There is another matter which is bound up with the situation in Spain, and that is the position in regard to the Anglo-Italian Agreement...When we entered into negotiations, we did so because we thought then, and we are still of the same opinion, that the restoration of the relations between Italy and this country to their old terms of friendship and confidence would bring us appreciably nearer to our ultimate aim, which is a general European appeasement. We felt at the time that the moral justification for our

recognition of the Italian position in Italy would be the knowledge that the recognition had brought with it a real contribution to the peace of Europe, We felt that, while this conflict was going on in Spain under the sort of conditions in which it has been waged, the Spanish situation was perpetual menace to the peace of Europe, and it was for this reason that we said that it must be removed from that category before our Agreement was brought into force. It is not our fault, and it is not the fault of the Italian Government, that condition hasnot been brought about. They have kept faith with us... They kept full faith us...in collaboration on the Non-Intervention Committee." 176

This attempt to distinguish between the activity of the Non-Intervention Committee and Italian policy, according to which the pre-conditions for entry into force of the Anglo-Italian Agreement are dependent not on a reversal of policy by the Italians but on the mysterious functioning of the Committee, contrasts with the development of British Policy.

Chamberlain in the debate above had continued:

"I was saying that we cannot abandon the position we have taken up in regard to the settlement of the Spanish question which we have over and over declared to the House. But on the other hand, we profoundly regret this unforeseen delay which has taken place in the completion of the Agreement, and we shall do all we possibly can to facilitate the withdrawal of the foreign volunteers from Spain, in order that that country may cease to offer any threat to the peace of Europe."

At this point Mr. Attlee broke in to ask:

"Do I gather from the right hon. Gentleman's statement that what he means by a settlement in Spain is the volunteers' withdrawal? hitherto we have not known what he meant by a settlement in Spain. Do I understand that it is merely a question of volunteers being withdrawn?"

Chamberlain gave the rather quizzical answer:

"I would like to see what happens when the volunteers are withdrawn. If His Majesty's Government think that Spain has ceased to be a menace to the peace of Europe I think we shall regard that as a settlement of the Spanish question." 177

However it became clear that the withdrawal of a certain number of volunteers by the Italians was to be regarded as settlement of the Spanish question, and that this 'settlement' was to be a matter of unilateral negotiation between the British and the Italians, as is made clear by this report of Woermann:

"Having withdrawn about 12,000 men from Spain the Italian Government is negotiating with the British Government as to whether this is sufficient to put the Anglo-Italian Agreement of Easter into force. The entry into force of this agreement was, as is well known, made conditional upon a 'substantial withdrawal'." 178

Maisky offers us this description of the activities of the Non-Intervention Committee during this period:

"In London and Paris they remembered about the Committee for 'Non-Intervention'. A little camphor was injected into its stiffening members, and for a little while they began to function as if alive.

"On 26 May 1938 Plymouth suddenly summoned together the Sub-committee, and after shedding the regulation number of crocodile tears over the prolonged pause in its activities, addressed to those present a no less hypocritical appeal to get that cumbrous vehicle the British plan moving once again since 'the international situation is far from easy, and one of the problems making for that uneasiness is the position obtaining in regard to Spain'. The Sub-committee started to work with an energy such as had not been seen for a long time, and in the course of seven meetings (on 26 and 31 May, and 2, 21, 24, 28 and 30 June) did in fact prepare an agreed text of the British plan....

"And now, on 5 July 1938, the plenary meeting of the Committee was gathered together to adopt the plan worked out by the Sub-committee. This meeting was heralded by a great fuss in the press and in

political circles in Britain and France. To lend more weight to the meeting it was chaired not by Plymouth, but... Lord Halifax. He made an opening speech suitable to the occasion, in which he thanked all the members of the Committee for the spirit of cooperation they had shown, and expressed the hope that the present meeting 'may prove to be of good augury and omen for the carrying through in the international field of a very novel and a very complicated piece of real international co-operation'.

"Then, after a brief and unaccustomedly calm discussion, in the course of which some individual and very minor details were cleared up, the entire British plan in its last version was unanimously adopted by the Committee for 'Non-Intervention'.

"This was to be its last meeting. After this the Committee again fell into a state of suspended animation, and its unburied corpse stank for ten months more poisoning the political atmosphere of Europe...

"After 5 July, practically speaking its only functioning parts were Lord Plymouth and the secretariat under Francis Hemming. This rump of the Committee made use of the mediation services of the British Government in order to send the control plan adopted at the Committee's last meeting to the Republican Government and to Franco, after which it settled down to wait.

"On July 26 an answer was received from the Republican Government. It was in the affirmative. With Franco it was otherwise.

"When I returned to London from my leave, at the end of July, I tried several times to find out from Lord Plymouth what was happening in relation to the plan, on the far side of the front, but I could get no satisfaction. The honourable Lord was becoming more and more like the Delphic oracle which as we know was famous for the ambiguity and vagueness of its answers. One thing was clear to me: things were not going well for the plan... while in the autumn of 1938 the fighting of the Ebro was in progress and the fascists were preparing their attack on Catalonia, an unhurried game of diplomatic pat-ball went on between Franco and Plymouth, which suited perfectly the interests of the aggressors." 179

The United States' documents provide a valuable source of information and observation on the development and nature of British policy during during this period. On June 9, 1938, Kennedy, the

American Ambassador in London, reported:

"...in the course of a conversation regarding the recent statements in the press that the British Government was considering mediation in Spain with a view to an armistice, a Foreign Official said that even if a genuine agreement could be reached on the British plan for the withdrawal of auxiliaries, it would take considerable time before the Italian troops could leave Spain. The continuation of the civil war and the delay in reaching an agreement on the British plan made it impossible to put the Anglo-Italian Agreement into effect. This was holding up the appeasement among the Mediterranean Powers generally and in turn retarding any progress towards a wider European settlement.

"With this in mind, the British Government had been casting around for some other scheme which might hasten a settlement and relieve the present tension, and decided to attempt to bring about an armistice in Spain...

"Asked whether he thought there was any likelihood of such a plan succeeding, the Foreign Office official would only say that his Government felt it could do no harm and that even if it fails completely, bringing the idea of mediation before world opinion might do some good. He pointed out that in any event there was no intention of abandoning their efforts to put the British non-Intervention plan into effect.

"The Embassy finds it difficult to say what, if anything, is behind this new move, especially since there is little or no prospect of achieving concrete results. Reports of mediation may, of course, have been circulated simply with a view to counteracting criticism that the British Government is not making active endeavors to bring about a solution of the Spanish problem; and though these reports were received without optimism they were welcomed in the press. In any event the recent intensification of aerial bombing both of British and of civil population has made the Spanish question increasingly embarrassing to the British Government." 180

The latter observation is repeated in a report by Kennedy the following day:

"Last night I saw Cadogan (the British Permanent Under Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs) and asked him what his Government was planning to do in connection with the bombing of British ships in Spanish waters. He told me that the situation had the Cabinet almost distracted...

"Beyond this question of arranging an armistice, he said, the British Government feel they are frankly up against it. British shippers are crying for protection and the country is beginning to feel without realising what the final result might be that this Government is not courageous and states that England's great prestige is rapidly diminishing. Cadogan said that the Prime Minister's answer so far has been that it is much more courageous to proceed along his line of policy and take the charges of cowardice that it is to take up a position which would mean war in three or four places at once simply because Great Britain does not approve of the bombing. The British, Cadogan said, are not very proud any solution that they are thinking about because they realise that none of these solutions reasons very well but there is a feeling that they will try any idea that anybody suggests which still adheres to the principle of not going to war." 181

On October 8, 1938, Kennedy, after describing the visit of the Hemming Mission to Franco to explain the nature of the British plan for the withdrawal of foreign volunteers, went on to state that:

"It is reported in today's press from the Spanish sources, that Franco has expressed his agreement to the imminent withdrawal of about 10,000 men... While this may be a step toward putting into effect of the Anglo-Italian Agreement, the declaration of the Barcelona Government at Geneva of its decision for the immediate and complete withdrawal of all non-Spanish combatants on its side, does not make the problem of the British Government any easier. The Prime Minister is committed in Parliament not to put the Anglo-Italian Agreement into effect until there has been substantial withdrawal of foreign volunteers from both sides. Some way will have to be found to make Franco's concessions appear 'substantial' in the face of the unequivocal action of the Barcelona Government. Informed official sources express confidence that a suitable formula to make effective the Anglo-Italian will be found." 182

Bowers gives us this interpretation of the how the trick was to be accomplished:

"In reference to the Hemming Commission's activities in Burgos, I have the honour to report that its mission and activities are most carefully concealed from the British correspondents here, and that there is no reason to believe that the reasons given by the British Government, that it is the wish to 'explain' the Non-Intervention Committee's withdrawal plan and to persuade General Franco to accept it, is the true reason. In my dispatch at the time this Commission appeared here I expressed the conviction that the sole purpose is to exaggerate out of all proportions the withdrawal of the 10,000 Italians and to declare this a complete compliance with Mr. Chamberlain's demand that there shall be a 'settlement' of the Spanish question before the Anglo-Italian Agreement can be put into effect. There can scarcely any doubt of it now.

"The fact that Hemming went to Cadiz to witness the departure of these Italians, though he stoutly declared such was not his purpose, and that a British official was sent to Naples to witness the landing there, leaves no room for doubt that this withdrawal of a small part of the Italian army is to be used by Mr. Chamberlain as a satisfactory settlement.

"There is significance also in the fact that the British Broadcast reported fully on every phase of the withdrawal, but has scarcely mentioned the presence in Barcelona of the representatives of several neutral nations, sent by the League of Nations to supervise the withdrawal of all the foreigners from the other side.

"The original position of Chamberlain was that when a 'proportionate' number of foreigners on both sides had been withdrawn 'in substantial number' he would consider the Spanish question settled enough to allow him to put the Italian Agreement into operation. With all foreigners leaving loyalist territory, there is manifestly no proportionate withdrawal at all if only 10,000 Italian soldiers leave Franco's side." 183

The Hemming Mission followed in what was in danger of becoming a tradition of British (or British

inspired) commissions and missions (after the Lytton Commission of 1932 and the Runiciman mission of 1938) whose purpose seemed to be to sanctify all that was unholy, and if not to grant absolution to the transgressor, at least to find sufficient justification for aggression to ensure that British policy would not be deflected from its destined course by any possible twinges of the national conscience. In the Commons the inevitable argument was presented by Chamberlain to justify bringing the Anglo-Italian Agreement into force:

"...perhaps hon. Members may recollect that on July 26 last...I used these words: 'I would like to see what happens when the volunteers are withdrawn. If His Majesty's Government think that Spain has ceased to be a menace to the peace of Europe, I think we shall regard that as a settlement of the Spanish question.' Since then a great deal has happened. Already, even at that date, all the powers represented on the Non-Intervention Committee, including Italy, of course, had accepted the British plan for the withdrawal of volunteers, and if that plan is not in operation today, it cannot be said that this is the fault of Italy. (Interruption) It cannot be properly said. Again, since then the Spanish Government have announced their intention of withdrawing the International Brigade
(An hon. Member: 'They have done it!')

When I was at Munich, Signor Mussolini volunteered me the information that he intended to withdraw 1,000 men, or about half the Italian infantry forces, from Spain, and since then these men have in fact been withdrawn...we have received from Signor Mussolini definite assurances, first of all that the remaining Italian forces of all categories will be withdrawn when the non-intervention plan comes into operation; secondly that no further Italian troops will be sent to Spain; and thirdly...that the Italian Government have never for the moment entertained the idea of sending compensatory air forces in the lieu of the infantry forces which have been withdrawn. These three assurances, taken in conjunction with the actual withdrawal of this large

body of men, in my judgement constitute a substantial earnest of the good intentions of the Italian Government. They form a considerable elimination of the Spanish question as a menace to peace." 184

On the question of 10,000 men constituting a of a considerable body of men, a British Foreign Memoranda of October 2, 1938 contained the following information:

"...According to the latest War Office estimate the number of Italian troops at present in Spain are as follows.

Infantry.....	22,000
Artillery.....	7,000
Engineers.....	2,000
Armoured Vehicle Volunteer Personnel...	1,000
Services.....	8,000
	<hr/>
Total.....	40,000

In saying that 10,000 men constituted 'half the Italian forces' in Spain, Count Ciano was, according to the War Office estimate, clearly inaccurate. If he had said half the infantry (22,000), his statement would have been approximately correct, particularly if wastage in recent fighting were taken into account; even so, according to the War Office estimate, 18,000 artillery, engineers, armoured vehicle personnel and other services would remain behind in addition to the division of infantry. Nor do the above figures allow for the Italian air force in Spain, which, according to the Air Ministry, is distributed as follows:...

Machines--

Mainland

Bombers.....	60
Fighters.....	100
Reconnaissance.	20
Total.....	180

Balearics--

Bombers.....40

Fighters.....30

Total..... 70

Grand Total.....250

Personnel--

Mainland.....1,700

Balearics..... 500

Grand
Total....2,200

In addition, there are about 2,200 civilian lorry drivers.

It is clear that if Signor Mussolini were to make a gesture by unilaterally withdrawing what he regards as a substantial number of his forces from Spain he might, and probably will claim that he was implementing the second definition of a settlement of the Spanish question put to him by Lord Perth in accordance with the instructions sent to him in Foreign Office telegram No.350 on the 17 June. The problem before His Majesty's Government will then be whether the withdrawal was sufficiently 'on a considerable scale' to justify to public opinion here recognition of the Italian Empire in Abyssinia in order to bring the Anglo-Italian Agreement into force." 185

The Foreign Office telegram mentioned above is of interest, since it shows that as early as June 17, over a month before Chamberlain hinted in the Commons that a withdrawal of volunteers by Italy would be a sufficient condition of the entry into force of the Anglo-Italian Pact, this in

fact was a basis of negotiation between Britain and Italy; the in telegram No.350 Halifax told Perth that

"His Majesty's Government are anxious as the Italian Government to see the Agreement enter into force as soon as possible, and so far as they are aware, the only obstacle appears to be the settlement of the Spanish question...The difficulty remains of defining what constitutes a settlement of the Spanish question. British public opinion cannot be ignored...What we always had in mind was that, short of victory for one side or the other, settlement in the sense of meeting the pledges given must be something which could be shown to have eliminated or be in the process of eliminating the Spanish question as a source of international friction. This might be achieved in one of three ways:-

- (a) By the execution of the Non-Intervention Committee's plan...
- (b) By the Italian Government, on the acceptance by the Non Intervention Committee of the British plan, at once making a unilateral withdrawal from Spain...
- (c) By bringing about an armistice..." 186

In its task of placating British public opinion, the British decision-makers. asked the permission of the Italians to be able to misrepresent in the Commons the assurances that had been given by the Italians as a precondition for the entry into force of the agreement. On October 26, 1938, Halifax informed Perth of the following:

"The Cabinet today decided to bring the Anglo-Italian Agreement into force...you should ask again Count Ciano to approach Signor Mussolini on the vexed question of assurances. While I have no doubt that His Majesty's Government will secure the support of Parliament on the question of bringing the Agreement into force, I am

most anxious that this new(?era) in the relationship between our two countries should not be inaugurated in an atmosphere of any greater measure of recrimination than is perhaps avoidable. I anticipate that the debate will turn less on the merits of the Agreement than on the Italian role, past and future, in Spain. For the above reasons I hope you will be able to persuade the Italian Government to reinforce the assurances given... In particular it would be helpful if I could say (a) that Signore Mussolini had used or would use his influence with General Franco to refrain from using Italian pilots and machines against targets which may involve damage to British shipping. (b) that he had withdrawn or would withdraw some Italian pilots, even if he cannot withdraw Italian machines already handed over to Franco." 187

On the 14 October, 1938, Perth handed to Ciano the following memorandum:

"Statements which I assume could be used in publicity in Parliament.

- (a) That the withdrawal of 10,000 Italian infantry constitutes a withdrawal of more than half the Italian infantry forces in Spain.

That the remaining categories will depart when the Non-Intervention Committee's plan comes into execution.

- (b) That no further Italian troops will be despatched to Spain.
- (c) That the Italian Government had never for the moment the idea of sending compensatory air forces in the place of the infantry forces they were withdrawing.

Assurances which would be extremely helpful if they could be given and made public in Parliament.

- (a) that it is not out of the question that within two or three months the rest of the Italian infantry forces will be withdrawn.

(b) That no further Italian pilots will be sent to Spain."188

In fact, it is difficult not to reach the conclusion that the British Government was being pressured by Italy into giving effect to the Agreement. Far from gaining the maximum concessions from Italy in giving reality to the aims of non-intervention in return for the British recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia, the main British consideration was the desire not to let slip what was appearing to be the last possibility of weaning Italy from the alliance with Germany by refusing to give effect to the Italian Agreement. The concessions which the British desired to obtain were designed to make the implementation of the Agreement as palatable as possible to the British nation, and so allow the new era in Anglo-Italian relations to be launched with the minimum of criticism that could disturb the relations between the two countries.

Ciano's Diary describes the methods by which Italian pressure was applied on Britain to give effect to the Anglo-Italian Agreement:

"October 2. The Duce and I examined the question of our relations with London....I am to send for (Perth) tomorrow and officially communicate to him the withdrawal of the 10,000 volunteers. After which I shall ask him bluntly the question are you willing to implement the pact of April 16?....The Duce also tells me to indicate that the Grand Council might repudiate

this agreement, which has been waiting too long for its consummation.

October 3. I had my conversation with Perth. I expressed myself on the lines agreed with the Duce. The arguments are so strong that Perth himself could not raise serious objections, though he tried to make a point about the question of our aeroplanes....

October 4. I received Perth at his request. He wanted elucidation of certain points in yesterday's conversation, viz., does Italy intend to send more troops after the withdrawal of the 10,000, and is she prepared to promise not to increase the number of pilots and aircraft on the Nationalist side? The answer to the first question is obvious and I gave it at once. On the second question I reserved the right to decide to the Duce. And I was right, because with good cause he rejected a promise which would do much to weaken Franco's position....

October 6. Perth brought the British reply. In principle they accept the implementation of the pact after the withdrawal of the 10,000 men. But Chamberlain asks for a short breathing space. He does not want to present himself to the Cabinet, and subsequently to the House of Commons, with the words: 'Here you are. Take it or leave it. Mussolini has fixed the date.' At the moment in spite of the vote of confidence, his position has been shaken, and in those circumstances it would be untenable. He asks for a delay until November 1. The Duce's reaction to the British reply was unfavourable, but then he ended by consenting to this. On the other hand, he naturally does not want to give any assurances about the airforce and its activities."189

On October 4, Perth reported to London:

"I feel that we have come to the parting of the ways. If it is possible for His Majesty's Government to authorise me to inform the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that they are prepared to put the Anglo-Italian Agreement into force and to recognise the Empire once 10,000 troops have left Cadiz or reached Naples then I believe that Signor Mussolini will work for a European detente and general pacification. If we fail to do this he will consider that although he has fulfilled condition (b) of the memorandum of June 20 by withdrawing Italian troops on a considerable scale we still refuse to give the desired equivalent

and that we have deliberately adopted and are still trying to adopt a policy of colorforming and that we have no desire and do not intend to bring the alliance into force. Consequently he will conclude a definite military alliance with Germany even though this is against his innermost wish and would be unpopular in the country."190

There would seem to be some real justification for this attack made by Lieut.-Commander Fletcher in the Commons against the British Government during the debate on the Government's proposal to bring the Anglo-Italian Agreement into force:

"This agreement was made contingent upon a phrase 'a settlement in Spain' which has never been defined. I imagine that this must have been one of the very few occasions on which a major negotiation has been carried on without any attempt to define the basis of negotiation....I consider that it was a deliberately ambiguous phrase employed by the Prime Minister in order to enable him to turn in a very tight corner. People have very short memories, but long ago, in the Non-Intervention Committee, Count Grandi made the statement that no Italian troops would be withdrawn from Spain until General Franco was victorious, and Signor Mussolini has repeatedly declared his intention to use all Italian resources to ensure a Franco Victory....That is Signor Mussolini's idea of a settlement in Spain and our Prime Minister has never challenged it or put forward any alternative to it.... I do not accuse the Prime Minister of bad faith; that is not the sort of criticism in which I indulge; but I do say that the Prime Minister repeatedly makes use of a very ambiguous language in the statements which he makes to this House at awkward moments. He is wont to make dramatic statements, dramatic though quickly 191 uttered, which all too often turn out to mean nothing."

The use of the term 'a large body of men' to refer to the 10,000 withdrawn from Spain was certainly misleading. 10,000 is a large body of men, but compared to the total Italian effort in Spain, the withdrawal did not mean a

a substantial or even a large reduction in the Italian effort in Spain. In the opinion of Stohrer, the German Ambassador in Spain "...probably has no important effect on the comparative strength of the two opponents." ¹⁹² That the withdrawal did not constitute a 'substantial earnest of the good intentions of the Italian Government' can be gauged from these extracts: firstly, a report by Stohrer on 22 October 1938 that the Italians intended to ship home from Spain about 10,000 men for such reasons as "illness, family matters, etc, of the volunteers in question"; and secondly, a report by Schwendemann, head of Political Division 111a (Spain and Portugal) in the German Foreign Ministry, that the German Under State Secretary had told Count Magistrati:

"There was to be sure no immediate connection with the present negotiations with England, but the withdrawal of 10,000-12,000 men did at the same time result in fulfilling the British desires and would consequently enable the Anglo-Italian Pact to go into effect. Magistrati shared this opinion.

"Finally, Magistrati confirmed that the whole explanation brought out the fact that there had been no change at all in Mussolini's policy toward Spain and that Italy still desired as before to help Franco ¹⁹⁴ obtain a victory. Count Magistrati also confirmed this."

The statement by Chamberlain that the remaining Italian forces would be withdrawn when the British Plan in the Non-Intervention Committee came into effect must be balanced against this appraisal by Halifax of the likelihood of the execution (as opposed to symbolic and meaning-

less acceptance) of the Non-Intervention Committee's plan:

"Unfortunately there can be no doubt that even if both sides were to accept the plan unconditionally considerable time would elapse before tangible results could be looked for."195

This appraisal must have been adequately confirmed by the Hemming Mission, whose utility was described by Stohrer in the following terms:

"...the despatch of Hemming, Secretary General of the Non-Intervention Committee, to Spain, which Franco finally agreed to in principle, seems to have finally come to nought....It almost looks as if the effectiveness and the potentialities of the Non-Intervention Committee, so often assailed and ridiculed had come to an end."196

While non-intervention staggered on, engaged in its much publicised futilities, even Perth's ardour began to diminish:

"I spoke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs this evening about Mr. Hemming's visit to Burgos and expressed the hope that the Italian Government would support the mission and use their influence with General Franco...I cannot say that he appeared very enthusiastic but on the other hand he did not adopt a negative attitude."197

For Mr. Chamberlain to pretend that Mussolini's assurances on the withdrawal of the remainder of the Italian forces in Spain upon the putting into effect of the British plan represented a meaningful contribution to the Spanish problem, reflects a deep felt concern with the state of British public opinion. In this, the Non-Intervention Committee was playing its accustomed

role of pulling out of a fathomless hat possibilities of a solution which in fact did not and which could be displayed for the edification of the general public.

With the circus the people were diverted; the tensions within British society which had been exacerbated by the Spanish War were released, in part, through the torrent of ridicule and abuse that was heaped upon the Committee.

So far it has been contended that British policy toward the civil war in Spain was a function of a much more comprehensive policy of appeasement in Europe. Chamberlain put this in its clearest form in the course of a speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on the 9th November 1938:

"...I attempted soon after I became Prime Minister to improve our relations with Italy, and last April we were able to make an agreement with the Italian Government. Although that agreement did not immediately come into full operation, yet it at once was followed by the return of the old feelings of cordiality and friendship between our two people's....Now since we no longer regard the Spanish conflict as a menace to the peace of Europe, that the agreement will soon be coming into force, and I am confident that it will be a further advance towards that general appeasement of Europe which we are aiming at."198

To Chamberlain, and even to Eden, the Spanish conflict was viewed in terms of being an impediment in the path of peace through appeasement, which had to be removed. The fate of the Spanish Republic, though of concern, could not be measured in the same terms as the maintenance of the peace of Europe. As a value judgement there is much to be said for this attitude (serious disagreement could however be made with the basic assumptions of the

general policy of appeasement, but once these assumptions have been accepted the general line of British policy toward Spain follows logically).

However in the implementation of the general line of British policy toward Spain, serious difficulties were encountered as a result of the inter-action of the conflict in Spain and public opinion in Britain. Propoganda, ideology, class conflict and the fact that Spain became a testing ground for the new technology of war in which civilian populations were, before the eyes of the world, subjected to the terror of large scale bomber attacks resulted in the extention of the boundries of political solidarity of the Spanish conflict outside Spain and to include Britain. The internationalisation of the Spanish conflict led to a dynamic of tension which affected the method of implementation of British policy. This necessitated an emphasis on the activities of the Non-Intervention Committee and influenced the timing of British initiatives. British policy was not determined in its general direction by this tension - British policy was not impelled on the path of non-intervention by the existence of pro-Republican and pro-Nationalist camps within Britain (and here a distinction must be drawn

* There is some evidence to suggest that some of these air attacks on defenseless citizens were instigated by the Germans to inflame British public opinion, and so divide Britain, rendering Chamberlain's task more difficult.

between the general policy of non-intervention and non-intervention as expressed in the Non-Intervention Committee).

Emerging into the delights of mass consumption, the New Britain which was emerging in the prosperous Midlands and South of England bore little resemblance to the older England that had entered the twentieth century. The older industrial strata became smothered by the ever-expanding suburbs, where the humanitarianism of Sunday afternoon tea-parties began to replace the solidarity of working-class consciousness as the driving force behind the support of the Republicans in Spain. Sympathy for the Republicans was reinforced by a vague sense of national honour, a feeling that a nation of shop-keepers should not be humbled before a nation of waiters famed for their lack of fighting prowess and the dirtiness of their towns.

The British decision-makers began to pay the price for the lack of leadership of the Baldwin age, in which the political hierarchy of the country had not stood up to attempt the education of the British public in the realities of the international politics of the 1930's. Hoare was sacrificed to the outraged will of the people following his attempt to find a policy toward the Abyssinian crisis that accorded with the general desire in the country for the avoidance of war. The country had not been instructed in

the knowledge that if Britain was to act as the guardian of the small and weak, she would have to prepare for war to deter the strong and avaricious; or if that country was not prepared to face the prospect of war the halcyon days of the Palmerstonian heroics would have to be forgotten and an aptitude for turning the other cheek be developed. In 1935, Baldwin bowed to the storm and Hoare bowed. The result was that the country continued on its path unhindered by doubts as to its claim to a voice in the affairs of Europe without at the same time realistically facing the prospect of war. Hoare states the case against Baldwin:

"It is that after 1935, and having obtained a mandate for rearmament, he (Baldwin) did not make better use of his opportunity. These were two years during which public opinion was better prepared for a more vigorous policy. Was it that Baldwin was growing old and tired and already thinking of retirement? Or that he was out of his depth in questions of defense and foreign affairs?....The inescapable fact that should never be forgotten was that in spite of Hitler's growing power the country as a whole remained indifferent to the threat of danger. Up to the time of the Abyssinian 201 crisis I shared that general feeling of complacency."

Decision-makers stand between the community which they represent and the international system which presents them with problems that have to be solved in accordance with the values, beliefs and interests of the decision-maker and of the national community. Therefore, following the conception of decision-makers as problem solvers*, it will be necessary at this point to continue with an examination

* Admittedly a deficient conceptual attitude but one which is sufficient for the purposes of this chapter.

of the problems that were presented to the British decision-makers through the inter-action of the civil war in Spain and the international system.

We have already seen that Modelski has put forward the notion that every internal war creates a demand for foreign intervention which is implicit in the logic of the situation. 202
The logic of this demand, as seen by Modelski runs as follows: on the assumption that one of the parties to the internal war is weaker than the other, and also assuming that the weaker party has exhausted all its internal means of increasing its strength:

"The only way of redressing the internal power balance is to invite outside aid. This, the demand for outside aid, is the first mechanism of 'internationalisation' of internal war; it inheres in the fundamental condition of disparity found in internal war....The second mechanism follows from the first. If the weaker party be presumed to be seeking outside aid, then the stronger party, if it is to maintain its preponderance, is driven to take international countermeasures by anticipating as much as by hard and fast information about external intervention in aid of its adversaries. (Such information is frequently false). It must destroy the actual or potential opponents, and must counter them by alliances of its own. Thus, as if by a 'natural' process of alignment, the friends of your opponents become your opponents too...the third mechanism of internationalisation...follows from the preceding two. The search for outside aid and the effort to counteract that search make every internal war a matter of international concern. They complicate international alignment and add acerbity to them, and may lead directly to external war. Hence,, the second power might be brought in to intervene in the conflict, in aid, as it were, of the third party, and in order to perform the functions of mediation and reconciliation. Given an internal war in one state the foreign policy of the second state faces three choices:

(1) helping the weaker party - usually, but not invari-

ably, the insurgents - and thus embarking on subversion;
(2) helping the stronger party - usually, but not invariably, the incumbents - and thus embarking on foreign aid;
(3) working for a conciliatory solution of the conflict by attempting mediation."²⁰³

A few preliminary remarks can perhaps be made before we proceed to an examination of the internationalisation of the Spanish civil war. The tendency of the internal war to become internationalised will depend not only upon the desire of the parties to the internal war to obtain aid from the external parties, but also upon the willingness of these parties to grant such aid.* This willingness, according to the analysis of Modelski above, is to be seen as being dependent upon the existence of an international power struggle between the members of the international community, a power struggle which has led to an alignment of states into power groupings. The basic assumption therefore is that the external states, as a result of the power struggles within the international system, are unable to concert together to decide the fate of the internal war. To attempt to describe the system possibilities with less imprecision, it might be said that the

* Much turns on the definition of the word 'aid'. Where there is communication within a society and members of that society are aware of occurrences elsewhere within that society, any form of response to an occurrence within that society which involves a conflict situation (whether such a response be interest, indifference, joy, hate or any other response) may be termed 'aid' in one form or another. Indifference may thus be termed 'negative aid' to the stronger of the parties to the conflict. Aid at this point means a conscious attempt to affect the course of events in the internal war.

decisive factor that will determine the attitudes of the external states toward the internal war will be the level of integration achieved within the international system.²⁰⁴ The level of integration will depend upon the extent to which there exists within the international system a self-maintaining level of sharing of values, beliefs and interests.²⁰⁵ Where there is a high level of integration (i.e., a high degree of values, beliefs and interests held in common by the actors within the system) then one would find that the actors within the system would be able to formulate their individual policies towards problems calling for solutions (such as an internal war) in accordance with these commonly shared values, and thus in accord with values held by the other actors. Thus the process of consultation and discussion will form the basis for the methods of formulating and implementing policies of the actors within the system.

It was a high degree of shared values, beliefs and interests which formed the basis of the Concert of Europe. A desire to maintain the status quo, a belief in the monarchical system of government and a common fear of republicanism united Austria, Russia, France and Prussia (and for a period Britain) into adhering to the Congress system, whereby problems facing Europe would be solved in consultation. Established in 1815 by the Quadruple Alliance (to which France as the defeated nation did not

accede - France was brought into the system in 1818 by means of the Quintuple Alliance) the states pledged themselves under Article Six to "...reunions devoted to common interests and to the examination of the measures which, at any one of these periods shall be judged most salutary for the repose and prosperity of peoples." ²⁰⁶

Harold Nicholson is of the opinion that the Concert of Europe did exist, and continued to exist, even after the Congress system fell into disuse, based on a common sharing of values and standards:

"It is incorrect to dismiss the conception of the Concert of Europe as being purely inoperative diplomatic catchword or as a phrase designed to justify the domination of great powers. It was more than that. It represented a tacit understanding between great powers that there were certain common standards of dignity, humanity and good faith which should govern the conduct of these powers in their relations with each other and in their dealings with less potent or less civilised communities. When, in 1914, this whole conception was shattered, something of great stabilising value, something of durable common repute passed from the policies of Europe." ²⁰⁷

When there exists a lower level of value-sharing, there will be tendency for less emphasis to be placed on consultation with other actors in the system as a means of obtaining desired policy objectives, and a greater emphasis on the use or the threat of coercion. The lower level of value sharing will mean that the policy objectives of the actors will tend to conflict. The actors will find they have to pursue their goals in competition with conflicting goals of other actors.

Thus a disintegrative mechanism is introduced into the system. Since, in the international system, the ultima ratio of conduct remains the use of coercion, states in the pursuance of their policy goals will align themselves with states whose values coincide with their own in a sufficient degree to allow for co-operation to achieve policy goals. Alignments will therefore form as states seek to maximise the power base for the attainment of goals. In seeking to maximise their power base, states will try to prevent other international actors from entering an opposing grouping, and thus adding to the power resources of their opponents. A state which is outside a power grouping will therefore become an important stake if of important strategic in the eyes of the international actors; if considered to be of low strategic value, the non-aligned state will not become stake competed for if such competition involves an uneconomic expenditure of resources.

Thus one can conclude that the willingness of states to intervene in an internal war, and the methods by which such intervention is carried out will depend upon the nature of the international system and the nature of the state in which the internal war is being waged. In a political system with a high degree of value-sharing, intervention in an internal war will usually result from consultation between the major powers - Australi intervention

in the dispute between the King of Naples and some of his liberal subjects followed the Congress of Laibach, of 1821. Where there is a low degree of value-sharing intervention will often be on a unilateral, or limited actor basis, This intervention will usually be opposed at least verbally by the representatives of the opposing international grouping. Counter-intervention may take a more positive form than words, as in Greece in the latter 1940's. In the latter case, the internal war will lead to a disintegrative input function on the part of the internal war, perhaps even perhaps bringing the possibility of external war. This possibility places restraints upon the actions of the external actors. It will involve the weighing of the consequences of the victory in the internal war favouring the opposing alliance against the risks involved in intervening. The decision will revolve around the strategic (Or perhaps psychological) value of the stake; here we can contrast the different reactions of the international community to the internal war in Vietnam to that in the Congo.

Thus the question of formulating policy toward an internal war will be tied to the nature of the international system and the nature of the state in which the internal war is being waged. In a system with a low level of integration and opposed groupings where the outcome of the internal war represents a high strategic value and into

into which states are drawn to intervene, possible policies open to an external power may be seen as follows:

- (1) helping the weaker party
- (2) helping the stronger party
- (3) mediating between the primary parties to the internal war.
- (4) mediating between those external actors that have become involved in the internal war. It is this set of mediation activities to bring an end to an internal war. Once a compromise can be reached between the external actors, a solution to the internal war can be imposed on the primary parties. The task is difficult, since as long as the internal war is unresolved the state in which the the war is being waged can be considered as unaligned, and in their desire to gain aid, the primary parties will hold out to the external actors the promise of alignment (even non-alignment may suffice). The losing side in the internal war may be concerned to prolong the war to gain a better position, or the winning side may be concerned to have sufficient time to finish off its opponent. The result is that primary parties may pressure their external allies not to reach any form of agreement.

In the latter part of the Thirties one may see the

the international system within Europe as a loose bi-
polar one. ²⁰⁹ Two main groupings of powers existed: those supporting the status quo - represented by Britain and France and those states within the French alliance system (including Russia, whose security interests coincided with those of Britain and France); the revisionist grouping - represented by Germany and Italy. These groupings it must be admitted did not represent tight cohesive blocs, but the countries within each grouping were bound to each other by common interests, the German determination to gain a dominant position in Eastern Europe and the Italian desire to establish a predominant position in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean bringing these two countries into opposition with the interests of Britain and France. This process of the creation of ever hardening blocks was opposed to the basic desire of British decision-makers of maintaining Britain's freedom of maneuver and to remain free of any binding commitments to states on the continent of Europe. As we have seen in the previous chapter the under-lying impulse behind British foreign policy in the later half of the 1930's was to maintain the peace of Europe, to prevent any armed conflicts developing into which Britain could be drawn, and to establish friendly relations with as many states as possible, and especially Italy, in view of her strategic position in the Mediterranean.

Italy's developing entente with Germany following the Abyssinian invasion by Italy remained an anomaly.

Ultimately the establishment of German dominance in Europe would threaten the strategic position of Italy and would make of Italy a dependent of Germany. Italy's traditional policy therefore, as before the First World War, was to balance between the West European states - Britain and France, and between the Central European states - Germany (and Austro-Hungary before the First War). Duff Cooper has argued well the case that Britain's interests lay in developing friendly relations with Italy:

"I felt that the Abyssinian business had been badly bungled, that we should never have driven Mussolini into the arms of Hitler, and that it might not be too late to regain him. The Italo-German alliance was an anomaly. The Germans and Austrians were the traditional enemies of the Italians: the English and the French, who had contributed so much to their liberation, were their historic friends, and Garibaldi had laid a curse upon any Italian Government that fought against them. The size and the strength of the Third Reich made her too formidable a friend for the smallest of the Great Powers, who would soon find that from ally she had sunk to a satellite." 210 Thus Britain, in her attempt to prevent the hardening of dangerous bloc grouping of powers looked to Italy to see if the Axis could be weakened at that end, since, as Feiling notes, it was felt that the German connection was not Italy's first choice. 211

Eden, at the annual dinner of the Foreign Press Association held in London on January 12, 1937, stated

"...One of the most disturbing tendencies in the international situation in 1936 was the tendency to divide Europe into two political doctrines. I hope and think that this tendency shows signs of diminishing. There is, for instance, the exchange of assurances between this country and Italy...."

