AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

Thesis Title:

"ANTI-COMMUNISM AS A FACTOR IN ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1935-39"

by

LAYLA NAJIB TARAZI

(Name of Student)

Approved:

PROFESSOR JOSEPH J. MALONE — Advisor

PROFESSOR WILLIAM A. WARD — Member of Committee

PROFESSOR ZEINE N. ZEINE — Member of Committee

MR. SAMIR SEIKALY — Member of Committee

Date of Thesis Presentation: 21 May 1968.

ANTI-COMMUNISM AS A FACTOR IN ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS 1935 - 1939

BY

LAYLA NAGIB TARAZI

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

of the Degree of Master of Arts in the

Department of History of the

American University of Beirut

Beirut , Lebanon

May , 1968

ANTI-COMMUNISM AS A FACTOR IN ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS 1935 - 1939

PREFACE

Soviet Russia was a new factor in an old continent. Its impact on the diplomacy of the established powers of Europe was unprecedented, in that the traditional regimes were faced with a new element acting to strengthen the extreme Left in their internal political structures. The reaction to Soviet Russia was then conditioned by one's attitude towards Communism, an ideological factor. In the European arena, 1935-1939 were years during which international relations and decisions in foreign policy were subject to the stress of emotions based upon ideological conviction. The study of anti-Communism as a factor in Anglo-German relations is a relatively unexplored topic which this paper investigates. Although I have been told by a student that "acknowledgements are no more in fashion", I would like to thank Professor Malone for the encouragement, sympathy and help he has always given me and without whom I would not have been able to do this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE.	iv
INTRODUCTION.	1
Chapter	
I. ANTI-COMMUNISM IN ENGLAND 1935 - 1939.	4
II. ANTI-COMMUNISM IN BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY 1935 - 1939.	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	172

INTRODUCTION

The 1930's witnessed a series of aggressive acts which threatened with increasing seriousness the international scene and which undermined the League of Nations as a device for peace. What each country would do to safeguard the status quo and to check other nations became in those circumstances particularly important. Britain was then a leading Great Power the foreign policy of which carried great weight in the European Balance of Power. And Britain did influence in a decisive way --sometimes by not acting-- the main crises of the period. The most important of those crises occurred in the period 1935-1939 and were provoked by the increasingly aggressive foreign policy of the Third Reich. As things were, the way in which Britain reacted to the actions and demands of Hitlerian Germany revealed a general conciliatory attitude towards Hitler. One of the motives behind this conciliatory policy is believed here to be the bias of the leading conservative circles against Communism and Soviet Russia. The Tories in power and conservatism greatly

influenced the policy-making of the period, and their attitude towards Communism and Bolshevik Russia indirectly may have helped mislead this influential part of public opinion about Hitler and hampered a possible collective action against him. This paper proposes then to depict anti-Communism in England and how it was manifested in the international sphere in Anglo-German relations in the period 1935-1939. A study of Conservative public opinion is made possible by the letters sent to the editors of newspapers and periodicals, the Press --best organ of public opinion--, the debates in Parliament, the knowledge of the leaders and other influental people and circles, and the available memoirs and diaries. Many tendencies can be discerned, and the lines between Right and Left were not always clear cut, particularly in regard to the rise of Hitler. Also, some Conservatives did not let anti-Communism prevail over their fear of Hitler. And most to be remembered, many motives lay behind the attitude towards Hitler, and anti-Communism was only one limited indirect factor which influenced Anglo-German relations. However it did exist in Conservative circles and it shaped events. How, then, was anti-Communism manifested, and how did it affect Anglo-German

relations in 1935-1939, these are some of the main questions to be investigated in this essay with the help of the numerous primary sources and some helpful secondary works.

CHAPTER I

ANTI-COMMUNISM IN ENGLAND
1935 - 1939

In the 1920's the spectre of Communism had been associated with social unrest, and British Conservatives in the 1930's still remembered the scares of the Zinoviev letter and those of the General Strike of 1926 which made social dissatisfaction and demands for better conditions be seen as clashes between capitalism and revolutionary labour.[1] With the memories of the past decade in mind,

---

[1]For the social history of England in the 1920's consult David Thomson, England in the Twentieth Century, 1914 - 1963 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Book Ltd., 1965), pp. 61-126; Charles Loch Mowat, Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940 (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1956), pp. 201 - 352; E.E. Reynolds and N.H. Brasher, Britain in the Twentieth Century, 1900 - 1964 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1966), pp. 103-50; Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, The Long Week-End: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939 (New York: The Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1941); A J. P. Taylor, English History, 1914 - 1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965). See also the description of the General Strike by William McElwee, Britain's Locust Years, 1918-1940 (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), pp. 114-33; L.C.B. Seaman, Post-Victorian Britain, 1902-1951 (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1966), pp. 187-205. And part of the text of the Zinoviev letter is given by Viscount Templewood (Sir Samuel Hoare), Nine Troubled Years (London: Collins, 1954), pp. 434-436. The same books have been used for the internal history of Britain in the 1930's.

British Conservatives witnessed the growth of Left feeling and following in the 1930's, at a time also when social unrest was revived by the effects of the Depression and seemed to challenge the established order to the worry of the Right. Thus, the strike of the Fleet at Invergordon in September 1930, in protest against the lowering of wages, stirred British Conservatives who learned that the foreign press referred to Britain as being on the verge of a social revolution at a time also when the Socialists were making use of the strike in the General Election of October 1930.[2] Later the economies introduced by the National Government and the Means Test in particular became the center of social controversy and infuriated the working classes.[3] The ensuing strike and National Hunger March led to violence between the police and the demonstrators, and conservative opinion connected the Left with violence and attacked the marchers as being instigated by the Reds and purposely baiting the police.[4] Unhappy economic

---

[2]Graves and Hodge, op. cit., pp. 244 - 245.

[3]Taylor, op. cit., p. 353.

[4]Graves and Hodge, op. cit., pp. 246 - 247.

conditions, problems of poverty, distressed areas and unemployment[5] continued to provoke strikes and rioting in the first half of the decade. Quoting the statistics issued by the Ministry of Labour Gazette of May 1935, The Times reported that "the number of industrial disputes involving strikes and lockouts in 1934 was higher than in 1933, and exceeded the number recorded for any year since 1925."[6] By 1935, the effects of economic recovery had improved social conditions. Thus in July 1935 unemployment "fell for the first time" below two millions,[7] but in October the improvement in employment was described as a temporary seasonal one.[8] By 1937, official unemployment figures as reported in the Spectator were of 1,390,249, "which is a drop of 166,400 on the figure of last year."[9] Economic recovery and the efforts to fight poverty did not eliminate the great

---

[5] A detailed study of the economic and social problems of the 1930's, supplemented by tables, is given by Mowat, op. cit., pp. 432-521.

[6] The Times (London), May 20, 1935, p. 8.

[7] Thomson, op. cit., p. 144.

[8] "Unemployment in October," Economist, November 9, 1935, pp. 903 - 904.

[9] Spectator, November 12, 1937, p. 831.

contrasts between the rich and the poor. Hunger marches, riots, attacks on the Government and the well-off classes were current, and in the short run they fed the flames of political activism of both the Right and the Left.

The defense of the poor was taken up by leftist intellectuals who, like George Orwell,[10] sympathized with the lower class and proposed Socialism as a solution to its problems. Thus, one effect of social questioning was the growth of leftist sentiments in Britain. Intellectual members of the educated class, shocked by "poverty in the midst of plenty," turned to Marxism. The Communist party remained a small party throughout the 1930's, but enthusiasm for communism spread.[11] "Suddenly, after Hitler's rise to power Communism became fashionable among the young, and especially among

---

[10] George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier (London: Secker and Warburg, 1965).

[11] Taylor, op. cit., p. 348; D.H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working-Class Movement, 1897-1947 (2d ed. rev.; London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1960), pp. 382 - 83.

students and intellectuals,"[12] and their conversion was due to "the apparent logic of international events, combined with feelings of social guilt thrust upon them by the depression."[13] They were impressed by the success of the Five Year Plan in Russia, and expressed their admiration in their writings. A whole school of new poets, including W.H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Stephen Spender were noticeable by their inclination to Marxism.[14] Books were published on Leftist ideology and one of the most influental of those works was The Coming Struggle for Power by John Strachey.[15] Between 1935 and 1937, nearly a million copies of Communist pamphlets and sheets were sold, and the circulation of the Communist Daily Worker founded in 1930 almost doubled during the decade.[16]

---

[12]Henry Pelling, The British Communist Party: A Historical Profile (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), p. 80.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., See also Graves and Hodge, op. cit., p. 329.

[15]John Strachey, The Coming Struggle for Power (New York: Modern Library, 1933).

[16]Graves and Hodge, op. cit., p. 322.

Leftist reviews multiplied and one of them, the Left Review, was founded in 1934 under the auspices of a new body called the British Section of the Workers' International, "a Communist-controlled body with headquarters in Moscow."[17] A Left Book Club was founded in May 1936 which issued a monthly periodical of political instruction, Left Book News.[18] "The Club's popularity, activities and influence far exceeded the expectations of its founders,"[19] and by April 1939, 57,000 members had joined in.[20] The Club was not extreme Leftist. Its selection committee included Harold Laski a Socialist professor of political theory and the Labour Party's leading intellectual;[21] Victor Gollancz its publisher

---

[17] Pelling, op. cit.

[18] Stuart Samuels, "The Left Book Club," Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. I, No. 2 (1966), pp. 65-86.

[19] Ibid., p. 67.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Martin Peretz, "Laski Redivivus", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. I, No. 2 (1966), pp. 87 - 101.

"represented that ill-defined group of left-progressives"[22] who were "interested in the spreading of all such knowledge and all such ideas as may safeguard peace, combat Fascism, and bring nearer the establishment of real Socialism."[23] Only John Strachey in the committee had sympathy for the aims of the Communist party, but the Club served the ends of the latter because "although the books published were not in accordance with the party 'line', a high proportion of them were, and manuscripts that seemed to express any undue criticism of the 'line', even if written from a left-wing standpoint, were omitted from the list of publications."[24] Thus, "for the Labour party, the Left Book Club was an exasperation" because it "was diverting high minded school teachers into reading Communist tracts when they ought to have been joining the Labour party and working for it."[25]

---

[22]Samuels, op. cit., p. 71.

[23]Ibid., quoting Left Book News, May 1936.

[24]Pelling, op. cit., p. 96.

[25]Taylor, op. cit., p. 397.

This illustrates the success that extreme left ideas had secured in a short time. After a lunch with Wilson Harris, the editor of the Conservative Spectator, in which they discussed the new writers, Thomas Jones, previous advisor to the Cabinet and then Secretary to the Economics Advisory Council and to the Pilgrim Trust, wrote down in his diary: "The young writers are all Leftish."[26] Reviewing Andre Gide's Les Nouvelles Nourritures, Edouart Roditi remarked that there was "something almost humorous about this sudden success" of Gide, because "now that he has adopted the Communist cause, Gide whose following never really exceeded the few thousand readers of the Nouvelle Revue Francaise, has become an exceedingly popular writer."[27]

British Conservatives were aware of the spread of Leftist feeling, and they worried over the youth disrespect of traditions, values and established order. A series of articles in the Spectator by "The Voice of

---

[26] Thomas Jones, A Diary With Letters, 1931-1950 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 347.

[27] "Comrade Gide", Spectator, July 17, 1936, p. 109.

Under Thirty"[28] provoked an abundant response by readers who worried over the youth neglect of church and traditional values.[29] One correspondent, Edward Peck, complained about British "'Salon' Communists";[30] another,

---

[28] Spectator, Oct. 15, 1937, p. 623; Oct. 22, 1937, p. 676; Oct. 29, 1937, p. 737; Nov. 5, 1937, pp. 794-95; Nov. 12, 1937, p. 838; Nov. 19, 1937, pp. 880-81; Nov. 26, 1937, pp. 944-45; Dec. 3, 1937, pp. 987-88; Dec. 10, 1937, pp. 1045-46; Dec. 17, 1937, pp. 1095-96; Dec. 24, 1937, pp. 1139-40; Dec. 30, 1937, pp. 1173-74. Two articles by "The Voice Over Eighty on Under Thirty" were published Ibid., Jan. 7, 1938, pp. 7-8; Jan. 21, 1938, pp. 83-84. One article by "Over Ninety on Under Thirty" was published Ibid., Jan. 14, 1938, pp. 45-46.

[29] The abundance of the readers' response revealed their interest and concern. See Ibid., Oct. 29, 1937, p. 748; Nov. 5, 1937, pp. 803-304 when four letters were published. Eight letters were published on Nov. 12, 1937, pp. 848-49; five on Nov. 19, 1937, pp. 912-13; three on Nov. 26, 1937, pp. 954-55; seven on Dec. 3, 1937, pp. 995-97; three on Dec. 10, 1937, pp. 1055-56; four on Dec. 17, 1937, pp. 1103-1104; two on Dec. 31, 1937, pp. 1180-81; one on Jan. 7, 1938, pp. 20-21; two on Jan. 14, 1938, p. 50; one on Jan. 21, 1938, p. 90. The topic had attracted so much interest that it was announced that a booklet of ninety six pages on "The Voice of Under Thirty" with comments was under sale. Ibid., Jan. 21, 1938, p. 105.

[30] Ibid., Dec. 10, 1937, p. 1055.

John Dobie, noted with pleasure that at least one article by a Lieutnant Warren Tuke had a different tone and showed "a spirited outburst"

> So novel in these days of decadent Left-Wing-ism , Pacifism and Won't-fight-for-King-and Country-ism that at least it demands sympathetic attention if only for its novelty. I thought this breed extinct, snowed by "Socialism in our time."[31]

Again, commenting on a book of verse by a young poet John Betjeman, the reviewer, under the title of "Bourgeois Verse", expressed his satisfaction that for once: "In his limpid rythming verse, there is no word either of sex or of Marx, no denunciation of the social order and no hope for a paradise to be won through youth and violence."[32]

In general, Conservatives worried over the spread of the revolutionary spirit and over the dangers of letting ideas prevail over reality and men.[33] A poem was once sent to the Spectator and read as follows:

---

[31] Ibid., Dec. 17, 1937, p. 1104.

[32] Ibid., Dec. 10, 1937, p. 1070.

[33] Ibid., July 17, 1936, p. 109.

I am bowed down to earth with other men's words.
See ! My hand trembles with the stress of thought;
Nor can I lift the load of memory
Surely the time has come to hear the birds
To find delight that logic has not wrought;
To recall nothing under the open sky?

So cried the revolutionary man,
Pale in his book-lined room, blinking, peering,
Holding a frightened hand to his deaf ear.[34]

British conservatives were aware that the success of Leftist ideas and the growth of Left following and of Communism in some parts of Britain[35] was occurring at a time when the Left was asserting itself in Spain and France. This was the era of "Popular Fronts" or combination of left-wing and moderate forces to resist the advance of fascism and to make social reforms. In the Spanish Republic, a Popular Front coalition of the Republican Left, Socialists, and Communists had won the elections of February 1936. Then, when the Spanish civil war started on July 16, 1936, the Spectator observed

---

[34]Richard Church, "The Revolution", Ibid., July 3, 1936, p. 21.

[35]For example it was reported that Communism had risen in South Wales and was still rising: "Communism in South Wales", Ibid., Sept. 18, 1936, pp. 451-52.

that one of its first effects was to produce a shift to the Left in the Government and that "instead of checking the revolutionary advance it may carry it to the extreme."[36] In France also a Popular Front was formed as an electoral alliance in 1936.[37] It was carefully followed by British conservative opinion because coming after the signing of the Franco-Soviet Pact of May 2, 1935,[38] it seemed to confirm the new strength of Communism. This impression was reinforced when The Times summarized the Manifesto of the Communist International issued in 1935 in the following terms: "The Soviet-French and the Soviet-Czechoslovakian Pacts are, the Manifesto says, bearing good fruit, and are endorsed by the masses in France and Czechoslovakia, as evidenced by recent elections which returned an increase

---

[36] Ibid., July 24, 1936, p. 125.

[37] For a concise history of the French Popular Front consult George Lefranc, Le Front Populaire, 1934-1938 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965). See also L. Bodin et Jean Touchard, Front Populaire, 1936 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961) which includes passages from the Popular Front election campaign that explain why Conservatives saw in the Popular Front the triumph of the Communists and extremism.

[38] Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1948), CXXXIX, 474-78.

of Communists."[39] In April 1936, Thomas Jones noted that the coming French elections "are expected to show a growth of the Left"[40] at a time when the Franco-Soviet Pact had strengthened the Left and was "popular with the Left here and in France."[41]

It was in that context of Popular Fronts that British Conservatives witnessed the efforts of the British Communist party to form a Popular Front in Britain. The calls for a British left Front were repeatedly made by the Communists[42] at a time when the British Communist Party, like all Communist parties in Europe, was affiliated to the Third International (Comintern) which was headed by Moscow and which had for declared objective the spreading of Communism throughout the world.[43] At

---

[39] The Times (London), July 17, 1935, p. 13.

[40] Jones, op. cit., p. 185.

[41] Ibid., p. 209.

[42] Pelling, op. cit., p. 76.

[43] Max Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941, Vol. I: 1929-1936 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 3.

the sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 a line of extreme intransigeance had been laid down.[44] The next world Congress opened in Moscow on July 26, 1935,[45] and announced a change of policy which consisted in favouring for the present a "Popular Front" policy in order to oppose the growth of Fascism and aggressive Fascist designs.[46] But this change of policy did not reassure British Conservatives who believed it was only a change of tactics and not of the ultimate aim of social revolution. The text of the new programme itself kept the suspicions of the Right awake, for it was stated that:

> Class war must continue in every country. Strongholds of capitalism must be stormed and existing Governments overthrown and the Soviet system established everywhere. But the Comintern will collaborate wherever possible <u>for this purpose</u> with other Socialists and Democrats against the capitalist order. In some cases the Comintern may even collaborate with bourgeois elements.[47] (Italics supplied.)

---

[44] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 9.

[45] <u>The Times</u> (London), July 27, 1935, p. 11.

[46] Beloff, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 195.

[47] <u>The Times</u> (London), July 27, 1935, p. 11.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International had also issued a Manifesto which was published in the British press and which included statements like: "We are entering on a new series of revolutions and wars", and: "New tactics of a united front with the Social Democrats have become necessary;. . . emancipation is possible only by the violent overthrow of capitalism which cannot occurr automatically."[48]

That communism still aimed at social revolution was expressed for example in the Spectator by the reviewer of The New Communism, a book written by Maurice Thorez, the Secretary General of the French Communist party. The reviewer first noted that: "All the usual Communist clichés are to be found in this book. . . and all the old stuff about Marx and Lenin."[49] He then noticed one more thing in it, "the superb political strategy that led to the formation of the Front Populaire and gave France the strongest Left Government since the War."[50] The book described the patriotism

---

[48] Ibid., July 17, 1935, p. 13.