"There is no country which we would not be willing to move towards if by doing so we and that country could assist in securing a general settlement of the strain and anxieties to which we are all subjected. We desire the circle of our friends to be as wide and all-embracing as possible. There is so much that can be done, but if it is to be done all the nations must enter on 1937 in this spirit of collaboration."212

Eden, as much as Chamberlain had believed in a rapprochement with Italy, as was seen in the Gentleman's Agreement of January 2, 1937 which Eden mentioned above. Eden merely differed on the means through which a rapprochement could be achieved with Italy - that unless established on a firm foundation of mutual respect and with assurances of good faith from Italy, Italy would merely be encouraged to demand further concessions from Britain.

Hassel (the German Ambassador in Italy) on December 18, 1936, presented in a report to the German Foreign Ministry an excellent appraisal of the impact of the Spanish civil war on the relations of the states in Europe:

"...Germany has in my opinion every reason for being gratified if Italy continues to interest herself deeply in the Spanish affair. The role played by the Spanish conflict as regards Italy's relations with France and England could be similar to that of the Abyssinian conflict, bringing out clearly the actual, opposing interests of the powers and thus preventing Italy from being drawn into the net of the Western powers and used for their machinations. The struggle for dominant political influence in Spain lays bare the natural opposition between Italy and France; at the same time the position of Italy as a power in the western Mediterranean comes into competition with that of Britain. All the more clearly will Italy recognise the advisability of confronting the Western powers shoulder to shoulder with Germany..."213

Britain, therefore, had to watch anxiously as

Europe began to crystallize into antagonistic groupings, each side seemingly prepared to intervent in Spain with military forces to oppose the other. Bowers (the United States Ambassador in Spain) reported on July 30, 1936, the development of

"Very strained relations...between Italy and Germany on one side and French on the other side. Their envoys here surprisingly open on attitude toward Spanish struggle. France has sent 20 airships last three days contracted for before the struggle and commander British ship here tells me Germany has sent 14 fighting airships to the rebels. Attempt of German warship to land armed forces San Sebastian some days ago probably intensifying the cleavage, important perhaps as indicating threat to European peace." 214

Kirk (the United States Charge in Italy) had reported on the 25th of July the outspoken concern of Italian officials over the Spanish situation:

"They point out that the uprising there combined with the Communistic tendencies already manifested in France constitute a very real threat of Bolshevism in the West...Unofficial opinion couples expression of anxiety over these increased Communistic activities with references to the evidence of harmonious relationship between Italy and Germany and stresses the view that cooperation between the two countries would form a bulwark against the spread of Bolshevism both from the East and the West." 215

Henderson (the United States Charge in the Soviet Union) reported on August 4, 1936 that:

"Soviet press and leaders are beginning more openly to show their sympathy for the Spanish Government as the latter's position becomes more precarious. Mass demonstrations of solidarity with the Spanish people were held in cities and towns of the Soviet Union yesterday. The moscow Pravda of this morning states that 12,000 demonstrators gathered in the Red Square and that 100,000 took part in the Leningrad demonstration. According to the same sources the meeting, both in Moscow and the Leningrad, addresses telegrams to the President and

the Prime Ministers of Spain." 216

Straus reported from Paris on July 31 that in view of the crucial strategic position of Spain to the French,

"Blum appearing before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate yesterday admitted frankly that the French Government had at first seriously considered acquiescing in the request of the Spanish Government for assistance... However, ... after mature consideration by the French Government would not permit the despatch to Spain of any aeroplanes or munitions of war... In saying this, however, Blum stated that the French Government would reserve its position regarding the future depending upon what the attitude of other foreign governments might be." 217

We can at this point remind ourselves of Baldwin's injunction to Eden on the 27th of July "... that on no account, French or other, must he bring us into fight on the side of the Russians." ²¹⁸ Suspicion of the Soviet Union reinforced within Britain the desire to localise the developing conflict in Spain as far as possible, and to prevent the French from becoming involved in an escalation spiral that would draw Britain into its vortex. The effect of the Spanish conflict was to drive Europe into divided camps, a process that was directly opposed to Britain's interest in the avoidance of armed conflict on the European mainland, from which Britain could not hope to remain aloof. Britain's interests, as then perceived, seemed to demand an attempt to reverse the spiral of escalation of intervention by two opposed groupings. Britain's

quandry was to attempt to prevent what Kenneth Boulding refers to as the reaction process of the conflict situation leading to a breakdown of the international system into war. The reaction process, as seen by Boulding, is the process "...in which a movement on the part of one party so changes the field of the other that it forces a movement of this party, which in turn changes the field of the first, forcing another move of the second, and so on."²¹⁹

Two solutions would seem to present themselves to the British decision makers: (1) exert diplomatic pressure on France to obtain her withdrawal from the reaction process by capitulating to the Italian-German action in Spain (2) reorganise the system.²²⁰ Both solutions present problems. While Britain was in a position to exert pressure on France to capitulate, such an action on the part of the French Government could rebound in view of the division within the Cabinet and within the French nation. Wilson (the United charge in France) reported on August 10, 1936,

"We are told by a usually well-informed source that the meeting of the Cabinet on Friday was a stormy one, Cot in particular urging that in view of the undoubted aid being given to the insurgents by Italy and Germany deliveries of war material should be allowed to go forward to the Spanish Government.... There is... undoubtedly great pressure from the extreme left being

brought on the Government to pursue a policy more favourable to the interests of the Spanish Government. There have recently been two large mass meetings of adherents of the Front Popular at which demands were made that aid be given the Spanish Government.²²¹"

Thus if those in France who were in favour of granting aid to the Spanish Government observed the capitulation by France to the intervention by Italy and Germany in Spain, domestic pressures could build up in France that would either force the Government to alter its policy to one of active intervention in Spain, or even bring about the replacement of the Government by one more in favour of intervening on behalf of the Spanish Government. Either result would be to increase the reaction coefficient of France and make the possibilities of a spiral of intervention by the two opposing international groupings leading to outbreak of war far more likely.

The other possible solution that was open to the British Government was the reorganisation of the inter-national system. This one might argue was in fact the aim and the function of the Non-Intervention Committee. However any attempt to reorganise the international system would be dependent upon the willingness of the other actors within the system - and we have in mind Italy and Germany at this juncture - to accept any restraint upon their freedom of action. It was

unlikely that Germany and Italy would accept any reorganisation of the system, since this implies a move away from the sovereign state system to that of a more structured system where the system would attempt illegal processes by means of which the relations of states toward the Conflict in Spain would be regulated. Revisionist states such as Germany and Italy would be unlikely to accept limits upon their freedom to alter the status quo.

Dieckhoff (the Acting State Secretary to the German Foreign Ministry) reported that Francois-Poncet on August 29th stated that the Non-Intervention Committee

"...was intended primarily to afford the participating governments the opportunity of maintaining constant touch with each other on the subject of the arms embargo. Furthermore, it was meant to serve the purpose of enabling the governments to inform one another of the decisions made in the various countries in carrying out the arms embargo and possibly to adjust these decisions to one another. There was no intention of appointing special delegates for this purpose...

"Moreover, I hardly believe that the plan could really entail any serious danger to us. The word 'control' does not appear in the French note; according to Francois-Poncet's explanation, too, what was involved was primarily an exchange of information and co-ordination. We ourselves, after all, can play a part in seeing that this London arrangement does not develop into a permanent policy agency, which might make trouble for us; and in this we can secure Italian and British support too."

(On September 3 Weizacker, the Acting Director of the German Political Department reported that the French Charge d'Affairs "...clearly implied that the

committee and its powers had been a British rather than
a French invention...")²²³

The extent to which British Government was not
intent upon reorganising the international community can
be seen from this memorandum by Diekhoff on September
3:

"Mr. Newton (the British Charge d'Affairs in Berlin)
stated that...there was no intention of setting up
the committee in London as an independent body which
would have to make decisions or whose jurisdiction
might later be extended in any way; it was a question
only of organising loosely the diplomatic representatives
of the interested powers accredited in London. The
British Government itself by no means intended to go
beyond this and to create a new international organ
but was really confining itself to making available
a meeting place for the joint conferences which take
place from time to time. The committee was not to
have the task of either exercising control powers or
of making majority decisions or the like." 224

Britain was in part motivated by the developing crisis
in French politics that was arising from the flagrant
intervention by the Italians and Germans. Welcbeck
(the German Ambassador in France reported on August 21:

"Within the (French) Cabinet the moderate members,
particularly Blum and Delbos, believe that they will
be able to prevail against the interventionist members
steeped in Popular Front ideology, only if they can
find support very soon in an international obligation
regarding an arms embargo. If the arms embargo does
not materialise within the next few days, Blum and
Delbos fear that they can no longer resist the growing
domestic political pressure and that they will have
to give unlimited support to the Spanish Government.
The deliveries and the stream of Red Front volunteers
to Spain would then assume such proportions that
consequences for foreign policy would be incalculable." 225

Thus the German Charge d' Affairs, Bismark, at the first
meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee, held on
September 9th, 1936, reported

"Today's meeting left the impression that with France and England, the two powers principally interested in the committee, it is not so much a question of taking actual steps immediately as of pacifying the aroused feelings of the Leftist parties in both countries...In particular during my conversation today with Vansittart in regard to another matter, I had the feeling that the British Government hoped to ease the domestic political situation for the French Premier by the establishment of the committee."226

Britain in its attempt to resolve the conflict situation that was presented by the impact of the Spanish conflict upon the international system helped to establish a committee for non-intervention that gave the outward impression of achieving a reorganisation of the international system and thus enabled the French Government to capitulate in the reaction process that had been in the early stages of being established during July and August 1936, without a feedback of reaction from the French Left into the international system in the form of increased pressure on the French Government to increase aid to the Spanish Government. The chain of the reaction process was snapped and the Non-Intervention Committee thereafter became usefully employed in talking issues to death, in transmuting potential conflict on the Spanish battlefield into a conflict of words in that device so beloved of the English - the committee.

We shall in other places deal in more detail with the activity of the Non-Intervention Committee, and for the moment will content ourselves not with the details but the substance as seen by Maisky, the Soviet representative.

Maisky draws for us in his usual vigorous style this portrait of Lord Plymouth who was for much of the time the British representative and the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee:

"...a practically ideal personification of English political mediocrity, nourished by the traditions of the past and by well-worn sentiments...an entirely helpless and comic figure."

Maisky sketches a typical incident in the Committee:

"On the agenda for the day there is some thorny question. A fierce debate flares up. The opinions of the Soviet and Fascist representatives are directly opposed. The representatives of the so-called 'democratic' powers are wavering. Plymouth as Chairman should take up a definite stand and win over a majority of the Committee's members to it. But Plymouth does not know what to settle on. His face expresses agonised bewilderment. He turns to his advisors -Francis Hemming who used to sit on his left and Roberts on his right. A hurried consultation in whispers begins among them. The recommendations of the advisors turn out to be at variance, often diametrically opposed, for... Hemming sympathised with the Spanish democrats and Roberts was a supporter of Franco. The indecision on Plymouth's countenance grows greater, he goes red, then pale, and at last, assumes his severely impartial air, proclaims solemnly : 'The meeting is adjourned.' "227

Francis Hemming, the Secretary of the Non-Intervention Committee, had all the skills of the professional civil servant:

"...(He could) pick up with the greatest of ease the most violently opposed of views and find for them an exceedingly well 'streamlined' formulations, as the result of which the gulf between them was somehow made invisible, smoothed out."

Hemming was thus ideally suited to the task that was central in the British attitude toward non-intervention - the reduction of conflict to a mere verbal formula;

Principles, interests and realities became submerged beneath a flood of words dedicated to the cause of disguising conflict:

"Hemming was in his most special glory when it was time to draw up the official communique on the meeting of the Committee or the sub-committee just concluded. A word was enough for him to catch the wishes of each participant in the discussion, which he would instantly clothe in a form of words acceptable to the majority; if there were any objections he would at once make changes, adding something here and taking away something there, and in the end produce a document which satisfied everyone."228

In this structure the bete noire was the Soviet Union threatening at any moment to throw a scycle into the smooth non-functioning of the Non-Intervention Committee. Maisky tells one story of an incident that occurred in the midst of a fierce tussle over infringement by Italy of the Agreement on Non-Intervention:

"...I assumed my most innocent expression, suddenly turned to Plymouth and said: 'On a point of order, Mr. Chairman...'

"Plymouth looked at me, puzzled and suspicious. He might have been waiting for me to throw a bomb down on the table. His secretaries were also thrown into alarm; they were clearly having visions of some new and cunning moves by the Soviet side. Silence descended on the green covered table. Everyone waited with bated breath to see what would happen.

"'Yes on a point of order', I repeated, deliberately prolonging the moment of tension. '...may I suggest that we have a break now for a cup of tea?'"229

The following incident provides an example of the desire on the part of Plymouth to maintain the smooth functioning of the Committee even at the cost of maintaining an ignorant silence towards the events in Spain. On May 30, 1937, Germany withdrew from the Non-Interven-

tion Committee in protests at the bombing of the pocket battleship Deutschland by the Spanish Republican airforce. On June 18, 1937, the German delegation returned to the committee. Before the session of the Committee began, the German and Italian requested Plymouth to prevent any discussion of the past in the committee meeting, pointing out the consequences that might otherwise arise. Plymouth having agreed, used his influence on the Soviet Ambassador to this end, and refrained from welcoming back Germany and Italy so that their past absence should not be a matter for discussion. ²³⁰ The question of the shelling by Germany of the defenceless Spanish town of Almeria in retaliation for the bombing of the Deutschland was thus relegated forever to the past. Eden had already successfully used his influence to prevent any discussion of this question in the League of Nations. ²³¹

There seems to be an inevitable comparison between the British reaction to the Spanish conflict and the typical British reaction to many crucial domestic problems. When, in Britain, a serious problem becomes apparent - be it education, penal reform or political irresponsibility - the usual recourse is to establish a Royal Commission or Committee of Enquiry to look into the matter and report in language, which is usually lengthy, foggy and designed to conceal disagreements:

"When a report is unanimous, like the Devlin Report on Nyasaland, it is translucent; when it is a com-

promise, like the Radcliffe Report on the Bank of England, it is opaque. Important Whitehall documents all go through the process of toning down... 'papering over the cracks'... until much of the original force or even the sense has vanished. 'By the time the civil service has finished drafting a document to give effect to a principle, said Lord Reith, 'there may be little or no principle left.'²³²

The Committee on Non-Intervention was designed to act as a neutralising agent that would counter-act the dangerous catalyst of conflict that Spain represented; to reduce the tensions that seemed to threaten to rend Europe apart to acceptable levels. In this, the search for compromise came to dominate the fulfillment of the principle for which the Committee had been established: to prevent intervention of states in the Spanish War. As Bingham reported in November 1936, Britain was determined to make every effort "...to localise the war and certainly Britain had no intention of being drawn into a tug of war."²³³

One may wonder on the question of the extent to which the British leadership made any real attempt to think through the problem of the relationship of Britain and Spain, and the place of this relationship in the spectrum of Britain's political role in the world as a whole. To drown conflicts in a tide of paper, to cover disagreement and intervention among the niceties of language played an important role in British policy in view of the dangers that a new European War held for Britain. But this is not the sum total of British policy toward Spain. Other dimensions existed which reflected

a more precise calculation of British interests in Spain. It will be the purpose of the next chapter to examine these other dimensions of British policy.

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131. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol.318, cols.1074-1076.
132. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol.317, col.318.
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135. New Statesman, 1936, p.145.
134. Watkins, op. cit., p.103.
136. R.B. McCallum, Public Opinion and the Lost Peace (London Oxford University Press, 1944), pp.142-143.
137. Rt. Hon. L.S. Amery, My Political Life, Vol. 3, The Unforgiving Years: 1929-1940 (London, Hutchinson, 1955), pp.424-425.
138. Ibid, p.112.
139. Ibid, p.168.
140. Ibid, p.236.
141. Connell, op. cit., p.219.
142. Mackintosh, op. cit., pp.420-431.
143. Duff Cooper, op. cit., p.204.
144. Ibid, pp.204-205.
145. The Rt. Hon. Viscount Maugham included in his justification of the actions of the Chamberlain Government this survey of the newspapers of the day:

"What was the public opinion in 1938 as disclosed on the 30th September and the 1st and 2nd October by the principal newspapers? Mr. Hadley has given in his book an elaborate resume with extracts from

over fifty of them, including all the London morning and evening papers, twenty-six provincial morning papers and sixteen Sunday papers. They include among the London morning papers The Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Sketch, Daily Express, News Chronicle, Daily Mail, Daily Herald and Daily Mirror; among the other papers, The Sunday Times, The Observer, News of the World, The People, Manchester Guardian, Yorkshire Post, Liverpool Daily Post, Glasgow Herald and The Scotsman. The extracts given by Mr. Hadley should be read. Not one of these newspapers suggested that it was the duty of the Government to declare or to threaten war. It was truly stated that a high price had been paid and it fell on the Czechs; but with only, I think, one or two exceptions they were unanimous in their expressions of approval and warm gratitude to the Prime Minister and his Government."

At the End of the Day (London, Heinemann, 1954), p.382.

146. General the Lord Ismay, Memoirs (London, Heinemann, 1960), pp.92-93.
147. McCallum, op. cit., p.148.
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149. Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War (New York, Harper, 1961), p.574.
150. American Documents, 1936, Vol.11, p.464.
151. The Earl Halifax, Fulness of Days (London, Collins, 1957), p.192.
152. Maisky, op. cit., p.34.
153. Ibid, pp.33-36.
154. Ibid, p.33.
155. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, pp.141-142.
156. Ibid, p.84.
157. Ibid, p.564.
158. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol.317, col. 269.

159. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol.331,
160. Claude Bowers, My Mission to Spain (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1954), p.325.
161. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, p.443.
162. Thomas Jones, op. cit., p.270.
163. Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p.121.
164. British Documents, Third Series, Vol.111, p.316.
165. Ibid, p.321.
166. German Documents, Series D, Vol. 111, p.630.
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170. Iain Macleod. Neville Chamberlain (New York, Atheneum, 1962), p.222.
171. Feiling, op. cit., p.329.
172. Ibid, p.338.
173. Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p.177.
174. Ibid, p.184.
175. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol.332, cols. 60-62.
176. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C., Vol.338, cols.2953-2954.
177. Ibid, cols.2955.
178. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, p.777.
179. Maisky, op. cit., pp.191-202.
180. American Documents, 1938, Vol.11, p.221.

181. Ibid, p.215.
182. Ibid, p.244.
183. Ibid, p.249.
184. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C.,
Vol.340, cols.200-209.
185. British Documents, Third Series, Vol.111, p.315.
For Bower's estimate, see American Documents, 1938,
Vol.11, p.252.
186. British Documents, Third Series, Vol.111,
pp.316-317.
187. Ibid, p.342.
188. Ibid, pp.339-340.
189. Ciano's Hidden Diary, pp.172-174.
191. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, H. of C.,
Vol.340, cols.277-278.
190. British Documents, Third Series, Vol.111, p.322.
192. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, p.772.
193. Ibid, p.740.
194. Ibid, p.766.
195. British Documents, Third Series, Vol.111, p.316.
196. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, p.745.
197. British Documents, Third Series, Vol.111, p.337.
198. Documents, 1938, Vol.1, pp.118-119.

200. The "age of high mass-consumption" is the fifth of
the stages of economic growth through which, accord-

ing to W.W. Rostow, all societies pass:

"As societies achieve maturity in the twentieth century, two things happened: real income per head rose to the point where a large number of persons gained a command over consumption which transcended basic food, shelter and clothing; and the structure of the working force changed in ways which increased not only the proportion of urban to total population, but also the proportion of the population working in offices or in skilled factory jobs - aware of and anxious to acquire the consumption fruits of the mature economy.

"In addition to these economic changes, the society ceased to accept the further extension of modern technology as an over-riding objective. It is in this post-maturity stage, for example, that, through the political process, Western societies have chosen to allocate increased resources to social welfare and security. The emergence of the welfare state is one manifestation of a society's moving beyond technical maturity; but it is also at this stage that resources tend increasingly to be directed to the production of consumer's durables and to the diffusion of services on a mass basis, if consumer sovereignty reigns. The sewing machine, the bicycle, and then the various electric-powered household gadgets were gradually diffused."

W.W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth (Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp.10-11.

201. Templewood, op. cit., pp.195-196.

202. Modelski, The International Relations of Internal War, p.7.

203. Ibid, p.7.

204. The international system may be defined as that assemblage of sovereign states which are united by some form of interaction or interdependence by which the employment or the threat of the employment of more or less commonly accepted means of

physical coercion is issued to maintain or to transform the political status quo. The international system is characterised by four main elements: the absence of a formal government with the power and authority to judge or punish; the use of violence by the component units to achieve objectives and enforce obligations, or to put it another way, the absence of a rule of law capable of governing the attainment of values and interests; law and moral obligations are derived from implicit bargaining, or by custom, i.e. habitualised implicit bargaining; the international system is organised through the component units (i.e. the sovereign states) which possess the function of ordering the economic, political and social relations within the confines of their territory.

For definitions of an international system from which the above is, in part, derived, refer to:

C.J. Friedrich, Man and His Government (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1963), p.25.

G.A. Almond and J.S. Coleman, The Politics of Developing Areas (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1960), p.11.

R.D. Masters. "World Politics as a Primitive Political

System", World Politics, July 1964, p.612.

For an attempt to reduce the complexities of the relations between states to various types of international systems, see: Mortan Caplan, System and Process in International Relations (New York, Wiley, 1957).

205. Carl J. Friedrich, Man and His Government, pp.137-138.

See also: Amitai Etzioni, Political Unification (New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p.4.

206. Walter Phelps and William Davis, The Course of Europe since Waterloo (New York, Appleton Century Crofts, 1951), pp.28-29.
207. Sir Harold Nicholson, Diplomacy (London, Oxford University Press, 1960), p.72.
208. See Note 1, supra.
209. For an examination of the concept of a bi-polar international system, see Kaplan, op. cit.
210. Duff Cooper, op. cit., p.211.
211. Feiling, op. cit., p.330.
212. Documents, 1937, Vol.11, p.10.
213. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, p.172.
214. American Documents, 1936, Vol.11, p.450.
215. Ibid, p.447.
216. Ibid, p.461.
217. Ibid, p.450.

218. Thomas Jones, op. cit., p.231.
219. Kenneth E. Boulding, Conflict and Defense (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1963), p.25.
220. Ibid, p.29.
221. American Documents, 1936, Vol.11, p.447.
222. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, pp.63-64.
223. Ibid, p.70.
224. Ibid, pp.68-69.
225. Ibid, p.49.
226. Ibid, p.84.
227. Maisky, op. cit., pp.76-77.
228. Ibid, p.92.
229. Ibid, pp.62-63.
230. German Documents, Series D, Vol.111, pp.353-354.
231. Ibid, p.303.
232. Anthony Sampson, The Anatomy of Britain Today (New York, Harper-Colophon, 1966), p.300.
233. American Documents, 1937, Vol.1, p.560.

Chapter Three : Interests and Policies.

"...the mutedness that had so impressed me on arrival in England was developing into an awareness of what foreigners call, rightly or wrongly, English Hypocrisy."

Philip O'Connor - Memoirs of a Public Baby.

"...nationalistic interests are running riot."

Joseph E. Davies - discussing the European situation in 1937. Mission to Moscow.

Vansittart has stated that within Macdonald's second National Government "...there were wheels within wheels."² To paraphrase one might state that within the British reaction to the Spanish civil war, there were policies within policies, which was indeed a part a reflection of the fact that there existed wheels within wheels. But, as we have already seen, the developing confusion and transfer of policy-making authority meant that the wheels were not as well oiled as in previous times; friction led to the fusing of policies and policy-goals so that the various elements that composed British policy toward Spain cannot be laid bare so easily as one can peel the various layers off an onion and to do so would be to simplify out of existence the conflicts that formed (and still do) a significant element within the policy making process. The struggles

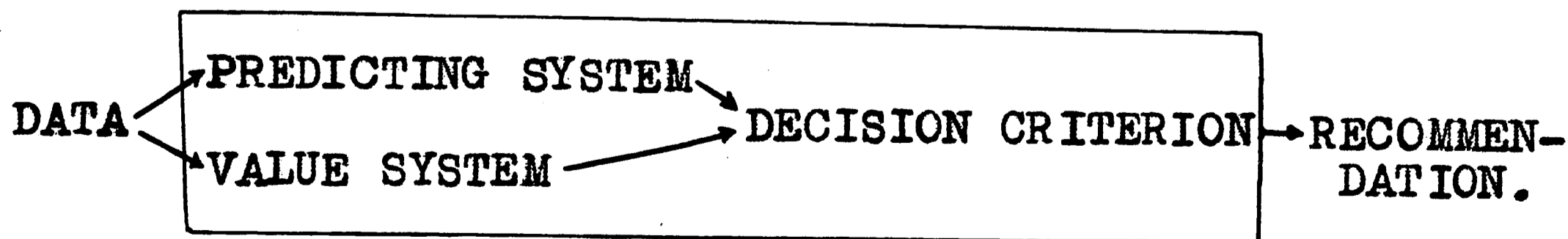
of Duff Cooper as the First Lord of the Admiralty with the Treasury over finance,³ can be seen as part of the long struggle of the Treasury to reduce as far as possible Public spending, the continuing mentality of the Treasury man concerned with 'candle-ends'.⁴ According to Sampson, each department has what it likes to call its own 'departmental philosophy' so that once inside the building the rest of Whitehall can seem as remote as Scotland: "They spend so much time fighting each other, said one civil servant, that it's difficult to remember that they're all supposed to be serving the same government."⁵

Despite the problems of doing so we shall attempt to disentangle the threads of British policy toward Spain - restating themes already developed with their wider ramifications and introducing new themes. For convenience the assault will be divided into two main parts: the relations of Britain with Spain; and the relations of Britain with states other than Spain who were concerned with the Spanish problem.

We have seen that there were present in British attitudes toward the Spanish conflict two main themes which can be taken as being mutually contradictory: (1) the desire not to see the strategic item that Spain represented move so far into the Axis (or Communist) sphere of influence that the European strategic balance would be altered significantly against Britain: (2) the desire not to see competition between European states for the allegiance of the strategic unit that Spain represented lead to a European conflict.

One might state that British attitudes toward Spain would thus be determined by the value that was placed on Spain as a unit in the strategic balance, and the boundary limits, if any, beyond which Britain could not allow action by another international actor or one of the actors of the internal war such as to alter the position of Spain in the European strategic balance, without feeling compelled to act to prevent such an alteration. Thus predictions as to what would be the future alignment of Spain upon the putting into effect of any of the various sets of possible actions by the actors concerned with the civil war in Spain. Such predictions being, of course, dependent upon the extent and the quality of the information available to the British decision-makers.

Thus the decision-maker in arriving at any one policy would have considered the actions by the other actors involved in the internal war in Spain, the outcomes associated with such actions, the probability of those outcomes, and the desirability of those outcomes. In reacting to such actions, the decision-makers would have had to consider the possible lines of action open, the outcome of such actions, the probability and the desirability of such outcomes. One can transform this into very simple model:



One can on this basis examine the developing nature of British policy toward Spain. In the early stages of the Spanish conflict there existed the difficulty of the lack of information, the resulting difficulty of making predictions as the outcome of such activity as could be observed in Spain, and the difficulty of arriving at what would be decision criteria that would form a continuing basis for decision-making. Britain during the early stages of the Spanish conflict seemed to be acting in terms of a limited decision criteria, which were shifted in emphasis by certain sections of the British decision-making structure towards the end of the year. The limited decision criteria utilised by the British decision-makers in the early stages was in the main a reflection of the necessity of formulating a policy towards the developing conflict in Spain before a clear appraisal could be made of the actions that could be observed and the lack of any clear information as to the events in Spain and the intentions of the outside powers.

The United States Chargé in France reported on August 20th a conversation that he had had that day with Blumel, Chef de Cabinet of Blum: "I asked Blumel whether the British Government had from the outset realised the potential dangers to Great Britain's interests in the Mediterranean if a military influence were established in Spain subject to Fascist influence. He said that the British Government had at first been rather lukewarm in its support of the French initiative for a non-intervention pact. This he explained by (apparent omission) that at first British conservative opinion, includ-

the Army and the Navy, had been that the triumph of the Spanish Government would mean Communism and disorder in Spain and that a victory of the military elements was to be desired. However, more recently the British Government seemed to have shown a clearer realisation of the implications to their interests of a victory of the military rebellion in Spain and the British communiqué of last Saturday and the order of the Board of Trade yesterday forbidding the export of war material and even civilian planes to Spain indicated this. He added that the British were 'strongly supporting' in Berlin and Rome the French proposal for a non-intervention pact.

"As of possible interest he said that when Blum met Vansittart recently in Paris on the latter's return from Berlin Blum felt that Vansittart had failed to show a clear realisation. This Blum felt might be explained by the fact that Vansittart had then been away from England for some time." ⁸

Hassel in reporting of conversation with Ciano on the 6th August, 1936, stated that he had "...referred to the decisive importance that the British attitude necessarily had; unfortunately it was to be noted that so far it had lacked a clear orientation. Ciano agreed but said that he was not too optimistic in that respect." ⁹

It would appear that British policy in the early stages was dominated almost entirely by the awareness of the possibilities of an escalation of conflict between France and Italy and Germany into which Britain might be drawn, once an initial move toward intervention were to be made by the

French. Straus reported to Cordell Hull on the 27th July, 1936, this account of the steps that led to the decision by the Blum Government in France not to supply arms to the Spanish Government: "The reasons which led to the decision were communicated to the Embassy by a reliable press contact who obtained his information from a member of the French Supreme War Council. According to his informant certain members of the Blum Cabinet particularly Cot, Air Minister, decided on July 21 to accede to a request from Spain to send arms and ammunition urgently required by the Madrid Government. To this decision it is understood that Blum gave his tacit consent.

"On July 22 Corbin, French Ambassador in London, telephoned Blum personally and called to his attention that the British Government was extremely worried about this contingency. Corbin urged that Blum come over and discuss the situation with Baldwin and Eden as soon as possible. Thus Corbin's request was the chief reason for Blum's sudden decision to proceed to London and not as is generally believed to join in the tripartate conversations that were then taking place.

"In London Eden drew Blum's attention to the grave international consequences which might result from French active support of the Madrid Government. The fears of the British Government were strengthened by a report from the French Military Intelligence which indicated a certain movement of German troops on the French Eastern border. Eden furthermore made it quite clear that he considered any assistance lent

by the French Government to the Spanish Government might conceivably develop a most critical international situation in view of the Italian and German attitude in the matter.

"Blum returned to Paris on the 25th and immediately called the Cabinet Council meeting mentioned above in the course of which the British point of view was brought forcibly to the attention of his extremist colleagues particularly Cot. After a lengthy debate the more moderate elements Blum, Daladier and Delbos who advocated a policy of strict neutrality won out and the decision mentioned above was taken."¹⁰

The British Government had persuaded a French Government that, in view of the serious dangers presented by the possible victory of Franco, had seriously considered acquiescing in¹¹ the request of the Spanish Government for arms. According to Wilson in Paris, it was largely on the advice of the British that the French inquired of the German, Belgian, Portuguese, Russian and Polish Governments on August 5th their views regarding a declaration of non-intervention in the affairs of Spain; Wilson added that the Counsellor of the German Embassy understood that the British Government had advised the French Government to use the method of consultation through the ordinary diplomatic channels, rather than trying to hold a conference on the subject.¹² While Eden was applying pressure on the French, he was in fact also engaged on a wide-scale campaign to bring the other states into line with the non-intervention proposal, employing tactics that ranged from

diplomatic pressure as with the French to pleading and persuasion, as well as an attempt to employ the force of example. Bingham (the United States Ambassador in Britain) reported on the 15th August that he was reliably informed that a press report that the British Government was appealing to British firms and private owners to refrain from sending civil planes to Spain was true,¹³ while on the 19th Eden announced that Britain would apply an arms embargo to Spain without waiting for other powers. Eden wrote to Baldwin: "You will have seen the action which we took yesterday to prevent arms or aeroplanes going from this country to Spain. I felt it was necessary to do this even before we achieved international agreement in order that we might, by setting an example, do our best to induce others, more particularly Germany and Italy,¹⁴ to follow suit."

Pressure was applied where Britain was in the position to do so, as for example in Portugal. The Director of the Legal Department to the Legation in Portugal, Gaus, on the 7th of September reported that: "At the request of the Portuguese Government, the German ship Usaramo was unable to discharge a 'certain' cargo in the port of Lisbon and must return to the northern coast of Spain. According to information received by the Navy,¹⁵ the Portuguese Government acted under British pressure." The Chargé d'Affairs of Germany in Lisbon had already reported on the 22nd of August that the outbreak of the Spanish conflict had raised grave issues in Portugal, especially the spectre of a communist victory in

Spain, in which case Portuguese opinion felt that Portugal would go communist in two months. Gaus then went on to state that "The decision was made particularly difficult by the fact that the British ally by no means encouraged a policy in line with the interests of Portugal, but on the contrary tried by all manner of remonstrances to get her to follow a different course. I have recently confirmed that England went so far as to threaten that her obligations as an ally should by no means be taken for granted in the event of a conflict with Red Spain provoked by Portugal's attitude."¹⁶

Other states such as Germany and Italy were not so amenable to this kind of pressure, but Britain used to the full such means of persuasion that were open to her. On the 8th of August, the British Ambassador called on von Neurath, the German Foreign Minister, and as Neurath records: "...read me a telegram from his Government, in which he was instructed to give his warmest support to the step taken by the French Government to bring about an agreement regarding non-intervention in the internal affairs of Spain....The Ambassador ...declared again how important it was, in the opinion of his Government, at least to make the attempt to localize the conflagration in Spain by acceding to the non-intervention agreement proposed by the French Government. He therefore asked that we give our assent as soon as possible."¹⁷

Similar representations were made by the British Chargé¹⁸ d'affairs in Rome to Ciano on the 17th of the same month.

The British Foreign Office, under Eden, attempted to harness the power factor that the United States represented in the attempt to bring about an international agreement that would serve to limit intervention by outside powers in the Spanish conflict. James C. Dunn, the Special Assistant to the United States Secretary of State and the Chief of the Division of Western European affairs, stated in a memorandum of the 4th December, 1936, that: "The British Ambassador came to see me this afternoon to transmit a message from the British Government. This was to the effect that the British and French Governments have approached the Governments of Germany, Italy, Portugal and the Soviet Union with a view to (1) having these four nations join with the British and French Governments in a renunciation forthwith of any action which might be likely to bring about intervention by a foreign nation in the Spanish conflict; (2) having these four nations join with them in a stronger and more effective prevention of the sending of supplies and equipment to Spain; (3) initiating steps with a view to having the six interested Governments join in an offer of mediation in an effort to terminate the conflict in Spain.

"The British memorandum further stated that it was the hope of the British and French Governments that our Government could make some possible statement of general sympathy with the proposed steps and suggested that in addition to such a statement it would be of great value if we could, through our representatives in the capitals of the four Governments to be approached, say a word in favour of those

Governments participating in this mediatory effort.

"The Ambassador went on to read to me the sense of a strictly confidential instruction which he had received at the same time as the text of his Government's memorandum in which his Government stated that while it was not expected that the United States would take any active participation in this proposal for mediation, they did attach great importance to some public statement in support thereof and to our conveying through our representatives in the capitals concerned as expression in favour of participation by those Governments in the mediatory effort."¹⁹

Bingham, the United States' Ambassador in Britain, gave, five days later, his opinion in a report to Washington that "...what he (Eden) really wishes is support of the British and French thesis against interference in the Spanish situation by the Governments of Italy, Germany and Russia."²⁰

In both the goals and the methods of implementing British policy toward the Spanish conflict, the British decision-makers were haunted by the memories of the failures that had been made by Britain during the Abyssinian episode. The still-echoing reverberations of the Hoare-Laval fiasco made British decision-makers determined that the mistakes would not be repeated. Thus even staunch supports of the League of Nations, such as Eden, felt a need to reappraise some of the high hopes that had been placed on the League and to reassesse the utility of the League institutions as a means of advancing British policy goals. Eden told the House of Commons on the 18th June, 1936, "....that the

future of the League needs to be urgently and earnestly considered by all its members....I must make it plain that the Governments are determined that the League should go on.... In our view, the fact that the League has tried and failed in this instance (referring to the Abyssinian episode) is not a reason for making us wish that the attempt had not been made, but it is reason for making us determine to seek so to organise the League that it may achieve the best chance of success hereafter. (interruption) I beg to think that my remarks have some importance. If the League is to have its best chance of success then it must be organised on a basis which takes into account the lessons of the last few months. Those lessons have to be analysed, and the instruction which they give has to be embodied in the future practise of the League....The question is, can the world succeed in reorganising itself on a peace basis? I am convinced despite the events of the last few months that it can, if it will. I am convinced that it remains true that a universal League of Nations of substantially disarmed states, in a world made safe for democracy - that is what the Covenant contemplated - can effectively and without doubt maintain peace, but unhappily as I believe for mankind such a League has never existed in fact, nor in present conditions can it be readily seen how such a League can be made....We have to comprise within one organisation the willing collaboration of Governments of totally divergent character. That gives some indication of the nature of the problem, but unless we face it we can-

not expect the League in the future effectively to meet these problems. At least I will give...this definite assurance, that the Government will strive to restore to the League its full authority, after this set-back which we admit, and to that end we propose to devote ourselves." ²¹

These were brave words and fine hopes, though the final impression left by the speech is of the difficulties rather than the possibilities. Baldwin, in a speech following Eden's gives a more accurate description of the philosophy underlying the formulation of British policy: "We often talk, statesmen who go to Geneva and many of us here, as to what the League should do and what it should not do, and statesmen go, and, I suppose, in certain circumstances they would commit their people to fight....I feel convinced that among the common people of Europe in many countries and in our own country and in France, there is such a loathing of war as such not from fear but from knowledge of what it may mean, that I sometimes wonder if they would march on any other occasion than if they believed their own frontiers were in danger....if you are to have collective security and if there be any truth in what my instinct tells me about men's hearts in Europe, then, indeed, one of the problems before the League of Nations is to educate the peoples of Europe, that they may be ready to fight to restrain the aggressor, and I doubt if today they are....I hope that the League of Nations will be able to make collective security a reality, but there are real difficulties about it....with

the experience I have learnt I would not be responsible for sanctions again until this country had given us authority to strengthen our arms. The right hon. Gentlemen may call that cowardice. Frankly I do not. I think that it is what one owes as trustee for the people, but if there be war in this country, I mean war nearer than the Mediterranean, they will pay for it on the first night with their lives....The man who puts sanctions on or allows this country to do so, unless he has done all in his power to see that his people can be defended at home, is not fit to carry the responsibility of governing his country." ²²

British treatment of the Spanish conflict in the League did not even reflect the pious hopes of Baldwin, becoming concentrated on preventing the conflict from becoming a matter of discussion such as would be likely to lead to action by the League. Del Vayo, the Spanish Foreign Minister, made a plea to the League Assembly on the 25th of September, 1936, pleading for a better understanding of his Government's moral and legal position, insisting that non-intervention was contrary to international law and wholly to the advantage of the rebels, and while he argued that foreign states were furnishing the rebels with the means of resistance, he denied any interference by Spain in the affairs of her neighbours. During the speech Del Vayo, according to Gilbert, the United States Consul at Geneva, exercised considerable constraint as to the content of his speech, and this felt Gilbert could have been a result of a "Continuous effort (that) had been

made during the last few days by a number of delegations especially the British to persuade Del Vayo to keep his speech within bounds which would not precipitate controversial discussion of the points he would raise."²³

Technical arguments had been developed in the League of Nations to obviate the League's taking a position on the Spanish conflict, such as that the League did not apply to a civil conflict,²⁴ while Eden advised the Spanish Government not to appeal to the League under Article 11 of the Covenant upon the recognition of the Franco Government by Italy and Germany in November, 1936.²⁵

At a private meeting of the League Council on the 10th of December, the Spanish conflict was placed on the agenda, while only Spain and Sweden were represented by their Foreign Ministers, which, according to Gilbert "...is regarded as obviously evidencing the desire of the Council states to be involved as little as possible and in particular to be in the position more easily to evade making commitments." Gilbert continued in his report to Washington: "In association with the virtually expressed desire of London and Paris to limit League action in this affair, note is taken here of the Anglo-French joint démarche of December 4 to Berlin, Rome, Lisbon and Moscow soliciting non-intervention in Spain and suggesting an offer of mediation between the parties to the conflict. In certain League circles this action is represented as prejudicing in advance the action of the Council and as tantamount to a public disregard by the two chief

League powers of the international status and purpose of the League and as an assertion of its impotence, which are regarded as prejudicial to its future." ²⁶

In the method of implementing policy therefore, the British decision-makers desired to avoid the institutions of the League and to advance British policy goals by means of negotiations through the diplomatic representatives of the states concerned, and thus retain as much freedom of manoeuvre as possible. But what were to be the policy goals in the period after the raising of sanctions against Italy? Baldwin raised this question in the Commons on June 23rd, 1936:

"The question is, what is our policy? The League has received a set-back, and a bad setback....The duty^l of the League is to see what ^e they can do in the light of the experience they have had, in the light of the present state of Europe, and to see how far they can make collective security a reality. Our policy is still based...on the League of Nations....the second object of our policy is the appeasement of the situation in Europe. We are most anxious to get onto those negotiations....The safeguarding of ourselves in the West is of vital importance. It may come to that if the League of Nations breaks down ultimately, but we are not there yet. I have every hope, but negotiations may be futile if, when negotiations come between our three countries, we cannot make provision for the same security in the countries to the centre and the East of Europe as we hope to make for ourselves. That is the policy on which we shall be directly occupied for weeks to come....and I hope that when September comes my

right hon. friend and whatever colleagues go with him may begin to lay the foundations of the superstructure which we hope to rear." ²⁷

Eden five days earlier had declared that "The collaboration of Germany is indispensable to the peace of Europe, and we have asked, as successive British Governments have, nothing better than to work with Germany to that end....when I came to the Foreign Office I felt that I must make it plain at once how earnest was my desire to enter into friendly discussions with the German Government in order to secure working arrangements in which that Government could participate. Accordingly I instructed our Ambassador in Berlin to tell Herr Hitler that I shared the view he had expressed as to the importance of close collaboration and understanding between Great Britain, France and Germany, and I expressed the hope that the two Governments would keep that object in view despite the fact that Germany was unwilling at the moment to open discussions....it was important for us and for Europe to be assured that Germany now felt that a point had been reached at which she could signify that she recognised and intended to respect the existing territorial and political status of Europe except of course as it might subsequently be modified by free negotiations and agreements. A frank and a reassuring answer to that question, I am sure would be the signal for a return of confidence to Europe. I believe that nothing less, if I may say so, than a European settlement and appeasement should be our aim." ²⁸

The Spanish conflict therefore broke upon a Britain, whose Government were preparing to initiate a comprehensive attempt to arrive at the general appeasement of Europe. The period that followed the lifting of sanctions against Italy and the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland was in Britain a period of reassessment and reformulation of attitudes and policies in many areas of policy-formulation, in the recreation of the armed forces of Britain to meet new challenges, as we have already seen, as well as the re-directing of Britain's policies towards political question. Into this period, which necessitated a period smooth readjustment, the Spanish question entered to interrupt the developing of these new relations. Hoare makes his attitude very clear: "When I returned to the Cabinet in June, 1936, I looked forward to a period of comparative calm from controversial questions....It was the Spanish Civil War that upset my calculations. Franco's attempted blockade of the Spanish coast and his bombing of British ships brought British naval policy into the very centre of international affairs. Scarcely a day passed in the autumn of 1936 and throughout 1937 that did not involve discussions with the Foreign Office over the many problems raised by incidents in Spanish waters and our policy of non-intervention. The Cabinet was unanimously agreed upon doing everything possible to localise the Spanish conflict."²⁹

The Spanish conflict was an inconvenient irritant in the foreign relations of Britain, one which British policy

in general became concerned to ensure would not deflect the direction of British foreign policy. One must remember the position of Eden in a Cabinet that was, as Alan Campbell Johnson had described it, "top-heavy with foreign experts." ³⁰

The position of Eden became all the more difficult in May, 1936, when Hoare rejoined the Cabinet. Eden has described his feelings on this event in this way: "Towards the end of May Baldwin told me that he had asked Hoare to rejoin the Government as First Lord of the Admiralty. He went on to assure me that I need not be worried that Hoare would interfere with foreign affairs. The importance of this, according to Baldwin, had been explained and accepted. I felt no enthusiasm for this appointment in itself and some disquiet at its possible consequences. I explained that there would now be three former Foreign Secretaries in the Cabinet and that although I was sure that MacDonald would always be as helpful as he could, this was not a particularly happy state of affairs for me. Baldwin spoke comfortably, repeating his assurances. Lord Halifax, however, was much more outspoken when we met the next day. He criticized Baldwin sharply for yielding to Hoare's importunity. A few weeks earlier, Sir Samuel had made a speech in Parliament about Baldwin so adulatory as to be embarrassing to all who heard it!" ³¹

In addition to MacDonald, Simon and Hoare (the latter two who were to become apart of the 'Big Four' in Chamberlain's Government that were to take Britain on the road to Munich, and who both had greivances - they had seen the younger man, Eden, become Foreign Secretary - while each

was suspicious of the appeal of Eden to the British public and were opposed to Eden's adoption of the cause of collective security)³², Baldwin's Government included Halifax and Chamberlain. On June 10th, 1936, Chamberlain in an address to a Conservative political club drew some conclusions from the failure of the League to halt Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia; referring to the idea that the further application of sanctions would aid the cause of the Abyssinians, Chamberlain stated: "That seems to me the very midsummer of madness.... Is it not apparant that the policy of sanctions involves, I do not say war, but a risk of war?...Is it not also apparant from what has happened that, in the presence of such a risk, nations cannot be relied upon to proceed to the last extremity until their vital risks are threatened?"³³ To Eden, "Neville Chamberlain's speech...was to me unexpected, not the least because his support of my arguments for maintaining sanctions had been so consistent and firm....Whatever the merit of this argument, its timing was explosive. I had known nothing of Chamberlain's intention to express these sentiments, which aroused a storm in the House of Commons."³⁴

Halifax, as Lord Privy Seal and the Leader of the House of Lords, occupied an undefined position in the Cabinet, but his relationship to Baldwin as an old and trusted friend and being as well a distinguished and experienced statesman, gave Halifax a special position on problems of foreign policy. Halifax was therefore placed to act to lend his aid, advice, and from the point of view of the remainder of the Cabinet, a restraining influence upon

Eden. To the problems that confronted Britain in this period, Halifax brought a dispassionate desire to apply logic and to avoid emotion in arriving at solutions, that set a model of English pragmatism. Sapsom quotes Halifax as saying before the war that: "I distrust anyone who forsees consequences and advocates remedies to avoid them."³⁵ It has therefore been asserted that "Lord Halifax had been appointed to second Mr. Eden, who, the British Cabinet feared, might act recklessley if left to himself".³⁶

On the 29th July, Halifax declared in the House of Lords that: "...it will be...the duty of this country to use all its influence for the reconciliation of opinions that will be very sharply opposed to one another...there must be a collective plan. Without it the world falls into chas. On that there is universal agreement, and indeed I think on no point in Europe today is there greater agreement than in the opinion that to return to any system that invited, or appeared to invite, the establishment of armed camps ranged in opposition to one another would be to court disaster... it is the duty of all of us, and your Lordships will, I hope believe, that it is the constant endeavour of His Majesty's Government, to use every effort that we may liberate these forces of peace through the promotion of understanding and through the removal between the nations of everything that would impede its growth."³⁷

Of special interest is the fact that Eden was absent from the Foreign Office from the 30th July to the 16th of August, 1936, and Halifax was in charge of the day to day

events in the Foreign Office, ³⁸ during a critical period for the formulation of British (and therefore French) policy toward the Spanish conflict: the British supported French proposal for the observation of a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish conflict was published on the 1st of August and informal inquiries were made "in the most informal manner" ³⁹ of the other governments concerned. We shall see later on that Halifax once again took charge of the Foreign Office during a critical period for the formulation of British foreign policy, in November, 1937; while Eden was absent at the Brussels Conference, Chamberlain and Halifax pressed eagerly ahead ⁴⁰ with the arrangements for the visit of Halifax to Berlin.

While it may be stated in general terms that the British Cabinet was agreed during 1936 and 1937 upon the necessity of a policy of appeasement, of the conciliation of conflicts that were dividing Europe, the value given to the various possible and conflicting policy goals and the methods envisaged as the most likely to achieve a stable Europe, did lead to disagreement within the British Cabinet, and it was this disagreement over methods as well as goals that led to disagreement over what should constitute British policy toward Spain.

Britain during 1936 and the early part of 1937 had, and was, advancing in the attempt to come to some form of modus vivendi with the governments of Germany and Italy. In the attempt to analyse the nature of the differences that did

exist within the British Government toward the dictators, one useful approach is provided by Dean G. Pruitt in his study of the definition of the situation as a determinant of international relations. Pruitt advances the idea that: "One way to account for an individual's social behaviour is to describe his definition of the social situation. By this is meant his image of the people around him - their capabilities, intentions and traits - and his view of how these people relate to his goals and codes of behaviour. Likewise, the decisions made by a policy-maker or the proposals communicated to him by another citizen may be derived from a definition of the international situation. By this is meant a set of images possessed by an individual, representing his view of what other nations are like, what relevance they have to the goals of his own nation, and what behaviour towards them would be appropriate for his own nation. Taking this approach, it is possible to distinguish three broad classes of images that influence action toward another nation:

1. Predictions about the future behaviour of the other nation. Policy-makers and interested citizens are constantly trying to predict the future behaviour of other nations....
2. Perceptions of the basic characteristics of the other nation. Most people are not content with simply observing and predicting another person's actions, they usually want to go further and assess his basic characteristics, the springs from which his behaviour flows. The same is true in the perception of nations. Whole nations are classified into

categories such as friendly, hostile, weak or trustworthy. people rely on such categorisations to explain the behaviour of another nation, and to predict what it will do in the future. They are also a guide to the choice of appropriate policies for dealing with the nation.

3. Conceptions of appropriate ways for dealing with the other nation. When two nations interact over a period of time, certain kinds of action are repeated over and over...the fact that certain patterns are repeated suggests, in addition, the existence of policies or rules of thumb concerning the actions that are appropriate to take toward another nation under most circumstances...

"Three rather specific kinds of image correspond to the three broad classes just described:

- (A) threat perception - the belief that the future behaviour of another nation is likely to frustrate the attainment of a specific goal.
- (B) trust or distrust - the perception of the basic characteristics of another nation as generally trustworthy or untrustworthy.
- (C) responsiveness - the conception of how helpful one's nation should be in dealing with another nation - a general orientation that underlies many more specific action patterns." 41

Hoare is typical of many who have described the attitude of Eden as being too rigidly bound by a moral view of international relations, in which Eden's dedication to the sanctity of principles such as the maintenance of good faith between nations in respect to agreements willingly entered in-

to, placed a serious and dangerous impediment upon his ability to view problems in the 'proper' perspective: "While I cannot point to any specific difference of opinion between us over British policy during the Spanish Civil War, I formed the impression, when I was the First Lord, that he regarded the conflict as one between absolute right and absolute wrong in which the dictator should at all costs be totally defeated and democracy totally defended."⁴²

This inditement by Hoare of Eden would seem to be rather harsh in its evaluation (or at least an indication of Hoare's lack of principle), since Eden's attitude toward the Spanish conflict was a function of his image of the world around him and the methods by which one should deal with that world. When Eden arrived back from the Brussels Conference on the 6th of November (Eden was present from the 2nd of November to the 11th, 1937, at the Nine-Power Conference held in Brussels which was concerned with the problems of the Far East), as recorded in Eden's Memoirs, he found that "...the Prime Minister and Halifax were pressing eagerly ahead with arrangements for the visit (of Halifax to Germany). The original intention had been that Halifax should see Hitler in Berlin during the Sports Exhibition, and it was on this understanding that I had agreed that he should go. A series of telegrams from Henderson now told us that Hitler would not be in Berlin during the material time and that he showed no inclination to meet Halifax there....If Halifax wished to meet the Chancellor, he would have to go to his eyrie at

Berchtesgaden. It even appeared that the Germans wanted to pretend that the whole idea emanated from us. Here was the precise sequence of events that I had wished to avoid....I did not think it good, either for Hitler or for us, that we should appear to be running after him, particularly when the tripartate pact between Germany, Italy and Japan had just been announced on November 6th. So I telegraphed London: '...from the point of view of our position in Europe and public opinion at home it is essential to avoid giving the impression of our being in pursuit of the German Chancellor.' At the same time I explained my views by telephone to Lord Cranborne and asked him to speak to Chamberlain. Cranborne did so that afternoon, saying that it would be most undesirable that we should appear in the role of supplicant.⁴³ When Eden arrived back from Brussels for the last time, he went to see Chamberlain to explain his concern at the exaggerated accounts of the scope of Halifax's visit given in the press, together with complaints over the slowness of rearmament, he was advised by Chamberlain to go home and take an aspirin.⁴⁴ "This," comments Eden, "hardly seemed an adequate remedy for the national deficiencies, so I returned to the Foreign Office and wrote to Chamberlain: 'Not to exaggerate the significance of this visit. It is an occasion for an informal and unofficial contact and not for negotiations. That being so, it is even more ridiculous to suggest that a visit of this character is indicative of any change in the fundamentals of British foreign policy.'⁴⁵"

The fundamentals of British foreign policy included, in Eden's view, not only goals to be attained but also the methods to reach these goals. His concern that it was essential to avoid giving the impression of chasing Hitler, of not placing Britain in the role of the supplicant was based on his belief that agreements made between states are worthless if made on the basis of a threat by one of the parties. Halifax in his meeting with Hitler has spoken of "possible alterations in the European order which might be destined to come about with the passage of time....England was interested to see that any alteration should come about through the course of peaceful evolution and that methods should be avoided which might cause far-reaching disturbances, which neither the Chancellor nor other countries desired."⁴⁶

Eden's comment on this was that: "I wished that Halifax had warned Hitler more strongly against intervention in Central Europe. 'Alterations through the course of peaceful evolution' meant one thing to Halifax and probably something quite different to the Fuhrer. Hitler was capable of taking this as giving him freedom to increase subversive Nazi activity in Austria, or to stir up the grievances of the Sudeten Germans...."

"The conversation was carefully studied at the Foreign Office, where it was noticed that Hitler had now adopted the theme that a general settlement was not careful politics, that immediate negotiations between Great Britain and Germany were unnecessary, but that if Britain really wanted to improve relations, she could do so by satisfying German colonial

claims. It was noticeable that Hitler had offered no guarantees about his policy in Central Europe. Once more we were to be asked to make all the concessions without any return. I minuted: 'If we do not get, we shall not give'....

"As I had feared, Lord Halifax's visit was without positive results. My loyal collaborators at the Foreign Office were proved right in the uneasiness which they had expressed about it from the start. One of its effects was to weaken my own position and I was mistaken in ever tolerating it."⁴⁷

Eden's sense of what was realistic in international affairs therefore differed quite radically from that of Chamberlain, and to a lesser extent to that of Halifax, being built on an assessment of the appropriate ways to deal with other nations and his belief that for Britain to negotiate with the Dictators merely for the sake of negotiation or the vague hope that it would improve the international situation would only lead Britain into a weaker negotiating position, while encouraging the Dictators to demand more. Pruitt, having defined trust as the expectation that another nation will be helpful, attributes trust to a feeling that, or a conception in the mind that, one's nation should be helpful to another nation. He then states that there are four ways by which one nation can judge another nation to be trustworthy: (1) by reorganising incentives for the other nation in order to induce it to be trustworthy (2) judging the other nation on the evidence of its past experience (3) by means of tests (4) by means of a general evaluation of the other nation.⁴⁸ In view of the suspicions that were held by Eden and the British Foreign Office on the aims of

German foreign policy, general evaluations and past experience did not serve a view that Germany would prove helpful to Britain of its own volition, and so Eden demanded that Hitler should prove his trustworthiness by meeting Britain with concessions that would equal those made by Britain. As we have already noted, Eden felt that incentives granted to Germany would only serve to encourage her appetite, rather than to engender a more helpful attitude on her part.

During June, 1937, the possibility of a visit to London by the German Foreign Minister, Von Neurath, was discussed between London and Berlin. On June 11th, Mackenson, the German State Secretary, informed the British Ambassador that Neurath was prepared to visit, arriving on the 23rd, and added that the visit would only be possible on the condition that German demands made after the Iviza incident had been settled in a manner satisfactory to the Germans. ⁴⁹ The Iviza incident refers to the bombing of the German pocket battleship, Deutschland, as it was lying in the roadstead of Iviza. Reference has already been made to this incident and the German action of bombing the harbour of Almeria in retaliation, a measure that Eden considered as too extreme and leading to a very dangerous situation. On May 30th, the German Government withdrew from the Non-Intervention Committee until such time as it obtained a positive guaranty against repetition of such incidents. The details of the British and German proposals will be dealt in greater detail at a later point, but the essence of the differing viewpoints

lay in the German demand that paragraph (c) of the British proposal, which read that: "The two parties should be informed that failure to implement these assurances and any interference with ships employed in patrolling duties will in future form the subject of consultation between all four countries on the situation thus created." ⁵⁰ should be altered to read that: "That any infraction of the aforesaid assurances will be regarded as concern of all four powers who, irrespective of any immediate defensive measures considered necessary by the directly concerned power, will immediately seek agreement among themselves concerning the steps to be taken concertedly." ⁵¹

On June 12th, the British Ambassador in Germany at the personal request of Eden, called on Mackenson to inform him that: "Eden regretted exceedingly that the visit had suddenly been made to depend on a settlement of the Iviza incident and reminded us that the first suggestion for the visit had been made precisely in connection with a settlement of this incident. Nor had the Foreign Minister set this condition later but had made the time of the incident dependent first upon the completion of his Balkan trip and then on sounding out the Furrer's opinion, and had finally designated the time between June 21 and 28 as convenient for the trip without mentioning the condition that was now being advanced. Eden deplored the present standpoint all the more since the danger of indiscretions continued to make it extremely desirable to announce the visit as soon as possible. The Ambassador went on to read from the instruction that Eden did

not understand why the Spanish should not be taken up in
the London discussions."⁵²

It becomes clear that to the Germans the holding out of the promise of talks offered a means of obtaining British accession to the German viewpoint that the guarantees following from the Iviza incident, should allow, in the event of the reoccurrence of such an incident, that 'the directly concerned power' should have freedom of action to undertake such 'immediate defensive measures' as it thought fit. But Eden, as with Halifax's visit to Berchtesgaden, was anxious that the talks with Neurath should not lead to the appearance that Britain was acting in the role of supplicant to Germany. It is this that forms the basis of Eden's insistence that the British should be able to announce that the Germans had agreed to definite points of departure for the negotiations, and especially a discussion of the Spanish problem. On June 8th, the British government proposed the following text for the press announcement of the visit: "Baron von Neurath will visit London on June 24th as the official guest of His Majesty's Government. No negotiations are under consideration but it is hoped that visit will offer an opportunity for an exchange of views (on Spanish problem and) on (other) matters of common interest to the two countries."⁵³ On the following day, Neurath told Mackensen that he wished the text to be amended to omit the words "Spanish problem" and after "opportunity for an exchange of views" add "on matters of common interest for the two countries".⁵⁴ Also of interest is the quibble

that developed on the question as to where it should appear that the initiative for the talks had come from; Mackensen reported on the 8th: "Concerning the proposed text of the press announcement I noticed the absence of any emphasis on the fact that the invitation comes from the British Government. Sir Neville was of a different opinion, since in England to be a "guest" means to be "invited". Any particular emphasis on the Spanish question as the subject of discussion is in my opinion inexpedient because of the sensational effect to be expected from it. Reference to a tour d'horizon would probably be sufficient." ⁵⁵

It is clear that the Spanish question begins to transcend the issues directly devolving from the strategic and economic interests of Britain and Spain, and evolves into a "test" of the utility of talks between Britain and Germany, in particular, and the "trustworthiness" of the German Government, in general. Without some semblance of a quid pro quo, Eden was reluctant to pay the price that the Germans demanded, namely, the German warships should be allowed to retaliate in any way seen fit in the event of their being subjected to an attack by Republican aircraft or submarines.

The metaphysical quality ascribed to the Spanish problem by Eden is more clearly observable in the case of the relations between Italy and Britain. Britain had moved towards the appeasement of Italy by the Gentleman's Agreement of January 2, 1937, by which Great Britain and Italy disclaimed any desire to modify the status quo in

the Mediterranean and undertook to respect each others' rights and interests. In a note delivered to the Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee, on the 20th of December, 1936, the British Government stated that it had observed with growing concern the increasing number of foreigners entering Spain. Noting that the representatives of the Governments on the Committee had on December the 9th, undertook to ask their respective governments to agree to extend the Non-Intervention Agreement to cover indirect as well as direct intervention and, as a first step, that this extension should cover the question of "volunteers", the British Government considered that it was of the utmost importance that steps should be taken by these Governments to put an immediate stop to the departure from their respective countries of their nationals with a view to their taking service with either of the parties in Spain.⁵⁶

On January the 13th, Ciano informed Hassell that the desire of Italy before giving her official reply to the British note, was to implement further tactics of delay because on January the 14th, an additional 4,000 men were to be shipped to Spain, and in addition, a new division, of 9,000 combat troops plus 4,000 other personnel, were to be ready between January 22nd and January 25th.⁵⁷ These actions on the part of Italy were in direct contradiction to assurances that Italy had made in regard to the maintenance of the status quo in the Western Mediterranean

that had been given in the Gentleman's Agreement, the undertaking of December the 9th, by the members of the Non-Intervention Committee, and assurances given by Ciano to Ingram, the British Charge d'Affaires in Rome, on the 12th of September 1936, that the Italian Government had not, either before or since the revolution in Spain, engaged in any negotiations with General Franco whereby the status quo in the Western Mediterranean would be altered, nor would they engage in any such negotiations in the future. Eden, in the House of Commons on December the 10th made references to these assurances. Atherton, the Counselor of the United States Embassy in London, reported two days later: "In a conversation at the Foreign Office on the following day, the Embassy was informed that Mr. Eden's ... was made in order to remind the Italian Government of the undertakings which they had given to the British Government last September, both in Rome and in London, in view of the activities of certain Fascisti in the Balearic Islands." ⁵⁸

One startling admission was made by the Italian representative at a meeting of the subcommittee of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 23rd of March, 1937, described here by Maisky: "Grandi began a long and rhetorical speech to prove that the 'volunteers' played a quite insignificant role in the Spanish war, and that the Soviet side was dragging up the matter purely for propaganda purposes. In doing so he got very worked up, and I noted to myself 'He's rising!' To add fuel to the

flames, I began to 'stare out' the Italian Ambassador fixedly. He gave way first, stirred uneasily in his chair and tried to turn away. But I kept my eyes on him, and slowly, with pauses, putting deliberate emphasis on certain words, I asked: 'Are we to understand the Italian Ambassador as meaning that Italy and Germany, contrary to the decision of the Committee, are positively refusing to bring their "volunteers" out of Spain?'

"And here Grandi's Italian temperament again did him a disservice. He, as it were, broke his chain, and suddenly fired out in one breath: 'If you want my opinion, I'll say this, not one single Italian volunteer will leave Spain until Franco is victorious!'"⁵⁹

Eden, in a memorandum on January th 7th, had set out the wider implications of the Spanish conflict: "The Spanish civil war has ceased to be an internal Spanish issue and has become an international battle-ground. The character of the future government of Spain has now become less important to the peace of Europe than that the dictators should not be victorious in that country. The extent and character of the intervention now practised by Germany and Italy have made it clear to the world that the object of these powers is to secure General Franco's victory whether or not it represents the will of the Spanish people....

"It is therefore my conviction that unless we cry a halt in Spain, we shall have trouble this year in one or other of the danger points I have referred to. It follows

that to be firm in Spain is to gain time, and to gain time is what we want. We cannot in this instance gain time by marking it. It is to be remembered that in the language of the Nazi Party any adventure is a minor adventure. They spoke thus of the Rhineland last year, they are speaking thus of Spain today, they will speak thus of Memel, Danzig or Czechoslovakia tomorrow. It is only by showing them that these dangerous distinctions are false that we can hope to avert a greater calamity." ⁶⁰

Eden, on returning to the Foreign Office from Yorkshire, on January the 4th, learnt that the further large consignments of Italian volunteers had just arrived in Spain. To Eden it seemed, that since the Gentleman's Agreement had been signed two days before, that it was only too likely that Mussolini had used the negotiations for a cover plan for further intervention. Eden wrote in his diary: "It is fortunate that I insisted on an exchange of letters about Majorca and the integrity of Spanish territory.... At least we have given nothing away to Italy. It remains to be seen whether what we have gained will prove of any material value. Time alone will show and nothing would be more foolish than openly to attempt to woo Mussolini away from Hitler." ⁶¹ Eden's comment in his memoirs is that "The failure of the so-called Gentleman's Agreement taught me a lesson, that there was no value in negotiating with Mussolini again, unless he first carried out the engagements he had already entered into." ⁶²

Signor Crolla, the Italian Charge d'Affaires, shortly before Christmas 1937, handed Eden a document reminding him of Chamberlain's promise of the preceeding July that Britain would be "ready at any time to enter upon conversations " and declaring that the Italians were ready to do so. Eden in his reply reiterated that Britain desired to improve relations with Italy but these could only be realized on a basis of reciprocity. ^{o3} On the subject of the projected talks between Britain and Italy, Eden minuted to the Foreign Office on January the 30th 1937: "Do we really believe that we can reach an agreement with Italy of any real value if the Spanish question is not dealt with? A year ago we attempted this: we signed an agreement which ignored the Spanish situation and a fortnight afterwards Italy began sending men in large quantities to Spain. Any repetition of such an event - and it can surely not be ruled out as a possibility - would finally destroy our new agreement as it began to destroy our old agreement a year ago. If we are to ask the League to approve our agreement with Italy and to authorize us to grant de jure recognition on account of that agreement, there must be some contribution in it to European appeasement. Spain is clearly the largest contribution of this kind that can be made.

"Moreover, is it so certain that Signor Mussolini would dislike to discuss the Spanish situation with us in our conversations? After all, he has clearly some anxious decisions to take in the next few months.

"In any event it is surely true that so long as the Spanish situation continues with recurrent bombings of the civilian population by Italian aeroplanes and other manifestations of Italian intervention in one form or another, there cannot be an improvement in relations between this country and Italy. Signor Grandi well realizes this, indeed, he often refers to the Spanish Shadow."⁶⁴

This attitude on the part of Eden has led many to accuse Eden of being rabidly anti-Italian, and allowing a personal dislike of Mussolini to mar his judgement. One might feel that Eden's attitude is a reflection of an appreciation general to the Foreign Office during that period of the status and significance of the European Powers. Valentine Lawford having joined the Foreign Office and being selected for the Central department (something of an honour as Nigel Ronald, "the potentially sympathetic, potentially professorial Diplomatic Private Secretary, had hinted, between impressive sniffs...for the department & in Foreign Office parlance- 'dealt with' France and Germany ..."),⁶⁵ did not play a part, beyond feeling sick and solemn, when the news was received of the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and Monsieur Barthou. As Lawford relates: "The King's murder, I gathered, was the concern of the Southern department, who from their rooms adjacent to ours, along the ground-floor passage, tried sportingly (but by Central department standards not quite seriously) to cope with a picturesque but politically secondary province ranging from Italy through Austria and the

Hapsburg Succession states to the southernmost tip of the Balkans." ⁶⁶

While it is true that the majority of Britains find it difficult to take seriously a country chiefly associated with summer vacations, opera singers, mandolins, and rather inedible cooking, this cannot be taken to be the sole basis of Eden's attitude toward Italy. It is true, however, that Eden's attitude towards Italy was based on the belief that Mussolini's Empire was but a cardboard substitute for that of the Romans. In 1943, Eden wrote in his diary: "Looking back the thought comes again. Should we not have shown more determination in pressing through with sanctions in 1935 and if we had could we not have called Musso's bluff and at least postponed this war? The answer, I am sure, is yes. We built Musso into a great power, the Greeks first debunked him." ⁶⁷ In February of 1938, Eden tried to impress upon Chamberlain the real facts of Italy's position in the world and the difficulties faced by that country: "As I see it, the position is now this. Mussolini is an extremely uncomfortable position. He has commitments in Abyssinia and Spain, neither of which is turning out well. He now sees a government in power in Berlin which, it is quite true, is comparatively enthusiastic for the Rome-Berlin Axis, but which is also apparently determined to pursue a more active foreign policy in Central Europe with Austria as the first item on its list of intended victims. In such a position we have nothing to gain by showing ourselves over-eager. If Mussolini is

really anxious to reach a settlement with us, then the opportunity we are affording him of liquidating his commitments in Spain gives him an excellent chance of proving his sincerity. He will now, moreover, have heard from Grandi how ready we are to take up this question without delay." ⁶⁸

In examining the differing attitudes of Eden to Italy and Germany, it is useful to revert to the study by Dean G. Pruitt of the definition of the situation as a determinant of international action. In addition to trust and distrust, Pruitt saw two other broad classes of images that influenced the action of one nation to another nation: threat perception, and responsiveness. For Eden, in Europe, the main threat to British interests lay in German aspirations for territorial expansion. It was this, in the main, that underlay Eden's conception of the appropriate methods for dealing with Germany on one hand, and Italy on the other hand. Eden was far more "responsive" to the demands put forward by Germany than to those put forth by Italy. In the course of the Iviza Incident, Britain did far more to meet the wishes of the Germans than she was to move towards the policy goals of the Italians while Eden remained in office. Eden's justification for the Nyon Conference (to which we shall be referring at a later point) was that: "There are those who say that at all costs we must avoid being brought into opposition with Germany, Japan and Italy. This is certainly true, but it is not true that the best way to avoid such a state of affairs is continually to

retreat before all three of them. To do so is to invite their converging upon us. In any retreat there must on occasion be counter-attack, and the correct method of counter-attack is to do so against the weakest member of the three in overwhelming force. That is the justification of Nyon."⁶⁹

It would be a mistake, however, to formulate Eden's attitude towards Spain purely in terms of that conflict being a "test" of the willingness of Italy and Germany to enter into meaningful negotiations with Britain. The strategic importance of Spain has already been considered, and the economic importance of that country to Britain has yet to be examined. The relationship of the strategic and economic factors to British policy will be fully examined shortly, but in the meantime impact of France upon British policy should be examined. Britain and France during this period were tied to each other in a bond with neither fully desired, but neither was able to jettison. The bond was the threat to the security and interests of these two countries posed by German military might and revisionists aspirations. In any conflict in which France became involved with Germany, Britain could not stand aloof and watch passively the defeat of France, for such a defeat raised the spectre of a German hegemony that would threaten the security of the British Isles. Whether the British decision-makers wish to admit it or not, Britain was committed to the maintenance of a balance of

power in Europe, and France was essential to some semblance of an equilibrium.

But although the interests of Britain and France in the main coincided, suspicions existed between the two states as to the dedication of the other to the common cause. Lawford provides us with an indication of the suspicions that were held in Britain of the French leadership, as he sketches for us this incident that occurred in the Forest of Rambouillet: "...the afternoon began to seem long as one after another my companions, hearing that I was a secretary in the British Embassy, manoeuvred their mounts into a position where they could conveniently assure me of their life-long friendship for perfidious Albion, some of them adding however: 'But why do you English like this awful fellow Blum?' I did my best with the stock reply that His Majesty's Government were less concerned with who was at the head of the French Government than with whether it might be willing to cooperate with us in matters of common interest, which in our opinion Monsieur Blum certainly was. They looked puzzled, and asked me instead what I thought of French hunting: a question which was even more difficult to answer convincingly."⁷⁰

The Abyssinian episode had left its mark on the relations between the two countries. The Anglophobe press, more venomous than usual, vilified Britain rather than the Germans, while the French always seemed to be able to find convincing reasons for doing nothing. In Vansittart's eyes "Laval was troublesome and displeasing, as were the

grubbiness of his white ties and a chain-smoking swarthiness suggestive of sun rather than soap.... He thought so little of us that we inevitably expected too much of him.... Reasoning from fear he saw obstacles everywhere - he and Flandin always struck me as frightened men."⁷¹ Chamberlain wrote in January 1938, "She can never keep a secret for more than half an hour, nor a government for more than nine months."⁷²

The Popular Front Government, which came to power in France during May 1936, was faced with formidable difficulties, the chief being the maintainance of the cohesion of the coalition of the Socialists and the Radicals. The workers, especially in the Paris region, mistook the electoral victory and the prospect of exercising power for the beginning of the Revolution, and in the weeks that followed the election called a series of strikes. As James Joll has written, Blum saw both the reasons for this and the danger represented. He told the congress of the Socialist Party that met on the 31st of May: "It is perfectly natural and perfectly explicable, especially after a long period of hardship and suffering, that the victory achieved in the political field should create in the working class a feeling of impatience to see realised those reforms for which the electoral victory allows them to hope."⁷³

The revolt by Franco against the Popular Front Government in Spain exacerbated the divisions existing within the fabric of French society, threatening to shift the policy of the French Government from its uneasy perch

between the Communists and Socialists on the Left, and those on the Right who coined the slogan 'Better Hitler than Blum!'

"There was " states Joll, "perhaps no issue which caused Blum more personal suffering and no point in his career where a policy, adopted on rational grounds, even if it did not wholly accord with his own instinct, led him more obviously into the kind of dilemma with which a sensitive and intelligent man in politics is likely to be confronted. Blum had to use his own personal credit with the Socialist Party to persuade many of its members to accept his policy: he made a dramatic appeal to the most critical of them on 6 September, 1936, when revolt in the party was rising, and ended with the words: 'There are two things I can never be reproached with - lack of courage and lack of loyalty.' His Spanish policy led him into a position in which both his courage and his loyalty were to be called in question by the critics in his own party, and, more especially, by the Communists."⁷⁴

Tied to France by the power balance, the British Government was necessarily anxious that France should do nothing to precipitate an armed conflict between herself and the Dictators. There was, therefore, an awareness in Britain of the necessity to formulate policy towards Spain, in form if not in substance, so that the susceptibilities of the Left would not be excessively outraged by the abandonment of Democracy in that country. The German Ambassador in France, Welczeck, reported on March the 25th,

1937: "The attitude of Italy at the last meeting of the London Non-Intervention Committee, in which Grandi stated that the question of the withdrawal of Italian volunteers from Spain could not be discussed and declared that the volunteers would not leave Spanish soil before Franco had won complete and final victory, was such a flagrant violation of the basis and the spirit of previous agreements that France considered it a serious danger to the peace. Viewed from the standpoint of reciprocity, France had at least as much right to intervene in Spain as Italy, and could not permit Italy to usurp in the most obvious manner the right to decide the fate of Spain, at the same time completely disregarding the interests of this neighboring country. France would show Mussolini that she would not allow herself to be treated in this cavalier manner, as if she were a second-rate state. A matter of such importance could not be dealt with by the Non-Intervention Committee in London alone, which was competent for technical details, but, in view of the gravity of the situation, would also have to be brought up for discussion through the usual diplomatic channels. "France had gone to the very limit of tolerance in the face of this inadmissible behavior on the part of Italy, but she could permit such cavalier treatment no longer. The French Government did not request that we exert pressure on our Italian friends, but that we join with those powers which demanded of Italy the same strict observance

of obligations entered into as was required of all the other participants. Thus it was not a question of mediation but of a joint appeal for good faith in observing an agreement. In the course of the discussion we also spoke in a general way of the practical implementation of the plan, which I termed impossible, as far as the Reds were concerned, because of lack of authority. Delbos replied that reciprocity was, of course, essential, and, if this should prove impossible for the Left, then those on the Right would have to be granted the same privilege. In no case, however, should it be permissible for one of the partners to reject implementation bluntly from the very start and thereby violate the very concept of non-intervention."⁷⁵

While British Diplomats in this period do not seem to have indulged in the present American passion for categorizing and labelling, Sir Eric Phipps, British Ambassador in Paris, might have found the current terms "hawks" and "doves" of use when he reported on September 24, 1938: "I think therefore that His Majesty's Government should realise extreme danger of even appearing to encourage small, but noisy and corrupt, war group here."⁷⁶

Lord Strang has recounted the sense of outrage felt in the British Foreign Office at this telegram, and those who had the best interests of France at heart being described as a corrupt war group. The Foreign Office and Eden felt that British Policy had to be based on an understanding with France of the common interests of the two countries. Of Chamberlain's desire to begin conversa-

tions with Italy, Eden wrote to Vansittart on the 4th of August 1937: "I am presuming that there will be no further correspondence between No. 10 and Rome without my seeing it. I naturally attach importance to this.