[49] Spectator, January 21, 1938, p. 95.

[50] Ibid.

of the French Communists who sang the Marsaillaise and considered themselves French. But for the reviewer:

> Das Kapital, to be sure, still stands where it did, at the very centre of all Communist thought. It is still the aim of the Communist to change the structure of society, by force if necessary. He still differs from the moderate Socialist in his willingness to use the strike weapon for purely political, as distinct from industrial ends.[51]

And if the communists collaborated for the moment with the more moderate Left it was because of the danger of Nazism that Thorez described at length. Thus,

> The conclusion is obvious: Nazism today is the strongest enemy of Marxism; Nazism according to Mein Kampf, wants to destroy France,. . . therefore, the first duty of the Marxist is to support France until, at all events, the Nazi danger has passed.[52]

The impression that Communism had simply altered its tactics and still aimed at social upheaval was reinforced by the behavior of the Communist Party in Britain and the extreme Left in general. Their tactics of violence,

---

[51] Ibid., p. 96.

[52] Ibid.,

strikes and demonstrations caused social disorder and were looked at as a confirmation of their revolutionary character. The Communists had played an active role in the Hunger Marches of the 1930's and in the demonstrations which met those of the British Union of Fascists founded by Sir Oswald Mosley in 1932.[53] Reflecting on those counter-demonstrations Conservative press worried and The Times for example observed that "the spirit of 1926 which produced the General Strike is showing itself again."[54] In the 1930's, "even at home Conservatives still regarded Communism as the greatest danger", and in 1934 the Government restored general warrants "as a precaution against Communist propaganda in the armed forces."[55] References to the revolutionary aim of the Communists annoyed the latters so much that on one occasion Harry Pollitt, the leader of the British Communist party, wrote to The Times complaining that the newspaper had not taken the trouble to correct a wrong

---

[53]Colin Cross, The Fascists in Britain (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 67.

[54]Cited by Graves and Hodge, op. cit., p. 320.

[55]Taylor, op. cit., p. 374.

statement on that subject when all the other papers with one exception had done so.[56] Pollitt resented it particularly because The Times was "extensively quoted by all reactionary newspapers in Europe, and particularly in the Fascist newspapers in Germany."[57] Dislike of the Communists provoked a quick answer to that letter by a Conservative reader who defended The Times and referred with despise to "the elusive dead alive Communist Party of Great Britain",[58] not in the sense that it was a party of no consequence but in the sense that it obeyed blindly the instructions of the Communist International.

It was with the record of the activities of the extreme Left in mind that British Conservatives witnessed the efforts to form a British "United Front", "Popular Front". Demands for the formation of such a Front were discussed over and over again in the years

---

[56] The Times (London), May 17, 1935, p. 12.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., May 18, 1935, p. 10.

1933 - 1938. A proposal for the creation of a common organization was made by the British Communists and the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.) and was rejected by both the Trade Union Congress (T.U.C.) and the National Executive of the Labour Party.[59] In 1934, the campaign for a United Front was defeated by the Executive of the Labour party which blamed the members of the party who were taking part in that campaign.[60] Again in 1935, another resolution in favour of a United Front was advanced without success.[61] The following year the Labour party reaffirmed its refusal to accept the support of the Communist party and to form a United Front.[62] In the face of this refusal, the Socialist League which was affiliated to the Labour party and which was led by Sir Stafford Cripps determined to act on

---

[59]Alan Bullock, The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, Vol. I: Trade Union Leader, 1881-1940 (London: Heinemann Ltd., 1960), p. 527. For a bibliography on the history of the Labour Party and the Labor Movement see Charles L. Mowat, "The History of the Labour Party: The Coles, the Webbs and some others," Journal of Modern History, XXIII (June, 1951), pp. 146-53; Mowat, "Bibliographical Article: Some Recent Books on the British Labor Movement", Ibid., XVII (Dec., 1945), pp. 356-66.

[60]Bullock, op. cit., p. 552-53.

[61]Ibid., p. 559.

[62]G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, The Common People, 1746-1938 (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1938), p. 587.

its own and entered a united campaign for working-class unity with the I.L.P. and the Communist Party.[63] A Manifesto calling for "a Fighting programme of mass struggle through the democratization of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions" was signed by Cripps, Laski, Aneurin Bevan, Strachey, Pollitt, Mellor the editor of the Socialist paper Tribune, Gallacher the only Communist in Parliament, James Maxton of the I.L.P., and others.[64] This campaign for a United Front of January 1937 was "the most ambitious bid made by the British Left throughout the whole period of the thirties to break the stultifying rigidity of Party alignments,"[65] and its effect was "to reopen old divisions"[66] as it

---

[63] Hugh Dalton, The Fateful Years: Memoirs 1931-1945 (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1957), p. 129; Francis Williams, Ernest Bevin: Portrait of a Great Englishman (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 210; Cole, A Short History of the Working Class Movement, pp. 449-50; Pelling, op. cit., pp. 95-99; Arthur Marwick, The Explosion of British Society, 1914-1962 (London: Pan Book Ltd., 1963), pp. 96 - 97; Seaman, op. cit., pp. 297-302.

[64] Williams, loc. cit.

[65] Michael Foot, Aneurin Bevan: A Biography, Vol. I: 1897-1945 (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1962), p. 243.

[66] Bullock, op. cit., p. 595.

"emphasized the clear cut division between Marxists and revolutionary Socialism."[67] However, even if the efforts for a United Front had been defeated many times and revealed the divisions of the Left, it also meant for the British Right that there was a large body composed of many members of the Labour party--among whom Bevan and Jennie Lee played a prominent role--,[68] the Socialist League, the I.L.P. and the Communists who wanted such a Front and distinguished themselves from the Labour moderates. This only emphasized to the Right the strength of extremism, and it was clear that the Labour moderates were losing influence in favour of the more extreme leftists who followed Cripps, "the prophet of the Left, especially among the younger generation."[69] The division of the Labour party and those who favoured unity was well known to the Conservatives. Thus, the Economist wrote in January 1937:

> United Front appears to be the name which our extreme Left splinter parties assume when they want to emphasize the disunity existing

---

[67] "Popular Front" Economist, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 293.

[68] Foot, op. cit.

[69] Bullock, op. cit., p. 583.

> between them and the Labour Party. The new alliance between the Socialist League, the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party, approved by the Socialist League on Sunday in defiance of a Labour Party call for loyalty, accordingly described itself as a United Front.[70]

The Right witnessed the demonstrations of solidarity of the Left, like the Free Trade Hall meeting on January 24, 1937, which gave a spectacular start to the new campaign for unity, and the platform of which brought together Cripps, Pollitt and Mellor; and the other massive demonstrations for Left unity that took place in 1937.[71] Conservatives could read in the press how strong were the feelings of the Socialists towards the "bourgeois Labour"[72] and their insistence on an alliance with the I.L.P. and the Communists. The dissolution of the Socialist League and the expulsion of Cripps, Bevan and other advocates of

---

[70] "A New Left Front", Economist, January 23, 1937, p. 164.

[71] Foot, op. cit., p. 246.

[72] "United Front?", Economist, January 30, 1937, p. 230. In December 1935, The Times had also reported that the organ of the Socialist party, The Socialist Standard, had warned its readers "not to waste their time" with the schemes and views of the Labour party and had asked The Times to state that the Socialist party considered its aims and schemes distinct from those of Labour. The Times (London), December 9, 1935, p. 23.

the unity movement weakened the latter but also the moderate Labour, while Popular Front agitations continued till they died out before the end of the decade.

All through that period, the Right had worried over the new strength of the extreme Left. Conservatives and moderates expressed the fear that the Labour party would be carried away by the extremists on its Left. Commenting on a series of articles that had been published on: "What is wrong with the Labour Party?", one reader, H.G. Wood, wrote to the Spectator:

> We have in this country traditions of religious freedom and independence and traditions of political freedom and compromise for which Karl Marx had neither sympathy nor understanding. If now the Left-wing persists in trying to interpret capitalism and imperialism purely in Marxist terms and to base politics on class-consciousness, it will never get British Labour united behind it, and it will never secure from the middle classes that measure of support and cooperation without which Labour cannot hope to succeed.[73]

Speaking of the Liberal and Labour parties, another correspondent, Angus Watson, wrote:

---

[73] Spectator, July 31, 1936, p. 202.

> Liberalism however can find no place in its party for a policy of state Socialism, which is the very negation of everything that it stands for, and it can only be by the final repudiation of extreme Labour left-wing. . . that a working agreement may be secured.[74]

Another letter was sent by Hugh Ross Williamson who asked the Labour party not to let extremism win over in order to be able to check Communism.[75]

The Times also worried over the Labour Party's association with the Socialists and regretted the extremism of its language:

> The compromise agreement reached last October between the Labour Party and the Socialist League foreshadowed immediate action against the House of Lords (apparently in defiance to the Parliamentary Act), and the "sweeping away" of obstructions wherever "found" to the establishment of a Socialist Commonwealth. This means the control of currency, of banking, of investment, and of all "primary indies and services." It is based upon the repeated assertions of Labour politicians --in defiance to the actual facts since they left office-- that no material improvement can take place under a capitalist system.[76]

---

[74] Ibid., July 16, 1937, pp. 108 - 109.

[75] Ibid., July 23, 1937, p. 146.

[76] The Times (London), June 13, 1935, p. 13.

Thus, although the Labour party refused to join a United Front with the Communists and expelled the Socialists when they persisted in asking for such a Front, the Right was subjected to constant talk of "fronts", "battles" and such terms. Even the moderate Left was using extreme terms which seemed to confirm the domination of the extreme left-wing over the moderates. Labour members, like the Socialists and the Communists, were talking of "capitalism" versus "Socialism", of "class struggle", "reactionary" government and press, etc. For example, the Opposition leader in Parliament, Clement Atlee, said in the House of Commons on December 9, 1935 that:

> The real issue is now emerging, and it brings a cleavage between hon. Members opposite and hon. Members on these benches. . . . The main issue, . . . is the organization of society, whether society is to be based on profit or on service, priveledge or equality, whether it is to be based on Capitalism or Socialism. . . . We challenge the whole position on which the Government stands.[77]

The answer of the Attorney General, Sir Thomas Inskip, revealed the Conservatives' dislike of Socialism.

---

[77]Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCVII (1935), 576- 77.

Inskip first observed that: "It is worth while perhaps for a moment pointing out that the very advantage which the right hon. Gentleman enjoyed of questioning the Government of the day as to their policy is one which, if rumour is right, will be withdrawn by the next Socialist Government."[78] He then made "a contrast between the well tried Parliamentary, constitutional method of the National Government and the somewhat curt dictatorship to which the right hon. Gentleman has committed himself."[79] Attacking the Socialists who wanted to apply the Russian Communist system in Britain, he said:

> I take leave to say that those who are best acquainted with the Saturday and Sunday night meetings of the party opposite will be familiar with the fact that the proposals which evoke the loudest cheers from their well trained audiences are those that are most agreable to gentlemen like the hon. and learned Member for East Bristol (Sir S. Cripps) and the right hon. Gentlemen who are in favour of "the strong points of the Russian system."[80]

---

[78] Ibid., p. 588.

[79] Ibid., p. 589. Note here the bias of The Times who reported on December 10, 1935, p. 17, that "Ministerial Cheers" greeted this remark by Inskip, while no such cheers are recorded in the text of that debate.

[80] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCVII (1935), 589-90.

And he went on saying:

> At every election in the country where there was a contest the issue of Socialism and Capitalism was put before the electors. [HON. MEMBERS: "OH!"] Well, it was put to the best of hon. Members' ability. I assume that they made the best case they could for Socialism, and I am entitled, without going back upon the past, to say that the country gave its verdict against Socialism. . . . this Government has no mandate to introduce this country to Socialism or Socialism to this country.[81]

It already appears from what has been said that Conservatives did not only resent the Communists. In fact anti-Communism was generally accompagnied by anti-Socialism and extreme Left ideas on the whole. Talk of United Fronts and the spread of Marxist terms left very little margin of difference between Communist declarations and those of the Socialists and even Labour members. For example it was reported in The Times that at the annual conference of the I.L.P. at Derby in 1935, Jennie Lee had moved on behalf of the National Council a section of policy statement dealing with war and imperialism, and a paragraph headed "Defence of the Soviet Union" was amended by agreement to read: "The

---

[81] Ibid., p.592.

I.L.P. will urge a general strike against the British Government if this country is in anyway involved in an attack on the Soviet Union, and will do all in its power to assist revolutionary Socialists abroad to take similar action against the Government of their countries."[82] The Times also reported that to a Mr. Fletcher who had said that the U.S.S.R.'s foreign policy was open to criticism, it was answered that it was hoped "the I.L.P. would support Soviet Russia in season and out of season."[83]

This meant that because the U.S.S.R. had a Socialist regime, non-Communists were declaring openly their support to Russia "in season and out of season." This could only illustrate to the Right the influence and power of Marxism and Communism on the Left and make anti-Communism take the form of dislike of extreme Leftist creed in general. For example, A.L. Rowse, then "a Labour candidate for Parliament and much concerned with what was going on in the Labour Party,"[84] wrote an article where

---

[82] The Times (London), March 16, 1935, p. 15.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Rowse, All Souls and Appeasement: A Contribution to Contemporary History (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1961), p. 3.

he declared: "All we who are Socialists are convinced that there is no hope of any international order which can secure peace in the world except through the victory of Socialism; that there can be no peace unless the forces of the Left are to win."[85] One Conservative, W. W. Paine, answered back in a letter where he criticized Rowse's article treating it of "Socialist propaganda."[86] Another letter was sent by Martin Lindsay who, after defining himself as a young man and a National Conservative candidate, treated Rowse's article as "poor stuff" and said about the Socialists that "if Russia invaded Afghanistan, they would sing a very different tune."[87] This statement, it is to be noticed, was not about the Communists and yet carried the same kind of accusation. When Rowse swiftly retorted, noting in particular Lindsay's "so long and gallent work on the anti-Socialist front",[88] a Liberal Socialist, Athelian Rendall, was

---

[85] Rowse, "What Should We Fight For?", Spectator, July 3, 1936, p. 192.

[86] Ibid., August 7, 1936, p. 239.

[87] Ibid., p. 238

[88] Ibid., August 14, 1936, p. 273.

disturbed by Rowse's harsh tone and he worried: "How is our materialistic middle class to be persuaded to give Socialist views thoughtful considerations if their early attempts to do so are treated so harshly?"[89] But even this answer could not please or reassure Conservative readers for the statement "our materialist middle class" sounded as Marxist as could be.

Again, when Cripps referred to the Jubilee celebrations of May 1935 as the "Jubilee ballyhoo",[90] The Times criticized him and protested that in fact the Jubilee was "the revelation of the affection of all classes for the Crown",[91] and one infuriated reader, St. John Ervine, wrote to The Times attacking "the Socialist League, an organization mainly populated by disgruntled dons and ill-tempered members of the middle class."[92] And he added:

---

[89] Ibid., August 21, 1936, p. 310.

[90] The Times (London), June 13, 1935, p. 13.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., June 19, 1935, p. 15.

> We may well believe that there are some, Sir Stafford Cripps and Communists among them, who feel exceedingly "depressed and discouraged" by the overwhelming and spontaneous outburst of affection which was shown for the King by his people during the Jubilee celebrations, and it may well be that there are some hearts in Moscow on Jubilee night.[93] (Italics supplied.)

The dislike of the extreme left was expressed over and over again and showed the deep antagonism of British Conservatives for what Socialism and Communism meant.[94] Thus, Cripps was resented because, as one correspondent of the Spectator put it: "He hides from himself the realities of the situation under a mass of ambiguous verbiage drawn from the Marxist philosophy of class consciousness."[95]

Another comment on Socialism was made by Guy M. Kindersley, a correspondent of The Times, who wrote:

---

[93] Ibid.,

[94] The extremism of the Socialists was sometimes ridiculous and could only antagonize more the Right. For example, it was reported that a man had put his property in his wife's name in trust for him because being a Socialist, "he did not think he ought to own property." "The Socialist Conscience", Ibid., December 3, 1935, p. 19.

[95] Spectator, July 31, 1936, p. 202.

> The Socialist creed, if it be put into practice, entails a revolution, even though it be a peaceful one, in the Constitution and in the economic and social life of the nation. Socialism's main appeal is economic, and its constitutional aspect as an attack upon liberty is kept in the background by its exponents and to a large extent ignored by its opponents.[96]

As the writer George Orwell observed: "The average thinking person nowadays is not merely not a Socialist, he is actively hostile to Socialism."[97]

How did this hostility most clearly express itself may be revealed by the study of the British Fascist movement and of the reaction to the Spanish Civil War in Britain.

---

[96] The Times (London), December 7, 1935, p. 8.

[97] George Orwell, op. cit., p. 171.

The strengthening of the Left in the 1930's occurred at a time when the extreme Right was also gaining strength, and it is perhaps relevant to note that both extremes of the Left and the Right were most intransigeant and successful around the same time, the mid-thirties.

In the 1920's many Fascist movements had been created in Britain, among them the British Fascists founded in 1923, the Fascist League, the British National Fascists, other less known groupings, and in 1929 Arnold Spencer Leese's Imperial Fascist League.[98] But it was with Mosley's British Union of Fascists (B.U.F.) founded in 1932 that British fascism met success and attracted large popular support. It is difficult to know why fascism gained momentum then, but as anti-Communism was one of its major features, it can be suggested that the growth of fascism was partly an indication of the anti-Communist feelings in Britain.

And the B.U.F. grew quite remarkably in a very short period of time. Its great majority was composed

---

[98] Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, The European Right: A Historical Profile (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965), p. 64; Colin Cross, op. cit., pp. 62-66.

of young people; "it was a movement of youth"[99] and Mosley "appealed specifically to the young."[100] As Robert Graves and Alan Hodge also wrote:

> Mosley produced no plan for solving Britain's problems, and never secured his "people's mandate." His call for "Action", however, attracted a number of tough young men, who seemed to enjoy strutting about in black shirts and behaving aggressively to Communists and the poorer Jews.[101]

The B.U.F. drew its supporters from all classes and political parties. Many leftists were attracted to fascism as had been Mosley himself,[102] and a significant proportion of the fascist rank and file came over from the extreme Left, some from the Communist party but more from the I.L.P.[103] The main bulk of recruits came over from former members of the extreme Right and from the Right who were attracted by their own dislike of what

---

[99] Cross, op. cit., p. 67.

[100] Rogger and Weber, op. cit., p. 65.

[101] Graves and Hodge, op. cit., p. 300.

[102] Cross, op. cit., pp. 9-66, described the early life of Mosley and his different political shifts. See also Foot, op. cit., pp. 120 - 133.

[103] Rogger and Weber, op. cit., p. 67; Pelling, op. cit., p. 83.