"Meanwhile I think that the French are taking a more realistic view of this Italian move than some of our press. No doubt Mussolini wants recognition of Abyssinia, but so do we want the Italians out of Majorca, mechanized divisions out of Libya, explanation of fortified islands in the Mediterranean and Red Sea, etc. It would be the height of folly to concede in fact what the Italians want, in return for mere promises.... I think it important that our press should emphasize the connection in our mind between Italians in Spain and better Anglo-Italian relations.... We must not be backward in setting out our desiderata vis-a-vis Italy and there must be an end of giving and of not getting... By all means let us show ourselves ready to talk, but in no scrambling hurry to offer incense on a dictator's altar.... We have to remember in all our dealings with Italy that Mussolini's object is to show himself courted, waning weakling. We must give him no pretext for that, or we shall damage ourselves in the Near and Middle East at a time when our authority is important to us for Palestine, etc....

"Personally I feel that we have a chance now of bettering conditions in Europe, but this depends on two things:

(1) our own firmness

(2) maintenance of friendship with France, which

alone has maintained peace these last difficult eighteen months." ⁷⁷

Eden tried to impress upon his colleagues that Britain's real affinities and interests, strategic as well as political, lay with France, a fact that some were reluctant to accept. This extract from Eden's memoirs serves as an illustration: "An incident after the Cabinet had broken up one day was typical. Kingsley Wood was standing by the fireplace at 10 Downing Street, within earshot of the Prime Minister and also of myself, as I moved away on the other side of the table. He said, in tones clearly intended to be heard by me, as well as by the Prime Minister: 'It's time that the Foreign Office thought less about France and tried to get on terms with Germany.' I made no comment then." ⁷⁸

While Eden based his desire to see the Non-Intervention Agreement upheld on his unwillingness to give encouragement to the revisionist desires of Mussolini and Hitler and to maintain the understanding with France by easing the position of the French Premier, he has justified the adoption of the general policy of non-intervention in Spain by stating that such intervention would have served little purpose while bringing great risks to the security and peace of Europe. In a speech to the House of Commons on January the 19th, 1937, Eden made a prediction: "If any hon. Member believes that as the outcome of the civil war in Spain any single foreign power, or pair of foreign powers, is going to dominate Spain for a generation, to rule its life, to direct its foreign policies, then I am convinced he is mistaken in his judgement, and I would reply to him

that of all the possible outcomes of this civil war, that is most unlikely. I will tell the House why.

"We should be strongly opposed to any such happening, and I have no doubt that we should not be alone in our opposition.... Almost the only thing that can unite Spain, profoundly, bitterly divided as she is, would be a common hatred of the foreigner. That strong partisans on one side or the other will feel gratitude to those who have helped them in the civil strife is likely enough, but, unless the whole past history of Spain is belied in this conflict, the great mass of the proud Spanish people will feel the least illwill to those nations which have intervened the least...."⁷⁹

But while Eden may have been justified in feeling that the Spanish people would not react with gratitude to outside nations who intervened in Spanish affairs, his optimism that no single foreign power, or pair of foreign powers would dominate Spain as a result of intervention, this may with some justification be deemed a rationalization of the strategic weaknesses of Britain that led intervention by Britain to carry too many risks. Since, as we have already seen, the domination of Spain by a power in conflict with Britain and France would constitute a serious threat both to the strategic balance in Europe and the security of Britain's sea-links with her Empire, to prevent such a foreign power dominating Spain would become a policy goal of Britain. The desire to prevent such an occurrence would therefore reinforce Eden's

attitudes towards Italy and Germany, and his desire to make the Non-Intervention Agreement a real limiting factor upon Italian and German intervention in Spain. Eden, as he records in his memoirs, began to be aware in August of 1936 that Italian intervention in Spain raised new dangers for Britain: "If Mussolini were to occupy the Balearic Islands, he would gain a base for naval and military operations 250 miles nearer Gibraltar. In spite of this, my own belief was that no Spanish government, whether of the right or the left, would willingly grant to a foreigner facilities of such importance as to threaten our sea communications, if only for reasons of national pride. But there could be no certainty. We had, until this time, counted upon a friendly or neutral Spain. If a Communist or Fascist government were established there, we could no longer assume the safety of our communications through the Mediterranean or by way of the Atlantic. This was a powerful reason for the enforcement of non-intervention. It was important to us that the winning side should not grant territorial prizes or negotiate closer military relations with other powers. Even so, we could not tell whether Mussolini would extract some concessions from a victorious Franco. I minuted:

'I fear that whichever side wins, the outlook for us must be anxious and we must have the ultimate position of Gibraltar constantly in mind'"

On August 14th, 1936, Eden telephoned the Foreign Office

from Yorkshire to ensure that everything possible was being done to support the French non-intervention initiative of August 2nd, since, to Eden, the newspapers had seemed "to indicate that we had taken up an acquiescent attitude, rather than one of firm support of Blum's proposals." ⁸¹ From then on, Eden was engaged in a long and up-hill struggle to give meaning to the Non-Intervention Agreement, both with his colleagues in the Cabinet and with the other states concerned with the struggle in Spain, notably Italy, Germany and Portugal.

During the next months the failure of certain of the states party to the Non-Intervention Agreement to act in accordance with the principle embodied in the Agreement, led to an acrimonious series of meetings in November of the Committee. In these conditions Eden decided to elaborate a plan to supervise the entry of war materials into Spain, a suggestion that had been made earlier by Corbin to Eden and Maisky to the Committee. ⁸² On November 2nd, Plymouth placed the plan before the Committee the control plan, which contained provisions for the creation of two groups of neutral persons, one to be stationed in the territory of the Government, the other in the territory of Franco's forces, with the right to ascertain by all appropriate methods that nothing prohibited by the Non-Intervention Agreement was being imported. The plan was on the 12th unanimously approved, with the total number of personnel required to operate the plan set at 1,000 and the annual rate of expenditure at ⁸³ £1,000,000.

Meanwhile the Italians and Germans were beginning to move into Spain large-scale military forces. The American Ambassador in Italy reported on the 28th of November that active recruiting was taking place in Italy to obtain trained men for Franco's forces, and that 10,000 militia men were being selected for Spain. In addition, 400 machine gunners, and a force of Alpine infantry, probably in excess of one battalion, were being selected. It was also understood that 2,000 men had already sailed at that date. ⁸⁴ Bay, the American Consul at Seville reported on the 29th that 5,000 Germans, mostly aviation service, had arrived in Seville, with 2,500 also landing at Vigo. Bay also reported that, with the failure of Franco to capture the insurgent troops had become spiritless, so that Captain Ronald Strunk, said to be Hitler's chief agent in Spain, had informed Franco that unless he accepted German direction of the campaign Germany would withdraw most of its material. ⁸⁵

The British control plan had been proposed by Britain, in large part, to prevent a breakdown of the Committee, as the pro-Republican and pro-Nationalist factions in the Non-Intervention Committee alleged breaches of the Agreement by each other and tempers began to flare. For Eden "A breakdown on the Committee would have had baleful consequences, perhaps even on the Anglo-French alliance, which I regarded as indispensable to our joint survival and that of freedom in Europe." ⁸⁶ The result of the increased intervention by Italy and Germany was the series of notes and appeals addressed to the two count-

ries by Eden, that we have already observed, and answered in an evasive fashion. In reply to the British and French démarches of December 5th, calling upon the German, Italian, Portuguese and Soviet Governments to announce their firm determination to refrain from any action, direct or indirect, which might result in foreign intervention in Spain, the position of the German Government, as defined by Weizsacker (the Acting Director of the Political Department in Berlin), was as follows: "In connection with the discussion in the embargo committee of the problem of indirect intervention, the idea of granting priority to the question of volunteers arose, The German Government, in accordance with the position it has taken from the outset, unconditionally advocates the extension of the embargo measures to the question of volunteers, but it is of the opinion that the problem of indirect intervention at the present stage must be considered as a whole, or that at least the problem of financial support, which is of equal importance in strengthening the belligerents, should be settled simultaneously." 87

This attempt to extend the terms of reference to the more controversial problems which would necessarily present far greater problems for reaching agreement between the powers can be taken to be evasive tactics by the Germans to prevent consideration and agreement on the more straightforward question of the entry of volunteers into Spain, which formed the focus of concern for Britain and France, and it was in this light that the German "manoeuvres" were seen by Eden, 88

The British pressure on the Governments concerned continued, shifting from the Committee where no progress was being achieved to direct representations to the Governments of Italy, Germany, Portugal and the Soviet Union. In its note of the 26th of December, the British Government expressed its concern over the increasing number of volunteers entering Spain and urged that the Governments of these states would take appropriate legislative action to prevent their nationals from taking service with either party in Spain.⁸⁹ Britain again addressed notes on the 6th of January, 1937, expressing its concern over the continued flow of volunteers, and in its note to Germany, it was stated that: "His Majesty's Government cannot but take the gravest view of any further prolongation of the present circumstances in which so-called 'volunteers' continue to flow in organised contingents into the affected areas of Spain. Time is of the essence in this dangerous problem and for that purpose it is essential that no further time should be lost by any delay in any quarter."⁹⁰

Eden asked the German Chargé d'Affairs to call on him, on the following day and asked him to transmit the following information to the German Government: "He was under the impression that the Anglo-Italian Agreements could be misconstrued in Germany to mean that since their conclusion England was less interested in putting the ban on volunteers into immediate effect. The contrary was the case. Since the signing of the Mediterranean pact, England's attitude on the question of volunteers had rather stiffened considerably as a result of the numbers flocking to both Spanish parties.

He had just spoken to Baldwin, who had expressed to him his grave anxiety with regard to the European situation because of the influx of volunteers to Spain." ⁹¹

Eden, in his memorandum which he drew up on the 7th of January, 1937 (and to which reference has already been made) having drawn the conclusion that Spain had become an international battleground, with the result that the character of the future government of that country had become of less importance to the peace of Europe than that the Dictators should not prove victorious in the conflict, proposed that Britain should devise a control plan that would serve to limit the entry of volunteers into Spain. Eden thought that since Britain was known to be truly neutral that she should take up the heaviest share of responsibility, and that the services of the Royal Navy should be offered to supervise at sea all approaches to ports and harbours to prevent the entry of men or material. Other nations would be asked to agree that British ships be entitled to visit and search merchant vessels or send them into a convenient port if the search could not be completed at sea. As evidence of Britain's impartiality, Eden suggested that each British vessel carry a naval officer of one of the countries that had signed the Non-Intervention Agreement.

Eden explained the purpose of the memorandum to Baldwin who approved the policy, and agreed to call an informal meeting of the principal Ministers on the 8th. Although Halifax, just before the meeting expressed his liking for

the plan, Eden was unable to convince his colleagues to accept it in the form given by Eden. Hoare, the First Lord of the Admiralty did not like the plan, stating that Britain was getting to the point where she was trying to prevent Franco from winning; there were others he said who were anxious that the Soviet Union should not win. Hoare advanced every kind of technical argument to invalidate Eden's plan; these arguments, which, according to Eden, impressed the inexperienced of their colleagues, run along the lines that the Spanish coast was very long, with many ports; a large number of vessels would be required to examine the many neutral ships; it would involve mobilising the Home and Mediterranean fleets and calling up the naval reserve; that blockades were difficult to implement on the high seas and never watertight; and what Eden refers to as "other chatter of this kind."⁹² The most that Eden's colleagues would agree to was that Britain should welcome the recent replies of the other powers, professing to be willing to prohibit the enlistment or recruitment of volunteers and fasten on the general desire to exclude foreign volunteers from Spain, working for a more effective version of the Non-Intervention Committee's existing control scheme rather than employing Eden's proposal to use the Royal Navy.⁹³

Thus, the British Note of January the 10th, addressed to the French, Italian, Portuguese, and Soviet Governments stated that: "His Majesty's Government in the United

Kingdom are happy to note that there is in principle general agreement among the Powers mainly concerned that immediate measures should be taken to stop the inflow of foreign volunteers into Spain. Indeed some of the replies indicate that certain Governments would have readily taken such action at an earlier stage. It is now generally stipulated that these measures should be simultaneously taken by all the participating Governments, that the whole problem of dealing with indirect forms of intervention in Spain is also actively pursued forthwith, and that there is established an efficient and effective system of control.

"As regards the establishment of a system of control, the Governments are aware that the Non-Intervention Committee has elaborated a detailed scheme for supervision at Spanish ports and on the land frontiers of Spain and that this scheme is at present being considered by the two parties in Spain. It appears to His Majesty's Government that this scheme could without difficulty be extended to cover the arrival in Spain, both by land and by sea, of volunteers and military personnel as well as of war material. Such an extension might indeed render the scheme more acceptable to the two parties in Spain than it may be in its present limited form."⁹⁴

While Drummond, the British Ambassador to Italy, handed the British Note to Ciano, he asked whether Italy would be willing to prohibit hence forward new contingents

of volunteers going to Spain.

The British diplomatic pressure was the reason advanced by Von Neurath for the limiting of the influx of German volunteers into Spain to Signor Attolico, who repeatedly endeavored to induce Germany to send larger contingents: " I told him clearly today that we were not prepared to do this, because we considered that such a step would seriously endanger the larger European situation. Unless we wanted to accept the risk of war, we would have to realize that the time was drawing near when we would have to abandon any further support of Franco. In the last note to the British we had therefore agreed in principle to an understanding regarding the question of volunteers, and we now had to take a definite position regarding the second note." ⁹⁶

During the conversation between Mussolini and Goering on 23 January, "Ministerpresident Goering said that he had received reliable information that the Burgos Government has instructed its representative in Berlin not to accept more volunteers for Spain.

"The Duce noted this with satisfaction and declared that he, too, held that the Spanish National Government had now sufficient men and arms at its disposal. The joint note by Germany and Italy to Franco has meanwhile been delivered; further, on Monday, in the capitals of both countries, there will be delivered to the British diplomatic representatives the almost identical reply by Germany and Italy to the last English note. These

notes in reply will be published by the press on Monday
afternoon." ⁹⁷

On February 20th, the Governments on the Non-Inter-
vention Committee agreed to extend the Agreement to
cover the recruitment of volunteers. The British
Government persisted with the emasculated edition of
the scheme Eden had put to his colleagues, which came
before the Committee early in March, with the proposal
that supervision in Portugal be carried out by British
observers, while international staffs would be established
at suitable points on the other Spanish frontiers.
All merchant vessels belonging to countries which had
signed the Non-Intervention Agreement were to embark
an observer to watch the unloading of the cargo at
Spanish ports and be given facilities to carry out
investigations. The navies of Great Britain, Italy,
France, and Germany were each to be responsible for a
portion of the Spanish coast but were unable to do any-
thing more than look out for ships not reported as
having submitted to observation, board them, and warn
them. ⁹⁸

Maisky's opinion of the plan accepted on the 8th of
March was that "...the control plan accepted on 8 March
1937 could have served a certain purpose, if it had been
quickly brought into action and efficiently operated.
Italian and German intervention would have come up
against considerable difficulties, in that case. But
for that very reason the control plan was immediately

dogged by bad luck." ⁹⁹

The control plan did not finally go into force until April 19th, and according to Maisky did not take effect in entirety until the 9th of May. Maisky describes the date for the entry into force of the plan as being systematically pushed further and further back, under the sabotage of the Italians and Germans, while "the British and French treated the saboteurs with their usual tolerance. They looked sour, shrugged their shoulders, complained sotto voce of the intransigence of the Germans and Italians, but never once displayed the firmness that was needed." ¹⁰⁰ The methods of this sabotage consisted of withdrawing payments towards the cost of the organisation (Germany, pleading a shortage of foreign currency, at one point declaring that she wished to pay in kind - typewriters, office furniture, etc.), and alleged difficulties of finding Germans and Italians ¹⁰¹ who wished to serve on the control organization.

One contributing factor to intransigence on the part of Italy was the battle of Guadalajara at which the Republican forces, taking advantage of the rain and snow which rendered the airfields prepared by the Nationalists unusable but which enabled the Republican Air Force flying from all-weather bases to bomb, unhindered, the Nationalist infantry, inflicted a decisive defeat on their opponents. Mussolini, whose troops composed the majority of the Nationalist forces taking part in the battle, suffered a severe blow to his

prestige in the eyes of the world: "Mussolini's 'legionaries', which he had advertised the world over as fearless heroes, were now like hunted hares. They ran for it, abandoning their arms and ammunition as they went."¹⁰²

Litvinov, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, told Davies on March the 26th that from the point of view of European peace the Republican forces were doing almost too well. He feared that the reverses of the Italian forces would stimulate Mussolini to project additional forces into Spain to rehabilitate his prestige. In that connection, he stated that the Non-Intervention Committee was having great difficulty, which had taken up, following a German suggestion, the question of the evacuation of all volunteers from Spain, whereupon Grandi had interposed the condition that the matter of the embargo upon the gold of the Spanish Government should first be considered. But once the other Governments had acceded to this demand, Grandi had announced that the Italian Government would not discuss further the question of the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain.¹⁰³

Leger told Wilson on the 27th that he was just in receipt of information that Italian ships were even in enroute to Spain carrying troops, and that since it will be a week before the control plan could go into effect, Mussolini would have that period of time to send in troops unobserved. He remarked that Italian

calculations with regard to Spain had proved wrong: Italy had accepted the date of 20th February for putting the ban on volunteers into force feeling confident that within a few days thereafter Franco would capture Madrid; when this failed, they had continued to send troops to Spain.¹⁰⁴

The defeat of Italian troops at Guadalajara had an even more decisive effect upon the attitude of Mussolini toward the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain. Hassel reported on March 29th: "Today Ciano read to me the personal instruction which Mussolini sent Grandi Friday, laying down the Italian viewpoint in final form. It stated that actual withdrawal of the Italian volunteers was out of the question until the set-back at Guadalajara, which was not very significant militarily but was awkward politically, had been made good. Mussolini was not entirely opposed in principle to a withdrawal of the volunteers after he had obtained his revenge, especially in view of certain Spanish currents of opinion which deserved notice; in any case, however, an equal number of Whites and Reds should be withdrawn. Tactically it was not expedient to assume the odium of refusing to withdraw. It would be better to consent to turn the matter over to a subcommittee and to continue the tactics of sabotage and delay there."¹⁰⁵

The bombing of the German battleship Deutschland in May resulted in Germany and Italy withdrawing their warships from the naval control scheme. While after a

fortnights argument between Eden and Ribbentrop, both countries returned for a while, the alleged attack on June 18th of the German cruiser Leipzig by a submarine renewed the impasse. Ribbentrop at a meeting of the four powers engaged in the patrol, demanded the joint naval demonstration and the despatch of a stern note to the Spanish Government. Upon the refusal of Britain and France to accept this without an investigation, Italy and Germany withdrew from the patrol scheme, which was never resumed in full. ¹⁰⁶

Despite the many setbacks, the British Government persisted in its attempts to obtain some formula that would result in a reduction of the numbers of volunteers serving in Spain, trying first one tack and then another. On June the 21st the British Government noting in the Committee its disappointment and being of the opinion that the problem needing the greatest attention was that of the coming out of the volunteers from Spain, suggested that the British Government should be empowered to take up negotiations with either side in the Spanish conflict with a view to obtaining an agreement that an equal number of volunteers should be withdrawn from each side. This ran into the objections of the representative of the Soviet Union: "...roughly the total number of foreigners fighting on the side of General Franco is 100,000, and, on the other hand, at the outside, the present number of foreign fighting forces with the Spanish Government is not more than 15,000 or 18,000 at the

most. If you were to evacuate 5,000 from one side and 5,000 from the other side, what would it mean? General Franco would lose only 5 per cent of his foreign troops, but the Spanish Government would lose something like one-third....Would this be just or fair? I do not think so."¹⁰⁷

Eden told Ribbentrop on the 1st of July that he considered it incomprehensible that a patrol by the British and French fleets should not be given complete confidence, especially in view of the British and French readiness to take neutral observers on board. (This proposal had been put forward as a result of the withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the control plan.) Eden further stated that though Britain had not seriously considered the granting of belligerent rights to the two Spanish parties, since the British Government urgently wished to adhere to the non-intervention policy, that in the interest of retaining the principle of non-intervention, perhaps a combination of non-intervention, recognition of rights as belligerent states, and withdrawal of volunteers could be considered.¹⁰⁸

Plymouth, at the beginning of the session of the Non-Intervention Committee held on the 29th of June proposed that the naval patrol should be carried on exclusively by Britain and France, with the ships of the two countries carrying neutral observers on board. While the representatives of the majority of the powers on the Committee accepted the scheme at once, the representatives of Italy, Germany and Portugal put forward

objections to the scheme that in fact amounted to objections. Joint representations were made by the British and French Ambassadors on the 1st of July to urge that this proposal should be accepted, but met the same objections to any control scheme, and Germany urged that the obligations assumed under the establishment of the Non-Intervention Committee be retained, and invited discussion of the question of the recognition of the Spanish parties as belligerents with the rights implicit therein. Both the French and the British Ambassadors declared that their Governments were not ready for such a step.

In a statement by Great Britain on the 14th of July it was declared that: "At the last meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee held on the 9th July, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom were entrusted by their colleagues on the commission with the task of drawing up proposals which should aim at closing the present gap in the control scheme and enable the policy of non-intervention to be continued. This task has not been an easy one. For any proposal which can be put forward with any hope of success must not only harmonise the widely divergent views which have been expressed but must also give promise of an effective scheme of non-intervention.

"His Majesty's Government have, however, bent their best endeavours to their task, and have evolved a scheme which they herewith submit to other Governments represented on the Committee in the hope that it may lead to an agreed solution on the present difficulties. In submitting it, they will however

make one observation. It is admittedly a compromise between varying points of view; it can only be successful if it is accepted by the governments in a spirit of compromise. All the Nations represented on the Committee have repeatedly expressed the view that they wish non-intervention in the Spanish conflict to continue. They have now an opportunity to give to that wish practical effect." ¹²¹

The proposals outlined by the British Government was, as Ribbentrop put it: "...a combination of all the ideas discussed so far and gives extensive recognition to the German-Italian proposal in particular." ¹²² This amalgam of the various and varying viewpoints held by the states concerned with the conflict in Spain contained three main concepts: (1) the reconstruction of the system of supervision (2) the recognition, by all parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement, of the two parties in Spain as possessing a status which justifies them in exercising belligerent rights at sea (3) the withdrawal of foreign nationals. ¹²³

This plan formed the basis of the discussion of the Spanish problem in the Non-Intervention Committee into the next year, with the discussions gradually devolving into what per centage of volunteers should be withdrawn as a condition for granting belligerent rights. Woermann, the German Chargé d'Affaires in London, reported on the 13th of January: "The question of the so-called 'substantial withdrawal' is now reaching an acute stage. As reported,

it was decided in the session of the Non-Intervention Committee on January 11 that the matter should next be discussed in informal conferences between Lord Plymouth and individual representatives in the Committee.

"The proposal now officially made by Lord Plymouth that belligerent rights are to be granted after 75 percent of the volunteers have been withdrawn is not, as was quite clear from my conversation with Lord Plymouth, the last word of the British. It is rather a tentative figure mentioned only for the purpose of starting the discussion. It but would even be satisfied with a still smaller percentage if general agreement could be achieved on it." ¹²⁴ Grandi, on the 10th February, reported that Eden, having asked him to call on him to discuss the situation in the Non-Intervention Committee, concentrated entirely on the question of the number of volunteers that should be withdrawn, a "substantial withdrawal" being reduced to between 15,000 and 12,000 men. ¹²⁵

While Woermann had stated that the work of the Committee had something unreal about it, a game where everyone saw through the other but feared to say a clear 'no' in case the entire artificial structure collapsed (the question of the withdrawal of volunteers had been on the agenda for a whole year subjected to the dilatory tactics of the Germans, it would not be correct to state that this game, as seen by Eden had no relevance to British policy goals. Apart from the fear of a European conflict should the Committee collapse entirely and the concern with public opinion in Britain and France, British decision-makers (and Eden in particular) were concerned lest

Spain should fall from the 'neutral position that was its lot while the Spanish conflict raged into the arms of the Dictators. It was to prevent such an occurrence that British policy was directed. The question of the withdrawal of volunteers was, therefore, not an academic one, or even a matter of 'principle', but was related to a precise calculation of the British interest. The continuing emphasis, as is clear from the proposals that Britain put forward in the Non-Intervention Committee and the protests that were sent to Germany and Italy, was to limit the number of foreign volunteers entering Spain and to reduce as far as possible the numbers of those who had already entered that country. Woermann, had continued his analysis of the work of the Committee (made in January of 1938) by stating: "Apparently the main point of contention, namely, the question whether the volunteers are to be withdrawn or not, is no longer considered a vital question even in England. Here the main problem of the Spanish conflict is still considered to be whether Italy will establish herself permanently in Majorca or even on the Spanish mainland. The question of withdrawing the volunteers is in the main considered from this point of view and is regarded as a means of achieving the objective of Italian evacuation from Spain." ¹²⁶

On March the 5th, 1937, Ciano requested Hassell of the following: "Since the British have once again brought up in the London Non-Intervention Committee the idea of withdrawing all volunteers, he repeats the request that

the German representative be instructed ot sabotage it." Ciano added "...behind the British move there was presumably the ulterior motive of obtaining from Italy a guaranty to withdraw following the conclusion of peace, if withdrawal now should prove impractical. This was what England was really interested in."¹²⁷

The Gentleman's Agreement had been concluded to prevent the establishment of Italian predominance in the Western Mediterranean, and the protests directed towards Italy expressed the concern of England for the maintainance of the status quo in this region. Eden had been prepared to move a long way towards the German demands following the Deutschland incident in order to retain German participation in a naval patrol that did have some utility as a limit upon the numbers of volunteers entering Spain. In the later part of 1937 and into 1938, Eden was prepared to use the granting of belligerent rights as a bargaining position to obtain progress towards the goal of the withdrawal of volunteers.

Eden had stated that with the Spanish would not react with gratitude towards those who had intervned in the conflict, but his policy reflects a desire to ensure that the result of the Civil War would not be the domination of the policy of that country by an outside power. While the two parties in Spain were in combat some form of balance was maintained between Nations and ideologies that sought to influence the development of political Spain, while the Spanish were naturally preoccupied with Spanish matters. The eventual victory

of one or other of the parties would serve to disrupt this balance and make for the possibility of Spain being used for alien designs. To maintain this balance, or to put it another way, to prevent one side totally defeating the other, therefore became a major preoccupation of the British. One facet of this preoccupation was the concern over the question of volunteers, another was the attempt to arrive at some form of mediation that would arrange an armistice, thus achieving a compromise peace, and a compromise between the forces at work in Spain. In March 1937, Bingham outlined his personal views to Washington on the Spanish conflict: "Germany remains in official eyes the greatest threat to European peace. The British Government's attitude toward the Spanish situation has been from the beginning that a decisive victory by either of the contending sides would endanger European equilibrium -- rather peace without victory was preferable, with the situation ending in stalemate after withdrawal of foreign volunteers, leaving a settlement to be negotiated between the contending elements in Spain on a basis of provincial autonomy. It was with this in mind that English diplomacy has been concentrated on the maintenance of the work of the Non-Intervention Committee and this will continue to be the ultimate objective of British policy even under the most difficult circumstances."¹²⁸

Ribbentrop, on May 15th, reported that Eden had spoken to him concerning the intention of the British Government to work for a cessation of hostilities in Spain through diplomatic channels,¹²⁹ and on the following day the British Ambassa-

dor at Rome called on Ciano and on the instructions of his Government had taken up the question of a truce,¹³⁰ while on the 17th, Henderson called on Neurath and presented a communication from London that related the question of the withdrawal of volunteers to the calling of a truce.¹³¹ The Italian State Secretary, Bastianini, told Hassel that he regarded the British note as a move to reach a compromise in Spain "...in accordance with the old British aim of preventing a victory of Fascism under all circumstances;" Hassell added in his report of the conversation: "Private reports which I have received from Spanish circles here confirms the existence of lively British efforts, supported by the Vatican, to bring about an anti-Fascist settlement of the Civil War. In this connection the name of Gil Robles, who is supposed to be in Portugal was mentioned to me."¹³²

The British concern over the fate of the Republicans in Spain was not merely a matter related to concern over the strategic implications of a 'Fascist' victory in Spain, there were other factors that entered into the considerations. One factor that was of considerable import to British decision-makers was the position of the iron mines around Bilbao which constituted one of the primary sources of high-grade iron ore in Europe. About sixty per cent of these iron mines had been in Spanish possession and about forty per cent in British. Of exports, previous to the Civil War about half had gone to Britain and about half to Germany, but with the advent of the conflict this region had, until the capture of Bilbao, in remained

June of 1937, remained in the hands of the Spanish Government forces, and the total output had been sent to Britain. Britain was particularly interested in these ores since they were well-tempered ores, and the British blast furnaces needed fifty per cent of such ores to operate smoothly, and could not smelt upto a hundred per cent of the much harder Swedish ores, as the Germans.¹³³ Faupel, the German Ambassador in Spain, reported on May 23rd, 1937, that "On the basis of prospective iron-ore deliveries England had advanced large sums to the Bilbao Government in order to enable it to continue resistance. England had feared an early fall of Bilbao and consequently the loss of the sums advanced to the Euzkadi Government. Therefore England had the greatest interest in a quick armistice with a view to preventing the capture of Bilbao."¹³⁴

Hitler had told Faupel in November of 1936 to concern himself particularly with the extention of commercial relations between Germany and Spain, to utilise the favorable moment that existed gain an entrenched position before Britain could use her favorable advantage in capital resources to take away the market. To this end an official experienced in commercial policy was to be placed at the disposal of the Embassy.¹³⁵ On December 31st, the Agreement of March 9th, 1936, on German-Spanish trade was extended in its existing form until March 31st, 1937, and it was agreed that negotiations would begin for the purpose of adapting the trade agreement not later than April 1st, 1937. It was also agreed in prin-

ciple that commercial relations between the two countries would be conducted on a favorable basis as possible and that preference in supplying such goods as were of special interest to the two parties would be mutually guaranteed.¹³⁶ Ritter, the Director of the German Economic Policy Division informed the German Embassy in Spain on January 16th, 1937, that negotiations for a commercial agreement should be started as soon as possible while the economic delegation was expected to leave Germany at the end of the week so that negotiations could begin on the 25th. Ritter added: "Please report at once concerning the status of negotiations between the Nationalist Government and Italy and England on economic questions and matters of compensation. What agreement was reached with England regarding the duty on coal? It would be very desirable if the full text of such agreements could be dispatched by air mail."¹³⁷ The preparations were being made for the commercial battle that was to follow between Britain and Germany.

One object of this struggle became the Rio Tinto mines in Spain, a British owned company producing copper pyrites. The Rio Tinto Company reported to the British Government that the Spanish Nationalist Government had confiscated certain quantities of their output: 2,120 tons of copper precipitate which had been shipped to Germany after its confiscation on September 13th, 1936, and 500 tons of copper precipitate that was lying in the port of Huelva. The total output of the mines, apart from Spanish requirements, had previously

gone to the refineries of the Rio Tinto Company in Port Talbot, south Wales, but since new supplies were not to be had (the refineries having had no deliveries from Spain since October 15th, 1936) the plants were expecting to close during February of 1937. Mr. J. M. Magowan of the Commercial Department of the British Embassy in Berlin, having taken this matter up with the Economic Policy Department in Berlin, stated that: "The refineries were an important element in the British economy, and it make an unfavorable impression if the closing were attributed to 'circumstances beyond our control' for which Germany was partly responsible." Since the British Government considered that the seizure constituted an illegal act, in which the German Government was involved through accepting the confiscated copper, Magowan, in the course of his representation on February 4th 1937, said that the British Government would support the claim of the Rio Tinto Company against the German Government for either the return of the copper shipped to Germany, a delivery of a like amount, or payment in pounds sterling of the quantity shipped.¹³⁸

On January 13th, 1937, Woermann had reported that "...the alleged confiscation of the Rio Tinto mines for the benefit of copper exports to Germany" had led to lengthy discussions in the main sub-committee of the Non-Intervention Committee.¹³⁹ Faupel reported on the 20th that the "ationalist Government had assured him that they had flatly rejected an arrangement proposed by the British by which forty per cent of the total

output of the mines confiscated by Franco would be placed at the disposal of the British and sixty per cent at the disposal of the Germans, of which the Germans would be obligated to give Franco twenty per cent. Franco had rejected the offer on the grounds that the company was an enterprise under Spanish law and the Spanish Government (Nationalist) had explicitly reserved for itself full freedom of action in distributing the production of the Rio Tinto mines. ¹⁴⁰

The question of the Rio Tinto mines became a matter for discussion between the Rio Tinto company and the German Government, and between the Rio Tinto company and the representatives of the German firms that had received the confiscated copper. The Commercial Secretary of the British Embassy informed the German Foreign Ministry on the 12th of July that Messrs. Buchanan and Robbins of the Rio Tinto Company had arrived in Berlin and requested that they be received at the Foreign Ministry, to present their viewpoint, and that he be present in the conference. While Kreutzwald in the Foreign Office felt that the aim of the statements of the representatives of the Rio Tinto Company was to establish a more permanent basis for the relationship between the Company and the German purchasers of its copper ores, the Company had to insist that the confiscation of its products by Franco's Government cease, and that further deliveries to Germany be paid either in pounds sterling or in refined copper. ¹⁴¹

The British Embassy, on the 7th of July had presented to the German Government a note which sought to bring to the notice of the German Government as "a matter urgency" the

question of the Rio Tinto mines: "The situation of the British mining companies in Nationalist Spain is causing His Majesty's Government the most serious preoccupation, and His Majesty's Government, being unwilling to allow the situation in regard of these companies to continue thus, are considering what steps can be taken to protect these important British interests." ¹⁴²

Lord Chandos, having at one time been part of the British Metal Corporation (which had been formed by the British desire of the British Government to ensure that the British Empire would remain self-supporting in non-ferrus metals), and having been Controller of Non-Ferrus Metals, came to know the 'ins and outs' of the international copper market together with political and strategic aspects. ¹⁴³ Copper, of which Britain has no domestic sources, constitutes one of the most important of the principal non-ferrus metals, being used in the manufacture of cartridge and shell cases. The Abyssinian crisis had shown the British Government to be very short on copper, and the British Government could not but be concerned with the diversion of the copper resources of the Rio Tinto (one of the principal shareholders of the British Metal Corporation) to Germany.

Britain, in order to maintain its economic position in Spain intact and to be able to exert influence on whatever future government should come to control the destiny of Spain, had therefore compelling reasons to maintain an 'impartial' attitude towards the two parties to the Spanish conflict. Reinforcing the desire not to become involved in, and not to precipitate, a conflict in Spain,

was the wish to be in a position to be able to bring the economic resources at Britain's command to bear to influence Spain's future government towards a policy acceptable to Britain.

Contacts were maintained with Franco by Britain with a view to protecting Britain's economic interests and Britain's economic influence, but also with a more fundamental basis in a desire to maintain a political influence at Burgos. Schwendemann, the German Charge d'Affaires in Spain, reported on January 2nd 1937: "The diplomatic Chef de Cabinet to the Generalissimo, Sangroniz, spoke to me today about the attitude of the British toward the Franco Government. He told me that the British Ambassador, Chilton, who is accredited to the Red Government and has been staying at St. Jean de Luz ever since the sojourn of the diplomatic corps at San Sebastian during the summer, was maintaining active diplomatic intercourse with the Franco Government. Notes and telegrams came from him every day. Eden's statements in his last important speech in the House of Commons on the Spanish question had been communicated in advance to the Nationalist Government. The speech had been delivered in the House of Commons at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and by about 10 o'clock in the morning the Government here had already received a long telegram on its contents from Ambassador Chilton. The commercial attache of the British Embassy, Mr. Pack, was frequently in Burgos and Salamanca in order to discuss economic questions."

Woermann reported on October the 7th: "The competent official in the Foreign Office gave the following strictly confidential information regarding the establishment in England of Spanish Nationalist consulates of a semiofficial character:

"General Franco had made such a request of the British Government as early as the beginning of September. The British Government had recently replied to this via Hendaye and had given its consent in principle to the dispatching of agents of a semiofficial character who were to enjoy neither the title of consul nor diplomatic privileges but should in effect possess the duties and rights of a consul. Final consent was made conditional, however, upon a satisfactory solution of certain questions. Inquiry revealed that among them were presumably the following:

"Release of certain British ships, unhampered activity of the British consuls in Nationalist Spain, and solution of some economic questions.

"Franco had further been promised that a British commercial agent would be sent to Salamanca." ¹⁴⁵

The Anglo-Spanish negotiations followed logically from the mutual self-interest of the Nationalist Government in Spain and Britain. Britain could regard the Spanish conflict confident, to some degree, that Franco needed British capital and that this requirement would prove to be a major determining factor in Franco's policies towards foreign powers. Mackensen reported, July 7th 1937, that the assertion was becoming more and more pro-

nounced in the British and French press that Franco was beginning to seek a rapprochement with Britain. He had recognized, it was said, that Germany and Italy could not give him the desired help after all and that the military, naval and economic power of the Anglo-French bloc was of greater importance for the future fate of Spain than the interested help of Italy and Germany. Mackensen illustrated the developing favorable attitude of Franco towards Britain by commenting upon the favorable progress of negotiations between Britain and Franco concerning the British mining interests, the conversations about financial questions that were to have been concluded in a few days, and the fact that Franco had instructed his propaganda officers not to let through the censorship any further articles which were hostile to Britain.¹⁴⁶ Neurath was of the opinion (in a note sent to the German Embassy in Spain dated November the 30th 1937) that very considerable concessions which the German Foreign Office had been reliably informed, in contradiction to assurances given to Germany by Franco, that the Nationalist Government in Spain had offered to Britain represented a serious threat to German interests in Spain.¹⁴⁷

Britain's attitude towards the two parties (and to the general problem of formulating a policy towards the Spanish problem) would naturally be dependent upon the progress of the war in Spain. As the successes of the Nationalist's forces made a victory for Franco more likely, so there developed the necessity to come to some agreement to

regulate Britain's relations with the Burgos Government and to safeguard Britain's interests. Atherton, the American Charge d'Affaires in London, reported on February 12th 1937, that the discussions of the Non-Intervention Committee on the question of the withdrawal of volunteers had been admitted by the British Foreign Office to be possibly entirely academic in view of Franco's success and that the British Ambassador in Spain was in contact with Franco's Government "as occasion ¹⁴⁸ requires".

To the British decision-makers intervention in the Spanish affair was, in Eden's phrase, 'bad politics and bad humanity', but this could not be taken to mean that Britain could disinterest herself from Spain. The clearest exposition of this has been given by Welczeck, the German Ambassador in France, in a report on July the 7th 1937: "I hear from a reliable source that the Quai d'Orsay at the present time judges the negotiations between England and Franco rather optimistically. The subject of these is not only the question of northern Spanish ores. Rather it is believed that England thinks the time has come for strengthening her ties with Franco. England has always looked at the Spanish problem only from the British point of view, that is with a view to preserving strong British influence in Spain, regardless of the outcome of the Civil War. She expects that Spain will in any case be dependent on British financial and economic help after the Civil War.

"At the Quai d'Orsay the moment is considered propitious,

for England to establish relations with Franco, since Franco is now more in need of help than ever before, while Italy and Germany, on the other hand, are not quite clear about their further attitude. As for Germany, they continue to assume in London and Paris that she is averse to greater intervention. Britain wants to take the ground out from under Italy's intervention policy, especially by influencing Franco in the volunteer question." ¹⁴⁹

The prospect of the recognition of Franco by Germany and Italy in November of 1936, had given rise to great anxieties in Britain of the possibility of a significant rise in the influence of the Dictators over the Nationalist Government. According to American sources, these were the thoughts of a high official in the British Foreign Office on this prospect: "In view of the known sympathy of those two Governments with Franco's movement, the British feel that their influence at Madrid will in that event be very powerful and that it will consequently be essential for the Governments of the democratic countries to take some early action which will prevent Franco from falling completely into the pockets of Berlin and Rome. The question of recognition of Franco, should he be successful, is now being carefully studied in the Foreign Office. The official felt it to be important that some 'middle ground', short of actual immediate recognition, be found which would meet the situation of fact. He emphasized that the matter was still under consideration and that no real decision had been reached." ¹⁵⁰ Bingham reported on the 25th of November

that: "In a conversation at the Foreign Office today it was admitted that the French had...exerted sufficient pressure to dissuade the British Government from according belligerent rights to the Spanish warring factions and the Foreign Office obviously considered its recent action as a makeshift measure which might well prove to be merely a temporary stop-gap. I gathered that the Foreign Office would have preferred to have recognised Franco's faction as a belligerent and accompanied the recognition with a statement setting forth fully the reasons therefor.

"My informant personally characterised the position as absurd: Great Britain and France were recognising a government no longer in power, Italy and Germany had recognised one that had not yet come into power, and none of the belligerents had recognised the real situation, namely, a state of belligerency arising out of a civil war."¹⁵¹

The recent steps referred to were proposals made to Franco towards designating a specified safety zone that could be used by foreign shipping, and the problem arose from the anomalous position of the relations between foreign states and the Franco Government and the rights that the Franco Government possessed. In this connection the diplomatic correspondent of the Daily Telegraph stated: "The position of British shipping willing to utilise the Spanish Government's ports must remain somewhat obscure until it has been decided whether the Nationalists are entitled and able to establish a blockade."¹⁵² The announcement by Franco on the

17th of November, 1937, of his intention to stop the traffic in arms which was being carried on through the port of Barcelona raised new problems for the British. Franco had declared that he would if necessary destroy the port and warned all foreigners and foreignships to leave. This announcement was regarded in Britain as implying a blockade and Franco could not make this effective without belligerent rights, and the granting of these raised the question of Britain's relations with France, the state of public opinion in Britain and the effects of this action upon the course of the war in Spain (as we have noted it was not considered by Eden to be in Britain's interest to see a decisive victory by either side in Spain).

British public opinion became excited over attacks upon British shipping, and Templewood in his memoirs has described the questions in the House of Commons that were raised over 'Potato' Jones, the skipper of a small tramp that plied between South Wales and the Bay of Biscay: "In Lloyd George's eyes the obstinant Welshman was a national hero engaged upon a crusade against a threatening tyrant." To Hoare, it was a question of preventing "...the ships of the Welsh skipper and his friends from embroiling us and possibly the whole of Europe in a conflagration."¹⁵⁴ The question of the granting of belligerent rights raised the whole problem of the attitudes of the British public, and the Labour Party in particular, towards the Spanish conflict. The Left in Britain was not able to observe Spain in quite the detached manner that the

Foreign Office was able to manifest; Attlee stated to the Commons in January of 1937: "My first complaint against the right hon. Gentleman (Eden) with regard to the whole of his treatment of the Spanish question is, that he always treats the Government of Spain and that of General Franco side by side, and as Governments of equal validity....The Government always seems to take the view that there are two parties in Spain, and that their claims are of equal validity....I think there is a definite bias in favour of General Franco because he is regarded as representing the governing classes, the privileged classes of Spain....The Government have played a leading role against non-intervention, but it has mainly been a leading part in retreat. Those powers that are anxious to see this struggle brought to an end and genuinely anxious that the Spanish people should manage their own affairs would welcome a stand by our Government, a statement that will restore to the Spanish Government its right, that they will see that British shipping going to the Spanish Government will be protected and that General Franco and his friends, if they take any steps against those ships, will be treated as pirates. It is about time that we ceased accept the dictates of Berlin and Rome."¹⁵⁶

Before Franco's declaration of the blockade, instructions had been issued to the Royal Navy to protect British ships outside the three mile limit of Spanish territorial waters, but in view of the increased likelihood of incidents, new orders were drawn up by the Admiralty, whereby British ships

ships would not be protected, while Hoare wished to grant belligerent rights to Franco. But Eden has stated in his memoirs: "...I did not wish to follow this short cut. I preferred to find a policy which would protect our interests and minimize the risk of an encounter, without helping the insurgents. I thought that we should achieve our purpose if we forbade British ships to carry arms to Spain, at the same time giving notice that our vessels would be protected on all legitimate trade. On Saturday, November 21st, I wrote in my diary: 'A heavy and difficult day at the office. Admiralty have got out some interim regulations for Mediterranean which will not do for more than a few hours. After speaking to Sam (Hoare) and S B. (Baldwin), I arranged a meeting of some ministers for tomorrow afternoon. My own feeling is at present against granting of belligerent rights to Franco for international reasons. I do not want even to appear to follow Hitler and Mussolini at the moment, but would prefer to 'show tooth' in the Mediterranean; still less do I want to facilitate an attempt at a blockade that is maybe intended to starve Madrid.' A long tussle duly took place on the following afternoon. I drew attention to Franco's statement that he would stop all ships on the high seas. To grant belligerent rights would be to isolate us among non-dictator powers, for neither France nor the United States was thinking of such action. Moreover, its effect would be to give de facto recognition to Franco, although the military situation had not changed significantly in his favour; I preferred that we should show ourselves

strong in the Mediterranean by protecting all our ships engaged in legitimate trade, while forbidding them to carry arms. Eventually, Ministers agreed that my policy should be carried out and I despatched telegrams that night to the Spanish Government and to the insurgents.¹⁵⁷"

The resulting policy was one that while it did not give Franco the full status of a belligerent gave him some of the benefits and did accord him some international status, in that the distinction made by Eden between 'legitimate' and 'non-legitimate' trade admits to the Burgos some rights as a belligerent and denied to the Government of Spain access to weapons. Woermann in analysing the policy of Britain came to these conclusions: "The British Government's declaration that for the time being it would not recognise the parties in the conflict in Spain as 'belligerents' often is construed incorrectly in my opinion. As is shown by the whole behaviour of England in the Non-Intervention Committee and also recently toward the Franco Government in the question of a safety zone in the harbour of Barcelona, the British Government recognises both parties as parties in a civil war but not as belligerents in the sense of the rules of war, in which connection doubtless only the rules of naval warfare are meant. This means that in principle England concedes to both parties the right, within their sovereign territory and including the three mile limit, to engage in military operations, but that the parties should not have the right to exercise the rights on the high seas, particularly not the right of blockade and the right of seizure, including the right to stop and search...."

"According to reports which I have not been able yet to verify, there was for some time a tendency in the Cabinet to go a step further and concede to both warring parties belligerent rights in the sense of the rules of war. This tendency originated in the attempt to keep England out of any conflicts, so far as this can possibly be done. This, however, is exactly the policy of the whole Cabinet. It was therefore mainly a question of which of the two alternatives would offer less possibility of conflicts.

"A practical exception to the concession to both parties that they may engage in military operations in their sovereign territory is the above mentioned British demand for safety zones, that is, for harbour zones in which British ships are not exposed to bombardment. Such zones already exist in a considerable number of Spanish ports, but not in Barcelona. According to the reports today, the Franco Government has now complied with this request." ¹⁵⁸ (Report dated November 27, 1936.)

C Claude Bowers, United States Ambassador to Spain, has described the problem in these terms: "When this bombing or detention of British ships became a favorite outdoor sport without disturbing the complacency of the Chamberlain government, the Labor and Liberal parties in the Commons drove the Ministry into a corner in a five-day debate and they forced the promise from the government to protect British commerce on the high seas. Franco countered

with the threat to fire on British destroyers escorting food ships, even outside territorial waters, and British merchant ships were instructed from London to stay in the harbour of Saint-Jean-de-Luz or Bayonne to await further instructions. The great battleship, the Hood, was ordered from Gibraltar to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, and the little harbour was crowded with destroyers and merchantmen.

"At length, the Chamberlain government announced its decision. It would not tolerate any interference with British shipping by Franco, to whom belligerent rights had not been granted. Therefore, it strongly urged British ships to bow to Franco and not go to Bilbao. This was interpreted to mean that British ships would protect British shipping on the high seas, but would not challenge Franco's right to sink them in the harbour. But the old deadogs of England asked nothing more, and, gaily enough, they steamed into the harbour of Bilbao.

But almost immediately came a clarification of the policy of Chamberlain. He admitted the right of British ships to deliver their cargo in Bilbao; that they had this right under the Nonintervention Pact; that Franco had no rights to interfere, since he had not been given belligerent rights. This being true, food ships for Bilbao should not attempt to deliver their cargoes -- because the waters there were mined! Thus was darkness made visible.

"It was now clear that the dominant wing of the Chamberlain government was willing to make its contribution to the starving of the women and children of Bilbao, but the British food ships continued to pour into the

harbor, and the people were not starved." ¹⁵⁹

As evidence of Eden's concern with the effect of granting belligerent rights to the two parties in Spain upon the balance within Spain between the two forces one can cite Eden's statement on June 25th to the House of Commons:

"Suppose there were no Non-intervention Agreement and we returned to what the right hon. Gentleman describes as free trade in arms and people being allowed to sell....the United States long ago put an arms embargo on the export of arms, and everybody knows quite well that nothing would induce the United States to depart from that course....Does the House conceive our selling large numbers of aeroplanes at this time, at this moment, when we have the greatest difficulty in fulfilling the smallest contracts with those with whom we are under treaty obligations?...There remains France, and I leave it to the House to judge how far the French Government in the present condition of France would be willing to allow vast exports of war materials to Spain. What we have to face is that in what are called the totalitarian states, Germany, Italy and Russia, all their armaments are in an infinitely more advanced state than those of the democratic states, and if there were an unlimited supply, with the United States excluded, I do not believe that the result would be so favourable to the Spanish Government as many right hon. Members seem to believe.

"But we have to follow this matter a little further. If non-intervention ceased, is it the view opposite that belligerent rights should be granted? Certainly, if there were

no non-intervention every precedent would be in favour of granting belligerent rights as was done in the American civil war. But suppose belligerent rights were granted... how much of these arms would reach the Government in Spain? It is perfectly well-known that General Franco is much the stronger on the sea, and the exercise of belligerent rights would mean that he would have comparatively little difficulty in intercepting the majority of these supplies of arms going to Spain." ¹⁶⁰

The device of obtaining safety zones as a solution to the undefined nature of relations with the governments of Spain enabled Britain to achieve its object of safeguarding British shipping entering Spanish harbours without raising the legal question of the status accorded to the governments. We have already seen that the device was resorted to as a means to enable the naval patrol of the Non-Intervention Committee to function and avoid as far as possible a recurrence of incidents such as took place at Iviza. The efforts of the British Government to induce the Germans to return to the Committee offers an example of Spain being treated as an object of British policy -- being viewed purely in terms of calculation of interest as determined by the relations of Britain with Germany, and without reference to what might be termed the moral or legal rights of the two parties and the issues involved in the Spanish conflict. Sir Nevile Henderson, in discussing with Mackensen the measures that should be taken following the Iviza incident, stated: "...that in his opinion the further procedure would be that, after an

agreement had been achieved, the British Government would send word to that effect without delay to both Spanish parties. It was not a ³m₃tt₃er of asking their agreement, but merely of notifying them of the measures which the four Powers participating in the naval patrols had decided to undertake in case of any new incidents. He assumed that after this declaration had been made to both parties, Germany and Italy would resume their places in the Non-Intervention Committee." ¹⁶²

It was over the question of attacks on British shipping that British policy assumed its most forceful shape. In August and September of 1937, attacks on British merchant and naval vessels increased in numbers, leading to the rising tide of anger that we have already observed in Britain. On September 2nd, H.M.S. Havock was unsuccessfully attacked by a submarine sixty miles off Valencia, and on the same day, S.S. Woodford, a British tanker was torpedoed and sunk off the coast of Spain. According to Eden, there was little doubt that there were about 15 Italian submarines were attacking ships in the ⁴⁶²Mediterranean. Eden's proposed line of action was to convene a meeting of the powers to obtain an agreement to put an end to these attacks. In view of the fact that Italy and Germany therefore had indicated an unwillingness to attend the proposed meeting, the British Admiralty and the Foreign Office worked a plan by which the Mediterranean was to be divided into zones. Britain and France would patrol the western basin, and Russia together with other eastern Mediterranean states the Aegean. In a memorandum, Eden suggested that Britain should attempt to obtain agreement at the Conference on the follow-

proposals: that any submarine attacking a merchant ship in a manner contrary to the rules as to the action of submarines with regard to merchant ships should be counter-attacked and destroyed; and that this should extend to any submarine in the vicinity of a position in which a merchant vessel has been attacked or sunk. The Conference, which was held at Nyon, reached full agreement on September 11th, little more than twenty-four hours after convening. Great Britain and France were to patrol the main Mediterranean trade routes, from the Dardanelles to Gibraltar, and from North Africa to Marseilles, providing sixty destroyers for the purpose. The Eastern Mediterranean states were to patrol their own territorial waters, and would assist Britain and France, on request, to patrol the main routes. Some areas were specifically excluded, particularly the Tyrrhenian sea, in order that they might 'form the subject of special arrangements.' This was done in order that a large area could be offered to Mussolini to patrol should he decide to join the agreement. ¹⁰³

Ciano's account of the Italian accession to the Agreement differs from that of Eden's. In Ciano's diary the account runs: "September 13. Ingram and Blondel have given us a copy of the Nyon decisions. I have prepared a reply, in which, without advancing a claim to take part, I affirm our right to parity, it will certainly embarrass them. Either we cooperate or the scheme fails and they are to blame....
September 21. Blondel and Ingram handed me a note which gives us virtual satisfaction, though the word 'parity' is carefully avoided. The Duce has approved my reply and the press

communiqué: we agree to a technical conference to modify the Nyon clauses in accordance with our wishes. It is a fine victory. From suspected pirates to policemen of the Mediterranean --and the Russians, whose ships we were sinking¹⁶⁴ excluded."

Eden's account runs: "The Fascist Government returned a reply to the effect that the share allotted to them in the Nyon Agreement appeared unacceptable. Italy's vital interests in the Mediterranean made it necessary that she 'should have conditions of absolute equality with other powers in any zone of the Mediterranean.'The British and French Governments had always said that they were willing to give Italy a share in the work of the patrols. The Nyon Conference provided for revision at the end of the month and, when that time came, Mussolini was allotted his share and accepted it."¹⁶⁵

Forster, the German Charge d'Affaires in France, analysed the Nyon Conference to accord with Eden's view: "The initial rejection of the invitation was probably not unwelcome here, for that meant the agreement could be quickly concluded along Anglo-French lines and Italy could be confronted with an accomplished fact. This, to be sure, first created a critical situation for a few days. If Italy had flatly refused to accede to the agreement, events of great consequence might have resulted. Of course, Anglo-French policy would have been in a position to provoke or avoid incidents as needed, to make light of them or to magnify them, but it would not have been master of everything happening in the Mediterranean.

From conversations here I have gained the impression that this risk was taken deliberately. Italy's accession in principle has eliminated this danger for the time being.

"....The military potential of France and England in the Mediterranean has been strengthened to such a degree that French interests seem assured even from a military point of view. Political and military cooperation with Britain in the Mediterranean, which Laval had avoided, has now become a fact. All states bordering on the Mediterranean have at the very least been neutralized in relation to Italy in case of a conflict. These results were achieved without France having to take an open position against Italy and without the strengthening of the power potential appearing as an anti-Italian demonstration; for Italy was explicitly invited beforehand to work out the agreement and later to accede to it." ¹⁶⁶

The Nyon Conference brought sharply to the fore the contradictory tendencies in the Cabinet. To Eden to continue to retreat before the Dictators was to invite disaster; but to Chamberlain, the important task before Britain was to work towards improving relations with Italy. Of the conference, Chamberlain wrote in his diary: "We have had a great success at Nyon but at the expense of Anglo-Italian relations....It would be amusing, if it were not also so dangerous." ¹⁶⁷

Italy had rejected the invitation to Nyon on September the 9th, wishing to refer the matter of piracy to the Non-Intervention Committee. Chamberlain had asked the views

of the Foreign Office, as he thought there was something to be said for it. Eden's comment illustrates the divergence of thought between the two men: "Although at the time, perhaps, the Prime Minister did not know it, he was trying to reconcile two incompatibles: the theory of being on good terms with dictators, and the practice of dealing with their behaviour as exemplified in the Abyssinian war, the Spanish war and Mediterranean piracy." ¹⁰⁸

With Eden's resignation, the attempt was made to reestablish good relations with Italy through friendly and frank discussions. Lord Perth, in stating to Cianco on the 8th of March 1938, that he was authorised by the British Government to open the conversations with the aim of reaching an agreement between Britain and Italy, added that he was happy to deliver a personal message from Lord Halifax, containing a personal word of greeting. Lord Halifax said he was led to do so not only because he had just assumed the post of His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs but because the moment coincided with the opening of conversations which, he trusted with all sincerity, would lead to the rebirth of that old friendship between the two countries - a friendship which, he maintained, had been until recent times the cardinal factor in the policy of them both. ¹⁰⁹

The development of these conversations has already been traced in a previous chapter and there is no intention to cover the ground once again, but merely to demonstrate

other facets of a policy that was dominated by a belief in the necessity to remove from the path of reconciliation with Italy any obstacle which Chamberlain felt could be disposed of if only the effort were to be made.

Spain was one such obstacle. Chamberlain made use of the conversation between himself and Herr Hitler on September 30, 1938, at Munich, to propose the idea of a Four Power Conference to bring about a settlement in Spain. Chamberlain said to Hitler: "He wished to report to him a conversation which he had had the previous evening with Signor Mussolini on the subject of Spain. He had suggested to the Duce the possibility that the Four Great Powers might call upon the two sides in Spain to establish an armistice and that they might offer their services in assisting them to arrive at a settlement of their differences. The Duce had said, in reply, that he was tired of Spain. (Here Herr Hitler laughed heartily.) He had lost 50,000 men there; Franco had time and again thrown away his opportunities of securing a victory. He, Mussolini, was no longer afraid of Bolshevistic domination. He had never had any territorial aims in Spain, and it was his intention shortly to withdraw a considerable body of Italians. As to the suggestion, the Duce had expressed his intention of thinking it over.

"...he had thought that if the two sides received a call from the Four Great Powers they might well be induced to listen and that, once the truce had been called, the Powers might be able to help in getting a settlement.

However, he only now wished to report to the Fuhrer what had passed between himself and Mussolini on this subject and he hoped that the Fuhrer too would give it his personal attention."¹⁷⁰

Chamberlain's aim was to produce the appeasement of Europe and to establish a working relationship between Britain, France, Germany and Italy. Between this goal stood the bad relations that existed between France and Italy. Francois-Poncet indicated to Ciano on November the 9th, France's desire to contribute to clearing the atmosphere once and for all by improving relations between Italy and France, and he proposed examination of the problems that were rendering conditions between Rome and Paris difficult. Ciano replied that one great difficulty still remaining was Spain; Italy and France were still on opposite sides of the barricade -- Italy stood solidly on the side of Franco until he gained victory, and therefore it would be difficult to start talks until the Spanish problem had been cleared up.¹⁷¹

Sir Eric Phipps reported on the 19th of December the nature of the impediment that Spain presented to the betterment of relations between Italy and France, as viewed in France: "In the first place, the whole of the Left and much of the moderate opinion in France hope for a victory of the Spanish Government, and bitterly resent Italy's continued assistance to General Franco. Feeling on this score is so deep that if the French Government made themselves responsible for any step directly contributing to the defeat of the Spanish Government, they

might fall. Already not only the Communists but the Socialists are expressing the fear that M. Mussolini at the January meeting will ask for the immediate grant of belligerent rights to General Franco; and opposition from the Left would be most violent to any such step before the entry into force of the British plan....But there is a more important aspect of the Spanish problem. Not only the Left but the Centre and most of the Right, as well as the General Staff, are alarmed at the prospect of the establishment of Germany and Italy in Spain on the lines of French communication with Africa. M. Kayser, the 'homme de confiance' of M. Daladier, recently stated that the Government would consider no agreement with Italy satisfactory unless the withdrawal of Italy from the Spanish mainland and the Balearic Islands were assured. On this question of the safety of imperial communications the country is more or less united.¹⁷²"

It was on this question of possible strategic concessions gained from Franco by Italy that Chamberlain and Halifax, and Daladier and Bonnet disagreed in the course of conversations that took place on January 10th, 1939: "The French Ministers expressed concern at Mussolini's refusal to give the same assurances regarding the territorial inviolability of Spain, her islands and her colonies as he had given to Great Britain. Did this mean that he regretted the assurances given to Great Britain in the Anglo-Italian Agreement, and that he meant to violate them? It might be well to ask the Duce...to repeat those assurances....he (Bonnet) enquired what His Majesty's Government would do in the event of the Italian Government

failing to keep their word. The Prime Minister (Chamberlain) observed that that was a difficulty that would have to be faced if and when it arose; but M. Bonnet at least did not seem satisfied and reverted to the point at a later stage of the conversation when the Prime Minister assured him that His Majesty's Government attached not less importance to the point than did the French Government.

"The Prime Minister and Halifax thought that this would not get us much further. To ask the Duce to repeat his assurances would merely elicit verbal promises in the same sense as the assurances already obtained in writing. It would appear on this point better to wait and see. It seemed difficult to believe that Mussolini, who had shown such anxiety to put the Anglo-Italian Agreement into force, should intend flagrantly to violate it by any permanent military occupation of Majorca, or any other part of Spanish territory." ¹⁷³

Bowers reported: "Since the Non-Intervention Committee has taken the position that belligerent rights will not be granted until all foreigners are removed from the fighting forces, and since Mr. Chamberlain has so assured the Commons time and again, this would seem to mean that the granting of such rights is very remote.

"Even so it is commonly believed in circles usually dependable that Chamberlain, in his eagerness to give further assistance to Franco, and thus to appease Hitler and Mussolini, is anxious to grant such rights regardless of the pledge. When interrogated in the Commons this week Mr. Butler, Sub-

Minister of Foreign Affairs, was far from downright in his answers.

"It has been thought probable that one of the purposes of the visit of Chamberlain and Halifax to Paris...is to persuade the French into agreeing to this course."¹⁷⁴

Britain, under the impetus of Chamberlain, had moved closer in its relations with Franco attempting to gain influence at Burgos with a view to making the settlement of the conflict quicker. Stohrer, German Ambassador in Spain, reported on the 19th of May, 1938; that the Nationalist Foreign Minister, General Jordana, had told him in strict confidence that "...the Spanish Government had the impression that England was on the point of a more positive rapprochement with Nationalist Spain. The British Government had given the Duke of Alba to understand that it was endeavoring to have the French border closed to shipments of war material to the Reds. It had even urged that the Spanish Nationalist Government use its influence with Mussolini to get him to take a stiffer attitude toward the French and that it suggested to him that he for his part demand in Paris the closing of the French border. The part of Mussolini's speech at Genoa referring to Franco-Italian relations (in which Mussolini stated that it was unlikely that the Franco-Italian negotiations in progress would reach a conclusion since the two countries were on opposite sides of the barricades in Spain) as well as the report over the radio tonight that Mussolini had stated that he did not wish to continue the French-Italian conversations so long as deliveries of material to the Reds across

the border continued, seemed to him to be a result of this step."¹⁷⁵

Chamberlain had urged Daladier, in the course of their meeting on November 24th, 1938, that the French appoint an agent at Burgos as the British had done. Chamberlain explained that since this had been done (basing the action on commercial rather than political grounds in view of Left-wing criticisms in Britain) relations between Britain and the Nationalists had improved. Chamberlain also explained that "...His Majesty's Government were very anxious that the war should be brought to an end but that their present information was that General Franco was confident and would not entertain the idea of an armistice."¹⁷⁶

Time however brought the solution to the conflict as the Nationalist forces began in 1939 to overcome the Government resistance and the defeat seemed ever more imminent. Chamberlain wrote to Henderson, on February 19th, 1939, that things looked as if they would clear up in Spain soon, and that the next job would be to get the bridges between France and Italy in working order.¹⁷⁷ (Campbell reported from Paris in March that Léger had complained that it looked like the British Government were trying to put the brake on the French rather than on the Italians.)¹⁷⁸ Chamberlain wrote on the 19th of February that they had heard from the Spanish Government that they would surrender if Franco would give assurances that there would be no reprisals. Britain had held back recognition of Franco until the surrender should occur, but felt Chamberlain, if that were to be too long coming Britain would

recognise Franco anyway: "We ought to be able to establish excellent relations with Franco."¹⁷⁹ De jure recognition was granted to the Nationalists by Britain on February 27th.

During September of 1938 the Nationalists had informed the British and French Governments that they intended to remain neutral in the event of a European conflict,¹⁸⁰ which was only a confirmation of the belief that had been held in Britain that the future Government of Spain would be too preoccupied with Spanish affairs to undertake an active part in European politics. The concern of Britain was to see an end to the fighting and the removal of a problem that was felt to be hindering the road to European conciliation. Stohrer reported on October 2nd, 1938, that England was merely waiting for a suitable moment in order to intervene politically in Spain to bring about an end to the war: "According to reliable reports, Sir Robert Hodgson, the British agent here, stated recently in a circle of intimate friends that after the peaceful settlement of the Czech question England would attack the Spanish problem energetically."¹⁸¹

One attempt to aid in the conclusion of the war had been the Hemming Mission which had been sent to Spain to try to persuade Franco to withdraw his volunteers.¹⁸² Another method was to make the likelihood of surrender of the Government forces the more likely by attempting to influence Franco to be as humane as possible and give assurances to the remaining Government forces of good treatment. This may be part of the motivation behind the representations that

were made by Sir George Mounsey (Assistant Under Secretary of State) to Woermann on April 25th, 1938: "Sir George Mounsey made the following statements which were obviously not improvised: It seemed to him very desirable that the losing party in Spain should receive moderate treatment....(He) also pointed out that it was for a permanent pacification of Spain desirable that Catalonia, in keeping with tradition, should receive some kind of autonomy in Spain."¹⁸³ British efforts were also made to aid in the surrender of Minorca to the Nationalists. The British Cruiser Devonshire brought the Nationalist negotiators from Majorca to Minorca to conduct the negotiations for the surrender, and brought several hundred¹⁸⁴ of the Republicans from the island to the safety of France. The German Ambassador to Spain reported later in February that the British Government, according to certain indications, was not loath to repeat the unofficial intervention which had led to the subjugation of the island of Minorca.¹⁸⁵ It would appear that it was following a personal letter sent by Franco to Chamberlain on February 20th, giving satisfactory assurances to the British Government on the question of neutrality, the withdrawal of foreign volunteers and the question of reprisals against the Republicans, that recognition was accorded on¹⁸⁶ the 27th.

With resignation of Eden British policy had been dominated by Chamberlain and Chamberlain's desire to come to an accord with Germany and therefore Italy. All other problems were viewed in this perspective, and only gained relevance in

relation to the German problem and to Chamberlain's programme of the systematic removal of all obstacles to free understanding. Ciano, in the course of writing into his diary his impressions of the talks that were taking place in Rome in January, 1939, between the British leadership and the Italian (and having described Halifax as wishing that Franco's victory would settle the Spanish question), recorded: "The recorded discussion of the afternoon was characterized by the profound sense of preoccupation which dominates the British with respect to Germany. German rearmament weights on them like lead. They would ready for any sacrifice if they could see the future clearly." ¹⁸⁷ Any sacrifice included the submission by Chamberlain to Mussolini of the outline of the speech that Chamberlain was to make to the Commons, in order that the Italians could make any changes. The duce, in approving the speech, declared: "I believe that it is the first time that the Head of the British Government submits to a foreign Government the outline of one of his speeches. Its a bad sign for them" ¹⁸⁸

Chamberlain's concern with German problem led him, as concern became preoccupation, to develop 'tunnel vision' as far as the wider span of the international scene was concerned, which resulted in a far less precise calculation of the British interest in such areas as the Iberian Peninsular, than had been true with Eden and the Foreign Office, for in the case of Chamberlain, the British interest in these 'peripheral' areas was pre-calculated: the avoidance of conflict with Germany or Italy. Sir Walford Selby, Upon going

to take his post at the head of the British Mission in Lisbon in December of 1937, was received by Neville Chamberlain and the interview made clear to Walford Chamberlain's interest in the German assault upon the British position, commercial and political, in Portugal: "Despite my long and intimate association with his half-brother, Sir Austen, I scarcely knew Mr. Neville Chamberlain. He reminded me that we had 'once' met at the Embassy in Paris. Our conversation was only a very brief one/ It was quite obvious that whatever assurances Mr. Eden might be giving to me as to the importance he attached to my new post, Mr. Chamberlain was only remotely interested. He asked me no questions about my last post at Vienna, nor did he see fit to take me into his confidence in regard to the deal with Germany over colonies in Africa which he was at the moment contemplating, and which might greatly affect the overseas possessions of our ally."

"My interview terminated very quickly, Mr. Chamberlain
189
wishing me good luck."

Spain came to be viewed almost exclusively in terms of the German threat as the crisis in Europe developed. One may take the developing shape of British policy to be the result of a self-assurance and sense of purpose (or mission) on the part of Chamberlain that was carried to the point of arrogance, and be right to a large extent. But one should remember the nature of the times; the Prime Minister would have been lacking in his duty if, in the evolving crisis, had not manifested a sense of urgency. If the choices made

by Chamberlain were chosen with too inadequate an assessment of the effects of that decision upon Britain's relations with the non-Dictator states of Europe, then this is the usual effect of a crisis period upon diplomacy. As Pruitt states: "In times of national stress when national aspirations seem threatened, decision-makers are likely:

- (a) to be less aware of the complexity of their environment
- (b) to consider fewer alternatives
- (c) to choose among alternatives more impulsively with less
adequate review of their consequences."

This is perhaps the best description of British foreign policy as it developed under Chamberlain: the attempt to develop good-will and the signalling of a willingness to negotiate became the essence of British policy. In his domination by the perception of a threat and the resulting inability to consider alternative possibilities, Chamberlain inevitably reminds one of Piglet, one of the Winnie-the-Pooh character. In one episode, Pooh and Piglet were making their way to Owl's house on a very windy day, stopping to shelter in a wood, nervously listening to the roaring gale among the tree-tops.

"Supposing a tree fell down, Pooh, when we were underneath it?"

"Supposing it didn't," said Pooh after careful thought.
Piglet was comforted by this.

Notes : Chapter Three.

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Conclusion.

No people are uninteresting.
Their fate is like the chronicle of planets.
Nothing in them is not particular.
And planet is dissimilar from planet....
Not people die but worlds die in them.
Whom we knew as faulty, the earth's creatures.
Of whom, essentially, what did we know?
They perish. They cannot be brought back.
The secret worlds are not regenerated.

People

Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

The point has now been reached in this examination of British attitudes and policies towards the Spanish Civil War at which it becomes necessary to attempt to draw together the threads of the story, as well as to reach some conclusions as to the driving impulses behind British foreign policy and the essential nature of the spirit of Britain in the Thirties. In making this summary, it is inevitable (and perhaps even desirable) that judgements will be made as to the "correctness" of the concepts behind, and the content of, the foreign policies implemented by the British Government between the years 1936 and 1939. There are, however, pitfalls in setting oneself up as an armchair Solomon to judge the actions of others. This is especially true of a period, such as that which preceded the Second World War, which has managed to arouse furious passions and to shake the moral conscience of a nation accustomed to making easy assumptions as to its unblemished rectitude in such matters. The pusillanimous outpourings of outraged probity have been such that one is led to conclude, upon reading some of the accounts of British foreign policy in the latter half of the 1930's, that the results of the researches of some historians bear a marked parallel to the advent of Shakespeare's Caliban into the world of erudition:

"You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse."

This can, in part, be explained by the fact that the historian lives in the material world as well as the metaphysical realms of abstract thought. A.J.P. Taylor in discussing his "Origins of the Second World War" has stated that:

"Obviously, historians like Sir John Wheeler-Bennet and Alan Bullock and the younger American practitioners are hostile to my book because, whether they know it or not, they have vested interests. They have written textbooks, and they have their own books and legends to sell."¹

The political leaders of the Thirties have had to face not only the onslaught of the historian in the postwar period, but also had previously had to face the incursions of the political pundits of the Thirties. Sagittarius, one of the political analysts of the New Statesman with a satirical bent, penned the following parody, entitled "Eden Put the Kettle On", in 1937:

Eden, see the table spread,
Chamberlain take the head,
Greet our long solicited guest!
Foreign Office Chefs with care
Gastronomic flights prepare,
All the solid British fare
Nazis can digest!

Meet the Fuhrer's hungry wish,
Hand the Soviet with the fish,
Carve the League up on a dish,
Covenant chopped fine;
Serve what the Nazis love to eat -
Sauce Valencia with the meat,
Loans and credits with the sweet,
Mandates with the wine.

What! the guest will not partake?
All in vain we boil and bake?
Has Von Neurath stomach ache?
Can't he come today?...
Well, the food will keep, we find,
Later he may change his mind;
Meantime, till he feels inclined,
Eden, clear away!²

One may feel that political leaders should be prepared to accept any form of criticism which should be considered, as a Front Bench seat in the Commons, as coming with the job. Those who accept the responsibility of guiding the future of their state and yet cannot bear the gibes of the disgruntled should, perhaps, take the advice of Juan Chi, the medieval Chinese poet:

O, men of influence
Remember to withdraw in time!
You look sad and frail.
Is it because of power and fame?
I prefer to fly with jays and tits,
Not with hoary herons.
For they travel high and far,
Making the return too hard.³

There is, however, a significant difference between the criticism leveled at the politicians of the Thirties by the historians of the present day and that by the analysts of the 1930's. Those of the present time who level their retributive darts can base their case on the sure knowledge of the outcome of the policies of the appeasers and upon documentary evidence of the intentions of the leaders of the Fascist states. The importance of this difference has been pointed out, with justification, by those of the appeasers who have written their memoirs and by the apologists of those policies. Iain Macleod wrote of the year 1937 in his study of Neville Chamberlain:

"That such appeasement of Germany, at this point of history, rested upon falsely optimistic assumptions about the measure of Nazi ambitions is now undeniable. We know from the Nurenberg trial documents that Hitler was insatiable, war inevitable and appeasement therefore a forlorn hope. But since those who pursued appeasement lacked the benefit of hindsight, it was neither a foolish nor an ignoble hope." 4

If one is to understand or to judge the policies of the political leaders of Britain in the 1930's, one must reconstruct as closely the world as it was seen in that period and not as it seems in retrospect, so that the point of the exercise is not to attack the appeasers for their blindness but to attempt to understand why they (together with the vast majority of the population of Britain) were not able to perceive the true nature of the intentions of the Fascist leaders, the possible outcomes of the policies open to Britain and the capability of Britain to undertake to implement these policies.