Mosley denounced, like "the failure to check the spread of subversive ideas and movements at home and abroad."[104] Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber thus noted that "not surprisingly, many Englishmen, especially conservatives and old members of the Right were attracted"[105] by Mosley's group, and that he secured success near the youth "although the initial response came from the young middle-aged --that is, from men who had fought in the last stages of the war, or had been just too young to do so."[106] However, "though many were attracted, only those recruited from the extreme Left (mainly the Independent Labour Party) or the extreme Right (the old fascist leagues) stayed in any numbers."[107]

What is interesting for this paper however is not only who remained with the B.U.F. but who sympathized with it also, because it reveals how many were lenient towards fascist ideas and were prepared to accept them.

The B.U.F. secured a great success in England. If found enough sympathy and support to seriously worry

---

[104] Rogger and Weber, op. cit., p. 66.
[105] Ibid., p. 65.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

the Left. John Strachey, himself a former supporter of Mosley,[108] emphasized the appeal of the latter's group and its dangers.[109] According to Alan Bullock, the spread of fascism in England worried the Left so much that the National Council of the Labour party decided that:

> One obvious step was to redouble the efforts to rouse public opinion to the threat of Fascism, not only abroad but at home where the Blackshirted British Union of Fascists, under the leadership of the one-time socialist Minister Sir Oswald Mosley, was attracting large crowds to its meetings.[110]

This is corraborated by Colin Cross who, after showing that the movement was unable to succeed in Scotland, wrote that: "In England, however, the Movement attracted a score of enthusiastic supporters who believed that the day of Fascism was about to dawn."[111] Among those supporters, "many Tories took an interest in the fascist movement" and received it very favourably at first.[112]

---

[108] John Strachey, The Menace of Fascism (New York: Covici, Friede, Inc., 1933), pp. 152-160.

[109] Ibid., pp. 160-174; Strachey, The Coming Struggle for Power, p. 287.

[110] Bullock, op. cit., p. 547.

[111] Cross, op. cit., p. 108.

[112] Rogger and Weber, op. cit., p. 66.

Thus, at Mosley's public meetings, "half fashionable London turned out to hear him debate."[113] The marches he organized also attracted large crowds. In January 1933, about one thousand people took part in a march of the B.U.F., "but to attract even a 1,000 members was not bad progress for so young a movement."[114] More, "never before in modern British history had the spontaneous idea of one man flowered so quickly into a national movement."[115]

Success was so great that in one year the B.U.F. acquired the resources to move from its small quarters in Great George Street to a suite of offices at 12 Lower Grosvenor Place.[116] Conservative press gave the movement publicity and support.[117] Such was the help provided by the Saturday Review owned by the eccentric Lady Houston.[118] In January 1934 the B.U.F. also secured

---

[113] Cross, op. cit., p. 85.

[114] Ibid., p. 86.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Graves and Hodge, op. cit., p. 301; Thomson, op. cit., p. 148.

[118] Cross, op. cit., p. 90.

a very influential new supporter, the press magnate Lord Rothermere who opened a campaign in favour of Mosley's group in the Daily Mail.[119] In the fortnight following Rothermere's first article, twenty six readers sent letters on fascism, "all in favour of it."[120] Known Conservatives also expressed in that paper opinions favourable to the B.U.F., and among them was Thomas Moore, Conservative M.P. for Ayr, who made a long political appreciation of the B.U.F. under the heading: "The Blackshirts Have What The Conservatives Need."[121] A series of private dinner parties led to the formation of a club of "intellectuals" where the only qualification for membership was to be interested in fascism. This was the January Club which started in January 1934 and lasted two years, receiving important well-known speakers at its monthly dinners.[122] Sir Charles Petrie who spoke at the meeting of May 1934, recorded his impressions years later in his autobiography:

---

[119] Ibid., pp. 95-98.

[120] Ibid., p. 97.

[121] Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[122] Ibid., p. 101.

> It is true that very few people of note actually joined Sir Oswald Mosley, but a considerable number were sympathetically inclined towards him, as the membership of the January club proved.[123]

By the summer of 1934 the B.U.F. counted over a hundred branches,[124] which was a great lot for so young a movement and another proof of success. After that year the progress of the movement slowed down for a number of reasons. Important among them was the fact that anti-Semitism became officially part of the B.U.F. after 1934 and this repelled some of its supporters[125] like Rothermere for example.[126] Also, during the great fascist

---

[123] Ibid., quoting Charles Petrie.

[124] Ibid., p. 107. A study of those branches and of the proclaimed figures of B.U.F. following are given also, Ibid., pp. 130-132. Those figures are very different from those proposed by Taylor, op. cit., p. 374. For the membership of the B.U.F. see also The Times (London), June 20, 1936, p. 9.

[125] Cross, op. cit., pp. 109 . Rogger and Weber, op. cit., p. 65: "Much more damaging was the anti-Semitism, which, after 1934, became a characteristic --in the eyes of the public the chief characteristic-- of fascism." In The Times (London) also, one finds a lot of references to fascist Jew baiting in London, in 1936 and 1937 for example.

[126] Cross, op. cit., p. 102. Also Ibid., p. 116: "Olympia, the Roehm purge and, above all, the B.U.F.'s growing tendency towards anti-Semitism precipated a breach between Mosley and Rothermere which in July 1934 led to a formal withdrawal of support by the Rothermere Press."

rallies of 1934 and 1935 and the fascist marches of 1935 and 1937 the B.U.F. came to be associated with violence.[127] This impression was reinforced by the fact that fascism abroad also gained a reputation of violence because of the German purges, at a time when the admiration of Mosley for Mussolini and Hitler was well known.[128] Later, with war at hand, the B.U.F. appeared unpatriotic.[129]

But if the progress of the B.U.F. slowed down after the mid thirties the movement still continued to attract followers. In 1934, 1935 and 1936 reports on

---

[127] Rogger and Weber, loc. cit., A.J.P. Taylor, loc. cit., wrote that:

> "The British Union of Fascists, which Mosley founded in 1932, was at first applauded by many respectable conservatives, and also Lord Rothermere. The members of the Union. . . wore blackshirts and uniforms on the Italian model. They relied on marches and violence not on speeches. In time this violence was too much even for Conservatives."

Lord Templewood (Sir Samuel Hoare) also described how the English Fascists came to be considered troublesome and how he prohibited all processions in certain districts. Templewood, op. cit., p. 242.

[128] Thomson, loc. cit.

[129] Charles Petrie quoted in Cross, op. cit., p. 101. The fact that Mosley was put in prison at the time of the war also supports this point, Ibid., pp. 191-98; Thomson, op. cit., p. 206.

fascist demonstrations and incidents with Jews filled the papers[130] and yet the movement continued to be accepted for some years to come. At the London County Council elections of 1937 the B.U.F., though in decline, secured a success which "did prove the existence of a substantial body of support for fascism."[131] As late as 1937 then, sympathy for fascism still existed in England.

The role of anti-Communism in this sympathy for fascism was important. The greatest success secured by the B.U.F. occurred before anti-Semitism became publicly stressed, when the movement spoke of patriotism, social reforms and stood as a bulwark against Communism. It was at that time, when the emphasis was not on anti-Semitism but on the patriotic very conservative anti-Communist aspect of the movement, that the

---

[130] The Times and Spectator were filled with such reports. For example, The Times (London), October 7, 1935, p. 9 described fascist demonstrations in West End London, while Spectator, October 9, 1936, pp. 572-73 reported fascist anti-Jewish demonstrations in East End London and described how large they were, which is another sign of fascist following.

[131] Cross, op. cit., p. 166.

B.U.F. met its greatest success. In fact, that Communism was significant for the appeal of British fascism went back to the days of the British Fascisti and Miss Rotha Lintorn-Orman who "was gravely alarmed at the rise of Socialism and Communism"[132] and who founded her party which "stood simply on the basis of defending King and Parliament against the forces of Communism, Socialism, Anarchism, free love, atheism and trade unions, which the members tended to lump into a mysterious single entity."[133] R.G.D. Blackeny who later was to follow Arnold Leese's Imperial Fascist League also multiplied his attacks on the Communists warning that "a gang of internationalists seek to control the world."[134] In its turn, the B.U.F. stood in the eyes of many as a bulwark against Communism. Thus, Lord Rothermere supported Mosley's party because:

> The idea of an alternative to Sir Stafford Cripps seems to have obsessed Rothermere. His political perception was never particularly deep and his articles at the time displayed an almost hysterical fear of Red Revolution. His aim seems to have been to tame Mosley into co-operating with the Conservatives.[135]

---

[132] Ibid., p. 57.

[133] Ibid., p. 58.

[134] Ibid., p. 60.

[135] Ibid., p. 96.

Referring to the success of the B.U.F. in general, Colin Cross wrote that "fear of Communism was a major factor in attracting money to its funds."[136] The fascists themselves played on it and posed as an antidote to Communism. For example, they accused those who did not actively support a fascist demonstration in East End London once of capitulating to the "Red Terror."[137] The Left complained that Conservatives and the government showed pro-fascist bias and let the B.U.F. use free institutions to further the case of violence, anti-Communism and anti-Semitism. Protesting against the government's leniency towards fascist disorders in East End London, George Lansbury, a member of Parliament, described how for years the police had attended lectures by himself and by other Leftists and had even made reports on those lectures:

> This practice continues, I am told, so far as Communist meetings are concerned, and prosecutions occasionally follow. But at the open-air meetings organized by the "blackshirts", no government reporters are regularly in attendance, and in view of the widespread opinion that speeches at these meetings were deliberately made for the express purpose of stirring up hatred and violence against individuals simply because of the accident

---

[136] Ibid., p. 90.

[137] Spectator, loc. cit.

> of birth and creed, is it not the duty of the authorities to treat those responsible for such speeches as they treat ordinary working people who may be Socialists, trade Unionists or Communists.[138]

Thus, many who were not considered fascists and who were not members of the B.U.F. sympathized with Fascism and feared Communism. Describing the mood of his times George Orwell wrote:

> When I speak of Fascism in England, I am not necessarily thinking of Mosley and his pimpled followers . . . . But what I am thinking of at this moment is the Fascist attitude of mind, which beyond any doubt is gaining ground among people who ought to know better. . . . It boils down to a determination to do the <u>opposite</u> of what the mythical Socialist does.[139]

Orwell went on writing that if one wants illustrations of the growth of fascist feeling in England, "have a look at some of the innumerable letters that were written to the Press during the Abyssinian war, . . . and also at the howl of glee . . . over the Fascist rising in Spain."[140]

---

[138] "Anti-Semitism in the East End", <u>Ibid.</u>, July 24, 1936, p. 134.

[139] Orwell, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 210-11.

[140] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 211.

Fascism in England was then one extreme answer to Communism and other propositions of the day, which on the international field expressed itself in support of fascist behavior. Before being anything else, fascism in England was a domestic issue. A relevant comment was made by Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber when they wrote:

> Mosley and his followers were, at least in their own eyes, the response from the Right to primarily domestic issues; . . . . It is significant that Mosley broke away from the Labour party in March, 1931, and founded the British Union of Fascists in October, 1932 -that is before Hitler's seizure of power and the beginning of international tension- and that similarly it was at this time that the Communists began to attract young intellectuals in large numbers. The reasons for this expansion of the political extremes were primarily domestic; foreign-policy considerations were to come later.[141]

And it is as a domestic issue, an issue that raised the spectre of Communism at home, as well as abroad that one can look at the Spanish Civil War in particular.

---

[141] Rogger and Weber, op. cit., p. 63.

The indulgence and sympathy of the Conservatives for the British fascist movement of the 1930's was one manifestation of anti-Communism in England. Tory sympathy for the fascist cause outside Britain was another expression of anti-Communism. British Conservatives must have been reassured by the fact that an extreme Right-wing B.U.F. existed and met a success that was remarkable for so young a movement. Also it was apparent by 1937 that the efforts of the Left for a unity movements were unsuccessful in Britain and that even in France the popular Front experiment was failing.[142] Conservatives knew as Sir Thomas Inskip had said in Parliament that at every election the country had given its verdict against Socialism. Yet, although the spectre of Communism was not being fulfilled and was not making advances in practice, it remained very much alive and even appeared nearer at hand in the second half of the 1930's. The main reason for the maintenance and perhaps increase of the fear of Communism in Britain was the Spanish Civil War.

---

[142] Alexander Werth, "The Front Populaire in Difficulties", Foreign Affairs, XV (July, 1937), 608-18.

The issues at stake in Spain were not possibly as simple as Socialism versus Capitalism, Communism versus Fascism. But this was one major way the Civil War was looked at, and it was "recognized as such by hundreds of young men in Britain, France and the United States of America."[143] What matters and is important here then is what was believed to be at stake. As things were Spain was transformed into "the battleground of rival ideologies",[144] mainly democracy and Fascism, Communism and Fascism. Much evidence shows that this was how contemporaries looked at the Civil War. In a letter to the Spectator, Ramon Muñiz Lavalle, correspondent of del Heraldo de Madrid in London, described the Civil War as a war between communist and fascist forces and noted that "the enthusiasm for the red flag has been a phenomenon visible to all Spain",[145] a statement that could only make British Conservatives feel more certain that it was Communism that was at stake. Reflecting on the Spanish Civil War, one observer wrote in October 1936:

---

[143] John W. Wheeler-Bennet, Munich: Prologue to Tragedy (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1948), p. 259.

[144] Taylor, op. cit., p. 395.

[145] Spectator, August 7, 1936, p. 239.

> Red revolutionists -- Anarcho - Syndicalists, Socialists and various brands of Marxists -- have made common cause with the government to save Spain from fascism. It is recognized both within and without the country, that fascism versus popular rule has become the sharply defined issue.[146]

As Winston Churchill also saw it, it was "the increasing degeneration of the Parliamentary regime in Spain, and the growing strength of the movements for a Communist, or alternatively an anarchist revolution" that led to the military revolt of July 1936, and:

> It is part of the Communist doctrine and drill-book, laid down by Lenin himself, that Communists should aid all movements towards the Left and help into office weak Constitutional, Radical, or Socialist Governments. These they should undermine, and from their falling hands snatch absolute power, and found the Marxist State. In fact, a perfect reproduction of the Kerensky period in Russia was taking place in Spain.[147]

The failure of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War and the presence of Germany and Italy on the side of General Franco and that of Russia on the side of the

---

[146] Lawrence A. Fernsworth, "Back of the Spanish Rebellion", Foreign Affairs, XV (October, 1936), 87-101.

[147] Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War, Vol. I: The Gathering Storm (London: The Educational Book Co., Ltd., 1954), p. 164.

Republic[148] confirmed the impression that Communism and Fascism were the issues at stake in Spain. The American Ambassador in Berlin for the years 1933-1938, William Dodd, often referred in his diary to the help provided by Germany to General Franco and saw in the Spanish war a struggle between fascist forces on the one hand and democratic and partly radical forces on the other.[149] Looking at the forces in presence in Spain, the Spectator commented:

> General Franco is not the only one who is anxious to "save Spain from Marxism, Freemasonry and all international Red influences" at the cost of deluging it in blood. Political conditions in Europe make it possible to represent the struggle in Spain as an issue between democracy and Fascism; the sympathies, perhaps the active help, of Germany and Italy, are with the Rebels, of France and Russia with the Government.[150]

A little while later the Spectator wrote:

> General Franco has presented Europe with the choice between a Fascist or a Communist Spain: a Europe

---

[148] Philip C. Jessup, "The Spanish Rebellion and International Law", Foreign Affairs, XV (January, 1937), 260-79.

[149] Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938, edited by William E. Dodd, Jr. and Martha Dodd (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., 1941).

[150] Spectator, July 31, 1936, p. 185.

> "red at both ends" is as attractive to the U.S.S.R. and the French Popular Front as it is repugnant to Germany and Italy.[151]

People in Britain felt very involved and were deeply divided over Spain because it was not only Spain they saw at stake, but rival ideologies that concerned them and their own country as well. Although the majority of people -and the Labour party at first-[152] were in favour of the non-intervention stand of Britain, divisions over the Spanish issue were very deep and they revived the spectre of Communism for the Right. The war infused "a spirit a class-warfare into political discussion"[153] and "brought bitterness and class-consciousness into foreign policy, and so into domestic policies, to an extent unknown before."[154] Feelings at stake were so strong that the Spanish Civil War provoked a division in British opinion "rightly said"[155] to

---

[151] Ibid., August 7, 1936, p. 225.

[152] Dalton, op. cit., p. 97 ff., described how non-intervention was adopted at the Annual Labour Conference of 1936. See also Foot, op. cit., pp. 218-26; Wheeler-Bennet, op. cit., p. 261, n. 1.

[153] Thomson, op. cit., p. 164.

[154] Mowat, op. cit., p. 577.

[155] Taylor, op. cit., p. 395.

be the greatest over any foreign question since the French Revolution.[156] Harold Macmillan recalled that "emotions were violent and fierce at the time. Curiously enough, they have also proved lasting."[157] Lord Halifax -Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords in 1935, then Lord President of the Council in 1937 and successor in February 1938 to Anthony Eden as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs-[158] also noted that "one of the strangest properties of this fever has been its persistence."[159] Hugh Dalton also found "the Labour party, and many other good citizens most deeply stirred by the Spanish Civil War."[160] In Parliament, in the press, the armies and the public at large, the Spanish Civil War led to heated discussions and divisions.[161] Depicting

---

[156] Graves and Hodge, op. cit., pp. 325-26.

[157] Harold Macmillan, Winds of Change: 1914-1939 (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1966), p. 475.

[158] The Earl of Birkenhead, Halifax: The Life of Lord Halifax (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1965), p. 335.

[159] The Earl of Halifax, Fullness of Days (London: Collins, 1957), p. 192.

[160] Dalton, op. cit., p. 95.

[161] A description of how divided were the British over Spain is found in A. Toynbee (ed.), Survey of International Affairs (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 1937, Vol. II, p. 153. S.I.A. will be used in this paper to refer to Survey of International Affairs.

the deepness of these differences of opinion, the Spectator worried over their results and made a comment that is most revealing about how important were the issues considered for the British:

> There is no doubt a Right and a Left in every country, and it may be natural that the Right in this country should tend to sympathize with the Spanish rebels and the Left with the Government. But that such sympathy should lead, as it is leading, to the distortion of truth, the suppression of facts, the fomenting of domestic antagonisms and a blind subservience to misleading appellations is neither natural nor rational nor pardonable.[162]

To the British Right and moderates the deepness of the cleavage of opinion over the Spanish question was a new expression of how virulent were extreme left feelings in Britain. Attitudes towards Spain did not necessarily follow party lines. In general however the Right could witness how strongly pro-Republican was the Left. At last the Civil War provided the Left with an outlet to its anti-Fascism other than hunger marches and such demonstrations. Leftist intellectuals could now do something concrete for their beliefs. Such was the case with the poet Stephen Spender for whom:

---

[162] "The Defense of Democracy", Spectator, August 28, 1936, p. 332.

> Within a few weeks Spain had become the symbol of hope for all anti-Fascists. It offered the twentieth century an 1848: that is to say, time and place where a cause representing a greater degree of freedom and justice than a reactionary opposing one, gained victories. It became possible to see the Fascist -anti-Fascist struggle as a real conflict of ideas . . . . The Spanish war remained to some extent a debate, both within and outside Spain, in which the great political ideas of our time -- Fascism, Communism, and Liberal-Socialism- were discussed and heard.[163]

Another example is that of George Orwell, the Etonian,[164] who had tried to become a working man in The Road to Wigan Pier and who went now to fight for his convictions in Spain.[165] The Bloomsbury Set, until then aloof from politics, rallied to Republican Spain. The Communists organized the dispatch of the British companies of the International Brigade before non-intervention came to force. Enthusiasm for the Republic was not only found in the middle class and "the working class, too, had its intellectuals of a vaguely Marxist cast."[166] Although

---

[163] Stephen Spender, World Within World (London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., 1951), pp. 187-88.

[164] This example is given by Taylor, loc. cit.

[165] George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia (2d ed. London: Secker and Warburg, Ltd., 1959).

[166] Taylor, op. cit., p. 396.

the Civil War revived for the Labour party the threat of a Popular Front with the Communists, many were the members of the party who rallied on the side of the Republic. In the eyes of the Right the Labour party too was for communist Spain since in the House of Commons, pushed by its own Left, it was again and again accusing the government of favouring the fascists.[167] The Labour and Liberal parties had realized after a while that no one save Britain and France adhered to non-intervention, and they began to demand assistance for the Republican government.[168] Thus, in July 1937 the National Council

---

[167] Many were the Parliamentary debates where the issue of Spain occupied an important part and where the Opposition did not spare its attacks on the government's policy. To show how serious was the issue here are some of the debates where the Spanish question was strongly discussed: Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXIX (1937), 93-161; CCCXXVI (1937), 1799-1924; CCCXXVII (1937), 57-176; CCCXXXIII (1938), 486-538; CCCXXXVII (1938), 919-1042.
In his memoirs Anthony Eden also referred to the Parliamentary disputes over Spain, The Earl of Avon, Facing the Dictators (London: Cassell and Co., 1962), p. 443.

[168] A description of how after October 1936 the Labour party abandoned non-intervention and opposed it outside Parliament is given by Alan Bullock, op. cit., pp. 586-88, 594-95.

of Labour recommended that the Spanish should be allowed to buy arms and ammunition in Britain. A few months later Noel-Baker called upon the government to influence Leon Blum, the French prime minister, to open the French frontier and lift the embargo on the sale of arms to Madrid.[169] Such requests on the part of the Left were in direct contradiction to its usual line of policy which consisted in strongly opposing rearmament and in criticizing the government about it. In those circumstances the demand for help to Spain made it clearer to the Right how strong were the sympathies of the Left for the Republican government in Spain. For the Right it also meant that once more the extreme Left was pushing and possibly dominating the moderate wing. Such an impression could be reinforced by small incidents which Conservatives witnessed. For example, at the Annual (1936) Conference of the Labour party at Edinburgh, a famous communist orator Señora Isabel de Palencia known as La Passionara made a moving speech in favour of the Republican cause in Spain, and all those present at the

---

[169] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXVIII (1937), 290.

conference stood up and sang "The Red Flag."[170] A few days later, the whole Conference sang the Internationale, "Then Comrades, come rally", where Jennie Lee "crept miserably" and Aneurin Bevan "looked haggard and careworn."[171] Those are small incidents, but they showed the Right how much affected by extremism was the Left. This only increased the apprehensions of the Right concerning the Spanish Civil War. Fear of Communism found new expression in the Civil War because more than any hunger-march or rioting it put Communism and Fascism face to face in and outside Spain. Many Conservatives shared Thomas Jones' fear that: "If the Government wins in Spain they will be superseded by the Communists to whom they have issued arms."[172] In January 1937 Thomas Jones was asked whether the British government would give an assurance to Hitler that the "Reds" would not be allowed to triumph in Spain. Jones did not refuse to interfere or to support non-intervention but

---

[170] Foot, op. cit., pp. 231-232; Dalton, op. cit., p. 99.

[171] Foot, op. cit., p. 233.

[172] Jones, op. cit., p. 232.

promised that he would pass the request to the prime minister and would urge him or his successor to carefully choose who would be sent to see Hitler.[173] After Austria was forced into the Anschluss, Jones wrote on March 14, 1938: "What worries me more than Austria is the Spanish situation and its sequelae."[174] In his momoirs, Samuel Hoare (Lord Templewood) noted that his opinion concerning the Spanish Civil War differed from that of Eden who "regarded the conflict as one between absolute right and absolute wrong in which the dictators should at all costs be totally defeated and democracy totally defended."

As a member of the Opposition, A. Sinclair, once said in Parliament: "Members opposite are gravely preoccupied about the menace of Bolshevist propaganda in Spain."[175] Many leading Conservatives feared that if the Republican government won, the Communists who had been a minority in Spain in the past would gain control

---

[173] Ibid., pp. 304-305.

[174] Templewood, op. cit., p. 257.

[175] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXVII (1938), 949.

of the country and this could damage economic interests in Spain, but more, would put the Left in power in France and perhaps after in Britain. As D. Graham Hutton wrote in his excellent article on British policy towards the Spanish Civil War,[176] for many Conservatives, the majority in the cabinet and the National Coalition Liberals led by John Simon:

> It sufficed for them that France had just elected a Front Populaire Government, that the legitimate Spanish Government was called Frente Popular, that Communists were supporting both, and that the Spanish men of property were supporting General Franco.[177] The nineteen-year-old bogey of Bolshevism--Bolshevism in France, in Spain, in Crechoslovakia--was evoked by the astute Propaganda Ministries of Italy and Germany for the special purpose of impressing the British Conservatives.[178]

As Hutton also wrote, Spain represented from the outset the two warring ideologies of Right and Left. Despite

---

[176] D. Graham Hutton, "British Policy towards Spain", Foreign Affairs, XV (July 1937), 661-73.

[177] Even Winston Churchill who opposed the fascist dictators more than many of his contemporaries, wrote: "Naturally I was not in favour of the Communists. How could I be, when if I had been a Spaniard they would have murdered me and my family and friends?" Churchill, op. cit., p. 165.

[178] Hutton, loc. cit., p. 663.

the claims of the British government that to make a choice was not necessary, the Spanish war raised dilemmas not only in regard to ideologies but in regard to foreign policy:

> Decisions had to be made which necessarily implied taking a stand for or against not only the Spanish insurgents but also the Party States of Germany and Italy, for or against not only the legitimate Spanish Government but also the Party State of Russia.[179]

Thus the confrontation and contest of the ideologies of Right and Left which had found clearest expression in the Spanish Civil War transmitted the ideological conflict to the international field. How did anti-Communism, a dominant feeling among British Conservatives, affect foreign policy remains to be seen.

---

[179] Ibid.

CHAPTER II

ANTI-COMMUNISM IN BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY 1935 - 1939

The sympathy shown by a part of the British Conservatives for Franco and their fears over the possibility of a communist success in Spain came from their regarding the Spanish Civil War as a struggle between Fascism and Communism. What Spain represented on a small scale was believed to be what Germany and Russia stood for.

Russia as the head of the Comintern represented not only a government which was "revolutionary" because communist, but more, a government which wanted to provoke revolutions everywhere possible. The victory of Stalin over Trotsky was not considered by the outside world as a renunciation of revolutionary efforts on the part of Russia because of the dominant part Russia occupied in the Comintern. If the latter's intentions were taken to be revolutionary, the role and place of

the U.S.S.R. in it was well emphasized and made Conservatives see in Russia not only a revolutionary example but the promoter of trouble outside the U.S.S.R. Thus, the Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1935 not only invited the communists to collaborate with other leftists in order to better promote revolution,[1] but also stressed the central role of the U.S.S.R. in it:

> The U.S.S.R. is more than ever the basis of world revolution;. . . the U.S.S.R. is striving to preserve international peace and promote civil war in capitalist countries by exploiting conflicts among these countries, and these efforts must be continued and encouraged; and the objective conditions for revolutionary work were never so favourable as at present.[2]

The comment of The Times on the Manifesto emphasized the role of the U.S.S.R. in the Comintern: "It is clear that M. Stalin's new policy has imposed important changes in the overt tactical programme of the Communist International."[3] The same point was made by a correspondent

---

[1] Supra, pp. 14-15.

[2] The Times (London), July 17, 1935, p. 13.

[3] Ibid.

of The Times who signed his letter "X" and who wrote:

> It seems worth pointing out. . . that the Comintern frequently avoids giving Moscow as the place of origin for its more aggressive publications. They usually appear in the Paris Communist paper Humanité, and are sometimes circulated again by the Comintern as being reprinted from a foreign source.[4]

The accusation that Russia aimed at provoking social revolutions in other countries was often formulated by British Conservatives. In a letter to the Spectator in which he compared the communist experience in Russia to the League of Nations, one correspondent, Ivan Whitfeld, wrote: "Both are founded on attractive theories but both are divorced from normal practice. Each, in its sphere, is an attempt at revolution."[5] The Spectator wrote that the Soviet regime was in a dilemma between the need to "follow a policy of world revolution, central in Marxist creed" but which kept Russia at the "loggerhead with the whole world", and a policy of normal relations which involved the abandonment of Marxist orthodoxy."[6] For most Conservatives, "communist

---

[4] Ibid., May 18, 1935, p. 10.

[5] Spectator, March 18, 1938, p. 454.

[6] "The Twilight of Barbarism" Spectator, August 28, 1936, p. 333.

agitation with at least the indirect support of the Soviets has never ceased" as The Times once expressed it.[7] Because Russia was believed to have the main role in communist agitation, to sympathize with the Soviet government or to have anything to do with Soviet Russia seemed to imply taking the risk of favouring revolutions at home.[8] There lay the main cause of anti-Soviet bias in Britain, in the fear of the Red Revolution, in the feeling that trouble at home, talk of Popular Fronts, help to Republican Spain, were on the other side of the Soviet coin, namely the promotion by Soviet Russia of social revolution wherever possible. As the evidence presented in the following study will show, this was the abiding reason for hostility to Russia and the reluctance to cooperate with her.

---

[7] The Times (London), March 23, 1935, p. 10.

[8] It is interesting to note what William Evans Scott wrote on the attitude of writers of the French extreme Right towards Russia: "They often denied that Soviet Russia could be treated as a state; for them it was only the headquarters of the Comintern." W.E. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler: The Origins of the Franco-Soviet Pact (Durham: Duke University Press, 1962), p. 195, n. 71.

In contrast, Nazi Germany appeared as the fascist state which par excellence stood as a bulwark against Communism. Many facts point to the British awareness of Germany's willingness to check Communism and to the important place occupied by anti-Communism and anti-Bolshevism in the thinking of Nazi leaders, a fact well known about them outside Britain as well.[9] In their public speeches, the Nazis presented Germany as a force aiming at resisting Bolshevism.[10] The British press went on for years reporting in detail what Hitler and his aides said about the menace of Bolshevism and their dislike of Russia.[11] More consequential, influential people in Britain were aware that those feelings

---

[9] Vincent Sbeen, "Dictators - and the Pursuit of Happiness", Reader's Digest, XXXIII (Dec., 1938), 74-76, described how German leaders referred to the threat of Bolshevism in their campaigns and speeches.

[10] See for example The Speeches of Adolf Hitler: April 1922-August 1939, trans. and ed. by Norman H. Baynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), Vol. II, pp. 1214, 1466-69, 1469-72.

[11] The Times for example used to report in detail the speeches and other declarations by Hitler, Goebbels and others on the menace of Bolshevism. To cite some of those reports on attacks on Bolshevism and on Russia by German high officials: The Times (London), September 14, 1935, p. 9; September 16, 1935, p. 12; January 6, 1936, p. 10; February 5, 1936, p. 11; February 12, 1936, p. 14; February 29, 1936, p. 11; March 9, 1936, p. 9; June 8, 1936, p. 13; etc. That Germany was against Russia and Bolshevism was also stated in Economist, Sept., 19, 1936, p. 508.

had a leading place in the thinking of the German leaders. When Eden visited Germany in March 1935,[12] Hitler made this point quite clear and Eden wrote about the Führer:

> He apparently fears both the military strength of the Soviet Union and her intentions to promote world revolution. The Chancellor regards Germany as a barrier against this double danger.[13] (Italics supplied.)

Thomas Jones knew that Hitler was "posing as the defender of Western Civilization against Communism."[14] He also noted that he had found von Ribbentrop, the German Ambassador in London for the years 1936-1938, "just as much obsessed with the fear of Bolshevism as Hitler in his public speeches",[15] and even, that "to von Ribbentrop Communism is a nightmare."[16] In September 1936 Lloyd George went to Germany on the invitation of Hitler. Jones and Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of The Times, were among those who accompanied him in his trip. At a dinner with von Ribbentrop in Berchtesgaden, Dawson "was struck

---

[12] Avon, op. cit., pp. 133-42.
[13] Ibid., p. 146.
[14] Jones, op. cit., p. 144.
[15] Ibid., p. 185.
[16] Ibid., p. 188.

with the Ambassador's sincerity, with his Bolshevik obsession", while "throughout the dinner von R. [Ribbentrop] kept harping on Russia and the spread of Communism in Spain, France and China and the menace to India."[17] When Lloyd George met Hitler the latter told him that:

> The menace was Bolshevism. It was difficult to make people realize this, they think it is a fanatical obsession, but it was a real danger of which people should take account. It was as great a phenomenon in history and its menace to the national states of Europe as great as the migration of peoples, e.g. Mohammedan. It was necessary for Western Europe to stand together as a bloc against this danger.[18]

Hitler complained of the "sections in certain countries infected with Bolshevism" and insisted on the need to "form a bloc against Bolshevism."[19] The British even knew that anti-Bolshevism was so essential for the German leaders that they taught it to the people. Dawson and Jones were told that:

---

[17] Ibid., p. 241.

[18] Ibid., p. 245.

[19] Ibid., p. 246.

> Perhaps ninety per cent of the Hitler Youth and of those in Labour camps had no use for organized Christianity. They were fed on hatred of Bolshevism and had nothing offered for their love but Germany and Hitler.[20]

The British knew then that anti-Bolshevism and the dislike of Russia and what it stood for was central in the thinking of Nazi leaders. It meant the British were aware that any pro-German sympathies or desire to cooperate with Germany involved the acceptance of Germany's anti-Communism and anti-Bolshevism. The British also knew that it was solely on those bases that Germany was proposing unofficially to England to join her for the one expressed aim of fighting Bolshevism. Again and again the Nazi officials expressed this offer. Von Ribentrop often referred to the need for England to stand by Germany to form "a new center of crystallization for the smaller powers in Europe"[21] because "neither alone could resist the Bolshevik flood, together they might."[22] The way the issues presented themselves

---

[20] Ibid., p. 261.

[21] Ibid., p. 215.

[22] Ibid., p. 248.

involved some kind of choice between Germany and Russia. This choice in sympathy and in foreign policy rested on ideological ground. Von Ribbentrop thus told Thomas Jones that Hitler and himself "share the dread of Russia. Communism is the enemy which Germany cannot resist alone and successfully without the help of Great Britain."[23] Later Jones wrote: "Hitler feels quite unequal to standing up alone to Russia. . . . He is therefore asking for an alliance with us to form a bulwark against the spread of Communism."[24]

On the whole then it was clear that Russia and Germany represented opposing ideologies. What was the British attitude towards Russia and Germany and how much of it was due to anti- Communism remains to be seen. The British view of some aspects of internal developments in Russia and Germany must be considered, to be followed by a consideration of developments in the international field.

---

[23] Ibid., p. 186.

[24] Ibid., p. 209.

The attitude of British Conservatives towards internal developments in Germany and Russia revealed a pro-German anti-Soviet bias explained by anti-Communist feelings only, for it was remarkable how many dismissed in Germany the same things they condemned in Russia. The limitations of personal liberties and rights in Germany were known to the British public. For example, one of the books published in 1935 and reviewed in The Times was: I was Hitler's prisonner by Stefan Lorant, a Hungarian who was held prisoner for six weeks and a half by the Nazis with no reason and under no charge. The book constituted "a dreadful record of his sufferings" where the physical tortures endured by other prisonners were described.[25]

The fate of the Jews and the Christians was also made known to the British public. Reports on Jew baiting in Berlin and on anti-Jewish demonstrations in Germany were very numerous in the British press.[26] Equally numerous were the references to the struggle

---

[25] The Times (London), March 3, 1935, p. 11.

[26] See for example Ibid., Dec., 16, 1935, p. 13; July 17, 1935, p. 13; July 27, 1935, p. 11; etc.

between the Catholic church and the Nazi government.[27] In 1935 for example The Times wrote that the religious struggle in Germany was in a more acute phase than in the past,[28] that in Munich organized violence by Nazis had met Roman Catholics who were volunteering their services as money collectors,[29] that the German government was using coercion to bring church and government closer,[30] etc. In his memoirs Lord Templewood testified to the coming to England of German refugees who made him and others aware of "the hapless state of those thousands of men, women and children of all ages, classes and characters, thrown together by an overwhelming calamity."[31] Those refugees were numerous enough to pose problems to the British government:

> As the Hitler persecution became more savage, the number demanding asylum became very great. Questions in the House of Commons began to show a growing anxiety over the immigrants.[32]

---

[27] "The Nazi 'Drive' in Germany", Economist, August 3, 1935, p. 228; Ibid., Nov. 22, 1935, p. 847; H. Powys Greenwood, "Jews and Christians and Nazis", Spectator, Nov. 22, 1935, pp. 847-48; G.A. Rowan Robinson, "The Nazi Gospel and the Christian", Ibid., Oct. 29, 1937, p. 742.

[28] The Times (London), May 4, 1935, p. 13.

[29] Ibid., May 20, 1935, p. 14.

[30] Ibid., December 10, 1935, p. 17.

[31] Templewood, op. cit., p. 239.

[32] Ibid., p. 240.

So the British were aware that liberties were supressed in Germany, that Jews and other sections of the German people were presecuted. Reports from outside came also to confirm this, and for example Dr. Abraham Flexner, first Director of the Institute for Advanced study at Princeton, often described the Nazi persecutions[33] to his friend Thomas Jones. What was the reaction in Britain? On the whole it was to defend the German regime, or for the most part to simply avoid --like Jones-- going deeper into the question or to regret those persecutions but also tolerate them. The cause behind this indulgence was that Germany stood as a bulwark against Communism. The wrongs done by Nazi Germany were excused or tolerated in the name of anti-Communism. Thus, Halifax was invited to Germany in 1937 officially to attend a hunting exhibition in his quality of Master of Middleton Hounds,[34] and when he met Hitler on November 19, he told him:

---

[33]Jones, op. cit., pp. 109, 281-82. Among the articles that referred the Nazi persecutions were: Stephen H. Roberts, "The House that Hitler Built", Reader's Digest, XXXII (Feb., 1938), 92-93; Desider Kiss, "The Jews of Eastern Europe," Foreign Affairs, XV (Jan., 1937), 330-39.