One might take as a starting point of a tirade upon Chamberlain's policy to Italy over the Spanish question the following record by Count Ciano of the Anglo-Italian talks of January 1939:

"The recorded discussion of the afternoon was characterized by the profound sense of preoccupation which dominates the British with respect to Germany. German rearmament weighs on them like lead. They would be ready for any sacrifice if they could see the future clearly. This dark preoccupation of theirs has convinced me more and more of the necessity of the Triple Alliance. Having in our hands such an instrument we would get whatever we want. The British do not want to fight. They try to draw back as slowly as possible, but they do not want to fight." 4

Chamberlain's policy was to weaken the Axis at the Italian end by a policy of appeasing Italy's demands, since it was felt that Germany was not the Duce's first choice.⁵ Chamberlain came into conflict with the Foreign Office over this question, since Chamberlain felt that the Foreign Office continued without justification to see a Machiavelli in Mussolini using treatment which would not get anywhere.⁷ Thus Chamberlain was prepared to advance a long way towards the Italian viewpoint and, for example, to grant to Mussolini recognition of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia after, what many felt to be, only nominal withdrawal of Italian volunteers from Spain. This readiness of Chamberlain to move towards the Italian viewpoint led Mussolini to retort:

"These men are not made of the same stuff as the Francis Drakes and the other magnificent adventurers who created the empire. These, after all, are the tired sons of a long line of rich men and they will lose their empire."⁸

One could buttress the general line of argument with exposition on the inglorious record of the Italian armed forces in Libya and Albania, together with the impotence of the Italian surface navy after the battle of Taranto in November 1940. The effect of this battle was to have, in the words of Viscount Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean fleet in 1940, a profound effect on the naval strategic situation in the Mediterranean:

"It reduced, if it did not altogether abolish, the threat of the enemy fleet interfering with our neverending succession of convoys to Greece and Crete, and enabled our battleship strength in the Eastern Mediterranean to be diminished. This in turn brought relief to our hard-pressed destroyers, as fewer were now required as an anti-submarine screen for the smaller battle-fleet. Within the next few weeks the Malaya and the Ramillies sailed for home."⁹

One result was that the Italian Chief of the Naval Staff was relieved of his position at the same time as Mussolini accepted the resignation of the Supreme Commander of the Italian Army, Marshal Badoglio.¹⁰

To accept such arguments would, however, be to use the power of hindsight where it should not be used. We should remember the renewal of the three power warning that was given by the British Chiefs of Staff in November, 1937, who insisted that Britain's interests lay in a peaceful Mediterranean and that every effort should be made to return to a state of friendly relations with Italy.¹¹ The threat of the Italian submarine fleet, which had a hundred submarines in commission before the outbreak of hostilities, and had appeared as presenting an important factor in the Mediterranean, did not materialize.¹² Cunningham, who had expected that upon the Italian declaration that he and his fleet would spend most of the daylight hours beating off heavy bomber attacks, had the encouraging experience on the first day of never sighting a plane.¹³ The supine direction of the Italian fleet was an unexpected bonus that could not have been foreseen. However, even this could not remove the danger that the strategic position of Italy across Britain's Mediterranean route to the Far East presented. Captain S.W. Roskill in the official British History of the Second World War makes this clear:

"While the Italian high command did not realise sufficiently the importance of taking the offensive to secure their communications with North Africa, especially the elimination of Malta, the Italian fleet could not be ignored, and the British ships which were urgently required elsewhere had to be used to contain the fleet in being. May 1940 reinforcements were sent from the Home Fleet to Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham at Alexandria as the Italian attitude became more threatening. The threat of the Italian destroyers and submarines based at Massawa on the flank of the convoy route to Suez meant that on 24th May, the Red Sea was closed to shipping until counter-measures had been taken" 14

If decision-makers in Britain were too impressed by the Military parades of Mussolini's legions and the utterances on the might of the 'New Rome', it was natural since the Fascist regime was built on its ability to impress and to create the aura of greatness. Luigi Barzini, in his portrait of the Italian people, represents Mussolini as the supreme showman, enthralled in his own act:

"He was a flamboyant interpreter of heroic roles in the style of the great nineteenth century tragedians or operatic baritones. Paolo Monelli, the author of the best life of Mussolini wrote: 'The Italians saw in him only the tenor for whom they had raved as they had years before for Carso and Tamagno. As one does with tenors, they enjoyed his good long notes and the melody without paying attention to the words, but, if they had listened more carefully, they would not have been surprised by the catastrophe later. He had announced it.'"¹⁵

The tanks built under Mussolini were slow and protected by such thin armour that they could be pierced by machine gun fire. They had been chosen by Mussolini because they were cheap and therefore for the same price there could be more of them to fill a parade.¹⁶ The act and the pose were important but behind the facade there was little of substance. The deficiencies of the Italian Army had not escaped the notice of the German military mission which visited Italy in 1938. The Italian Army possessed no effective modern tanks and was quite unprepared for a modern campaign, while the Italian General Staff, realizing the true extent of the Army's weaknesses was, under Marshal Badoglio, working for peace. It was stated by reliable friends of the members of the German military mission that Fascism had neglected armaments, as it wanted to maintain its popularity by giving priority to social reforms.¹⁷

To draw the conclusion from the knowledge that we have today of the weakness of the Italian military position behind the facade of the revived Imperium Romanum, that it was a mistaken policy to attempt to slake the revisionist thirst of Mussolini by meeting him more than half-way on the question of the recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia, would be less than fair. It would be to overlook the central fact that the Three Power warning issued by the British Chiefs of Staff stemmed from the position of Britain as facing too many demands upon her military resources: the importance of Italy stemmed from the necessity, if Italy were not to be placated by political means, to divert much needed naval strength from the Far East and the waters around the British coast. The importance of Italy sprung from her crucial position across Britain's route to the Far East through the Suez canal. Even a poorly equipped and organised military force would be able to pose a considerable problem to those concerned with the defense of Britain's sea routes.

One must also bear in mind that the policy of Chamberlain towards Italy was based upon political as well as strategic considerations. Chamberlain was directing his policy towards the appeasement of Europe as a whole, in which a planned policy toward Italy played its part. It was Germany that occupied the role as the major problem in Chamberlain's hierarchy of solutions. However, while the most important, the German problem was the most intractable, so that Chamberlain decided upon the course of seeking to bring the southern partner of the Axis into those states whose influence could be relied upon to bring about a peaceful solution to those problems that faced Europe, a role in which Chamberlain sought to use Mussolini at the time of the Munich crisis.

One must therefore be careful to see the world as it would be seen through the eyes of the decision-maker and not as it seems thirty years later and in the 1930's Italy presented a far more formidable spectacle than she does to those whose view is highly coloured by the image of the long streams of Italian soldiers surrendering in the Libyan desert. Professor Butterfield makes the point very clearly that our understanding of history will depend upon our ability to imagine oneself into the place of the statesman:

"Our traditional historical writing... has refused to be satisfied with any merely causal or standoff-ish attitude toward the personalities of the past. It does not treat them as mere things, or just measure such features as the scientist might measure; and it does not content itself with merely reporting them in the way that an external observer would do. It insists that the story cannot be told correctly unless we see the personalities from the inside, feeling them as an actor might feel the part he is playing - thinking their thoughts over again and sitting in the position not of the observer but of the doer of the action. If it is argued that this is impossible - as indeed it is - not merely does it remain the thing to aspire to, but in any case the historian must put himself in the position of the historical personage, must feel his predicament, must think as though he was that man. Without this art not only is it impossible to tell the story correctly but it is impossible to interpret the very documents on which the reconstruction depends. Traditional historical writing emphasizes the importance of sympathetic imagination for the purpose of getting inside human beings. We may even say that this is part of the science of history for it produces communicable results - the insight of one historian may be ratified by historians who then give currency to the interpretation that is produced".¹⁸

Objections have been stated to the "empathy theory" of historical explanation on the basis, that while this method is useful as a heuristic

device, the soundness of historical explanation will depend upon the factual correctness of the empirical generalisations which the method of understanding may have suggested.¹⁹ The argument follows from the belief that implicit in the use of the word "because" there is a reference to a generalization from which the explanation gains its meaning. Gardiner, for instance, states:

"...every explanation of the above kind that is ever offered always contains a reference to one or more generalisations, But the expression 'contain a reference' is ambiguous. It may well be argued that very often to give an ordinary causal explanation - 'he slipped because he stepped on a banana skin' - does not seem to involve a reference to a generalization, either for the speaker who enunciates the explanation or for the hearer who understands it. Such an objection may be circumvented by the device of stating that on such occasions only an implicit reference to the generalization is expressed...whenever a causal explanation is doubted or queried..it is the generalization that warrants its utterance which comes under fire, and the same generalization must be defended by reference to previous experience if the claim to have offered a satisfactory explanation is to be upheld."²⁰

Related to this problem of the correct basis of historical explanation is the problem of the extent to which the subject matter of history is amenable to the making of generalizations and to the general inductive method:

"One answer to these questions boldly states that the subject matter of history is amenable to ordinary inductive treatment. History admittedly differs from science in that it has to do with different objects; nevertheless these objects can be generalized about, the behaviour of another such object. And, if sufficient generalizations are made on a wide enough scale, why should not the body of such generalizations be called a science? Historians have been doing the spade-work for such a science for hundreds of years: now all that is necessary is to gather together the information they have collected and throw it into the form of laws.

"...an alternative view is presented. According to this we are asked to accept the diversity between the subject matter of history and the sciences, and to realize that the nature of history will not permit the formulation of laws in the scientific sense of the term, namely by means of correlations observed to hold in experience. Nevertheless, it is possible to grasp the meaning of an historical entity like a civilization, to 'understand it, by means of historical insight, which represents the faculty of the historian for penetrating into the objects of his study, and for coming to know the 'principle of development' of a nation, social movement, or class." ²¹

Professor K.R.Popper, Professor C.G.Hempel and P.L.Gardiner, amongst others, have put forward the theory that explanation is achieved solely by means of bringing that which is to be explained under a general law, so that explanation can be taken to be prediction back to front. Thus Popper states:

"To give a causal explanation of a certain event means to derive deductively a statement (it will be called a prognosis) which describes that event, using as premises of the deduction some universal laws together with certain singular or specific sentences which we may call initial conditions. The initial condition (or more precisely, the situation described by them) are usually spoken of as the cause of the event in question, and the prognosis (or rather, the event described by the prognosis) as the effect...."22

This statement that explanation should be achieved through means of covering laws may be seen to be in contradiction with the frequently made statement that each historical event is unique:

"...history is different in that it seeks to describe and explain what actually happened in all its concrete detail. It therefore follows a priori that since laws govern classes or types of things, and historical events are unique, it is not possible for the historian to explain his subject-matter by means of covering laws. If he is to understand it at all, it will have to be by some kind of special insight into particular connexions."23

One might attempt to formulate the problem in terms of agreeing that while individuals may be seen as unique beings, they will find themselves in reoccurring situations. Patterns of behaviour will therefore emerge, since in any given situation the variety of courses open to the individual being faced by that situation are limited. Given a defined situation, one may be able therefore to predict the possible courses of action available to that individual. As an example, if one had undertaken a period of observation of plumbers in action one should be able to predict the likely courses of action open to a plumber when faced by a leaky pipe.

One should deal, before moving on further, with the extent to which individuals can be considered as involved in these decision-making processes. The elements of a decision include, as we have noted before, the values and beliefs of the person making a decision and the system of reasoning by which the individual attempts to adjust the situation so that his values and beliefs are given effect to. To take the question of the

value-belief system held by the individual, it would not be entirely correct to state that an individual's values and beliefs are derived from the individual searching 'within himself' to arrive at these values and beliefs. It would be more correct to state that a person's value-belief system is derived from the accumulated experience of the person's pattern of social relationships. For example, a person's moral beliefs and behaviour pattern will derive from the moral precepts taught to that person as a child, his observation and experience, his existence within a group and the social pressures exerted on the individual who does not conform to the group concept of the normal behaviour pattern. The concepts of nationalism and national culture in as far as they have meaning provide useful adjuncts to this statement of the impact of the group upon the individual through means of a national language, national press, radio and television systems, national education systems, religion and a host of other means by which the individual comes to look at the world in terms of the state within which he lives rather than as a single, untainted entity.

The system of reasoning by which the individual attempts to give reality to his value and belief system in the world around cannot be taken to be entirely unrelated to the community from which the individual springs. One may take as the justification for this statement the definition of reasoned thought as the application of knowledge to the solution of a problem which faces the individual. This knowledge we make take to be the accumulated memories of past situations in which the individual found himself and the results of these situations in terms of the solutions which the individual had previously applied.

The above is not intended to deny the existence of the individual personality, since for each individual there will be a unique pattern of interacting social relationships, and there will be varying degrees of intelligence, or the ability to apply the lessons learned, and aptitudes in mental and physical equipment. But it is to say that the strands of the individual's personality can be related to the community in which the individual lives and that the existence of the individual personality is no insuperable barrier to the formulation of generalised statements about human situations, past, present or future.

Such generalised statements are made in historical study, as for instance when an attempt is made to relate the revulsion felt in Britain toward the slaughter of the First World War to Chamberlain's attitude toward the German problem in the 1930's. The attempt may even be made to arrange a series of generalised statements on human reactions in defined situations into a unified theory of human activity within a defined area of human endeavour. The creation of theoretical models of man's economic activity is one well established field of study. In the field of the inter-action between states, and especially in that of the question of arms races, conflict and deterrence in the nuclear age, a great deal of work has been produced. One of the pioneers of this field, Lewis Richardson, attempted to apply his theories on conflict situations and arms races to the two arms races of 1908-1914 and 1929-1939 with varying degrees of success.²⁴

It is a regrettable necessity that we cannot take time to examine further the philosophical implications of the word 'because', together with the extent to which there exists an implicit reference to generalizations in all explanations. We can however agree that in each explanation there is a reference to an implicit or explicit generalization, which ought to be examined to test the validity of the explanation. While it is possible to state the existence of the individuality of the human personality and the uniqueness of historical events, this does not preclude the stating of generalised statements on the relationships between the individual and the community in which he lives and of the construction of theories of human behaviour of general application. We should however recognise the difficulties of the construction and application of theoretical structures to historical events. One such difficulty is the question of the selection and the availability of data. Another lies in the changing pattern of the kaleidoscope of the images that the actors in the historical situation will have of the other actors and of the situation itself. These images change and the theorist has to be able to recreate these images and incorporate them into the model. This problem of the non-coincidence of images held inwardly-orientated organized groups has been termed by Kenneth Boulding

'the misunderstanding processes',³⁵ and it is in this field that the empathy method of historical interpretation becomes important.

The difficulties of applying models to human activity does not preclude the theoretical approach from being a fruitful one for gaining entry into differing levels of explanation from that offered by the more traditional one of concentrating upon the actions of the individual. The ability to postulate generalised patterns of behaviour and to state the relationship between the decision-making processes of the individual and the community in which he lives raises the problem of the extent to which the individual can be considered to be exercising free will in decisions which he makes, and therefore our ability to make moral judgements on the individual in making certain decisions. Dr. Pieter Geyl has attacked A.J.P. Taylor for "...writing old-fashioned political history, from which it appears that the great issues of the world are settled in Foreign Offices rather than in society at large".²⁶ This brings the question to what extent is history the result of the interaction of the flowing streams within the societies of the world, and to what extent the formal decision-makers can alter the tide of events. Eden, having resigned from the Foreign Office and told Harold Nicholson that he did not wish to lead a revolt in the Conservative Party or to secure any resignations from the Cabinet, stated that:

"(HE) would probably have done the same if he had been in Halifax's place. 'Only' he adds with a smile, 'I do not think that I would have put myself into Halifax's place.' He says that it is very difficult to criticise one link in the chain of events, when the whole chain is itself vicious." 27

Could Eden have avoided the pitfalls, or are politicians merely tumbling currents in the tide of historical forces? We must first examine the forces. Britain, after the very rapid industrial expansion in the early and middle parts of the nineteenth century, entered a period when industrial expansion began to slow down. Britain relied upon its trade with the underdeveloped countries and failed to keep up with the latest technical advances that were being spurred on in such other countries as Germany that had to export into the more complex and demanding market of Europe. The impact of the Imperial idea can therefore be seen as very

injurious to Britain, since there was a failure to invest in the development of the technical advance of British industry. While people in Britain did save, this money was used to finance the development of agricultural countries which did little to add to Britain's industrial capacity. The result was a slowing down of Britain's industrial growth and a decline in output per man.²⁸ Upon this declining economic position was placed the strain of financing a world-wide defense system and competing with developing industrial powers, such as Germany, Japan and the United States in armaments whose developing technical innovation was leading to the rocketing of the costs of maintaining a modern defense system. Moreover, Britain was beginning to move into what Rostow has termed the age of mass consumption, in which:

"...real income per head rose to the point where a large number of persons gained a command over consumption which transcended basic food, shelter and clothing; and the structure of the working force changed in ways which increased not only the proportion of urban to total population, but also the proportion of the population in offices or in skilled factory jobs - aware of and anxious to acquire the consumption fruits of a mature economy.

"In addition to these economic changes, the society ceased to accept the further extension of modern technology as an overriding objective. It is in this post-maturity stage, for example, that, through political process, the Western societies have chosen to allocate increased resources to social welfare and security. The emergence of the Welfare State is one manifestation of a society's moving beyond technical maturity; but it is also at this stage that resources tend increasingly to be directed to the production of consumer durables and to the diffusion of services on a mass basis, if consumer sovereignty reigns. The sewing machine, the bicycle, and then the electric-powered household gadgets were gradually diffused." 29

Thus Rostow can state that: "A good deal of American and Western European history since about 1900, Japanese history since the 1930's... can be told in terms of the problem of choice posed by the attainment of maturity and in terms of the different balances struck among these three objectives (military power, the welfare state and mass consumption), at different times." 30

In a democratic country, such as Britain, the choice will be made by the consumers, the electorate; so that Britain in the Twentieth Century

moved more and more into the age of the welfare state and of mass consumption. The burden of social welfare was therefore added to the costs of defense, so that Britain was faced by a reoccurring series of economic crises, and so the need was felt to cut back on armaments at a time when Britain was faced by potential enemies possessed of political systems which enabled them to concentrate the fruits of the emergence into the age of technical maturity upon developing extensive armed forces equipped with modern weapons.

The people of Britain, having recoiled from the horrors of the First World War which had resulted from Britain sending its first large scale army to fight on the continent of Europe (with the possible exception of Wellington's army sent against Napoleon), found themselves emerging into the delights of the age of mass consumption. Even those in Britain who were at the lowest end of the economic scale in Britain found that there were diversions to make bearable their otherwise pallid existence, as is made clear by George Orwell in his study of the English working classes, The Road to Wigan Pier:

"A working man does not disintergrate under the strain of poverty as a middle-class person does. Take, for instance, the fact that the working class think nothing of getting married on the dole. It annoys the old ladies in Brighton, but it is proof of their essential good sense; they realise that losing your job does not mean things in a distressed areas are not as bad as they might be. Life is still fairly normal, more normal than one really has the right to expect. Families are impoverished, but the family system has not broken up. The people are in effect living a reduced version of their destiny they have made things tolerable by lowering their standards.

"But they don't necessarily lower their standards by cutting out luxuries and concentrating on necessities; more often than not it is the other way about - the more natural way, if you come to think of it. Hence the fact that in a decade of unparalleled depression, the consumption of all cheap luxuries has increased. The two things that have probably made the greatest difference of all are the movies and the mass production of cheap smart clothes since the war...You may have three half-pence in your pocket and not a prospect in the world, and only the corner of a leaky bedroom to go home to; but in your new clothes you can stand on the corner of a street, indulging in a private daydream of yourself as Clark Gable or Greta Garbo, which compenstates you a great deal. And even at home there is generally a cup of tea going - a 'nice cup of tea' and Father, who has been out of work since 1929, is temporarily happy because he has a sure tip for the Cesarewhich. Even people on the verge of

can buy a few days hope ('Something to live for', as they callit) by having a penny on the sweepstake ...Of course the postwar development of cheap luxuries has been a very fortunate thing for our rulers. It is quite likely that fish and chips...the movies, radio, strong tea and the football pools have between them averted revolution..(by) the quite natural inter-action between the manufacturer's need for a market and the need of half-straved people for cheap palliatives." 31

With the age of mass consumption, England turned in upon itself and devoted its time to the exploration of the new worlds opened by the newly available means of transport. The image that one receives from the England of the Thirties is a sense of serenity epitomised by the tranquillity of the cricket matches which attracted record crowds and the long queues waiting at the train stations to relax on the beaches at Bank Holidays. The great achievement of Baldwin as Prime Minister had been to maintain the unity of the English nation through the trials of the Ethiopian crisis and the abdication of Edward VIII, a cohesion which Chamberlain inherited. The majority of the people in Britain were moving forward on the wings of comfort and prosperity. Only the Marxist intellectual and the remaining areas of the nineteenth century industrial ghetto, (where, in the East End of London, South Wales and the industrial North an industrial proletariat could still be identified,) maintained a cosmic world sense of involvement. The remainder sank into the attractions of the English weekend (which was not to be interrupted by the threat of Hitler), cricket and the silver screen. The English maintained a sympathy for the Chinese, the Abyssinians and the Spanish, and in most cases upheld the cause of the underdog, but this sympathy rarely went beyond words or scratched the calm interior beneath the bland exterior. English contact was kept with the outside world by means of the Empire where the dusky peoples were kept in their place, while the stately ship continued serenely forward, suspicious as ever of those peoples across the English Channel. David Thomson, in his study of England in the Twentieth Century, has pointed to an incorrigible immobilisme of society in the Thirties, a structural resistance to change and especially to any radical movement, while the inability to come to grips with the problems that faced Britain led to a sense of helplessness and drift.

The result was an escapist flavour to many of the most fashionable pastimes; what appealed most was getting away from it all by means of the Youth Hostels, Butlins holiday camps, football pools, the cinema, the radio and the motor car.³²

There were, however, many organisations springing up in the Thirties to mobilise the sympathy that was felt for the unemployed at home and the peoples abroad being deprived of their freedom. The left especially controlled powerful levers of public opinion, especially the Left Book Club which generated and mobilised the existing and latent sympathy for oppressed peoples. There developed a cult of the working man among the intellectuals of the middle class, and among the poets and novelists, which put forward the idea of the essential goodness of the common man, with the adoption in literature of the language of the working classes. To the dissident members of the middle class wandering in the Waste Land, embarrassed by their middle class backgrounds, the Soviet Union became the land of hope and the common man the source of salvation. To J.M.Keynes the middle class rebels were the spiritual leaders of British politics:

"There is no one in politics today worth sixpence outside the ranks of the Liberals, except the post-war generation of intellectual Communists under thirty-five. Perhaps in their feelings and instincts they are the nearest thing we have to the typical nervous nonconformist English gentleman who went to the crusades, made the reformation, fought the great rebellion, won our civil and religious liberties and humanized the working classes during the last century." 33

In his study of Poetry and Politics in the Twentieth Century, C.M.Bowra, examines the position of the poets of protest:

"In Great Britain there was no crisis comparable to what was happening elsewhere, and the opiates so skillfully administered by Baldwin in his years of power might seem to have lulled the British public into a complacent indifference to the fate of the world. But it was just this advertised security which stung a young generation of poets of protest and complaint. They were in the first place moved by the social condition of their own country, where the dismal acceptance of an outmoded system seemed to offer no hope to a large part of the population.

In this way they were heirs of a long tradition of British radicalism which goes back to William Morris and Shelly and Milton. But in the second place, the standards by which they judged their own country and found it wanting were relevant abroad, where in the rise of the Nazi, the slaughter of the Vienna socialists by Dollfuss in 1934, the invasion of China by Japan, and the Spanish civil war, deadly threats were manifest to the structure of free societies and the essential pre-requisites of a civilised life. Their own powerful reactions to these new horrors came not from any fear of their own safety but from their outraged consciences and their innate sense of human worth. They were driven not by personal danger..but by abstract beliefs which meant a great deal to them. They suffered from not being immediately engaged in the events of which they wrote, and perhaps for this very reason they felt that it was necessary to speak in a more public and more simple way than was natural to them." 34

Thought the middle-class rebels may be taken as the spiritual vanguard of the Left in Britain during the Thirties, their total impact upon was the Left was not as great as one would expect. While the cult of the common man was adopted, the intellectuals dwelt apart because their experience and arguments bore little relation to those of the common man, and did little more than spread a shimmering dialectical light upon the political scene. Orwell points with horror to what he considers the synthetic adoption of the common cause by the disaffected middle class conscience:

"The first thing that must strike any outside observer is that Socialism in its developed form is a theory confined entirely to the middle classes...most middleclass socialists, while theoretically pining for a classless society, cling like glue to their miserable fragments of social prestige...it must be remembered that a working man, so long as he remains a genuine working man, is seldom or never the complete Socialist in the complete, logically consistent sense. Very likely he votes Labour, or even Communist if he gets the chance, but his conception of the Socialism is quite different from that of the book-trained Socialist higher up. To the ordinary working man, the sort you would meet in any pub on Saturday night, Socialism does not mean much more than better wages and shorter hours and nobody bossing you about...It may be said that even if the theoretical book-trained Socialist is not a working man himself, at least he is actuated by love of the working class. He is endeavouring to shed his bourgeois status and fight on the side of the proletariat - that, obviously, must be his motive.

"But is it? I look at the Socialist - the intellectual, tract-writing type of Socialist, with his pullover, his fuzzy hair, and his Marxist quotation - and wonder what the devil his motive really is. It is often difficult to believe that it is love of anybody, especially of the working classes, from whom he is of all people the furthest removed. The underlying motive of many Socialists, I believe, is simply a hypertrophied sense of order. The present state of affairs offends them not because it causes misery, still less because it makes freedom impossible, but because it is untidy: what they desire basically is to reduce the world to something resembling a chessboard...The truth is that, to many people calling themselves Socialists, revolution does not mean a movement of the masses with which they hope to associate themselves; it means a set of reforms which 'we', the clever ones, are going to impose upon 'them', the Lower Orders...A whole generation has grown up more or less in familiarity with the idea of Socialism; and yet the higher-water mark, so as to speak, of socialist writing is W.H.Auden, a sort of gutless Kipling, and the even feebler poets who are associated with him." 35

Despite their intellectual slumming, the middle class intellectuals could not become a part of a true working class movement or understand the motives of the working class. This was due to the fact that the idealised proletarian of the socialist literature is a very rare creature; the majority of people are concerned with the details of living rather than fitting neatly into the slot allocated by the Socialist plan. The tradition of British labour is that of organised self-help through means of trade unions and co-operatives, while violence has played only a very minor role on the British political scheme. The result tended to be a love-hate complex behind the intellectual's relationship with the allegedly down-trodden; the supposedly uncorrupted side of the workers was placed on the pedestal, but the desire of those same workers to alleviate their dreary lives with unpretentious pastimes, their insensitivity to the subtleties of the middle-class nature and their unwillingness to sacrifice themselves to the dialectic filled the Red proselytisers with dismay....if not with disgust. The workers elected their own leaders through the trade unions who reflected their own desires and interests with the result that Bevin rather than Cripps represented the true character of the Left and the intellectuals of the extreme left were left to wander in their waste land.

It would be difficult in the Thirties to talk of class warfare in Britain. For the majority life was better than it had ever been before, and those who were still suffering the rigours of unemployment were isolated in certain areas away from Britain in general; though reminders of the fate of the less fortunate were brought to the general attention by means of the Jarrow marchers, but this through the news media of the press, the radio and the cinema. Some have argued against the importance of the term class, or its validity in the Twentieth Century. The concept of class-consciousness is important because people associate certain characteristics with certain classes, so that there exist a number of preconditioned images held within the society. The importance of class is on the stress on the differences, the incompatibility, of the different classes. It is this stress on the differences that leads to the conflicts and antagonisms associated with class in Britain. One important distinction that the middle classes saw as dividing the working man from their betters (apart from keeping coal in the bath) was that the working classes smelt, upon which subject Mr. Somerset Maugham gave us this:

"In the West we are divided from our fellows by our sense of smell. The working man is our master, inclined to rule us with an iron hand, but it cannot be denied that he stinks; none can wonder at it, for a bath in the dawn when you have to hurry to your work before the factory bell rings is no pleasant thing, nor does heavy labour tend to sweetness; and you do not change your linen more than you can help when the week's washing must be done by a sharp-tongued wife. I do not blame the working man because he stinks, but stink he does. It makes social intercourse difficult to persons of sensitive nostril. The matutinal tub divides the classes more effectively than birth, wealth or education."³⁶

Orwell describes in greater detail the operation of the images that acted to divide Britain:

"It is probably true that class-feeling is for the moment a little less bitter than it was*. The working classes are submissive where they used to be openly hostile, and the post-war manufacture of cheap clothes and the general softening of manners have toned down the surface differences between class and class. Every middle class person has a dormant class-prejudice which needs only a small thing to arouse it;

and if he is over forty he probably has the firm conviction that his own class has been sacrificed to the class below. Suggest to the average unthinking person of gentle birth who is struggling to keep up appearances on four or five hundred a year that he is a member of a parasitic exploiting class, and he will think you are mad. In perfect sincerity he will point out a dozen ways in which he is worse-off than a working man. In his eyes the workers are not a submerged race of slaves, but are a sinister flood creeping upwards to engulf himself and his friends and family and all decency out of existence. Hence that queer watchful anxiety lest the working classes shall grow too prosperous." 37

* This was first published in 1937.

With their economic position becoming gradually undermined by creeping inflation, the lower middle classes became intensely conservative and opposed to any radical changes for fear that any change would further act to weaken their economic position. Those who wished to raise the clarion call of opposition to the growth of fascism in Britain and throughout the world found that the majority of the British were unresponsive. Any attempt to found some form of national party to combat fascism ran into the hurdle of class enmity that remained from the General Strike and the hunger marches and into the constricting hand that party politics placed upon political leaders in Britain and upon personal conflicts. Eugen Spier, who was concerned with the organising of Focus (an association for the defense of freedom and peace to concentrate anti-fascist feeling), relates the difficulties of getting people of different political persuasion onto the same platform:

"But when it came to getting public support we discovered that most of those who had expressed their agreement with us, drew a sharp distinction between their personal views and an official statement with which they would be prepared to be publically associated, Such an association might lead people to believe that these were the views of the party or association to which they belonged. So we were compelled to accept the fact that we could not obtain a binding commitment to co-operate publically even after a satisfactory initial meeting in private, and that the matter had always to be referred to the party or association...Our future associates wholeheartedly approved our aims, but were by no means prepared to appear with each other on a public platform. There was for instance the great difficulty of getting Sir Walter Citrane to appear together with Churchill, mainly on account of their differences during the General Strike, and even to get them to meet informally to

discuss the matter needed the upmost patience." 38

Those prepared to take positive action against the growth of fascism, small in number and divided by party lines, could do little to shatter the introspection of the British nation. The doctrines of the League of Nations were coming into disrepute; the desire in the Conservative Party was to move away from the commitments to Europe and to revert to the position of Victorian England, which conjured up a glowing picture of solidarity, of freedom from the troubles of Europe. Anti-Russian to the core, the Soviet threat to capitalism and suspicion of the lower classes became merged into an uneasy concern that their way of life was under seige. Harold Nicholson commented on the motives of the Conservative Party:

"....my own party has behaved like worms and kissed the Chamberlain boot with a resounding smack...all the Tories and die-hards are hugging themselves at having got rid of all the nonesensical notions of the past and at having got back to good old Tory doctrines..

"We have lost our will power since our will power is divided. People of the governing classes think only of their own fortunes, which means hatred of the reds. This creates a perfectly artificial but at present most effective secret bond between ourselves and Hitler. Our class interests on both sides cut across our national interests." 39

We can, from the discussion above, put forward the case that the British political leaders were caught in forces which made the policies they adopted inevitable. Britain's economic position would not allow Britain to rearm with sufficient speed to meet the three-pronged threat from Germany, Japan and Italy. Faced with this threat there was no alternative but to attempt to placate the revisionist states until such time as Britain's military power had developed to allow her to secure the defense of the British strategic position. The great majority of the British people wanted the allocation of the resources of the country to be directed toward social welfare and economic stability, while the sentiment of the country was against involvement in the storms that were brewing on the continent of Europe. The advent of the Spanish civil war and its inter-mixing into the class divisions

of Britain saw the possibility of Britain being split in two at a time when cohesion was essential. While the Conservative Party controlled the levers of power, the Left controlled many powerful instruments for stirring public opinion, especially on the Spanish problem, where the issues could be represented in terms of an heroic people striving for freedom from the machinations of inter-national fascism. To offset the growing public opinion among the lower classes and dissident middle-class in favour of the Republican cause, it was necessary to maintain the almost impotent structure of the Non-Intervention Committee (which lived up to its name by intervening as little as possible in the question of 'volunteers' in Spain), so that the British decision-makers could maintain their freedom of movement in negotiating with Italy and Germany.

The modified version of Modelski's model of the international reaction to an internal war that we adopted, posed the possible choices of policies open to an external power as follows:

- (1) helping the weaker party.
- (2) helping the stronger party.
- (3) mediating between the primary parties to the internal war.
- (4) mediating between those external actors that had become involved in the internal war.

For Britain, the policies that would have to be adopted, would have to be mediation between those states that had become involved in the internal war in order to prevent the development of a new trouble spot in Europe, and, as the logical corollary of this policy, an attempt to bring to and end the internal war itself by arriving at an compromise peace through mediation. Though Spain did represent an important strategic stake in European power politics, Britain could undertake this policy confident that whichever side in the internal war emerged victorious in the internal war, the Spanish need for British capital in the period of reconstruction that would have to follow the conclusion of the war, and the need for such a period of reconstruction would ensure that the victor would not do anything to damage Britain's defensive position.

If one concludes that it is correct to take a determinist position toward the formulation of British policy and that the decision-makers were in fact not able to divert the tide of events in which they found themselves, can one advance any moral judgements as to the nature of the policies put forward by British decision-makers in the Thirties? Should not rather say that it was not the decision-makers that caused morally undesirable outcomes of international problems, in Spain, Austria, or Czechoslovakia, but facts and forces over which they had little control? If one should want to indulge one's outraged conscience, should one not point a finger at the immoral times in which those statesmen lived? Were Baldwin or Chamberlain to blame, or the uncaring peoples who had elected them? Could not Chamberlain, heir to the political dynasty of Joseph Chamberlain and the leadership of the Birmingham political scene, echo these words?:

"The ex-King said, Yon star's indifference
Fills me with fear I'll be left to my fate:
I needn't think I have escaped my duty,
For hard it is to keep from being king
When it's in you and in the situation.
Witness how hard it was for Julius Caesar.
He could'nt keep himself from being king
He had to be stopped by the sword of Brutus.
Only less hard was it for Washington.
My crown shall overtake me, you will see,
It will come rolling after us like a hoop". 40

It would, however, be a mistake to take the view that the policy of appeasement was merely a reaction on the part of British statesmen to the military and economic weaknesses of Britain in the face of the challenge offered by Japan, Germany and Italy. Appeasement had its roots in a positive desire to contribute to the peace of the world by mitigating the sources of conflict and achieving a more ordered international society. The constructive elements of appeasement are most clearly to be seen in attempts of Eden to bring into existence a comprehensive scheme for the achievement of a lasting European peace. This scheme Eden revealed to Harold Nicholson in February 1936. Eden stated that his aim was to avert another German war, and that to do this he was prepared to make great concessions to the German appetite provided

that the Germans were prepared to sign a disarmament treaty and to join the League of Nations. His idea was to work for this for the next three years and then to put it before the League. Nicholson commented in his diary that he was all in favour of such a farsighted plan. 41

The claim that the policy of appeasement was determined by the military-strategic position of Britain overlooks the extent to which Britain's position was the result of deliberate choices made by the decision-makers in London, flowing from a political view of the world which helped to structure Britain's military posture. To say that British policy toward the Dictators was determined by the strategic balance in Europe and the Far East must be dependent upon an examination of Britain's military policies and especially in the reactions to the rearmament programmes of Germany, Italy and Japan. One must ask more specifically whether the rearmament programmes adopted by Britain were intended to allow Britain to lay claim to a greater voice in the councils of Europe and to provide a military force on the basis of which Britain could intervene to shape the tide of European history.

Aircraft were recognised, even in Britain, as constituting a weapon that brought new and unparalleled dangers to the civilian populations of belligerent countries. Therefore A.J.P. Taylor has pointed to the importance of the universal belief that there was no defence against attack from the air:

"Baldwin expressed this when he stated: 'The bomber will always get through'. It was expected that every great city would be levelled to the ground immediately on the outbreak of war; and the British Government, acting on this assumption, made preparations for more casualties in London alone during the first week of war than in fact the entire British people suffered during five long years. The only answer was supposed to be 'the deterrent' - a bomber-force as large as the enemies. Neither Great Britain nor France claimed to possess such a force in 1936 or even in 1939: hence, in large part, the timidity of their statemen." 42

One could, with justification, take issue with Taylor on the question of whether it was the lack of a deterrent which led to the timidity of

British policy, or whether it was the timidity of British Policy that led to the lack of a deterrent. One could also quarrel with Taylor's statement that the 'deterrent' was the universally accepted answer to the air threat, and his later statement that fighter aircraft despised in Britain before the war.⁴³ We shall pass on later to consider these points in greater detail.