[34]Halifax, op. cit., p. 184.

> Although there was much in the Nazi system that profoundly offended British opinion, I was not blind to what he (Hitler) had done for Germany, and to the achievement from his point of view of keeping Communism out of his country.[35]

Despite the fact that Halifax said achievement "from his point of view" about keeping Communism out of Germany, he could very well have considered it among what "offended" the British.

The Nazi acts were also defended on the grounds that Russia was worst. For example, among the rare letters that contained any criticism of Germany was one sent to The Times by Gilbert Murray, Lord Rutherford, G.P. Gooch and Lord Allen of Hurtwood. The latter two were great pro-Germans and members of the "Anglo-German Group" as it called itself and the chairman of which was Allen of Hurtwood himself.[36] In that letter they regretted than one major cause of diffidence between Britain and Germany concerning the latter's proposed re-entry into

---

[35] Ibid., p. 185.

[36] D.C. Watt, Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1965), p. 125.

the League of Nations was "her harsh treatment of the Jews and increasing interference with religious liberty", for the "flood of refugees" and

> the knowledge that those personal and spiritual rights are being daily violated by the German Government is a formidable obstacle to cordial cooperation. Is it too much to hope that Herr Hitler will have the greatness to remove that obstacle?[37]

There was no mention of Russia at all in that letter. What was the reaction of the readers who felt strongly enough on the subject to answer back? They brought forth a defence of Germany based on a comparison with Russia. One correspondent, B.E. Bennett, wrote that he deplored Germany's harsh treatment of the Jews and certain religious leaders, but:

> Really, if Germany's re-entry into the League and her reasonable demands for equality status are to be questioned because of her treatment of the Jews and the clergy, what about our attitude towards Russia. . . . whose ceaseless endeavours to ridicule and destroy the Faith of Christ and subsidize and promote Communist propaganda in our midst appear indefinitely more odious to thoughtful men and women in this country than any other features of Germany's domestic policy.[38]

---

[37] The Times (London), March 20, 1936, p. 15.

[38] Ibid., March 23, 1936, p. 8.

Another correspondent, Atherton-Smith, wrote that he was answering the letter by Lord Allen of Hurtwood and the others, that: "After spending every winter and spring in Germany since 1932 I feel justified as a British observer in expressing an opinion on the subject." So he defended Germany by drawing a parallel between the Nazi and the Russian revolutions, showing the evils of the latter. After remarking severely that: "It is true that memories are short, but to hundreds of thousands of Russian exiles the following facts are unforgettable", he gave a long and detailed --and unreliable-- list of figures "given by the Soviets" on how many people of different categories were sacrificed and then concluded:

> The contrast between the Russian Revolution and the National-Socialist Revolution in Germany, which was almost bloodless, is, to say the least, startling, and the suffering of the relatively small number of disfranchised and deported Jews from Germany infinitesmal compared with the agonies endured by Christians in Russia. One notes with what equanimity and benevolence (presuming also the above facts were known) the accredited representative of a country which openly professes atheism has been accepted in the bosom of the League of Nations, whereas Germany, which firmly stands for religious liberty, outside the realm of politics, is considered by your correspondents unworthy of renewed representation.[39]

---

[39] Ibid., March 25, 1936, p. 17.

In his diary, Thomas Jones described a dinner where von Ribbentrop was subjected by Inskip to questions on the Nazi persecution of the church in Germany. Lady Nancy Astor, the Virginia-born wife of the second Viscount Astor and a great admirer of Germany, broke in the conservation saying: "The Roman Catholics make God material and the Communists make man material",[40] a statement on the communists that had nothing to do with the conversation on the Nazi persecution.

The defence of Germany about her internal pressures and persecutions is most interesting because people were at the same time submitted to the same kind of details on repression in Russia and yet they did not try to excuse the latter. In Russia as in Germany liberties were repressed, and this was reported in the British press. For example, along with the review of the book I was Hitler's Prisoner, The Times presented the review of another book: I Speak for the Silent by Vladimir Tchernavin who had been a political prisoner in Russia as a scapegoat for the failure of the Five-year

---

[40] Jones, op. cit., p. 215.

Plan, according to The Times.[41] One can discern here the bias of the reviewer. He reviewed the two books, one on persecution in Germany and one on that in Russia. He described what Stefan Lorant had written on Germany without personal comments on oppression in Germany. When he reviewed Tchernavin's book however, he remarked that there were "two principal lessons to be drawn from the book", when he had drawn no lesson on persecution in Germany and when anyway the lessons he proposed could as well have been applied to Germany, especially the "lesson" that "the supposed voluntary confessions. . . are obtained invariably by fraud, torture, or, most brutal method of all, the imprisonment of wives and daughters and the threat to subject these to the horrors of the concentration camps."[42] The reviewer then ended by stressing that: "This is a book which every student of present-day Russian conditions should read",[43] when he had not found it advisable to recommend a book on persecution in Germany. Opression in Russia was

---

[41] The Times (London), March 3, 1935, p. 11.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

described at length in the British press and gave place to unfriendly comments on the U.S.S.R.[44] After publishing a series of articles on "New Russia"[45] The Times summed up impressions writing that "paradise for a few is still a prison for all" and that although many achievements had taken place in the U.S.S.R. they had been done in a negative way: "The Politburo's dictatorship may be congratulated upon many of its achievements, but on very few of its methods."[46] Conservative press in general noticed the negative side of Russian internal developments. The new Constitution adopted by the Soviet State in December 1936[47] was done on the Western European model and seemed to demonstrate stability in Russia and the desire to conciliate the western democracies. There were some people in Britain who hoped that the new Constitution would establish more firmly the foundations of the U.S.S.R. and would widen its basis in a democratic

---

[44] Reporting for example that Dr. Peter Kapitza, F.R.S., Fellow of Trinity College, Director of the Royal Society Laboratory, Messel Prof. of the Royal Society, had been kept in Russia where he was claimed for Soviet Research, The Times hinted that he was forced not to leave, Ibid., April 25, 1935, p. 12.

[45] Ibid., March 16, 1936, p. 13; March 17, 1936, p. 17, March 18, 1936, p. 15.

[46] Ibid., March 18, 1936, p. 15.

[47] Beloff, op. cit., Vol. II: 1936-1941, p. 3.

way,[48] and they were angered sometimes by the mistrust of Conservative papers and opinion.[49] On the whole, conservative reaction to Russian efforts of democracy was critical and unsympathetic. Commenting on the projected elections in Russia in December 1937, the Spectator made it clear that those elections would be a formality and quoted ironically a communist writer who had declared: "Here the Party and the State and the Government all do their utmost to ensure that all electors shall be completely enlightened when they go to the polls."[50]

Letters were written about "the weight of terror, cruelty and wickedness that accompanied the Russian Revolution."[51] British public and press were deeply shocked by the Russian purges which started in 1935 by a new series

---

[48]See for example the letter sent by a resident in Moscow, L. Haden Guest, to Spectator, September 4, 1936, p. 381.

[49]Pat Sloane's letter, Ibid., December 17, 1937, p. 1105.

[50]"Russia Makes Elections", Ibid., December 10, 1937, pp. 1038-39.

[51]The Times (London), March 27, 1936, p. 10.

of trials, continued in 1936, reached their heigth in 1937, before a final purge in 1938 and Stalin's declaration in 1939 that the period of mass purges was at end. On one occasion, the Economist took advantage of those purges to comment ironically on British leftists:

> The prudent course for our young Communists is undoubtedly to admire Russia and write about Russia and hold Russia up as the pattern of State --but to continue to live in England where they are safe.[52]

The point to be made here on Conservative reaction to the Russian purges is not that the latter were not to be condemned but that here again pro-German anti-Soviet bias appeared, because many Conservatives forgot that "the history of the National Socialist dictatorship in Germany reveals remarkably close parallels to the Stalinist purges."[53] British Conservatives shared the opinion expressed by Lord Allen of Hurtwood in a letter to The Times that: "We find it hard to understand why

---

[52]"The Soviet Trials", Economist, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 225.

[53]David Thomson, Europe Since Napoleon (2d ed. rev.; Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1964), p. 681.

liberty of opinion must still suffer grievous wrong in Russia."[54] One may wonder however why so few of those Conservatives had found it as hard to understand the same type of wrong in Nazi Germany. In the same way, the Spectator criticized Russia because there "the determining forces are to be mass propaganda, a censored press, a secret police and concentration camps or worse for opponents of the regime",[55] when the same should have said also about Germany. Thomas Jones was irritated because: "All the Labour folk are very complacent about Soviet murders but full of righteous wrath about Hitler",[56] and yet, one could say the same in reverse of a great number of Conservatives.

Many of course realized that Germany and Russia resembled each other and numerous prominent pro-Germans were aware that Nazi Germany was authoritarian and suppressed liberty ruthlessly. But they tended to excuse, or at least to accept Germany's behaviour while they remained

---

[54] The Times (London), July 1, 1935, p. 12.

[55] Spectator, Dec. 17, 1937, p. 1105.

[56] Jones, op. cit., p. 184.

severely critical of Russia. This, once more, because of anti-Communism, because of the feeling that Hitlerism was less dangerous than Communism, that Germany was anti-Communist and minded her own business while Russia was the promoter of social revolutions. Thus, after stating that "the Russian Government ferments and subsidizes insurrections in other countries", the Rev. W.R. Inge wrote:

> The Fascist and Nazi Governments on their side, see their interests in keeping the terror of "Bolshevism" alive, though the present Russian Government is not very unlike their own. They have this excuse, that the danger of a culbute generale is really greater in the West.[57]

This was also why Russian propaganda was resented by British Conservatives. They saw in it an attempt at arousing the masses to revolution, and their worry over it revealed how much they feared its effects at a time when they were also aware of German propaganda

---

[57] Rev. W.R. Inge, "Christianity and Communism: II. The Christian Tradition", Spectator, Oct. 9, 1936, p. 576.

but did not oppose it. It is revealing to look at some of the debates in Parliament where the question of Russian propaganda was raised. After the return of Eden from a visit to Moscow in March 1935,[58] a member of Parliament, Lieutnant-Colonel Todd, asked

> whether the question of political propaganda within the British Empire was discussed during the recent conversations in Moscow between the representatives of His Majesty's Government and any representatives of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialists Republics; and, if so, whether any understanding was arrived at and of what nature?[59]

Stanley Baldwin, then Lord President, answered that he could only quote the communique that had been issued in Moscow on March 31 and where collaboration between Russia and Britain was stressed but where there was no reference to Russian propaganda in Britain. As if purposely avoiding to take away all suspicions concerning Russian intentions --or at least what he said did not help ease feelings towards Russia-- Baldwin added:

---

[58]Avon, op. cit., pp. 144-163; S.I.A., 1935, Vol. I, pp. 149-51.

[59]Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCC (1935), 1839.

I regret that I can add nothing to the terms of the communique."[60] Lieutnant-Colonel Todd who had said before that during the visit to Moscow the broadcast had been "one of the most malicious in recent times",[61] answered Baldwin that since the conversations in Moscow the broadcast propaganda had been "more virulent than ever."[62]

Todd also asked the Postmaster-General, Sir Kingsley Wood:

> Whether in view of the objectionable character of the Communist propaganda which is broadcast in England from Moscow wireless station on long and short wave-lengths on four nights a week he will take steps to ensure that these broadcasts are jammed and rendered incapable of reception in this country?[63]

The Postmaster-General replied that the Government would be reluctant to jam wireless messages from other countries except in case of grave national emergency. Should his attention however be called to the broadcasts from Moscow of an objectionable character, he "would be

---

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 1838.

glad' to consider what action could be taken.[64] A member of the Opposition, Mr. West, then interposed:

> Is the Minister aware that the Communist propaganda broadcast from Moscow is not more objectionable and is certainly less audible than the Nazi propaganda from Germany?[65] (Italics supplied.)

Wood answered that he was not "in a position to make these comparisons" and that he had not "the time that the hon. Gentleman evidently has." Maxton, the leader of the I.L.P., asked him then whether he was aware that "these particular broadcasts are more profitable to a Large proportion of British workers than his own programmes?" Wood replied: "I should say to a large proportion of the hon. Gentleman's party."[66]

This is very interesting. It showed the determination of the Conservatives not to question German propoganda and also the association in their minds between Russian propaganda and the worrisome leftist parties of Britain. This impression, due to the known

---

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

admiration of many leftists for Russia and to the role of the latter in the Comintern, must have influenced negatively the attitude of British Conservatives towards Russia. The question of Russian propaganda perhaps best exemplifies their fears. It concerned them so much that although it had been raised and answered already, Eden was asked again on May 14, 1935, whether during his recent visit to Moscow:

> Any undertaking or guarantee was given that there would be no financial or other assistance given to Communist propaganda in Great Britain or any part of the British Empire, including India.[67]

The bias of many Conservatives towards Russia was shown in their insistence, despite assurances to the contrary, that Russian propaganda aimed at provoking revolution in Britain by discrediting established institutions. For example, on November 9, 1936, Sir Frank Sanderson asked the secretary of state for Foreign Affairs whether he was aware that:

> Broadcasts from Russia are regularly being transmitted in English and are available to listeners in this country; whether he has

---

[67] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCI (1935), 1540.

> considered the effects of the persistent spread of Russian Communist propaganda in this country through this medium; and what steps, if any, he proposes to take to put a stop to it.[68]

Viscount Cranborne answered that he understood that: "These programmes are devoted almost entirely to discussions of various aspects of everyday life in the Union."[69] Sanderson persisted, remarking that the Soviet government devoted fifteen hours to propaganda against Britain. Cranborne had to say: "I have already said that I understand these programmes relate almost entirely to the discussion of various aspects of life in the Soviet Union." Yet, Sanderson remained entrenched in his opinion and did not even try to give a thought to any other one.[70] Despite all this, on February 8, 1937, Cranborne was asked again whether in view of "the indignation" caused by broadcasts from Moscow attacking British institutions, the British government intended to act.[71] When Cranborne answered like

---

[68] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXVII (1936), 483.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., CCCXX (1937), 14.

he had answered Sanderson, Mr. Hannah, his "interlocutor, insisted and spoke of the "intense indignation" caused by Russian propaganda. Another indignant Conservative, Captain Ramsay, remarked: "Is there no point at which His Majesty's Government may be expected to take some action?"[72]

British Conservatives who were angered by Russian propaganda did not mind the German variety. In fact, the ends they attributed to Russian propaganda were partly due to the effect of German propaganda on them.[73] The Conservative press not only denounced Russian broadcasts and other efforts of propaganda, but also related what Germany had said about them.[74] Bias

---

[72] Ibid.

[73] Germany was constantly denouncing Russian propaganda. Thus, on September 10, 1938, Goebbels said: "We know all about Bolshevist wireless and film propaganda." Beloff, op. cit., p. 145, quoting The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, p. 1471. D.C. Watt, op. cit., provides a most helpful study on the influence of German propaganda on British opinion in his chapter: "Influence from without: German Influence on British opinion, 1933-1938, and the Attempts to Counter it", pp. 117-35.

[74] For example, The Times (London), August 22, 1936, p. 10, described German protests over broadcasts from Moscow.

towards Russian and German propaganda extended to other spheres where the government also showed anti-Soviet prejudice. Robert Graves and Alan Hodge described how censorship of political films was practiced for years in Britain. In the 1920's, "propaganda films that were thought likely to cause a breach of the peace, such as 'Battleship Potemkin' and other Russian dramas, had been forbidden public showing."[75] "In the Thirties there was a ban even on straight commentaries, like some of the issues of 'March of Time' which were held to portray the danger of European war too realistically."[76] On the whole:

> The censorship often seemed biased in its view of what was likely to cause a breach of the peace, and what was not. In the early Twenties, though "Battleship Potemkin" was banned, anti-Bolshevist propaganda films were allowed,. . . --one was even run through in the House of Commons to the assembled members. And at the same time as a "March of Time" on the subject of Nazi Germany was forbidden, by request of the German Embassy, a news-film edited by the

---

[75] Graves and Hodge, op. cit., pp. 417-18.

[76] Ibid., p. 418.

historian, Professor G.P. Gooch, was shown at all news-theatres, giving a pro-Nazi version of Germany's claim to her lost Colonies.[77]

The dislike of Soviet Russia and the feeling that Russian propaganda was an attempt to win over sympathy to the communist cause contributed to the British Right's unsympathetic reaction to the Russian efforts of integration in the European system. In the 1920's, Russia was still on the whole "the great outcast power."[78] In the 1930's many facts pointed to the Russian desire to win over sympathy and to collaborate with the other Great Powers. The main motive behind this desire was the rise of Hitler and the menace the Soviets believed him to be. Russian histories of the period emphasized that at very early date the U.S.S.R. began to be concerned with anti-Soviet efforts in

---

[77] Ibid.

[78] Thomson, Europe Since Napolean, p. 99.

Germany.[79] Whenever possible and all through the decade, the Soviet leaders expressed their fears of the German menace. The dread of Hitler and, also, the fact that Russia was engaged in internal economic development were among the main reasons that made Russia calm down the tone of the Comintern in 1935 and try all through the 1930's to become integrated in the European collective system. That she was unable to succeed in doing so in the second half of the decade was partly due to her own behaviour, but also partly to the anti-Communism of the leaders of Britain at a time when Britain played a decisive role in the shaping of events and as Eden had sensed it: "There is a special responsibility on this country at this time."[80] Hitler could have been stopped perhaps by reorganizing and making effective the system of collective security. As Sir Charles Webster wrote:

---

[79] V. Potiemkine et al., Histoire de la Diplomatie, Vol. III: 1919-1939, trans. Levin, Tarr and Metzel (Paris: Librairie de Medicis, 1947), p. 431.

[80] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCX (1936), 1435.

> This was the policy of the Soviet Union which in 1934 joined the League of Nations for that purpose. But since that policy was combined with Communist propaganda and penetration in the West, it was naturally regarded there with the greatest suspicion.[81]

That anti-Communism hampered common action against Hitler by creating a suspicion of the U.S.S.R. and sympathy for Nazi Germany was manifested in the attitude of leading conservative circles. Thus, despite the efforts of a few highly placed Conservatives who favoured collaboration with Russia and the efforts of the latter, anti-Communism proved stronger in the long run.

The effect of anti-Communism on British attitudes towards Soviet Russia was described in the book Who Helped Hitler? written by Ivan Maisky, the Ambassador to London for the years 1932-1943. Maisky accused the British governments of the period of having been pro-German and anti-Russian because of their "class

---

[81] Sir Charles Webster, "Munich Reconsidered: A Survey of British Policy", International Affairs, XXXVII (April, 1961), 139.

hatred towards the country of Socialism",[82] their "hatred of Communism and the Soviet State."[83] His book is almost a prosecution of the Conservative governments of the 1930's and particularly of the Chamberlain government which took over power in May 1937. The book is then a very biased praise --almost a propaganda work-- of the U.S.S.R. and one should use it with caution -- as is to be done with other memoirs and interpretations as well. But one finds in it useful evidence of the anti-Communism to which Maisky was exposed and which was expressed in dislike of Russia. Thus, at the time of his new appointment as Ambassador to London and while he was being instructed to stress peace and to seek the friendship of Britain,[84] the Soviets were told on October 17, 1932, that the Foreign Secretary John Simon had denounced the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement[85] concluded

---

[82] Ivan Maisky, Who Helped Hitler? trans. Andrew Rothstein (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1964), p. 70.

[83] Ibid., p. 10.

[84] Ibid., pp. 13-19.

[85] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

in 1930 by the second Labour Government.[86] Then, on the eve of Maisky's arrival to London, the Sunday Chronicle discovered a "terrifying event",[87] namely that Moscow had smuggled into Britain in "coffins of foreign origin"[88] boxes of Russian matches where "the Sacred Heart, transfixed by a dagger"[89] was printed. The newspaper expressed its protests and asked the government to do something about it. The story was taken up by a number of newspapers and a wave of anti-Russian feeling spread quickly and a campaign against trade with the U.S.S.R. begun. The All-Russian Co-operative Society, then the central trading organization in Britain established there legally as a British commercial company, tried to deny those charges. Fortunately, wrote Maisky, it was soon discovered that the match-boxes came from India and not Russia and in India the heart pierced by

---

[86] Mowat, op. cit., p. 374.

[87] Maisky, op. cit., p. 21.

[88] Ibid., quoting the Sunday Chronicle.

[89] Ibid., quoting the Sunday Chronicle.

a dagger was taken to be a noble symbol and not a blasphemy.

Other small details were significant concerning the anti-Soviet bias of the upper classes. On November 8, 1932, Maisky presented his credentials to the king, thus becoming officially the Russian Ambassador in Britain. The following day he was invited to the Lord Mayor's annual banquet on the occasion of his entry upon his duties. The "cream" of society was present at this invitation where an imposing ceremony of presentation of guests took place. Maisky described the pomp of the ceremony, the herald, the red carpet on which the guests walked as they advanced towards the Lord Mayor, and how the guests who had already arrived assembled on both sides and received t he new arriving guest with applause. "The amount of applause varies according to the position and popularity of the guest" explained Maisky.[90] And the guest who had preceded Maisky had been given an ovation. Then the Soviet Ambassador was announced in his turn:

---

[90] Ibid., p. 23.

> It was as though an icy blast had swept through the hall. Everything at once fell silent. I moved off along the red carpet. Not a sound, not a handclap! A deadly vigilantly hostile silence all around me.[91]

Mrs. Maisky was also subjected to that kind of social humiliations. At the opening session of Parliament for 1932-1933, she was placed near a court lady, a Duchess, who, when she heard that Mrs. Maisky represented the Soviet Union, could not refrain from showing her dislike and from expressing it loudly. The incident was so "undiplomatic" that the head of the Protocol Department of the Foreign office, Mr. Monck, apologized to Maisky two days later.[92]

This social disdain towards the Soviet Ambassador and his wife was also described by Ian Colvin, Central European correspondent of the News Chronicle in 1937-1939 and later biographer of Robert Vansittart. Referring to the evening courts at Buckingham Palace in 1933, Ian Colvin wrote that Maisky and his wife were not at ease and did not feel that they fitted entirely:

---

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

> Nor did others think so, for there was no nod or pause to exchange a few words, and when they sat for a moment on one of the wall sofas, a Peeress sitting next to Madame Maisky twitched up her skirt and walked away.[93]

Ian Colvin then related how Lady Vansittart, wife of Sir Robert who was then Permanent Under-secretary at the Foreign office, sat near Mrs. Maisky and opened the conversation which was to be the starting point of a friendship between the Maiskys and the Vansittarts. Vansittart did not like Russia particularly. Its "gloomy Embassy" in London gave him "the creeps",[94] and for him "the mental confusion of the Communists was as deep as their duplicity."[95] But he feared Germany more and felt that "Russia and Britain were alike exposed to German designs."[96] Thus, he proved to be one of the few who made national interest pass before social interest; and though he disliked Soviet Russia, he feared Germany and worked for a rapprochement with the U.S.S.R. As early as August 1933, he

---

[93] Ian Colvin, op. cit., p. 33.

[94] Lord Vansittart, The Mist Procession (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 455.

[95] Ibid., p. 456.

[96] Ibid.

had published a "Memorandum on the Present and Future Position in Europe"[97] where he warned that Germany had aggressive designs and that while German Communism had never been a danger for Britain, Hitlerism was.[98] A.J.P. Taylor wrote about Vansittart that he "was set on resisting Germany", but that:

> He paraded his resolution in an ornate literary style and also in more irregular ways, such as passing information to Churchill and stirring up opposition to the government in the press. Yet the attitude of Vansittart and other professionals was singularly impractical.[99]

For Eden also, Vansittart "held decided views on international affairs and his instinct was usually right, but his sense of the political methods that could be used was sometimes at fault,"[100] and:

---

[97] Ibid., pp. 478-82; Colvin, op. cit., p. 29.

[98] The warnings that Vansittart kept on giving to leading Conservatives and members of the government are also described by Templewood, op. cit., pp. 138, 152-53; Potiemkine et al., op. cit., p. 511; Rowse, op. cit., pp. 31-38; Martin Gilbert, The Roots of Appeasement (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), pp. 131, 149.

[99] Taylor, op. cit., p. 405.

[100] Avon, op. cit., p. 241.

> The truth is that Vansittart was seldom an official giving cool and disinterested advice based on study and experience. He was himself a sincere, almost fanatical, crusader, and much more a Secretary of State in mentality than a permanent official.[101]

However, despite Vansittart's faults, it still remains as Churchill put it that "no one more clearly realized or foresaw the growth of the German danger or was more ready to subordinate other considerations to meeting it."[102] (Italics supplied.)

Vansittart belonged to what Maisky called the "Churchillites" as opposed to the "Chamberlainites."[103] The first group promoted rapprochement with the U.S.S.R. and secured some success in 1934 - 1935. Among those that can be included in that group are Churchill Vansittart, Eden and some others. Maisky named also Lord Beaverbrook and Lloyd George, but one must remember that despite the latter's record and his opposition to Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, he also worked for a rapprochement with Germany and even advised it on

---

[101] Ibid., p. 242.

[102] Churchill, op. cit., pp. 186-87.

[103] Maisky, op. cit., pp. 39-42.

grounds of anti-Communism. If later Lloyd George became as critical of Germany as he was of Italy, here is what he said at Barmouth in September 1933: "If the powers succeed in overthrowing Nazism in Germany, Communism will follow."[104] In November 1934 he also said in Parliament, after referring to the great military power of the U.S.S.R.:

> In a very short time, perhaps in a year, perhaps in two, the Conservative elements in this country will be looking to Germany as the bulwark against Communism in Europe. . . if her defence breaks down against the Communists. . . and Germany is seized by the Communists, Europe will follow. . . . Do not let us be in a hurry to condemn Germany. We shall be welcoming Germany as our friend.[105]

Many were the "Chamberlainites", prejudiced against Soviet Russia and sympathetic to Nazi Germany.[106] These were the Conservatives who, as Atlee wrote,

---

[104] Thomas Jones, Lloyd George (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 242.

[105] Ibid., pp. 243-44

[106] Von Ribbentrop also described the division in governmental circles between those for appeasement and the followers of Vansittart, Churchill, Duff Cooper. The Ribbentrop Memoirs (London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson, 1953), pp. 47-48.

"looked upon Fascism as a useful offset to Communism."[107] Together with Neville Chamberlain, Maisky named in that group John Simon, Lord Halifax, Lord Curzon, Lord Birkenhead and others.[108] For A.L. Rowse, it was the middle-class mentality that blinded Chamberlain and many of his fellow appeasers to the dangers of Nazi Germany:[109]

> There was a fatal confusion in their minds between the interests of their social order and the interests of their country. They did not say much about it, since that would have given the game away, and anyway it was a thought they did not wish to be too explicit about[110] even to themselves, but they were

---

[107] C.R. Atlee, As It Happened (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1954), p. 79.

[108] Maisky, loc. cit.

[109] The effect of the middle-class mentality on the policy-making of the period is a very interesting point raised by A.L. Rowse. It is to be kept in mind while reading, for example, a speech delivered by Neville Chamberlain on June 28, 1937, when he received the honorary freedom and livery of the Cordwainer's Company. Neville Chamberlain, Struggle For Peace (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., n.d.), pp. 13-14.

[110] Lord Astor wrote to Thomas Jones in March 1938 that the American public could not understand England's desire to negotiate a settlement with Germany. In a context where he strongly emphasized "Communist inspiration and promptings" and influence on the Americans, Astor wrote:

> anti-Red and that hamstrung them in dealing with the greater immediate danger to their country, Hitler's Germany.[111]

Anti-Russian prejudice also existed outside the government among influential people such as Thomas Jones, Geoffrey Dawson, Lord Lothian, the Astors, and their friends. All were people who saw each other a lot, knew each other's views, and in general agreed on such broad points as that Germany was closer to their liking than Russia. Jones once referred to: "our indifference to Bolshevism."[112] Perhaps the British Conservatives were not as obsessed with Bolshevism as the German leaders were. Still, despite what Jones said, pro-German feelings in Britain --and particularly those

---

> "I went out of my way to try and clarify the situation and explain our attempts to settle outstanding questions with Germany. I naturally only dealt with arguments etc., which I and others had discussed publicly in England." (Italics supplied.)

Jones, A Diary with Letters, 1931-1950, p. 390. And one can suggest that only arguments of personal prejudices and preferences were arguments that were not discussed publicly.

[111] Rowse, op. cit., p. 116.

[112] Jones, op. cit., p. 252.

of Jones and his friends and circle-- were affected by the dislike of Soviet Russia, Bolshevik Russia. Jones and his friends were doing all they could to promote a rapprochement with Germany knowing very well the latter's declared intentions and attitude towards Bolshevism, the U.S.S.R. and what it stood for. In fact, this is best supported by the diary of Thomas Jones himself. Not only did he testify to his awareness of Nazi Germany's aims when he wrote in May 1936 that Hitler was "asking for an alliance with us to form a bulwark against the spread of Communism"; but more, he added immediately afterwards: "Our P.M. [prime minister] is not indisposed to attempt this as a final effort before he resigns after the Coronation next year."[113]

On the whole, leading Conservative circles were pro-German and anti-Russian. At the time, there even circulated the rumour that there existed a "Cliveden set" composed of the friends of Lady Astor who met at

---

[113] Ibid., p. 209.

her estate in Cliveden, and which was a "citadel of the enemies of the Soviet Union and the friends of an Anglo-German rapprochement."[114] Thomas Jones denied that there existed such a group, and Cliveden was "a gathering place for public persons of varying views and parties."[115] On April 8, 1938 he wrote:

> The description of "Clivedenism" is of course somewhat grotesque to anyone who really knows what a week-end with the Astors is like. The so-called "Group" has as much unity as the passengers of a railway train. Several of them never mention politics at all and confine their observations to golf, others to books, some to gardening.[116]

Lord Halifax was less sure of himself, and he wrote: "We used to be asked to join a party at Cliveden from time to time, though not perhaps regularly enough to qualify for inclusion in the so-called 'Cliveden set.'"[117]

It is correct that the Cliveden guests did not form a united political group which decided politics

---

[114] Maisky, op. cit., p. 69.

[115] Jones, op. cit., p. XXXV.

[116] Ibid., p. 403.

[117] Halifax, op. cit., p. 156.

secretly there. But this does not mean that the Cliveden group was not important or without influence. The truth lies in between. In his "informal" biography of Nancy Astor, Maurice Collis correctly denied that there existed a "sinister, alarming and secret" Cliveden group.[118] But as he also explained, the Astors held definite views on foreign policy, and their ideas and those of their friends were expressed for years in the Round Table quarterly and in The Times.[119] In general, they believed settlement was always possible, and despite Halifax's denial of any pro-German feelings among those Conservatives,[120] there were many among them who a preference for Germany and disliked France and Russia. Another writer, Lucy Kavalev, also recognized this point. She wrote that Lady Astor disliked the French while "the Germans on the other hand appealed to her", and that in that she followed the views of Lord Astor, Lord

---

[118] Maurice Collis, Nancy Astor: An Informal Biography (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 178.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Halifax, loc. cit.

Lothian, Dawson, etc.[121] Lucy Kavalev also noted that "the guest list at Cliveden became top heavy with Conservative statesmen."[122] Elshewhere, she also wrote a very accurate summary:

> And yet, of course, there was a Cliveden Set. It did not have the degree of power attributed to it. . . but its members unquestionably influenced the thinking of the government. They did not plot; they did not need to plot. They were the Establishment, bound by background and schooling to the highest government officials.[123]

That this was true was unwittingly supported by Thomas Jones. He thus wrote about a week-end at Cliveden in February 1936 that "there were a few new faces among the old habitues [sic] ",[124] revealing in that way that there were regular familiar guests usually present. Again, although he stated that many were the guests who did not care about politics, he also wrote that "the house was most active as a center of political talks in the decade 1930-1939,"[125] and that: "The talk is

---

[121] Lucy Kavalev, The Astors: A Family Chronicle of Pomp and Power (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1966), p. 224.

[122] Ibid., p. 225.

[123] Ibid., p. 226.

[124] Jones, op. cit., p. 170.

[125] Ibid., XXXViii.

never of home but always of foreign problems",[126] and, for example, that one time he "arrived at Cliveden at 6.30 and spent the evening talking politics."[127] The important thing is not that those discussions took place at Cliveden, but that as influential people as Neville Chamberlain,[128] Halifax,[129] Nevile Henderson,[130] Lord Lothian, Dawson,[131] the Astors and others took part in them, and that, although there were guests who held different opinions,[132] those influential people showed on the whole a pro-German inclination coupled with a dislike and suspicion of France and Russia.

---

[126] Ibid., p. 193.

[127] Ibid., p. 327.

[128] Ibid., p. 170.

[129] Halifax, op. cit., pp. 156-58.

[130] Jones, op. cit., pp. 369-70.

[131] Lord Lothian and Geoffrey Dawson were present at almost every week-end.

[132] Ibid., p. 370.

This was the context in which British foreign policy was conceived and carried out. The "Chamberlainites" increasingly gained ascendency in the second half of the 1930's, particularly when Neville Chamberlain became prime minister and turned to Horace Wilson for advice rather than to Vansittart and Eric Phipps; and when Vansittart was replaced by Alexandre Cadogan, while Halifax took over the place Eden left.

Earlier however, in 1934-1935, it was those who were against Hitler who were still active in the government. This was why a kind of Anglo-Russian rapprochement occurred then. This rapprochement must be studied because it shows that if nothing came out of it it was not because of any concrete obstacle, but because anti-Communism proved strongest.

The middle thirties was a time when a détente with Russia was quite discernable. This was first shown in the numerous books and articles which were

published describing Russia's return to "normalcy."[133] For example, a book that was published in 1936 was Moscow Admits a Critic by Sir Bernard Pares, "the foremost Britain authority on the history of Russia" who after an absence of twenty years "during which he had been outspoken of his criticism of the Soviet regime," returned to Russia: "Still very critical he nevertheless finds much to admire in the new Russia."[134] Reviewing the book the Spectator wrote that the author, "perhaps too optimistically", had noted encouraging points such as the fact that many churches were still open, and that: "He does not avert his eyes from the darker sides of the Soviet system. . . . But on the whole he must rank with the converted."[135] Commenting also on Russia, the reviewer wrote that Pares being a known critic of the aims and achievements of the

---

[133] See for example Walter Duranty, "Evolving Russia: I. Back to Normalcy," Spectator, November 29, 1935, pp. 893-94; Duranty, "Evolving Russia: II. Communism by Stages", Ibid., December 6, 1935, pp. 933-34; Duranty, "Evolving Russia: III. Class and Rank", Ibid., December 13, 1935, pp. 980-81.

[134] Foreign Affairs, January 1937, p. 397.

[135] E.H. Carr, Spectator, July 3, 1936, p. 25.

Soviet Union:

> It is therefore not surprising that, on a first application some years ago, he was refused a visa for a visit to Soviet Russia. It shows how much water has been mixed with the good red wine of Bolshevism, and how much value the present Soviet Government sets on friendship with this country that Sir Bernard was able to spend some weeks of last winter in Leningrad and Moscow. (Italics supplied.)[136]

As if even there it was q uestion of either the one or the other, Pares made a comparison between Germany and Russia. But despite any rapprochement with Russia, the Spectator still favoured Germany and so commented:

> A reconciliation loses perhaps something of its dignity when it is proclaimed on a basis of common hostility to a third party; and one reader, at any rate, of this attractive little book was rather inclined to regret the chapter in which Herr Hitler is made to bear the costs of the rapprochement between Sir Bernard and his old enemies the Soviets.[137]

---

[136] Ibid., p. 24.

[137] Ibid., p. 25. Extracts from Sir Bernard Pares' book were published Ibid., March 27, 1936, pp. 567-68; April 3, 1936, pp. 607-608; April 10, 1936, pp. 656-57; April 17, 1936, pp. 696-97; April 24, 1936, pp. 735-36, and described construction, education, social services, religion and desiderata.

Sir Bernard Pares in his turn reviewed the book I search for Truth in Russia written by Sir Walter Citrine. The latter was a trade-union leader who had been knighted on June 3, 1935.[138] Pares described how Citrine had been "the principal apponent to a 'Popular Front' of Labour and Communism" and a severe critic of the Soviet regime.[139] Then during his visit to Moscow, Citrine had noticed that "the hardest time is past", and that:

> The Government seeks the fullest support from the country in defence not only of its territory, but of the great experiment which it is conducting to make the world a better place for all. The family is strengthened; the authority of parents is re-established; discipline is restored in the schools; and now we have the most striking bid for our good will which has yet been offered in the new draft constitution.[140] (Italics supplied.)

Other signs, besides the Constitution, had already shown the Russian desire to collaborate with Britain. Thus, the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement was signed on

---

[138] Mowat, op. cit., p. 547.

[139] Spectator, July 31, 1936, p. 208.

[140] Ibid.