In the period while Baldwin remained Prime Minister, it would seem to be more true to speak of myopia rather than timidity, of a chronic inability to perceive the nature and extent of the threat that was offered by Germany. Denis Richards, in his study of the Royal Air Force, makes the following observations on the lack of urgency with which Britain, under Baldwin, reacted to the German rearmament programme.

"How had it come about that a country that, in 1937 was still considerably stronger than Germany in the air, should contemplate surrendering any title of that advantage within two years? There were many reasons. Economy was only beginning to loosen its stranglehold; the country was gravely divided on the need for arms; the Government felt it impolitic to speak too frankly about Germany; the Air Staff itself, while strongly in favour of expansion, was all against a hothouse or mushroom growth which, by piling up reserves of outdated aircraft and swamping skilled men with novices, would destroy the efficiency of the service. But fundamentally all these reasons reduced themselves to one - that the Nazi threat to European peace, though apprehended in a general way, was not yet recognised in its true and terrible terms. This led to a sense of time, if limited time, in hand: a sense of urgency, but not of immediate and over-powering urgency. In consequence the Government, fairly reflecting the opinion of the country (which it made little attempt to educate) was at this stage prepared to take only those measures which would not upset the peacetime basis of industry and trade - measures which would still leave freedom in the factories, goods in the home, and cash in the pocket. The Germans were able to expand their Air Force and aircraft industry so rapidly because their rulers had adopted an appropriate and very different formula; guns before butter, with us, until the direst hour of danger, it was butter, butter all the way."⁴⁵

One result of the lack of a sense of immediate urgency was that the Englishman did not forbear, even in the face of National Socialism, from his natural predilection for the preservation of wild-life, even at the price of progress, without pangs of remorse:

"Since business as usual was until 1938 the Government's motto for business, the landowner and the farmer could fairly claim its application to their industry. The result was that the Air Ministry's proposals for new airfields, schools and camps met with constant opposition in the countryside. Air gunnery and bombing ranges were especially unpopular, for even if by some miracle of human selection lighted on a spot at once suited to the purpose and void of human haunt and habitation, voices were rarely lacking to defend the rights of the local wild fowl. In one case a colony of swans was held to be threatened, but fortunately the birds, when their supporters lost the day, rapidly adjusted to their new and noisier surroundings. Indeed, as Sir Philip Sasson pointed out when introudcing the Air Estimated in 1937, the bird difficulty was apparently two-fold: either they might be driven away from sanctuaries where it was hoped to preserve them, or else they might be driven away from coverts where it was hoped to destroy them" 45

As Baldwin moved toward the end of his term as Premier, weakening health reinforced a natural aversion to foreign affairs, while the problems posed by Mrs. Simpson occupied most of Baldwin's time. Aware of the weakening mood of the Government to the problems of defense of Britain, a parliamentary deputation and its military advisors called on Baldwin and Inskip (The Minister for the Coordination of Defense) at the end of 1936, and consisted of Lord Salisbury, Sir Austen Chamberlain, Churchill Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes, Marshal of the Air Force Lord Trenchard and Field Marshal Lord Milne.

The Prime Minister merely sat in at the meeting, while Inskip assured the deputation that everything possible was being done for the defense of the country without causing public alarm and despondency or upsetting industry. " The emphasis on these last words meant all the difference between peril and security. The deputation went morosely away." 46

With the advent of Chamberlain as Prime Minister there can be seen to have developed a more incisive reaction to the problems of British defense, though it must be reiterated that it would be a mistake to draw too much of a dividing line between the administrations of Baldwin and Chamberlain. Chamberlain had exerted a very powerful influence upon the development of British foreign policy even before becoming Premier: acting

as heir-apparant in the latter years of administration, and, more specifically, being the chief architect of the 1936 and 1937 Defense White Papers while Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁴⁷ However, while the Chamberlain era showed a greater awareness of the dangers that faced Britain arising from the re-establishment of German military power in Central Europe, British rearmament policy was shaped strongly by a political view of the role that Britain should play in the affairs of Europe. British rearmament was directed toward the safeguarding of the British islands rather than providing substance to underpin British foreign policy toward Europe.

The political policy that did so much to shape the rearmament programme of Britain was that Britain had only "limited liability" for the events that occurred on the European mainland. By this policy it was felt that Britain should remain aloof from making binding commitments on the Continent, and would become in the event of war the organiser and money-lender for alliance against the aggressor. The main concern of the British decision-makers became to attempt to prevent Britain being knocked out quickly by the German bomber fleet; once Britain had weathered this initial storm, it was felt that she would be able to bring into play her traditional weapons and what were felt to be her greatest assets: her financial reserves, her Imperial connections and the Royal Navy. This policy reflected a general desire to return to sound Tory principles and move away from the novel and dangerous League policy that had a rank radical odour to many in the Conservative Party; and also a desire to avoid what many felt was the gross and ghastly mistake of Britain forsaking the bosom of the sea to send a large scale army to **fight** on European soil. Ironside recorded in his diary on December 29, 1937, that:

"The cabinet, in a muddled way, are terrified of making an Expeditionary Force. They reason that if they have such a force they may be forced to send it to the Europe once more. They dread a Continental commitment such as we had, and honoured, in 1914. I don't blame them, for France will scream louder than ever for help in the next crisis. Belgium will shout equally loudly. Once we are landed, our commitment is limitless. With our good faith it is always ahead of expectancy

by our ally. They only wish to get us committed, and then we are harnessed to the cart driven by them. Our contribution outside an Expeditionary Force is never considered. Out of sight out of mind, is particularly applicable to a people come to such straits as France today.

"The cabinet now thinks that the Air Force can finish the campaign. They are terrified now of war being finished in a few weeks by the annihilation of Great Britain. They can see no other kind of danger than air attack and discount all other dangers...." 48

This policy of limited liability, according to Eden, was never a viable one, and would depend upon a massive development of the Royal Air Force:

"Neville Chamberlain and the majority of Ministers shared what was certainly a popular view at the time, that we could support our allies effectively on a basis of limited liability. This was probably never true, for psychological as well as military reasons. It was only rational if our contribution in the air could be dominant over Germany's, of which there was by this time no hope in a war within the next few years." 49

It was true that under Chamberlain the Air Force did receive priority for the allocation of resources over the army, together with coastal defences, as Ironside recorded in February, 1938:

"The Air Defences of Great Britain was absorbing all the money which was intended for the field Force. The Air Ministry dictates what it wants and the Army Estimates bear the cost... We have no control financially. Then the Navy are calling for Coast Defense to be put in order. They call the tune there." 50

The critical words are "the air defense of Great Britain and coastal defense. The development of the Air Force was not directed toward increasing the offensive power of Britain, but rather the ability to withstand the bomber fleet of Germany. Lord Trenchard, Chief of the Air Staff, argued in a memorandum of May 1928 to the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee on the War Objective of the Air Force that the future role of the Air Force should be an offensive one, based on heavy bombers, and directed against the enemy's means of producing the means of waging war:

"...air attacks will be directed against any objective which will contribute effectively toward the destruction of the enemy's means of resistance....

"To attack the armed forces is...to attack the enemy at his strongest point. On the other hand, by attacking the sources from which these armed forces are maintained infinitely more effect is obtained. In the course of a few days attack upon the aerodromes of the enemy perhaps 50 aeroplanes could be destroyed; whereas a modern industrial state will produce a 100 in a day - and production will far more than replace any destruction we can hope to do in the forward zone. On the other hand, by attacking the enemy's factories their output is reduced by a much greater proportion." 51

Following upon the growing awareness in 1935 that Germany had reached parity with Britain in aircraft, and Baldwin's admission to Parliament in May of that year and his Government had miscalculated as to the rate of German rearmament, the Cabinet appointed an Air Parity Committee under Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, who, on 7th June, 1935, became the Secretary of State for Air. From the deliberations of this Committee emerged two plans for the expansion of the air force schemes C and F. However, as the Abyssinian affair made clear the need for heavy bombers and further information made it evident that Scheme F would not be sufficient to obtain parity with Germany in the air, several new plans were put forward (which also had to take into account the lack of trained workers, the inadequate capacity of the new shadow factories and the lack of trained air crews.) Finally in Scheme J which was put to the Cabinet in October, 1937, the Air Ministry decided that it had to have a bomber force equipped with new heavy bombers in accordance with the strategic doctrine that only an offensive force with a greater bomb capacity than the German's could win the war for Britain. The emphasis in this plan was upon Bomber Command which was to be increased to 90 squadrons (1,442 aircraft). According to Eden it was estimated that the Germans in 1939 would have a bomber force of 1,500 aircraft, while the most favourable estimate of British strength based on the then existent plan would have been 1,000.⁵² A most important aspect of the plan was that the bomber aircraft would have become progressively larger - Whitleys, Hampdens and Wellingtons - which would have been replaced in turn by new aircraft in 1943.

However Sir Thomas Inskip refused to put forward these increases, and demanded that the sum to be allocated to Scheme J should not be increased by more than £110 million, and that the saving should be made by limiting increases in overseas air strength and by a drastic reduction in the proposed strength of Bomber Command:

"The point I want to put before you, therefore, is whether you can devise a revised programme based on the conception that at the outset of war our first task is to repulse a knock-out blow within the first few weeks, trusting thereafter to defeat the enemy by a process of exhaustion, resulting from our command of the sea, in the latter stages." 53

Once the initial attack had been beaten off, according to Inskip, Britain's inherent strength would tell:

"If Germany is to win, she must knock us out within a comparatively short time owing to our superior staying power." 54

Priority was therefore to be given to fighter aircraft, while bombers were to be reduced in numbers and the emphasis was to be placed upon medium and light bombers. Despite protests from the Foreign Office, the Cabinet accepted Inskip's viewpoint and on 22nd December, 1937 decided that the whole increase should be reduced to £100 million. The Air Staff made elaborate calculations as to the wastage that would occur if Germany tried to knock out Britain at the beginning of the war, and estimated that Britain would be left with only nine weeks reserves, a small training establishment and a war potential that would not be in full production until after many months of war:

"It appeared probable that there would be a period when the Air Force would come to a standstill owing to lack of reserves and the war potential would be consequently useless (since the war would have been lost) if it were not destroyed." 55

Scheme J had included in its arguments a reference to the advice of Lord Grey in 1912 on the position created by German military strength:

"You must not rely entirely on your foreign policy to protect the United Kingdom. That is to say, if you let your margin of naval strength fall below that which may be brought to bear on you rapidly, you are setting foreign policy a task which you ought not to set it. The risk of an attack on the United Kingdom stronger in force than we could meet

with the ships we keep in Home Waters is not one to be settled by diplomacy." 56

Vansittart told Eden in discussion of the Air Ministry's paper:

"There is not a man among us who does not feel that foreign policy cannot continue on our present basis of material strength. Lord Grey is rightly quoted, and nothing on earth can ever alter that truth. None the less, day by day the Foreign Office is tacitly expected to live in the teeth of that unalterable dictum, and is criticised for obvious inability to do the impossible....I feel that you ought to point out to the Cabinet that it is becoming steadily more perilous to disregard the wisdom of Lord Grey. I have pointed out that on many occasions from the beginning of 1934 that nothing can be guaranteed in Europe from the end of 1937.

"The moral is that the present scheme of the Air Ministry represents a rock-bottom minimum. Even so we shall be two whole years behind Germany...Of course you will be told that the Foreign Ministry can help and must by lowering tension...The Foreign Office may well agree to pass a sponge over the past, if we get the Air Ministry's present proposals and get them quickly. This time we should be in earnest against a day's unnecessary for we shall still have to live through four frightfully dangerous years. I only hope this programme will be discussed and accepted at once." 57

The significance of the shape being given to the British military posture was evident to the French. Daladier, the President of the Council of France, attempted in his meeting with Chamberlain in November, 1938, to persuade Chamberlain to shift the emphasis in British rearmament away from anti-aircraft defense towards the offensive role of bombers.⁵⁸ The meaning of the Chamberlain line bears a marked parallel to that of the policy that was implemented by Stalin after the purges of 1937. The important factor in this case was the modification of the strategic line which shifted the emphasis from the offensive bomber to the defensive fighter, a shift which may be interpreted as a reflection of a general move to isolationist policy on the part of Stalinist Russia in this period, and a move away from the policy of collective security, since, by the shift in the strategic line, the Soviet Europe would have been able to render less aid to the countries of Europe against German aggression.⁵⁹ Similarly, the emphasis by Chamberlain

and his group upon fighter aircraft and anti-aircraft defenses may be taken as a function of the political policy of insisting that Britain had only limited liability for the events that could occur upon the European mainland, and it would be, thus, incorrect to state that the political policies implemented by Chamberlain were entirely determined by the military position in which Britain found herself in the second half of the 1930's. This was made clear in the discussions between Chamberlain and Eden on the Air Ministry's paper:

"Had a talk with N.C. this morning about rearmament based on the air force paper. Told him of my conviction that rearmament must go faster, and that we should buy from abroad if necessary. I knew that some of my colleagues thought that we at the Foreign Office were insufficiently insistent in our efforts to improve relations with dictator powers. This, however, was not the true position. Unless it were known that we were rearming effectively, our efforts in international sphere today were useless. In this connection I emphasised the Grey quotation..N.C. did not, I think, share my view and clearly had the financial position much in mind. I maintained that good financial position would be small consolation to us if London were laid flat because our Air Force had been insufficient. N.C. thought this was today too alarmist a view, Despite the darkening international outlook, which he admitted, he did not think anybody was going to attack us for the next two years. It was necessary to follow a very cautious foreign policy." ⁶⁰

While Eden complained that Britain's proposed bomber strength would not give British diplomacy much chance in 1938 (as in a sense it was not intended to), the Regular Army sunk into the depths of unpreparedness. This can, in part, be explained by the traditional and inherently conservative nature of the British Army. The plans of the General Staff were, according to Liddell Hart, to reproduce the army of 1914, that is to base the army upon infantry rather than upon mechanised forces. In the army estimates of 1937, the bulk of the newly available money was devoted to the re-equipment of infantry divisions, and in the allocation for new equipment barely a tenth went for all types of tracked vehicles. ⁶¹ In a letter to Geoffrey Dawson on October 28th 1936, Liddell Hart wrote;

"Since my return to London I have been impressed, and depressed, by the prevalence of military opinion that the

War Office is sinking into fresh stagnation, instead of accelerating its pace; I am also struck by the contrast between the satisfaction, verging on complacency, which is expressed to me by most of the heads of Departments, and the increasing dissatisfaction, verging on despair, which is expressed by the younger officers, the lieutenant-colonels and majors, working in those Departments.

"Their general view is that Deverell wants to get on with things, if he has a certain slowness in crystallising his intentions, but in that carrying these into effect he is handicapped by his own inexperience of the War Office, combined with the fact of having a team of directors who, while quite able, are essentially of static mind. Since his three military colleagues on the Army Council are also of the same kind, it becomes even more difficult for him to give momentum to the machine." 62

As a result partly of this antipathy to mechanisation on the part of many in the upper echelons of the Army command as a result of the diverting of resources into the air defenses of Britain, the Army presented a woeful state. Ironside recorded in his diary in February, 1938:

"I don't wonder that our government is in a fluster over its military affairs after their years of neglect in the fact of so much warning.... We have no continental commitment now. I told the Commander's Conference that our wretched little Corps of two divisions and a mobile division was unthinkable as a contribution to an Army in France. Nothing behind it either. Let us make Imperial plans only. After all, the politicians will be heard put to it to refuse to help France and Belgium when the 1914 show begins again. There won't be any doubt about the Germans occupying the Channel ports this time... Belgium has once more declared her neutrality and has asked for protection from the great powers. I see that our people have been sitting in the Foreign Office discussing the situation for hours. They must all be in a terrible fright...." 63

Just over a month later Ironside was able to read the report on the state of rearmament in the Army:

"It is truly the most appalling reading. How we can have come to this state is beyond believing: present situation: we can put into the field two divisions only, with an incomplete quota of Corps troops, and deficient in many types of equipment essential for warfare under modern conditions." 64

This examination of the strategic policies of the 1930's and their relation to appeasement draws attention to the dangers inherent in making such statements as 'British policy toward the Spanish Civil War was determined by the military weakness of Britain.' British policy toward Spain, under Chamberlain, was in fact more a reflection of a belief in (or rather, perhaps, a desire to achieve) the ability of Britain to keep its distance from the European storm centre and a limited interest on the part of Britain in those events. Policy can be seen more as a general structuring of attitudes within Britain rather than a question of military capabilities: the reaction to the Great War; the developing conservatism and opposition to radical ideas; and the involvement with the growing complexities of a consumer society and its attendant delights. But while the tide of introspection flowed strong in Britain, the powerful levers that the proselytisers of the Socialist ethic could use upon public opinion, together with the tendency of people in Britain to see the world around themselves in class terms, meant that British decision-makers had to avoid enflaming further the acute case of stricken conscience with which the majority of British people viewed the struggle in Spain.

British decision-makers felt that they were able to view with equanimity the outcome of the struggle in Spain, sure in the knowledge that whichever side were to emerge victorious, the victor would need British capital to rebuild the shattered body of Spain. In this they were correct. Germany and Italy who had supported Franco to victory found that they were suckling a very strong-willed infant. In an interview between Hitler and Count Ciano in September of 1940, the future role of Spain was discussed. Hitler told Ciano that the Spanish price for entering the war on the Axis side had been that Germany was to deliver 400,000-700,000 tons of grain, all fuel, all equipment lacking in the army, put up artillery, planes and special troops for the assault on Gibraltar, hand over Morocco and Oran to Spain, while Spain in return would promise her friendship. Hitler commented:

"...Germany, on the basis of experiences during the Civil War, was clear about the fact that one could not make progress with the Spanish without quite concrete and detailed agreements.... It was...necessary to talk over very calmly for a few hours with the Duce the whole question in the light of its usefulness and military significance, especially since the deliveries demanded of Germany would represent a great sacrifice, which after all could not be made only in return for the good graces of the Spanish. Thus far, at any rate, the Spanish had not yet held out the prospect of an equivalent...The case would certainly be clear if Spain would assume distinct obligations...The agreements with Spain would only involve obligations for her partners and in practice would have to be made good militarily by Germany and Italy. The consequences would be very unpleasant..he was not convinced that Spain 'had the same capacity for giving as taking.'" 65

At the subsequent meeting of Franco and Hitler at Hendaye on October of that year, Hitler's fears were confirmed as Franco refused to play the part cast for him by Hitler and instead of committing himself to a definite date for the entry of Spain into the war, insisted instead on Spain's need for economic and military aid. Of his nine hours fruitless and exasperating wrangle with Franco, Hitler told Mussolini: "Rather than go through that again, he would prefer to have two or three teeth taken out." 66

To the extent that Chamberlain and Eden's judgements of the future role in European politics were correct, the Spanish Civil War may be seen as the 'Continental sideshow', a fratricidal struggle that owed its roots to the historical development of Spain, belying the labels of fascism and communism that were placed on the two sides by outside observers. Karl Marx observed some ninety years ago that "There is no country except perhaps Turkey, so little known and so falsely judged by Europe as Spain", explaining that this was because historians "instead of viewing the strength and resources of these peoples in their provincial and local organisations have drawn at the source of their court histories."⁶⁷ While the Spanish struggle came to symbolize for many in Europe their own hopes and dreams of a better world and their frustrations and anxieties as to its future, this had little to do with the realities of the issues involved in the civil war. This is made clear by Gerald Brenan in his study of the background of the war: "Spain, the symbol, was however rather a different thing from Spain, the actuality. The war had begun as a straightforward class struggle

between the reactionary landowners on one side and the revolutionary peasants and factory workers on the other. The Church, the Army officers and the majority of the middle classes supported the former, the petite bourgeoisie and the intellectuals the latter. Such is the broad outline, though the fact that the Republicans had brought over by the grant of an autonomy statute two of the most solidly Catholic and anti-liberal provinces in the country introduces a complication."⁶⁸

Elena de la Souchere places the Spanish Civil War in the historical context of reoccurring cycles of revolution, in which the cycle 1898-1950 was prefigured by the cycles 1808-1854 and 1854-1898: "Thus, the first glance at the preceding century strips the civil war of 1936 and Franco's dictatorship of any clinging aspect of the exceptional, and shows these bloody pages to be only episodes in an historical process whose dawn coincides with the dawn of the nineteenth century and the collapse of the Spanish Empire."⁶⁹

While the issues involved in the conflict between the Republicans and the Nationalists in Spain and the role (or lack of a role) that Spain came to play in the world war that broke out in 1939, may lead one to conclude that the Spanish Civil War was indeed a sideshow, this view overlooks the catalytic effect that Spain had upon the structuring of opinion within many European countries and upon the relationships between the states of Europe. The impact of Spain in these spheres was by no means symbolic, serving to render the British aim of achieving a peaceful Europe more difficult.

There was considerable agreement in Britain upon what should constitute the general line of policy toward Italy, though there was more than minor disagreement on the best means to implement this policy. This general line of policy was neatly summed up by Vansittart in a memorandum of May 21, 1936:

"Italy may become dangerous, but has not yet the same striking force or resolve or reserve of power as Germany, Mussolini has made his first advances to his fellow dictator across the Alps; but unless we drive him into an active and offensive co-operation with Hitler, we are entitled to hope that he will not be anxious to take the high road to Berlin.

We shall have to compromise with Mussolini for we cannot compromise or even live safely with Dictator Major if we are at loggerheads with Dictator Minor." 70

The implementation of such a policy would have meant granting to Italy a free hand in Spain and recognition of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia. This policy however ran into the emotional and symbolic importance which was attached to the Spanish issue in Britain and the fact that Italian policy toward Spain and the recognition of the Italian policy toward Spain and the recognition of the Italian Empire were linked together. British policy, as a result, fell between the two opposing viewpoints: one that concessions must be made to Italy; the other that Italy should limit or terminate its intervention in Spain before those concessions should be made. The vacillations and contradictions that resulted reflected and were partly a result of the dualism that steadily developed (up to the resignation of Eden) in the policy formulating machinery in Britain: the Foreign Office under Eden held the view that Italy should give proof of her good faith by withdrawing some of her volunteers in Spain: Chamberlain believed that Italy's goodwill should be obtained by British concessions on the Spanish question. While Eden had his minor triumphs, as in the Nyon Conference at which the Italian assertion of power in the Western Mediterranean was challenged (and deeply regretted by Chamberlain), the final victory was Chamberlain's with the resignation of Eden in February of 1938. Public opinion allowed Chamberlain to move only some way toward the Italian viewpoint so that the Spanish struggle remained as a wedge between Britain and Italy, as von Hassell, the German Ambassador in Italy had clearly foreseen in 1936:

"The role played by the Spanish conflict as regards Italy's relations with France and England could be similar to that of the Abyssinian conflict, bringing out clearly the actual, opposing interests of the powers and thus preventing Italy from being drawn into the net of the Western Powers and used for their machinations. The struggle for dominant political influence in Spain lays bare the natural opposition between Italy and France; at the same time the position of Italy as a power in the Western Mediterranean comes into competition with that of Britain. All the more clearly will Italy recognise the advisability of confronting the Western Powers shoulder to shoulder with Germany." 71

The Spanish conflict not only acted to bring to the surface conflicts of interest between Britain and Italy, it served the same end in the relations between Britain and France. Since very considerable French interests were involved in the Spanish conflict, in as far as the French were not prepared to go as far as the British in the sacrifice of these interests to gain Italian goodwill, such a policy as suggested and implemented by Chamberlain would lead to conflict between the French and the British. Despite the considerable strategic importance that the outcome of the Spanish outcome had for the French - the hitherto undefended frontier with Spain would have to be defended in the event of a victory by Franco, while the Balaerics lay across the line of communications with the supply of men and materials from North Africa - it cannot be maintained that non-intervention was a policy foisted on the French by London. It was Blum who, at the instigation of Leger (the head of the French Foreign Office), had suggested the policy of non-intervention to Britain. The reasoning behind Leger's action is however significant: he was afraid that the Conservative Government in Britain, alarmed by the Popular Front Government in power in France, would enter into an alignment with White Spain, Germany and Italy "in a Holy Alliance in the style of Metternich."⁷² Leger felt that British neutrality had to be maintained with the price of French neutrality in the Spanish war. It was far more difficult for the French to maintain a position independent of the events in Spain than it was for the British: the division of opinion on the Spanish issue was greater in France than in Britain, while the majority of the country were agreed upon the need to maintain French freedom of communication with North Africa. While Eden had been conscious of the need to take into account the difficulties which the French Government faced in dealing with the war in Spain, under Chamberlain this regard for the state of French opinion was cast aside and the French were placed under pressure from London to go further towards placating the Italian and German viewpoints than it was felt in Paris it was possible to go. A result of this was that the French felt that Britain was interested only in its own security, caring little for the

fate of France. Marshal Petain's view of the English reflected this suspicion, as he made clear to Sir Edward Spears:

"....you English, vous autres Anglais, vous etes de grandes politiques.' There was a soupcon of sarcasm in his voice. It was easy to discern his meaning; then as now, as always, the British followed the policy of their own interest. They could be relied upon to produce high moral motives for whatever they did. The Marshal had not invented this. It had been the verdict the French have pronounced on the British since the two have emerged as nations on either side of the Channel." 73

Some observers of the French political scene in the latter half of the 1930's have commented upon what they term the decadence of the French. William Shirer wrote in 1938:

"Paris is a frightful place, completely surrendered to defeatism with no inkling of what has happened to France. At Fourquet's, at Maxim's, fat bankers and businessmen toasting peace with rivers of champagne. But even the waiters, taxi-drivers, who used to be sound, gushing about how wonderful it is that war has been avoided, that it would have been a crime, that they fought in one war and that was enough. That would be okay if the Germans, who also fought in one war, felt the same way, but they don't. The guts of France - France of the Marne and Verdun - where are they? Outside of Pierre Comer, at the Quai d'Orsay no one with any idea at all of the real Germany. The French Socialists shot through with pacifism; the French Right, with the exception of a few like Henri de Kerillis, either fascists or defeatists. France makes no sense to me any more." 74

If France succumbed to the temptations of defeatism and Fascism, part of the explanation must lie in the situation in which France found itself. Feeling that the support of the English could not be relied upon, that France should seek to secure her own interests as the English were seeking theirs, some were led to the belief that the defensive system so carefully constructed in Eastern Europe should be abandoned and security should be sought through the attempt to reach an accommodation with Hitler. Thus part of the foundations of Vichyism were laid. The war in Spain, therefore, helped to weaken the Anglo-French alignment, to push France towards a self-seeking policy which developed independent of moral or ideological considerations, and to undermine the psychological position of the French nation. For many in France the struggle

of the Spanish Republicans was felt to be an heroic fight on behalf of all of civilisation. But as a result of France following Britain into devoted adherence to the hypocrisy of the Non-Intervention Committee, there tended to develop a malaise in the French nation, a crisis of self confidence, which led some to defeatism and others to the belief that the salvation of France lay in joining the marching tide of Fascism. Jean-Paul Satre has portrayed the guilt-inferiority syndrome that the policy of non-intervention helped to develop in France in his novel, The Age of Reason:

"...he took a paper at random; it was the Excelsior..... Excelsior wasn't an objectional journal, it was printed on coarse paper, with a dull velvety tapioca texture. It didn't succeed in making you lose your temper, it merely disgusted you with life while reading it. 'Aerial bombardment of Valencia,' Mathieu read... 'Forty aeroplanes circled over the centre of the city for an hour and dropped a hundred and fifty bombs. The exact number of dead and wounded is not yet ascertained.' He noticed out of the corner of his eye, beneath the headline, a horrid, huddled little paragraph in italics which looked very chatty and convincing: 'From our Special Correspondent,' and gave the figures. Mathieu turned over the page, he did not want to know any more. A speech by Monsieur Flandin at Bar-le-Duc. France crouching behind the Maginot Line... A statement by Stokowski - I shall never marry Greta Garbo. More about the Weidmann affair. The King of England's visit: Paris awaits her Prince Charming... Mathieu shuddered, and thought: 'All Frenchmen are swine.'.... He closed the paper and began to read the special correspondent's dispatch on the front page. Fifty dead and three hundred wounded already counted, but that was not the total, there were certainly corpses under the debris. No aeroplanes, no A.A. guns. Mathieu felt vaguely guilty. Fifty dead and three hundred wounded - what exactly did that signify? A full hospital? Something like a bad railway accident? Fifty dead. There were thousands of men in France who had not been able to read their paper that morning without feeling a clot of anger rising in their throat, thousands of men who had clenched their fists and muttered: 'Swine' Mathieu clenched his fists and muttered: 'Swine' and felt himself still more guilty." 75

If Britain were ever to come into a military confrontation with Hitler's Germany, a free and independent France would be of the utmost importance to the security of the British Isles. France was the great

barrier between Nazi Germany and Britain; if that barrier were to fall Britain would be placed in the greatest peril. It would seem to have been in the greatest interest of Britain to bolster as far as possible the military preparedness and morale of the French people. However, the Spanish conflict had the effect of creating the predicament for Britain of choosing between support of France and Italy. For some this was a simple question of hoping to gain the alignment of Mussolini to the cause of peace; for others, notably Duff Cooper, there was hope of giving new reality to the Stresa Front. But these viewpoints failed to realise that the basis of the Stresa Front and meaningful negotiations with Mussolini was a solid alignment between Britain and France. Without this alignment there would be no reason for Italy to move away from Germany, since greater rewards could be obtained from exploiting the divisions between the Democracies. It was this question of what should be the British attitude to France that created a basis division between the policies advocated by Eden and Chamberlain: for Eden, support of France was to be a cornerstone of British policy; for Chamberlain, the concern of France with her security constituted just one more source of tension that hindered the achievement of the appeasement of Europe. Thus, under Chamberlain pressure was increasing applied to France to give way to the Dictator's view point on the question of Italian volunteers in Spain and later the Italian demands on Tunisia, Djibuti and Nice. In doing so, Chamberlain helped to undermine the political position and elan of the anti-fascists in France and to push further the French nation into the downward spiral of apathy and defeatism which helped to bring about the defeat of France in 1940. Britain was saved in 1940 by the British development of radar, the decision by Goering at the height of the Battle of Britain to shift the weight of the German air attack from the sorely-pressed British Fighter Command to the civilian population and the fact that Hitler's eyes were turned to Russia rather than Britain. The belief of Chamberlain that Britain could maintain a limited commitment to the struggle on the European mainland, sheltering behind the body of France, was shattered by the fall of France in 1940, as was Stalin's attempt to divert the impact of the Nazi onslaught to the West by the Non-Aggression with Hitler

in 1939. The defeat of France brought home to both the reality that the war against Hitler could not be fought by proxy but only by all who were opposed to the aims of Hitler fulling accepting responsibility for bringing to an end that threat to the freedom of Europe. Mussolini had entered the Spanish struggle initially in the hope that a quick victory for fascism and Italian arms could be gained. This hope was frustrated by the heroism of the supporters of the Republic in Spain and the entry of the International Brigades into the struggle. Once committed to the cause of Franco Mussolini found it very difficult to withdraw, especially after the resounding defeat that the Italian Legions suffered at Guadalajara. The appeasers in Britain had hoped to deal with Spain irrespective of the ideological and moral issues involved, but the result was that Hitler was allowed to achieve his aim of seeing Britain and France alienated from Italy, as the majority of the people in these two countries were unwilling to see the intervention of Italy sanctified by their governments. While Britain refused, except at Nyon, to give effect to their declarations that the states of Europe should not intervene in Spain and tried to move towards appeasing Italy on Spain but was prevented by public opinion from paying the full price, so Italy was forced into co-operation with Germany. Italy became convinced that in co-operation with Germany lay her fullest advantage, since Britain and France were too supine to act against the combined strength of the Axis. While one can argue with great force that non-intervention was in Britain's best interests, the way in which that policy was implemented played an important part in developing the crisis of Europe in the latter 1930's. Spain may be called a 'continental sideshow', but the policies that were implemented toward that struggle had more than symbolic importance.

Harold Nicholson, writing to his wife in February 1938, wrote of the general structure of British foreign policy:

"The Government may say what they like, but their present policy means nothing less than the scrapping of the ideas which have been built up since the war and the reversion to the old pre-war policy of power politics and bargaining.

This means that: (1) that we shall have to buy the friendship of Italy and Germany by making sacrifices; (2) That this friendship will not be worth 2d once it is bought; and (3) That in doing so we shall sacrifice the confidence of France, Russia and the United States and all the smaller countries. I mind this dreadfully." 76

In attempting to explain the policy of appeasement, of which British policy toward Spain was an intergral part, one can try to place the blame on a small group of people, especially the 'Clivden Set'. Harold Macmillan has written to oppose the view that Clivden was a hive of plotters for appeasement, and should be looked upon as a circle rather than a cell.⁷⁷ One might see appeasement as a function of the development of Britain into a society enjoying the fruits of the arriving age of mass-consumption, careless to the trials of the world beyond the borders of Britain. One might also attempt to investigate the realm of theories developed on the nature of collective group action, of appeasement being a function of group interaction rather than the result of the ruminations of the individual. Neil J. Smelser has developed a theory of collective action whereby one would look at the analysis of the reactions between actors in a system rather than at the individual personalities or the principal types of systems.⁷⁸ The four main components of collective action postulated by Smelser are:

- (a) Values - generalised ends held by the individual;
- (b) Norms - regulatory rules governing the pursuit of these values;
- (c) The motivation of the individual actor, and how motivated actors are organised into roles and organisations; thus, the mobilization of the individual energy to achieve values within the normative framework;
- (d) The available situational facilities which the actor utilises, such as his knowledge of the environment, predictability of the consequences of actions, and tools and skills.

The main area which one examines is that of structural strain which develops between the components. The principal strain occurs on the situational facilities as ambiguity develops as to the adequacy of the means available to achieve a given goal. (In a study of appeasement,

for example, one might look at the lack of resources available to guarantee British security.)

In each of the components of collective action there are varying levels of generality to which reference can be made, from very specific to very general. Smelser gives the levels of specificity of the situational facilities as follows:

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| (1) Preconceptions concerning causality; | M
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| (2) Codification of knowledge. | |
| (3) Technology or specification of knowledge in situational terms. | |
| (4) Procurement of wealth, power or prestige to activate level 3; | |
| (5) Allocation of effective technology to sector of society; | |
| (6) Allocation of effective technology to roles and organisation; | |
| (7) Allocation of facilities within organisation to attain concrete goals. | |

Collective behaviour, according to Smelser, consists of a search for solutions to conditions of strain by moving to a more generalised level of resources. Once the generalisation has taken place, attempts are made to reconstitute the meaning of the high level component, but in doing this people develop a belief which short-circuits from a very generalised component directly to the source of strain. Collective behaviour is therefore a compressed way of attacking problems created by strain. It compresses several levels of components of action into a simple belief from which specific operative solutions are expected to flow. As an example of this short-circuiting one could cite the reaction of Britain to the economic depression of 1931. According to Lipson, the great depression produced in Britain a reaction which was out of all

proportion to the cause, in which the determining element was the psychological reaction of the British people. A wave of pessimism swept through Britain, inducing a belief that the economic interests of Britain were no longer bound up with those of the world at large. A general opinion developed that international trade and finance were a source of danger to Britain's well being, and that it was necessary to insulate Britain against these forces. This belief led to Britain's abrupt abandonment of the two main pillars of her economy; the integrity of the pound sterling and the open door in commerce. In the atmosphere of blind panic, a nation hastily discarded its historic policy.⁷⁹ The age of economic nationalism had its corollary in the political insulation from the world around.

In a norm-orientated society, there will be a belief that extraordinary results will follow if only certain reforms are adopted, and gloomy predictions are made of the results that will follow if the reforms are not adopted. This exaggerated view of reality follows from the beliefs which are generalised and short-circuited. In a country such as Britain where great importance is placed upon the accepted method pursuing goals in society, stress was placed on the way in which German demands should be made rather than upon judgement of the nature of those demands. The almost academic detachment with which the problems of the nations of Europe were viewed by the appeasers reflects the importance placed on method rather than matter. Chamberlain wrote to his sisters in November 1937:

"I don't see why we shouldn't say to Germany, 'Give us satisfactory assurances that you won't use force to deal with the Austrians and Czechoslovakians and we will give you similar assurances that we won't use force to prevent the changes you want if you can get them by peaceful means.'"⁸⁰

The Lytton Commission in 1931 on the Manchurian dispute, The Hoare-Laval Plan on Abyssinia, the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1936, the Non-Intervention Committee on Spain, together with the Hemming Mission, the Runciman Mission and the Munich Agreement, were in part a function of an overblown belief in the efficacy of channeling crises into acceptable forms. But in the creation of the plans to bring about

solutions to crises British decision-makers often jumped from the consideration of the details of the crisis and the specification of rules to achieve co-operation to the efforts to achieve general conformity to that plan, without consideration of how the plan would be put into effect or how it would be ensured that the parties to the agreement would abide by its measures. To put it into the language of Smelser, there were failures to relate plans for the solutions of crisis to the specification of the requirements for individual observation of norms and a failure to specify norms according to the type of roles and organisations.

Appeasement reflected more than the belief in the need for the maintenance of accepted methods of solving international crisis. It also reflected irrational behaviour that grew out of anxiety that was rooted in the ambiguity as to the adequacy of the means available to achieve the ends of British policy. Anxiety was at the center of appeasement and the desire to resolve the supposed causes of anxiety was the impulse behind the British diplomatic assault on Europe and the League of Nations. This anxiety stemmed not so much from an appreciation of the objective facts of Britain's strategic position in the world, as from the difficulties of estimating the correct nature of the world in which Britain found herself. It was the impossibility of defining exactly the nature of the National Socialist regime in Germany and the aims of Hitler's foreign policy, and the nature of war if it were to occur, especially the effect of aeroplanes upon civilian populations, that made future possibilities fraught with dread. Smelser explains anxiety in collective behaviour as lying essentially in the ambiguity of situations, consisting of a generalised response which is not tied to precisely definable environments. Anxiety exists as a vague and incomprehensible uneasiness about unknown or shadowy threats. It is because these threats are ill-defined that they would seem to contain potentially enormous powers of destruction. In the follow-diagram, Smelser explains the way in which exaggerated and unduly pessimistic outcomes are predicted as the outcome of the ambiguous situation. Stage 2 involves

the selection of unfavourable possibilities from an ambiguous situation and a leap into the world of generalized forces whose efficacy is exaggerated. Stage 2a involves a leap back to the concrete situation and the enumeration of specific outcomes as flowing from what was an initially ambiguous situation, bypassing many logical and empirical contingencies in levels 2-4.

FACILITIES LEVELS

7- 5

4 - 2

Stage 1:
Strain giving
rise to ambi-
guity.

Stage 2:
Anxiety - the world
of generalized threats.

Stage 2a
Specification of
concrete outcomes
flowing from
generalized forces.

This generalization on the nature of the ambiguous threats and its relation to the concrete world leads to the creation of wish-fulfillment, a semi-mystical belief which links the potency of the formless threats and forces to the estimated outcomes and thus seems to guarantee these outcomes. Thus the ambiguity of the situation is the source of anxiety, and therefore the source of concrete policies which it is felt, if put into effect, would resolve the dangers which are viewed as part of the world.⁸¹

Appeasement, therefore, can be seen as part of a generalized response by the British people to the anxiety that resulted from an awareness of the impending dangers which had come into the world with the development of Hitler's regime in Germany and the long-range bomber against which, it was proclaimed, there was no defense. Peace, it was declared, could be obtained by adhering to accepted methods of inter-

national conciliation, without any real thought as to how the settlements that resulted could be carried out or maintained as a lasting solution. For the majority, there was no real effort to consider the impact of the solutions that would be arrived at upon the syndrome of the political and strategic relationships within the European society. The necessity for conciliation was advocated, to this extent, not as a way for Britain to buy peace at the expense of the other countries of Europe, but from the belief that conciliation was the only way in which peace could be obtained. Jumping from the awareness of the threats that faced Britain to the enumeration of concrete steps that would reduce the dangers pent up in the forces of National Socialism and modern military technology, this process glossed over the way in which these forces were related to the steps advocated and avoided the critical and enormously difficult task of specifying the norms that would govern the roles of the international actors involved and institutions that might be set up, and specifying the requirements for observation of the solution. Commissions and committees were spawned for the purpose of conciliating but not enabling the world to live securely with the results of that conciliation. The Non-Intervention Committee on Spain was set up, but there was never any attempt to establish its role or the rules through which it would operate. In this, those who advocated conciliation considered themselves to be the only truly rational people and their opponents warmongers and dangerous fools. While the Foreign Office grappled with the difficult tasks of the means by which conciliation could be implemented in terms of the laying down of the future roles of the states of Europe, this activity was dismissed by Chamberlain as the unwillingness of the Foreign Office to break from traditional methods and concepts. Convinced of the validity of their proposals, those who advocated appeasement brushed aside the protests of their opponents. One must consider appeasement as consisting not so much of the machinations of a small political clique, but rather as a mass movement with Chamberlain as its arch apostle. Anxious to avoid entanglements on the European mainland that would distract their attention from a new

found prosperity, the British people sought refuge by clinging to the maintainance of accepted methods and they avoided reaching conclusions as to where this emphasis upon method rather than facilities and outcomes would bring them.

Do our ruminations into the nature of collective action bring us back to the viewpoint that the policies which states adopt toward each other are manifestations of cultural, social and economic forces and trends within the individual states and the international society as a whole. Further, if this is true, are the political leaders within states to be absolved from the responsibility of the policies which they are instrumental in putting into effect? To answer these questions one must examine the interrelationship between individual human behaviour and the social processes we have so far described.

At this point we come back to a consideration of the relationship between the processes by which people assimilate and develop social behaviour patterns and the social culture in which they live, Tamotsu Shibitani has defined culture as a common perspective that is shared by people in a particular group, being derived from the similar patterns of behaviour in which that particular group engage. Thus people with dissimilar perspectives would define identical situations differently, responding selectively to the different aspects of their environment. Thus, Shibitani states that a prostitute and a social worker walking through a slum area would notice different things.⁸²

The importance of culture within a political system lies in ability a common culture gives to people to enter into concerted action. Each person is able to predict the behaviour of others and adapt his own behaviour to the predictable responses other people will manifest in each situation.⁸³ Taking the argument further, Rose states that man learns values and social behaviour from the actions of other men, and that this knowledge is gained through the communication of symbols rather than through individual trial and error. Symbols in this case being taken to be stimuli that have a learned meaning and value to which people react in terms of their own learned meaning and value, derived through social interaction. Men will communicate with each other, therefore, by taking

a role in social situations employing learned symbols, Thinking becomes a symbolic process since alternative courses of action are assessed in terms of the individual's values, and selected in terms of what the individual thinks he knows about the past.⁸⁴ Mead contributed to this concept of individual activity by stating that each individual deals with the world through the selection and indication to himself of phenomena to which he gives meaning. The individual sees society as a set of symbols; society can be seen as consisting of the interaction of symbols; and collective action can be seen as the aligning of individual action through the interpretation of the actions of others.⁸⁵

Each individual in society will communicate to other individuals his intentions through the adoption of a role which is constructed from the commonly accepted symbols existing within that political culture. For example, a school-teacher wishing to communicate to his pupils his position of authority will adopt the commonly accepted role of a school-master, a role which will be expected of him by his pupils. When the school-master goes home to his family, he will change his role from that of a school-master to that of a father or husband, each role requiring the adoption of different symbolic actions and attitudes.

The adoption of a role would then seem to be dependent on the existence of the other roles to which the individuals relate themselves. The role of the school-master can exist only in relation to pupils, the role of the father only in relation to a role of the child.⁸⁶ The existence of the other-role allows for an explanation of changes of behaviour, since these changes in one's own role reflects a changing assessment of the role of the relevant others. As Turner states: "The idea of role-taking shifts emphasis away from the simple process of enacting a prescribed role to devising a performance on the basis of an imputed other-role. The actor is not the occupant of a position for which there is a neat set of rules- a culture or set of norms - but a person who must act in the perspective supplied in part by his relationship to others whose actions reflect roles that he must identify. Since the role of alter can only be inferred rather than directly known by ego, testing inferences about the role of alter is a continuing element in

interaction. Hence the tentative character of the individual's own performance and own role definition is never wholly suspended."⁸⁷

Thus a great deal of room can be made for the concept of the individual. It involves the way in which the individual interprets the symbolic structuring of the society around him and the inferences that the individual makes about the nature of the roles of other individuals and hence his own role. We may return at this point to our previous consideration of the nature of the individual personality. To this consideration of individual personality Leon H. Washay brings the concept of the breadth of perspective. Washay defines this perspective as the symbolic structuring that each person brings to a situation, and which serves as a frame of reference for defining situations in which the individual finds himself. This perspective, which will determine the number and kind of definitions each individual can make of a given situation, is largely learned through symbolic interaction and is closely organized around one's self, since symbolic interaction involves role-taking and role-playing. One should not take breadth of perspective to be analogous to intelligence. Breadth of perspective is more the ability to learn a variety of ideas, meanings and values. A person with a broad perspective will be one able to muster a variety of responses to given situations. The person who is able to reach a number of definitions of given situations may be one who is a puzzle to other people and be inconsistent in his actions and ideas. Furthermore, a broad perspective, involving as it does this inconsistency, may be a factor contributing to neurosis and provide basis for charges of weakness of character. It is the person with the narrow breadth of perspective who is more likely to be successful as a problem solver of immediate issues for he will be the more likely to arrive at a solution which he will pursue with an unstoppable and unshakeable determination to go ahead.⁸⁸

One can relate the concept of breadth of perspective to the examination that has already been made of the differences that arose between Chamberlain and Eden as to the policy that Britain should

adopt toward Italy and the withdrawal of Italian volunteers from Spain. Chamberlain, whose breadth of vision was bound by the austere nineteenth century radicalism of Joseph Chamberlain's Birmingham and the death of a beloved brother in the First World War, carried through with great courage and determination a policy determined by a definition of a situation seen in terms of war and peace, and carrying on social welfare in Britain or wasting hard-earned money on armaments. The narrowness of Chamberlain's perspective carried the seed of strong leadership since there were few doubts in Chamberlain's mind and a clear-cut plan of action to be put into effect. Chamberlain, in putting his ideas to the test came into opposition to Eden, a man whose mind was receptive to a far wider range of ideas, meanings and values. The receptiveness of Eden's mind to a variety of stimuli can be judged from his reading of Persian at University, while his inconsistency of character has been alledged by Hoare and Amery in a previous chapter (though these two, one should admit, cannot be judged to be neutral in the matter). To British foreign policy, Eden brought a far wider perspective than Chamberlain, encompassing the need to align British policy as far as possible with that of France and, to a lesser extent the United States, the desire to maintain the League of Nations as an instrument of international co-operation, and to appease the demands of Hitler and, under certain conditions, Mussolini. However, these inputs were not mutually reinforcing or even compatible, since the League of Nations was linked (if only in people's minds) with the Versailles settlement, which Hitler hoped to destroy. With the undermining of the Versailles settlement, the French commitment to the international concept of the League became weakened and eventually the same happened to the French defensive system in the East European countries. Since the use of sanctions of any kind involved the risk of war, the undermining of the Versailles settlement meant the undermining of the willingness and ability of the French to give reality to the role of the League as a decision-making institution. This broad perspective through which Eden viewed foreign affairs may account for the rather neurotic personality of Eden and his frequent bouts of ill-health, and in part, perhaps the rather dramatic and sudden nature of his resignation from the Foreign Office.

We can profitably, at this point, recall the bitter yet brilliant darts of political wit which were hurled at Eden and Chamberlain by the staunchest upholder of working-class consciousness - Nye Bevan. Writing for Tribune in 1943, Bevan said of Eden:

"League of Nations society at Geneva introduced him to a whole range of ideas strange to a Tory. There he acquired a progressive vocabulary, and this, allied to the amiability that flows from weakness of character, deceives many people into thinking that his political intentions are honourable. Actually there is nothing in his conduct to justify such a conclusion. His resignation from the Government of Mr. Chamberlain over our Italian diplomacy provided him with a balance at the political bank on which he has drawn generously ever since. His behaviour during the civil war in Spain proves conclusively that wherever he has to choose between his Tory instincts and his progressive inclinations his instincts can be relied upon to win every time."

Bevan made it clear that he felt there was no question of such inner conflicts within the breast of Chamberlain and, in fact, the real problem was that within the bleak exterior of that person very little occurred to ruffle the fixed pattern of responses. Of the transition from the reign of Baldwin to Chamberlain's tenure in office, Bevan let fly the following:

"In the funeral service of Capitalism the honeyed and soothing platitudes of the clergyman are finished, and the cortege is now under the sombre and impressive guidance of the undertaker...He (Chamberlain) has the lucidity which is the by-product of a fundamentally sterile mind...He does not have to struggle, like Chamberlain has, for example, with the crowded pulsations of a fecund imagination.. Listening to a speech by Chamberlain is like paying a visit to Woolworth's; everything is in its place and nothing above sixpence."

Chamberlain came to the leadership of Conservative Party and established such a dominant hold of that Party in the latter 1930's partly because he offered a clear-cut solution to the difficulties that faced Britain and partly because of his unyielding personality. But leaders are never men who come to their position because of their personality alone, but because what they have to offer closely corresponds to the values, interests and beliefs of the group they are attempting to lead. The process is one of interaction rather than of control lying purely in the hands of the leader. This is made clear

by George C. Homans in his study of leadership:

"The leader is the man who comes closest to realizing the norms the group value highest. The norms may be queer ones, but so long as they are genuinely accepted by the group, the leader, in that group, must embody them. His embodiment of the norms gives him his high rank, and his rank attracts people: the leader is the man people come to; the scheme of interaction focuses on him. At the same time, his high rank carries with it the assumed right to take control of the group, and the exercise of control itself helps maintain the leader's control and prestige. This control he is peculiarly well equipped to wield by reason of his position at the top of the pyramid of interaction. He is better informed than other men, and he has more channels for the issuing of orders. He controls the group, yet he is in a sense more controlled by it than others are, since it is a condition of leadership that his actions and decisions shall conform more closely than those of others to an abstract norm. Moreover, all these elements, and not just one or two of them, come into leadership; all are related to one another and reinforce one another for good or ill." 89

One comes back to the propositions that were put forward in the Introduction, following the ideas of Modelski, that decision-makers mediate between the community of which they are part and the outside world. One cannot dismiss the importance of the individual personality in foreign policy formulation. While the social culture of the community is of the greatest importance, the individual does not take an allotted role in society, but rather emphasis should be placed upon role-making. The role that the individual will undertake to create will be dependent upon the symbols that he selects as being significant from the world he sees around him, the selection being determined by the past symbolic interaction which the individual has experienced with the society around him. This role in turn will be dependent upon the part that the individual imputes as being played by the "significant others" in the situation in which he finds himself.

The leaders of political parties, in dealing with their group will, however, function through a process of interaction and will reflect to a high degree the values, beliefs and interests of that party. If they do not their impact upon policy will be strictly limited. One must come to the conclusion that to designate certain actions of a state as being under the heading of foreign policy and the separation of the other activities of that state is arbitrary and misleading. Homans defines a

group by interaction. A social system consists of the activities, interactions, and sentiments of the group members with two aspects; the internal system and the external system. The external system is the state of those elements of group behaviour (sentiment, activity and interaction) insofar as it constitutes a solution to the problem of how the group can survive in its environment. Homans emphasises that: "The two aspects of group life we call the external and the internal systems are continuous with one another, The line between them can be drawn where we choose, arbitrarily, and we choose to draw it here. The only reason for drawing a line at all is to save words...."⁹⁰

Foreign policy must, therefore, be taken as a function of group behaviour and the structuring of society, rather than being merely an elite-formed concept. One must look at the culture of the group, and especially direct one's gaze to the degree of homogeneousness of that culture. Examining the structuring of the reference groups within the society will be especially fruitful, since the concept of the reference group signifies "...that group whose presumed perspective is used by an actor as the frame of reference in the organization of his perceptual field."⁹¹ These reference fields will provide the basis for the selection of symbols from the society and will thus provide the basis for the formation of attitudes to the world around and the taking of roles. The reference group will provide the means for the individual to form a picture of himself and those activities in which he will wish the state to concern itself. In this study, one type of reference group which has been made use of is that of class groupings. The importance of the class groupings lies not in their being objectively derived groupings of people with statistically identifiable characteristics, but rather as self-images which are derived from self-identification. This self image enables the individual to select (significant symbols) from any event. In looking at the Spanish Civil War, people who identified themselves with the working classes would select different significant symbols than those who identified themselves with the upper classes. To the working class man, the conflict would be seen in terms of the

'ordinary person' struggling against those who sought to deprive them of their liberties and chances for a better life. The perspective would be derived from the experience of hostility against employers, and the struggle to achieve a better standard of living. Each self-identification presupposes both self-images and the existence of images of the reference groups. Images will consist rather of stereotypes rather than realistic pictures, since the degree of communication between the members of each reference group is often limited. The result is that: "Each social world is a culture area, the boundaries of which are set neither by territory nor formal group membership, but by the limits of effective communication."⁹² The existence of these social worlds within the British state helped to define the nature of British policy toward Spain, since each reference group selected differing significant symbols from the conflict; while the ruling elite were drawn from one class, the majority of the people of Britain belonged to another, with the result that conflicts developed as the majority of people in Britain viewed with sympathy the struggle of the Spanish people against authority (or so the struggle was seen), while the ruling elite in Britain viewed with distaste the breakdown of authority, and saw the Republican side, as Nicholson put it, "...a mere Kerensky Government at the mercy of the armed proletariat."⁹³ Between these two perspectives, British policy toward Spain maintained a delicate balance with the aid of the Non-Intervention Committee, and deception on the part of the British Government.

Furthermore, one can take into account not merely the differences that exist between reference groups within a state, but also the similarities. We may at this point return to a consideration of whether the culture of the state is orientated towards values (generalized ends) or towards norms (regulatory rules governing the pursuit of these ends). Britain one may consider as a norm-orientated society; the British tend to see their country and way of life in terms of the institutions which have been developed in Britain: monarchy, Parliament, and even the public houses. The self-image which the Germans hold may be seen to consist rather in concepts such as race, religion, and supposed national characteristics. Germany may be considered to be a value-dominated society. France would seem to have been poised between adherence to the institut-

ions of the Republican concept of 1789, and values such as communism, monarchism, the Church and its opponents. The adherence to these values of differing groups within France has led to the merry-go-round of political systems and ever-falling governments, from which France has only been rescued by abandoning the substance of 1789.

This brief classification will enable us to pose at least part of an answer to certain questions that have been raised on the nature of British politics and policies. For example, Peter Worsley, in a discussion of political power in Britain, has stated that:

"The uninterrupted, albeit modified, dominance of the property-owning classes, in a society which has been the most highly proletarianized in the world, is surely the most striking phenomena in modern times." 94

This can partly be explained in terms of Britain being a norm-orientated society, in which adherence to the means by which values are obtained is greater than the importance placed upon the satisfying of those values. This orientation of British society towards norms rather than values can be explained partly by means of the early enfranchisement of the British people through the laws of 1832, 1867 and 1884: through the freedom that the British working classes have had to increase their living standards through self-help, by means of co-operatives and trade unions; and the development of Imperialism which added a new symbolic value to the institutions of Britain, enabling the working classes in Britain to relate themselves to the monarchy and national pride. Disraeli said of Imperialism:

"I look to the cultivation of public opinion, and especially to the working classes for the maintainance of the British Empire." 95

Ronald Blythe has asked the question " why was appeasement a positive creed in Britain and in France a vulgar necessity?"⁹⁶ The French might argue that this is merely a reflection of the more rigorous nature of Cartesian logic over the English pragmatic mind, which, it often seems, would desire to avoid reaching a conclusion to a problem if the matter can possibly be phrased another way. Another answer to the question might be found in an examination of the differences in the

political culture of the two countries. In a country such as Britain where norms of the political system are considered to be of greater importance than the attainment of the values held by the actors within the political system, appeasement became an extension of the culture of the system, as we have considered above. In France, however, the political culture was fractionalized among reference groups; there did not exist after 1936 a general consensus that the maintenance of the integrity of institutions of the French state was of greater importance than the result of the issues at conflict between those reference groups. Paul-Marie de La Gorge has described the developing tensions created in France by the signature of the Franco-Soviet Pact of 1935, and the advent of the Popular Front to office in 1936:

"Right-wing opinion, the most indulgent with respect to the new dictatorial regimes in Germany and Italy, had no objection to a military effect, and its traditional sympathy for the Army led it to criticise the Radical Governments which had too sharply reduced the military credits. But already, in their eyes, the precautions that had to be taken against the dangers of revolution far outweighed those required by the new German threat. A rapprochement with Fascist Italy appeared absolutely essential. An understanding with Germany seemed possible and certainly desirable. But the idea of an alliance with Communist Russia, in the face of the Hitlerite menace, was horrifying. This brought about the crystallization, the new political alignment which occurred in French opinion and lasted until 1939, after having received a brutal impulse from the events of February 6, 1934...

There was, thus, a profound cleavage in the public mind....

In conservative circles and for many segments of the bourgeois classes, during the winter of 1935 to 1936, resistance to Hitlerite Germany had not seemed the main requirement of French foreign policy. The events of the following Spring and Summer were to convince them that the real danger lay elsewhere. The triumph of the Popular Front would not have had the same effect on French public opinion if it had remained an electoral and parliamentary victory, although, for the first time, the majority included a powerful communist party. But more than anything else it was a spectacle. And this spectacle was a frightful shock for all those who saw in it a revolutionary peril, the undermining of order and the risk of social upheaval....

During this summer of 1936, as 'revolution' seemed to threaten France, it broke out in fact in France. Public opinion realized that the struggles of the parties might very well cease to be a matter of students' brawls, workers' mass meetings and press polemics, even the most ferocious. In Spain, it had all led at last to a civil war. This, like the Franco-Soviet Pact, served as a catalyst for the major trends of opinion in France... Beyond a doubt, the majority of Army men instinctively rejected

the idea of civil war. But for many officers they were psychologically ready for it. Some were even preparing for it."⁹⁷

The structure of the Third French Republic had been maintained not so much by loyalty which the majority of Frenchmen held for its institutions but rather as result of an uneasy balance between political groups which embodied other values but which could not agree to replace a creation originally designed as a stop-gap measure until the monarchy could be restored. The Third French Republic continued its precarious and unstable existence poised between more than one political divide. The fracturing of the political system between the clericals and the anti-clericals, the Radicals and the monarchists, the socialists and right meant that while one government replaced another with predictable frequency there was never a sufficient consensus for the political conflicts to be solved, for answers to continuing problems to be reached and for an agreed set of norms to be entrenched within political institutions.⁹⁸

Looking at foreign policy as a continuously evolving solution of a social group to the problem of survival carried out through individuals who fill and create roles within that social system, one can see that social system not as a system which rests in a self-restoring equilibrium but rather as a system which attempts to manage tensions within itself.⁹⁹ The foreign policy that emerges will not only be a function of the environment and the roles a decision-maker attempts to fill and create, but also of the extent to which the system is successful in its task of tension-managing. It is to this problem that much attention has been devoted in the attempt to show that British policy toward Spain was not merely the result of the perilous strategic position in which Britain found herself in the latter half of the 1930's, but also of the fact that as Peter Worsley pointed to, in the most highly proletarianized country in the world political power remained mostly in the hands of the property-owning classes. The civil war in Spain brought the tensions that such a situation created to the fore; British policy was in part concerned with

alleviating these tensions so that appeasement could be followed wherever it might lead, with non-intervention fulfilling the role that Pilate allotted to water as he stated that he was innocent of the blood of another.

The framework that has been taken for the examination of the tensions within British society has been that of the class structure within Britain. The class concept occupies in Britain a place more central to the life of the community than any other country in the Western World. This is perhaps because Britain has not enjoyed the benefits of a revolution able to sweep away permanently the social structure imposed on Britain by the Norman victory in 1066, which established a clearly defined ruling class separated from a class which expected to be ruled. The ruling class survived, perhaps by virtue of Britain's isolation from the centre of the social revolutions that occurred on the European mainland, but perhaps more by virtue of the fact that the ruling class in Britain perceived the necessity of admitting to their ranks the more wealthy and powerful of the outsiders, whilst ensuring that those admitted into the ruling club should be clearly distinguished from the great unwashed (and at the same time be suitably bribed into accepting the norms of the upper echelons) through the distribution of meaningless titles and honours. The social order has become woven into a highly complicated and formalised religion, complete with a high priest or priestess, a chosen people, meeting places, holy days and seminaries. At the pinnacle presides the monarch, who leads the Establishment through a pre-established routine that seems to the outsider as baffling as the steps of an eighteenth-century ball dance. The participants, all suitably alert to their duties and instantly recognizable after long training at the public schools and Oxbridge, parade through the events of the social calendar at which the masses are occasionally allowed to gaze, as at Henley or Ascot. An aura is created which succeeds in disarming the underprivileged, offering a glorious show of pomp and ceremony in compensation. In the maintenance of this enslaving mystique, the survival of the monarchy has been of critical importance in diverting the challenge of social change from the central pillars of the social structure by instilling a belief in the sanctity of existing institutions and

the importance of tradition in the smooth-running of the British way of life to which the trials and storms being fought out in foreign lands are held up as proof of the benefits to be derived from toeing the Establishment line. This buffering effect of the monarchy has been pointed out clearly by Anthony Sampson:

"Among the more old-fashioned areas of British life, a blurred image of Buckingham Palace often lies in the background. That re-occurring theme 'It may seem odd to you, but it works', which crops up in British institutions, from Lloyd's to the House of Lords and the election of Bishops, has its prototype in the mystery of the monarchy. Businessmen with feudal pretensions; arrogant Guards officers; jingo speakers at Conservative conferences; pompous ambassadors, young blimps (a far less pleasant species than the old ones); parliamentarians talking about bogous mystique - all these invoke the palace in support of their mystery. While Britain is having to make the painful transition from imperial splendour to competitive trading, the palace represents in most people's minds a feudal, uncompetitive haven of 'it's not done'.¹⁰⁰"

However, despite the pottage distributed to the great majority not admitted to the 'club' from the panoply of national majesty, tensions have not been eradicated from the socio-political system. The changes in the economic structuring of British society have been too great, the pretensions of the upper-classes too large, and the irrationalities of the existing structure too injurious to ignore. The voices raised in protest have come not merely from the lower classes, but also from the upper classes who have provided some of the most vociferous detractors. Pierre Daninos, writing in L'Express, has made an interesting comparison between the structuring of British society and the cultural revolution in Communist China:

"...il y a de la Chine dans l'Angleterre actuelle. Une Chine sans guerre civile et sans autres gardes rouges que les tuniques écarlates des gardes de Buckingham Palace ou de Whitehall, mais qui emploie un vocabulaire de plus pur style maotsetougnais: il y a les jeunes rebelles révolutionnaires qui ridiculisent les tabous de l'Establishment, les contre-révolutionnaires qui cherchent à maintenir la perennité des traditions, les rebelles travaillistes, les travaillistes conservateurs, les bourgeois réactionnaires, les travailleurs des classes laborieuses, les jeunes anti-contre-révolutionnaires des Public Schools - fils des plus affreux réactionnaires - qui veulent supprimer la queue de pie étonienne et les chatiments corporels, les aristocrates progressistes, les antitout, les antirien, les antiquaires de la tradition qui aborent comme

un etendard melon, oeillet et parapluiepee...."101

Baldwin spent the majority of his energies in the management of these tensions, and any attempt to account for the development of British policy toward Spain without reference to the social origins of the conflicts that the Spanish conflict wrought in British politics would be incomplete and misleading. Tension-management is a vital function of any social system and it is this aspect which enables us to account for the method of implementation of British policy toward the Spanish civil war and, in particular, the timing of British initiatives toward Italy: the delays that the problem of volunteers in Spain brought about in the rapprochement between Italy and Britain.

While the tensions created in Britain aid in the explanation of the tactics by which British policy was implemented toward Spain, the underlying concept behind British policy was that Britain had only limited liability for the events that occurred on the European Continent, and thus the general lines of British policy toward Spain are a function of a much broader policy toward events in Europe and the rest of the world in general. It is on an estimation of the rationality of this general policy that a final reappraisal of Britain's policy toward Spain must rest. Britain escaped from being engulfed in the Nazi onslaught of 1940-1941 through a mixture of over-reaching ambition and inhibiting timidity on the part of Hitler. Heinz Guderian, who commanded the XIX German Army Corps in 1940, gives us this account of the advance of the German Army toward the Channel ports in May, 1940:

"On this day (the 24th) the Supreme Command intervened in the operations in progress, with results which were to have a most disastrous influence on the whole future course of the war. Hitler ordered the left wing to stop on the Aa. We were not informed of the reasons for this. The order contained the words: 'Dunkirk is to be left to the Luftwaffe.' We were utterly speechless....

"...we attempted once again to attack towards Dunkirk and to close the ring about the sea fortress. But renewed orders to halt arrived. We were stopped within sight of Dunkirk. We watched the Luftwaffe attack. We also watched the armada of great and little ships by means of which the British were evacuating their forces...What the course of the war would

have been if Supreme Headquarters had not kept ordering XIX Army Corps to stop, and thus hindered its rapid and successful advance. What the future course of the war would have been if we had succeeded at that time in taking the British Expeditionary Force prisoner at Dunkirk, it is now impossible to guess. In any event a military victory on that scale would have offered a great chance to capable diplomats. Unfortunately the opportunity was wasted owing to Hitler's nervousness. The reason he subsequently gave for holding back my corps - that the ground in Flanders with its many ditches and canals was not suited to tanks - was a poor one." 102

Other instances can be cited of the relief given to hard pressed British forces by miscalculations in tactical policy by Hitler. One of the most crucial of these miscalculations was the decision, at the height of the air battle over the British skies, to switch the focus of the Luftwaffe away from R.A.F. Fighter Command and the vital radar communications centres to the mass bombings of London. At the very moment when the fighter defence of Britain had been pushed to the limit of its endurance, it was reprieved and given the chance to regroup which meant the end of the German attempt to establish air superiority over Britain for the invasion of those Isles. Through these tactical errors by the German High Command and through defects in the strategic conceptual framework on the part of Hitler, the British escape in 1940 - 1941 was built. Britain's final emergence as a victor from the war can be seen, partly, as a result of the fact that Hitler's vision included grander victims than the British; the eyes of the dictator were directed toward the conquest of the vast plains of Eastern Europe occupied by the Russians. The conquest of Britain came second to the enslavement of the Slavic peoples to the task of building the 'Thousand Year Reich'. Thus on December 18, 1940, Hitler issued War Directive No.21, 'Case Barbarossa':

"The German Armed Forces must be prepared, even before the conclusion of the war against England, to crush Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign." 103

With the debouchment of the German war effort onto the endless horizons of the Russian steppe and the entry of the United States into the war on the British side in 1941, Britain escaped from a fate which William Shirer had concluded would not have been a gentle affair:

the German plans seemed to be"...designed to ensure the systematic plunder of the island and the terrorization of its inhabitants."¹⁰⁴ Britain had been brought closer to this fate than any political leader has any right to expose those committed to his care.

In the outcome of the war, the outcome of the Spanish Civil War did not play a great part. One can find instances of the revictualling of German U-Boats from the Canaries (stopped by diplomatic action in 1941).¹⁰⁵ A small trickle of ships carried contraband to Germany from Spain but this route was blocked by submarine and aircraft at the end of 1941.¹⁰⁶ If the German plan for the occupation of Gibraltar, Operation Felix, had been accepted by Franco, Britain would have been deprived of the use of that base to protect the Atlantic convoy route. The Admiralty, however, was constantly prepared to fulfill the occupation of the Canaries as a suitable alternative to Gibraltar.¹⁰⁷

It is not on such details that a reappraisal of British policy toward the Spanish conflict can be made. That policy was a function of a general attitude toward the events that occurred on the European mainland. It is on our judgement of that policy that one can judge a part of the whole. Britain attempted to maintain a freedom from the military and political groupings on the European Continent, to refrain in fact from participation in the dangerous world of power politics. Instead of using the military factor that Britain represented in the balance of politico-military power within Europe, this power factor was withheld from the events that were coming to a conclusion. Instead, the development of Britain's military resources was neglected as recourse was made to use diplomatic skill to achieve the ends of British policy. The problem lay in the exact delimitation of these ends. Was the avoidance of Britain's participation in a war on the European continent to be a major goal of British policy? This could not be so if the result of such a policy were to be the eventual establishment of German predominance, or even contro, over the entire European mainland. There would come a time when Britain would have to call a halt to such a process. There could be no escaping the distasteful world of power groupings. Britain, instead of aligning herself with those states who were opposed to the development of predominance by the most powerful

state in Europe, undermined the confidence of those states in the willingness and ability of Britain to form part of an alliance system opposed to Hitler's threat. With the advent of the civil war in Spain, Britain was instrumental in the establishment of an international committee which had as its avowed goal the prevention of the entry of volunteers from foreign states into the Spanish conflict, but which instead demonstrated the hypocrisy and cynicism of the English nation. While Italy and Germany supplied the men and material which enabled Franco to gain victory, the British were concerned with maintaining the meaningless impotency of the Non-Intervention Committee as an edifice pointing out to all the perfidy of the English. British influence, it appeared, was not to be devoted so much to limiting the intervention of the Axis states in Spain as to preventing France and the Government in Spain from bringing Axis intervention out into the open. The result was the undermining of the credibility of the British as a reliable ally when Britain found it necessary to go seeking for support. Britain could preside with equanimity over the death of the Spanish Republic, but those in France of the Popular Front could only see a defeat for democracy, while to Stalin it helped to confirm the suspicion that Britain could not be relied upon to participate in an alliance against Germany. The whole of British policy, of which policy toward Spain was an integral part, helped towards undermining the confidence of the states of Europe in their ability to halt the German threat; Europe became divided into states seeking their own route to salvation. Britain could not limit its liability for the events that occurred in Europe or avoid the necessity for making judgements upon the demands that the German leaders put forward. If the British leaders accepted the destruction of democracy in Spain through their inaction, then this would seem to be a judgement made by the British in favour of such destruction. If in Spain, why not elsewhere? In the Introduction it was stated that it was mistakenly held in the 1930's that the Spanish civil war represented a crucial struggle between Democracy and Fascism but that in fact the struggle represented in Spain the conflict between tradition and progress. However, in the minds of people the reality is not what exists but what seems to exist. Therefore though one may state that though the two sides in Spain did not really represent either

democracy or fascism, they did in fact do so in the minds of the peoples of Europe who observed the struggle. The victory of Franco appeared as a victory for Fascism and was one of great symbolic importance to those who stood on the sidelines. It seemed that Hitler had won a great victory and this was so, for the greatest victory that was won in Spain was the psychological battle. Held up as a conflict between two separate and competing ways of life, Spain demonstrated the superiority of the Dictator states; the tide was flowing for fascism and against democracy. One result was the developing fashionableness of fascism in France and the undermining in that country of the anti-Hitler forces. It is in this intangible element: the loss of confidence in the integrity of Britain and of the system of life in which the peoples of Europe believed, that Spain reaches its true importance and it is on this basis that one should judge the policies that Britain put forward to meet the war in Spain. Ralph Bates, a volunteer in Spain, as he returned from the front in Spain in 1939, saw this clearly:

"I came down off the black hills one gale-swept night during the Brunete battle, into Villanueva. The town was under shell-fire and it was burning...For safety I entered the church... Bowed over the centre of the altar, his head upon his arms, was a wounded man, blood streaming from his head...The man was dying I thought. He seemed to be pleading the sacrifice of Spain. I stood frozen in imagination, hearing that echoed wailing. Far off, the machine guns rattled.

"Afterwards I went outside and was sick. I was not sick at the spectacle of pain, but because of the unaccepted sacrifice. That it would not be accepted by the democracies, I foresaw, for not one of those governments had the courage even to dispense with hypocrisy. That the Spanish resistance was a sacrifice for more than Spanish freedom can be seen by anyone now. For had not nobleness gone out of the world and had we not been abandoned, the dictators would not have been encouraged to demand Czechoslovakia and whatever else they next demand. And when we have defeated our enemy in Spain the peoples of the coward democracies may at last take heart. All that I felt in that moment, standing at the altar at Villanueva dela Canada."¹⁰⁸

As an indictment against the unfortunate results of policies which embody a lack of moral honesty and courage, Monty Blatt (a character in Chicken Soup with Barley by Arnold Wesker) is more succinct;

"Hitler won't stop at Spain, you know. You watch him go and you watch the British Government lick his arse until he spits in his eye." 109

This however, would be a harsh note on which to end, implying as it does some hidden judgement. So far, the question of the moral issues involved in British policy toward Spain have been dodged. An attempt has been made to lay bare the bones of policies which still, as skeletons in cupboard, rattle today. If these issues are to be faced up-to, there is the problem of the selection of the scales. The secret worlds of those of the Thirties cannot be regenerated, and to many today the world of that period seems like life on another planet. Whose system of moral values is to be employed - those of the pacifist or those of the believer in international action, or any other one might hold? Each is of equal value to the individual who holds those beliefs. With the changing currents of morality, the tide of time may leave the present armada of indignation against the appeasers as but wrecks on the historical shore. Few people today hold it against Lord Palmerston that he observed Bismarck defeat Austria, Denmark and France, and unify Germany into the most powerful state in Europe, without any action to oppose this. One must here agree with the words of Buddha:

"I look upon the judgement of right and wrong as the surpentine dance of a dragon, and the rise and fall of beliefs as but traces left by the four seasons."

If criticism is to be made, it should be derived from a statement of the necessity of facing up to the fact that foreign policy involves moral choices, rather than catagorising what moral precepts foreign policy should enshrine. In particular this would involve decision-makers in examining, or rather searching out, the nature of the relationships which their state have with other states in the international community, and then facing up to the meaning of that relationship. Britain, and especially those favouring appeasement with Hitler, in the 1930's did not in many cases seek to establish the nature of their relationship with the states of Europe, outside an immediate consideration of the problem imposed by Hitler and Mussolini. The focus was placed upon the source of danger and little thought was givento what constituted and what

should constitute the nature of Britain's attitudes, actions and responsibility towards the other states of Europe. This was, to use Eden's words, 'bad politics and bad morality', since Britain was inextricably tied to the other states in Europe. The majority of people in Britain attempted to absolve themselves of responsibility in the events that were taking place in Europe and to concern themselves merely with reaching for solutions to those problems which threatened to end Britain's supposed insularity. Britain's fate was ultimately bound up with those other states in Europe, however, and all that was achieved was that Britain missed opportunities to use her influence to obtain favourable outcomes to situations within Europe, and at a later date, she found that she had to face those same situations when the choices involved were far more starkly posed and the ability to influence the actions of the states of Europe greatly reduced. There cannot be a meaningful policy of non-intervention in the sense of absolving oneself of involvement in the issues of conflicts, since inaction involves acquiescence in the domination of the weaker by the stronger. Britain was a part of Europe and involved, whether she wanted to be or not, in Europe. There could be no hiding from this by reaching solutions to problems which in fact involved hiding from the real crux of Britain's relations with the European community by allowing force to dominate. It is in this failure to face up the meaning of Britain's relationship to the countries and problems of Europe that one can make judgements in terms of practical politics and morality. This is summed up, and more, in the much quoted but very meaningful words of John Donne:

"No man is an island, intire of itself; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a clod bee washed away by the sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of they friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

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