February 16, 1934, but only after the British had provoked many difficulties and delays in its way.[141] On September 18, 1934, the Soviet Union became a member of the League of Nations with a permanent seat in its Council.[142] This entry in the League was a demonstration of Russia's desire to collaborate with her neighbours, and it bettered Anglo-Soviet relations in that Vansittart had helped the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Louis Barthou, in campaigning for the entry of the U.S.S.R. in the League.[143]

In 1934 also occurred a number of conversations between Vansittart and Maisky[144] about the project of an "Eastern Locarno" initiated in the French

---

[141] Beloff, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 110-11.

[142] Beloff, op. cit., pp. 134-37; Potiemkine et al., p. 517; Scott, op. cit., p. 200; Great Britain, Foreign office, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, eds. E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1958), 2nd series, VII (1929-34), 711ff. D.B.F.A. will be used in this paper to refer to Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939.

[143] Maisky, op. cit., p. 47.

[144] Ibid., pp. 43-44; Colvin, op. cit., p. 34.

government by Barthou and concerning a kind of mutual assistance security pact which would add an Eastern Pact to the Locarno Treaty.[145] This pact was to include the U.S.S.R., France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic States, possibly Finland and Rumania, and, at the request of the British government, Germany.[146] The project failed because Germany and Poland refused to take part in it. Maisky however considered the whole scheme positive in the sense that by agreeing to include Germany in it the Soviet government had shown good will and desire to collaborate.[147] But looked at differently, the project had also shown the British pro-German sympathies and their reticence to favour a pact where France and Russia seemed to be given an advantage over Germany.[148] In the series of

---

[145] S.I.A., 1935, Vol. I, pp. 58-90; Rene Albrecht - Carrie, France Europe and the Two World Wars (New York: Harper and Bros, 1961), pp. 259-62; Scott, op. cit., pp. 176-202.

[146] D.B.F.A., 2nd. series, VI (1933-1934), 753-54, 769-700, 807.

[147] Maisky, op. cit., p. 45.

[148] D.B.F.A., 2nd series, VI, 803, 806, 812-16 ff; Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCLXXXXII, 1934, 729-36.

meetings that took place between John Simon, Barthou, and their advisors in July, 1934, Simon had expressed his reluctance to agree to a project where as he saw it Germany was at disadvantage.[149] Although the British government finally shifted on the side of France, it had shown before its sympathy for Germany. British public opinion was also on the side of Germany and excused her refusal to enter the pact, as that correspondent of The Times who protested that Germany's "rejection of the Eastern Pact system is no proof ot its ill-will."[150] To a remark at that time by Baldwin that Vansittart --the promoter of collaboration with Russia and France-- hated the Germans, Thomas Jones severely commented: "Diplomatists should have nothing to do with the hatred of anybody. It is both silly and dangerous."[151]

---

[149] D.B.F.P., 2nd series, VI, 803-806, 815-16, 821-22.

[150] The Times (London), April 5, 1935, p. 12.

[151] Jones, op. cit., p. 129.

Thus, instead of noticing the willingness of Russia to collaborate and make concessions, attention was fixed on the fact that there was a project which seemed unjust to Germany. Another sign of Anglo-Soviet rapprochement that was also received with little enthusiasm was Eden's visit to Moscow in March 1935 and the ensuing communique[152] by the Russian and English representatives. The visit was an event because in effect if not in theory Moscow was still under some kind of "political boycott"[153] and no minister of a Great Power was used to go to Moscow. As Robert Coulondre, French Ambassador to Moscow from October 1936 to October 1938, wrote in his memoirs, many felt that a trip to Moscow was like making a trip to "hell".[154] All this only made Eden's visit more important as a

---

[152]The text of the communique can be found in The Times (London), April 1, 1935, p. 14; Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCC (1935), 1839.

[153]Maisky, op. cit., p. 50.

[154]Robert Coulondre, De Staline a Hitler: Souvenirs de Deux Ambassades, 1936-1939 (Paris: Hachette, 1950), p. 11.

sign of détente between Russia and England.[155] But interest and visits were not enough to make the British like Russia, and when Eden came back from Moscow, the first questions he was asked in the House of Commons were about Russian propaganda in Britain and what had been done about it.

However, if the British were suspicious of Russia the visit also made them aware of how much the Soviet government distrusted and feared Britain's intentions regarding the Eastern pact:

> The British visitors had found in Moscow an even deeper suspicion of British policy than anything for which they were prepared. It was based on the activities of several private but prominent persons, the attitude of some British newspapers, and on the belief that Cabinet Ministers do not always see eye to eye on this matter. Mr. Eden's task has been, among other things to allay this suspicion, which had been revived in an acute form by the fear that Britain

---

[155] A small amusing detail was that during Eden's visit to Moscow he was invited to Litvinoff's house. "The butter served at this luncheon bore the inscription 'Peace is Indivisible' and the Soviet Ambassador in London showed some hesitation in using his knife to cut it." The Times (London), April 1, 1935, p. 14.

> at Germany's prompting was cooling in her attitude towards the proposal for an Eastern Security Pact binding on Germany.[156]

The British knew that the Soviet suspicion of Britain was due to their own conciliatory attitude towards Germany at a time when the Russians greatly feared the German menace,[157] and they knew that if they cared about Russia they had to modify their policy towards Germany. This posed indirectly once more the question of choice between Russia and Germany and that of who was more dangerous. In April 1935, the British Conservatives were still ready to give a hearing to the Soviet view. The Times thus reported that the question of communist propaganda had not been given great importance during the conversations in Moscow because "in 1935 war seems a greater danger than world revolution" as the Russians explained and that:

> The Russian thesis as developed in the conversations seem to have been that Russia urgently desires peace, considers the British Empire the greatest factor in the world for peace and stability today and thus has no interest in attempting to undermine its "prosperity and integrity" as long as Russia's integrity

---

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid.

> is not menaced. The Russians gave the impression that they desire nothing better than to be left in peace to continue the enormous task of reconstruction now in its beginning.[158]

Russia's desire for peace was again and again stressed by the Soviets. Maisky went on through those years repeating in public conference and in private that Russia wanted peace and supported collective security as a measure for peace. Some British also tried to impress on their fellow men that Russia had not interest except in peace at that time.[159] But still, the British public in general preferred to distrust those assertions. The reason cannot be found in concrete actions done by Russia which showed aggressive designs and which

---

[158] Ibid.

[159] On May 2, 1935, Viscount Cranborne thus denied that there really existed a Russian peril for Germany or any other power. In the course of his speech he said:

> "Russia is engaged in a great experiment, an experiment which will take her many, many years to come. . . . The greatest hindrance to her internal experiment would undoubtedly be war, and therefore I believe Russia is at the present time firmly against war. Nor is this the only reason. She really has no incentive to go to war."

Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCI (1935), 627-28.

endangered peace. Rather, the main cause of that distrust was untangible, impalpable; it was the dislike of Russia because it was Soviet Russia. The period of *détente* had not been wholehearted, and the Franco-Soviet Pact of May 2, 1935, revived the fears of Russian designs. "Russia is coming out on top in a most disgusting way"[160] wrote a friend of Thomas Jones after the signing of the Franco-Soviet Pact. And yet, reaction to it in Conservatives circles in general --and among Labour-- was very hostile because it seemed a success for Bolshevik Russia. Conservatives also saw in it an anti-German gesture and they felt that it was becoming increasingly urgent to make up one's mind: "We have to choose between Russia and Germany and choose soon"[161] worried Thomas Jones. The fear was that the choice in foreign policy would be on the Russian side. But that such a fear existed could only be explainable by bias. At that time the *rapprochement* with Russia had just been coronated by Eden's visit to

---

[160] Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

[161] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Moscow. Russia was clearly trying to collaborate with the West. On the other hand, Germany had already given many signs of its toughness in revisionist desires. Her withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and from the League of Nations in October 1933,[162] the Polish-German Non-Aggression Pact on January 26, 1934, following Hitler's conciliatory attitude towards Poland,[163] the publication of the German military budget in January 1934,[164] the "night of the long knives" on June 30 and the abortive putsch in Austria in July,[165] all had been as signs of the tough Nazi policy. The incorporation of the Saar in January, 1935 when Germany secured ninety per cent of the votes confirmed their strengthened position. Then came --in March, 1935-- the admission of

---

[162] Germany, Auswärtges Amt, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, eds. Paul R. Sweet et al. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1957), series C, I (1933), 885-922 D.G.F.P. will be used to refer to Documents on German Foreign Policy.

[163] D.B.F.P., 2nd series, VII, 291-98; Colonel Joseph Beck, Dernier Rapport: Politique Polonaise, 1926-1939 (Paris : Histoire et Société d'Aujourd'hui, 1951); Herbert Von Dircksen, Moscow Tokyo London: Twenty Years of German Foreign Policy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), p. 110.

[164] D.B.F.P., 2nd series, VI, 531 ff.

[165] Ibid., 869 ff. Neville Chamberlain was very upset over the Dolfuss assasination, as shown in Keith

German rearmament,[166] the gravest breach to the Versailles Treaty yet committed by Germany and a repudiation of the international agreement on disarmament.

Thus, by 1935, there was evidence of increased aggressiveness by Germany at a time when Russia was showing a desire to collaborate. While Germany had walked out of the League of Nations, Russia had accepted to join. Russia had also agreed to have Germany enter the Eastern Pact while Germany - who had withdrawn from the Disarmament Conference, was rearming and had attempted a putsch in Austria - refused to have her eastern frontier restricted. Indulgence towards Germany in 1935 did not concern the country that had been humiliated by the peace treaties following World War One. In the 1930's, Nazi Germany had for a leader the man who had written in 1925 such a book as Mein Kampf. Even if it had been written by a young man then without any power, the British knew perfectly well

---

Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1946), p. 253. But this only makes more apparent his determination later to appease Hitler.

[166] U.S., Foreign Office, Foreign Relations of the United States, eds. E.R. Perkins et al., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), 1935, I, 225-29. References to German rearmament were made in Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938, op. cit; Andre Francois-Poncet,

that Mein Kampf:

> Is officially designated to be the paramount in German literature and political education; it is forced upon all German officials, soldier pupils, and the whole population in millions of copies . . . it is circulated abroad in thousands of copies by the German cruisers and liners, and Hitler himself is boasting over and over again that he has nothing to change in his pronounced opinions and principles and clings to them as laid down in his book unshakably.[167]

Even those who did not go as far as that statement recognized, as the Spectator did, that Mein Kampf was "regarded as the gospel of the Nazi movement."[168] Even if there were people who did not know about Mein Kampf or who did not take it seriously, they still knew that Hitler was imposing more and more the revision of the Treaty of Versailles upon the other powers and did not hesitate to crush enemies at home ruthlessly. And yet, very few supported a firm stand against Hitler. On the contrary, just after the Stresa Front had been designed by Italy, France and Britain to stop breaches to international order, the National Government of Macdonald concluded in June 1935

The Fateful Years: Memoirs of a French Ambassador in Berlin, 1931-1938, trans. Jacques Leclercq (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949), pp. 118-26.

[167] Letter signed "Expertus", Spectator, December 13, 1935, p. 990.

[168] "A Spectator's Notebook", Spectator, November 1, 1935, p. 710.

the Anglo-German Naval Agreement[169] which limited the German navy to thirty five per cent of the British with submarines at fourty per cent "or even 100 per cent.in case of danger from Russia."[170] While the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement had been very difficult to carry out, here was a naval agreement which "was an open repudiation of disarmament by international agreement and of the treaty of Versailles",[171] and which despite all this was welcomed by Conservatives.[172] In general, the public continued to be pro-German.[173] Yet, there were people who were pointing out the negative side of Germany and who were warning the public. Thus, the historian and Professor Gilbert Murray was an open opponent of Hitlerism. In an article in which he wrote that Mein Kampf made "claims

---

[169] D.C. Watt, "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935: An Interim Judgement", Journal of Modern History, XXVIII (June, 1956), 155-75.

[170] Taylor, op. cit., p. 377.

[171] Ibid.

[172] See for example the very favourable reaction of The Times in The History of the Times: The 150th Anniversary and Beyond, 1912-1948, Part II: 1921-1948 (London: The Office of The Times, 1952), pp. 894-95.

[173] One expression of pro-German feelings less known than the others is that there were many who were for an economic "appeasement" of Germany. Consult on that subject Martin Gilbert, op. cit., pp. 151-58; Paul Einzig, Appeasement Before During and After the War (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1942).

which no international tribunal is likely to approve",[174] he observed that he saw "no ground whatever" for saying that Germany had been denied a position of equality in the League, and that from his own experience he knew that "there was a special desire to show friendliness to Germany", at least until -in his case- "the sympathy went over to Dollfuss and the other victims of Hitler."[175] He then concluded:

> In general, it is a choice between force and persuation. In an anarchical world the way to get your will is to increase your armaments, threaten war and blackmail the tribunal. In the sort of world which, amid many imperfections, we hope that the League of Nations is now creating, those are exactly the means of setting the court against you.[176]

Also aware of the danger presented by Nazi Germany was Sir Walter Layton, ex-member of the Anglo-German Group and proprietor of both the News Chronicle and the Economist.[177] Commenting on German rearmament, the Economist observed that "what has now been obvious for long to many observers in Germany has now been officially recognized this week by

---

[174] Professor Gilbert Murray, "The League and the Revision of Treaties", Spectator, December 13, 1935, p. 978.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid.

[177] D.C. Watt, Personalities and Policies, pp. 125, 133.

the German Government", and that people were excusing Germany, "justifying" and "absolving" her, and:

> Thus do the exigencies of national defence inspire actions which, in their turn, lead to the unilateral rupture of treaties and, therewith, to the breeding of more and more insistent exigencies all round ! Quousque tandem .....?"[178]

Most Anglo-Germans however refused to be influenced by what they could observe in Nazi Germany and remained favorable to Hitler. These were people who were at the same time as pro-Germans prejudiced against Soviet Russia. Describing a number of those Anglo-Germans, E.H. Cookridge wrote:

> These men regarded Hitler and the Nazi regime as a stabilizing force in Europe and a bulwark against international Communism and world revolution; they remembered the general strike, which had brought Britain to the verge of revolt and they wanted to make sure that it would never happen again.[179]

The public at large also refused to listen or even to consider warning voices and excused Germany, complaining

---

[178] "Germany Has an Air Force", Economist, March 16, 1935, p. 585.

[179] E.H. Cookridge, The Third Man (New York: Berkley Medallion Books, 1968), p. 40. The book also contains a lively picture of the social atmosphere of the 1930's and of the spread of leftist feeling in the intellectual and student circles of the time.

that the League of Nations was used one-sidedly against Germany[180] and that the latter should be conciliated.[181] One correspondent, Maxwell Garnett, wrote to Geoffrey Dawson, the unflinching supporter of Nazi Germany: "Will you, Sir, who have done so much to promote an agreed settlement with Germany use your influence" to convince the government to be lenient to Germany and willing to cooperate with her and believe in her sincerity.[182] That this was the feeling of a great many was summed up in a letter by Charles Mallet to The Times in which he observed that: "Distinguished correspondents have lately appealed in your columns for sympathy with the German Government, and have criticized the action taken at Geneva to censure that Government's repudiation of clauses in the Treaty of Versailles."[183]

---

[180] The Times (London), April 11, 1935, p. 14.

[181] Some went as far as to demand the return to Germany of her lost colonies. Wheeler-Bennet, op. cit., p. 14, n. 2 about Rothermere for example; Gilbert Martin, op. cit., pp. 146-47 about Lord Lothian.

[182] The Times (London), May 14, 1935, p. 12. Many were the letters which expressed the same desires, like the one written by a Mr. Parmoor, Ibid., April 24, 1935, p. 11.

[183] Ibid., April 24, 1935, p. 11.

Those reactions concerned a Germany which was disregarding other Powers and previous obligations but which was still mainly revisionist. The reoccupation of the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland by German troops on March 7, 1936,[184] was also a revision of the Treaty of Versailles --the most serious one accomplished by Germany-- but it was also a violation of the Locarno agreement made not under the Diktat but voluntarily.[185] The Baldwin Government which had come to power in June 1935 had already conciliated the Fascist states in the Abyssinian crisis[186] from which it was still recovering. The reoccupation of the Rhineland posed a new problem to the British government because Britain was with Italy the guarantor of Locarno. Yet, though Germany's action was officially regretted, no action was taken. When Flandin, the French Foreign Minister, met Neville Chamberlain who

---

[184] S.I.A., 1936, pp. 252-370.

[185] As Eden said:

> "We have heard much, more particularly since the advent of the present regime in Germany, about the diktat of Versailles, but nobody has ever heard of the diktat of Locarno."

Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCX (1936), 1437.

[186] Ibid., 1935, Vol. II, pp. 357ff; Templewood, op. cit., Part II.

was then the Chancellor of the Exchequer and "the most effective Member of the Government",[187] he asked that England and France be firm in the face of Germany because in this way the latter will yield without war.[188] Chamberlain protested that: "We cannot accept this as a reliable estimate of a mad dictator's reactions."[189] The British government then contented itself with a new offer to France and Belgium of renewed guarantee against German aggression. The Council of the League met in Paris and London with the Locarno Powers, except Germany, present. Only Litvinov, the Soviet representative, proposed sanctions against Germany.[190] "His advocacy was enough to damn the proposal."[191] The Council finally resolved that the Versailles Treaty had been broken and invited Hitler to find a new arrangement for European security. Hitler answered that: "In Europe we have no territorial claims",[192]

---

[187] Churchill, op. cit., p. 151.

[188] Feiling, op. cit., p. 279.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Beloff, op. cit., Vol. 2 pp. 51-53.

[191] Taylor, op. cit., p. 386.

[192] The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, p. 1300.

that he wanted peace and was ready to sign a twenty-five year pact of non-aggression with the Western Powers.[193] The British asked for a clearer definition and whether it would include "at least also the Soviet Union, Latvia, and Estonia as well as the States actually contiguous to Germany."[194] No reply was given to this questionnaire and the British contented themselves with what Hitler had said,[195] realizing his non-commitment Eastwards, a fact the Russians realized as well.

The British government openly criticized the German action[196] but primarily because of the method used.

---

[193] Ibid., pp. 1298-1302.

[194] Quoted by Beloff, op. cit., p. 53.

[195] When Captain Peter Macdonald, a member of Parliament, asked on November 9, 1936, whether the British government had received a reply to its questionnaire to Germany and whether the British would make it clear that "unless a reply is received within the next few months it must be assumed that no reply is forthcoming?" He was answered that: "His Majesty's Government were not prepared to repeat their requests for a reply." Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXVII (1936), 486.

[196] On March 9, 1936, Eden said in Parliament:

> "The abrogation of the Treaty of Versailles and the reoccupation of the demilitarized zone have profoundly shaken confidence in any engagement into which the Government of Germany may in future enter . . . It

In fact, it was generally agreed that only oral criticism was permissable. Hugh Dalton,[a]/Labor politician most convinced about the need for resistance to Germany, declared on March 26: "It is only right to say frankly and bluntly that public opinion in this country would not support, and certainly the Labour party would not support, the taking of military sanctions against Germany at this time."[197] The feeling was that one could not go to war because the Germans had walked "into their own backyard."[198]

---

strikes a severe blow at that principle of sanctity of treaties which underlies the whole structure of international relations."

Ibid., CCCIX (1936), 11812. Eden again criticized Germany very severely in Parliament on March 26, Ibid., CCCX (1936), 1435-50.

[197] Ibid., CCCX (1936), 1454.

[198] Halifax, op. cit., p. 197. Churchill, op. cit., p. 151, quoted Lord Lothian who said: "After all, they are only going into their own backgarden", and then commented: "This was a representative British view." Neville Chamberlain also said that public opinion in Britain was against sanctions, Feiling, loc. cit. On March 15, 1936, Thomas Jones wrote: "The English would not dream of going to war because the German troops had marched into their own territories -whatever Treaties declared", Jones, op. cit., pp. 182-83. Letters that were sent to the Spectator and The Time also asked for indulgence towards Germany. A Mr. Powys Greenwood asked for a settlement that would solve Germany's demands: "And once the settlement has been freely negotiated it must be clear to all that it will be upheld by the full moral and material forces of a League strengthened by Germany's return and by divorce from the ill-fated Treaty of Versailles." Spectator, March 20, 1936, p. 517.

Recalling the general reaction to the Rhineland coup in Britain, Ribbentrop wrote that "even in those days, public opinion was not unfriendly to Germany."[199] This sympathy for the German cause was partly due to anti-Soviet bias. Many felt that until German rearmament and reoccupation of the Rhineland, Germany had been defenceless in the face of aggressive designs on the part of France - Russia's ally- and Russia. Such thoughts could only be due to prejudice for, as Viscount Cranborne had once said in Parliament,[200] who was that enemy who had not wanted to attack Germany for years and who was now a great potential threat, according to the Nazi leaders? Was it France? Surely that was not possible according to Cranborne, because until Germany rearmed France had been for fifteen years superior in force to Germany and yet had never attacked her. Or was it the smaller nations that surrounded Germany? "Surely this is inconceivable." Russia then? But Russia had territory of her own not yet exploited and was busy with internal developments. No real danger threatened Germany. And yet part of British public opinion

---

[199] The Ribbentrop Memoirs, p. 57.

[200] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCI (1935), 599.

thought otherwise. Thus, one correspondent of the Spectator, E.N. Mozley, wrote:

> The cat is out of the bag. Germany is not to be allowed to fortify her French frontier in order that, if Germany comes to blows with France's Eastern Allies, she may be at France's mercy. Can we wonder at Hitler's refusal to leave his country defenceless, when the net is laid so very clearly in the sight of the bag?[201]

The Times, which had been "in the van"[202] of the majority of British press that believed Hitler's offers of a non-aggression pact, published the letter of an old soldier, Sir Ian Hamilton, who wrote:

> The Rhineland zone was not designated to prevent the outburst of hostilities; it was designated to insure that France would not be delayed at the outbreak of the next war and would be able to strike at once into the very heart of her enemy's country . . . . Under the conditions of the Franco-Soviet pact Czechoslovakia is bound to become an aerodrome for the swarming Russian bombing planes. To the North stands the Great Bear. The view of most soldiers is that Germany has got out of this net only in time.[203]

So, the Franco-Soviet Pact was seen as aggressive while the reoccupation of the Rhineland by force was not resented.

---

[201] Spectator, April 3, 1936, p. 620.

[202] Churchill, loc. cit.

[203] The Times (London), March 17, 1936, p. 12.

Halifax wrote that the British did not oppose the reoccupation of the Rhineland because in particular this was "a time . . . when you were actually discussing with them the dates and conditions of their right to resume occupation."[204] Yet, on the contrary, the British should have opposed Germany's action because she had used force at a time when discussions were going on. Instead many who realized that "Germany was, of course (as always), utterly wrong in method"[205] were angered only because Germany's behavior had forced Britain into commitments to France at a time when the latter had a pact with Russia. A friend of Thomas Jones was "in despair about the European situation" because Germany:

> has flung us into the arms of France in a deplorable way; you have seen how the French are exulting over the military guarantees into which England has now entered . . . . Was there anything more grotesque than the suggestion of the international force to police a Rhine zone? . . . . Does this new agreement mean that if France gets embroiled with Germany we have to go and fight with Italy and Russia? . . . . I don't know when I have felt more troubled and concerned.[206]

---

[204] Halifax, loc. cit.

[205] Jones, op. cit., p. 183.

[206] Ibid., pp. 183-84.

A correspondent of The Times was also very worried because:

> If we find ourselves once more virtually pledged -against the wishes, I am certain, of the vast majority of our people- to a military alliance with the French, we ipso facto, in case of war, become the military allies of Russia.[207]

And Thomas Jones wrote on April 4, 1936 that:

> In two party meetings of back-benchers last week, the first, . . . was on the whole pro-French; but two or three days later opinion had swung round to a majority of perhaps 5 to 4 for Germany. Part of the opposition to France is influenced by the fear of our being drawn in on the side of Russia.[208]

Such views were held despite the knowledge of how aggressive had been the German reaction to the British government's oral disapproval of the Rhineland coup. On March 20, 1936, Hitler had said in Hamburg that he needed the support of the German nation in order that he may: "Profess before the world that, come what may, we will not yield a centimetre -an inch- in our claims for recognition of our equality of rights."[209] (Italics supplied.) The Times published the speech made by Goebbels in Essen on March 27,

---

[207] The Times (London), March 23, 1936, p. 8.

[208] Jones, op. cit., p. 185.

[209] The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, p. 1311.

in reply to Eden's declarations in the House of Commons. The tone of Goebbels' reply was violent and unpleasant. Speaking of British statesmen he said:

> What do they expect? If they think we shall walk out from where we have just gone in they can wait until the end of the world! Does Mr. Eden think we are the same sort of cowards as our predecessors whom we drove out of office? Then certainly he is mistaken . . . . On the contrary we protected peace by reoccupying the Rhineland . . . . protests are no good if they are not backed by bayonets. A nation without arms cannot stand up for peace. Peace can be maintained only if one carries a sword at one's side.[210]

Most Britishers did not resent the aggressiveness underlying such statements and they also failed for years to take Goebbels' advice and to realize that peace could only be protected from a position of strength. Yet they knew how weakened was the British position as a result of Germany's moves. Thus, the Spectator published an article on July 24, 1936, stating that:

> The policy for which Great Britain stands in Europe at the moment is Locarno, minus the demilitarized zone, and negotiations with Germany, in Mr. Eden's words, "on terms of complete equality."[211]

---

[210] The Times (London), March 28, 1936, p. 18.

[211] "The Foundations of British Policy", Spectator, July 24, 1936, p. 129.

Germany's responsibility for peace in Europe was increasingly realized. In 1935, H. Powys Greenwood recalled that Goebbels had said that "you couldn't have butter and guns at the same time"[212] and that for the moment Germany preferred guns, but he was not sure whether she had "something behind her foreign policy" and whether the German army was trained in an aggressive spirit or not.[213] In 1936, the Spectator could assert: "Today the most uncertain, and in some respects the most decisive, factor in European politics is the intentions of Germany."[214] A year later another article showed that many British realized that Germany was dividing Europe and weakening peace by her action in Spain and her rejection of the Anglo-German note on Non-Intervention.[215] Another article expressed the concern that peace needed more than words from each side and that Germany was not being helpful, and that only the cooperation of the Dominions, America and France constituted "one of the

---

[212] H. Powys Greenwood, "Nazi Germany and Peace", Spectator, November 29, 1935, p. 894.

[213] Ibid., p. 895.

[214] "The Search For a Foreign Policy", Ibid., July 31, 1936, p. 188.

[215] "Europe Divided", Ibid., October 8, 1937, p. 572.

brightest features of the sombre world in which our lot is cast."[216]

Yet, despite such conclusions anti-Communism was stronger. In July 1936, Jones reported that Stanley Baldwin had told Eden that "on no account, French or other must he bring us in to fight on the side of the Russians."[217] While every move of Hitler threatened peace, the Spectator was under the impression that Russia was preparing for war. Commenting in December 1937 on elections in Russia, the Spectator expressed the opinion that such democratic facades as elections where the government was sure to get a majority were: "Essential to any dictatorship which willingly or unwillingly is preparing for war."[218] Thus, all the election fuss was carried out by the regime in order to demonstrate that popular opinion supported it in any of its plans, namely the war under preparation: "From the overwhelming vote of confidence M. Stalin will receive on Sunday, he may well conclude that Russia is ready for anything under his leadership."[219]

---

[216] Ibid., November 5, 1937, p. 789.

[217] Jones, op. cit., p. 231.

[218] "Russia Makes Elections", Spectator, December 10, 1937, p. 1937.

[219] Ibid.

Thus, on the whole, despite moments of doubts, public opinion remained entrenched in its sympathies, dislikes and biases. As the tempo of international crises quickened after 1937, the shift of emphasis must be made from public opinion to the level of decision-taking and policy-making. Knowing the background of the pro-German, anti-Soviet attitudes of a large section of public opinion, there remains to be seen how anti-Communism affected the events of the two most crucial pre-war years, 1937-1939.

By 1937, the shaky Anglo-Soviet rapprochement worked out by some members of the British government and on the whole unsupported by public opinion, had lost ground. The Soviets were disappointed by the failure of the efforts to check aggression collectively. In his speech to the Congress of Soviets on November 28, 1936,[220] Litvinov explained that the Soviet Union remained faithful to her policy of peace and collaboration, but that:

> The Soviet Union, however, does not beg to be invited into any unions, any blocs, any

---

[220] Beloff, op. cit., p. 65.

> combinations. She will calmly let other states weigh and evaluate the advantages which can be derived for peace from close co-operation with the Soviet Union.[221]

Max Beloff considered this speech to be "a turning-point in Soviet foreign policy -the beginning of a movement away from collective action, and towards a new isolation."[222] However, the possibility of collaborating with the Soviet Union to check aggression in Europe was still open in 1937. Other states could indeed still evaluate the advantages of collaboration with Soviet Russia. In 1937, the choice was still open to the Chamberlain government between checking Hitler and submitting to his demands. The British government chose the latter course. The main motive behind such British policy was undoubtedly the desire to preserve peace. However, it was in the conception of how this peace would be best preserved that the particular prejudices of the members of the government played some role. The Soviets went as far as to accuse the Chamberlain government of having been motivated in its attitude towards Germany by the hope of a Nazi-Soviet war. Convinced as the Soviets

---

[221] Quoted Ibid.

[222] Ibid., p. 67.

were that Germany was: "Conducting an open, rabid, anti-Soviet policy . . . and publicly abandons herself to dreams of the Ukraine and even of the Urals",[223] they had suspected British policy before 1937 already of helping Hitler achieve his goal. The coming of the Chamberlain government and its behaviour towards Germany and Russia was then seen by the Soviets and by the British extreme Left as deliberately anti-Russian, making "Germany strong as against Russia."[224] Ivan Maisky was convinced that the Chamberlain government had indicated to Hitler where he could freely direct his expansionist desires since November 1937 when Halifax had met the Führer and:

> Offered Hitler a kind of alliance on the basis of the "Pact of Four" and a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe. In particular,

---

[223] Beloff, op. cit., p. 134, quoting Litvinov during a speech he delivered in Moscow on June 23, 1938. Litvinov expressed the same idea on March 23, 1938, when he told the American Ambassador Davies that "Hitler had designs on all the Baltic States as well", Ibid., p. 123, quoting Davies, Mission to Moscow, pp. 189-90.

[224] Ibid., p. 134 quoting what Stalin said to Davies as reported in Davies, op. cit., pp. 220-26.

> Halifax stated that "no possibility of changing the existing situation must be precluded", and later on made this more precise by saying that "to these questions belong Danzig, Austria and Czechoslovakia". . . . pointing out to Hitler a direction in which his aggressions would meet least resistance from the Chamberlain Government.[225]

When the Anschluss took place in March 1938, the British government issued "a protest in strong terms with the German Government against such use of coercion, backed by force, against an independent state in order to create a situatiom incompatible with its independence."[226] Still, as the British Ambassador in Berlin himself wrote:

> Indeed the big question which all Germans asked themselves was, "what will England do?" England, however, left it to words to carry conviction, as Hitler on March 10th had doubtless foreseen.[227]

The Russian leaders took British inaction as further encouragement. Referring to Hitler Maisky angrily wrote:

---

[225] Maisky, op. cit., p. 73.

[226] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXIII (1938), 47. The details of the British government's reaction to the Anschluss are found in D.B.F.P., 3rd series, I.

[227] Nevile Henderson, Failure of a Mission: Berlin 1937-1939 (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1940), p. 123.

> As though jeering at the London appeasers, the Fuehrer timed his aggression for the very day when Chamberlain was ceremoniously receiving Ribbentrop, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had come to Britain. And what happened? Britain and France reacted to this outrageous act of aggression by purely verbal protests which neither they themselves, and still less Hitler, took seriously.[228]

He then concluded: "Great and legitimate after what had happened was the Soviet Government's mistrust of the Chamberlain Government."[229] This is important because it shows the British explanation of events and how estrangement grew between Russia and Britain and weakened more and more the chances of collaboration when they were considered again in 1939.

It was the British attitude during the Czechoslovakian crisis however that provoked the most bitter Soviet criticisms and made Soviet mistrust of the Chamberlain government reach its climax. From the start, the British had made it clear that they were not pledged to protect Czechoslovakia.[230]

---

[228] Maisky, op. cit., p. 74.

[229] Ibid.

[230] S.I.A., 1938, Vol. II, pp. 69-70. George Bonnet, Défense de la Paix, Vol. II: De Washington au Quai d'Orsay (Geneve: Les Editions du Cheval Ailé, 1946), p. 114, desribed how Chamberlain and Halifax told the French officials that England never agreed to tie herself in Central Europe, particularly in relation to Czechoslovakia.

The Chamberlain Government from March to September, 1938[231] took one step after the other to discourage the French from action, to reject the collective solution proposed by the Soviet Union,[232] to excercise more and more pressure on the Czechoslovakian government, to make it yield to Hitler. From the morrow of the Anschluss till the end of September, the British Government actively intervened in the affairs of Czechoslovakia. Whatever may have been its real motives and however sincere, the Soviet leaders came to think that the British government was really hoping for a Nazi-Soviet war. They were first alarmed by "the evidence of increasing British sympathy for the German case in regard to Czechoslovakia"[233] and they condemned the diplomacy which:

---

[231] D.B.F.P., 3rd series, Vol. II. A good secondary work on the subject is John Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit. Consult also David Vital, "Czechoslovakia and the Powers, September 1938", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. I, No. 4 (1966), pp. 36-67; Sir Charles Webster, op. cit.; Bernadotte E. Schmitt, "Munich", Journal of Modern History, Vol. XXV, No. 2 (1953), pp. 166-80; Gerhardt L. Weinberg, "The May Crisis, 1938", Ibid., Vol. XXIX, No. 3 (1957), 213-25. A lively account was also given by Sir Alec Douglas-Home, "Munich", B.B.C., January 14, 1968.

[232] Beloff, op. cit., p. 129.

[233] Ibid., p. 123.

> Resolves itself into an avoidance of any opposition to Germany's aggressive actions, to compliance with her demands and even her caprices, fearing to arouse her dissatisfaction and disapproval even in the slightest degree.[234]

More than simple "compliance" with her demands, it seemed to Stalin that the "reactionary elements in England represented by the Chamberlain Government were determined upon a policy of making Germany strong as against Russia."[235] Munich confirmed the Soviets in their suspicions: "The notorious Four Power Pact had come into existence at Munich, its sharp edge turned against the U.S.S.R."[236]

---

[234] Ibid., p. 134, quoting Litvinov during his speech in Moscow on June 23, 1938.

[235] Ibid., quoting Davies, op. cit.

[236] Maisky, op. cit., p. 89. The fact that Chamberlain who cared very little about Eastern Europe had gone personally to meet Hitler to solve the Sudeten problem after having refused a collective solution, appeared to the Soviets a gesture directed against Russia, especially that even Czechoslovakia was not represented or called in. As one historian put it:

> Russia's traditional distrust of the West re-appeared when Chamberlain took the initiative to resolve the Southern problem through a personal talk with Hitler. . . . Apparently the Soviet rulers immediately suspected a Western plot aiming at turning Hitler towards the East.

Jacques de Launay, Major Controversies of Contemporary History, trans. J.J. Buckingham (London: Pergamon Press, 1965), p. 173.

After Munich also British policy was interpreted in the same light, as shown from the Russian version of events:

> The intentions of the Chamberlain Government were even more clearly expressed in The Times. In its editorial of February 8, 1939, the newspaper announced that Westwards England was ready to defend France against any possible attacks. As for the East against which Germany had the means to direct all her forces, it was not difficult to conclude that in that direction the Germans would not meet with any obstacle from England.[237] (Author's translation.)

Some went so far as to believe the Chamberlain government played also with the idea of dividing the world between Germany and England, particularly at the expense of the Soviet Union.[238] In general however the main accusation

---

[237] V. Potiemkine et al., op. cit., p. 670.

[238] Ibid., it is reported that on October 23, 1939, the Sunday Times published an article by Lord Elton:

> The author expressed in it the opinion that the strong Germany and the powerful England could agree with each other perfectly because 'there existed enough space in the world for both countries.' The insinuation that there existed the possibility of a new sharing of the world between Germany and England was accompanied by hostile attacks against the Soviet Union. (Author's translation.)

was the one developed above, namely that the British Government --as well as British Conservative circles[239] and press--[240] welcomed German aggressive designs Eastwards and not only did not try to check them, but even encouraged them against Russia. This interpretation of British foreign policy has been detailed in length because it greatly contributed to the mistrust that existed between powers that could have collaborated against Hitler,[241] preparing in particular the ground for the failure of Anglo-Soviet negotiations of 1939. Knowing the Russian accusations, one can also better appreciate the British bias against Russia because if Britain had really been interested in collaboration with the Soviet Union against Hitler, she would have perhaps tried to convince the Soviets that their

---

[239] See Maisky, op. cit., pp. 69, 206.

[240] See for example Pravda, September 17, 1938, quoted in Beloff, op. cit., p. 149.

[241] For example, Beloff, op. cit., p. 212, described how the Soviets came to believe that the gulf between themselves and the Western Powers was very difficult to bridge. The Soviets were so dissatisfied with the British attitude towards them and towards Germany that a remark by a British Conservative that Russia had done very little to help Czechoslovakia provoked an immediate official Soviet protest.

impression was unjustified. For it was unjustified in that a careful study of such papers as the Documents on British Foreign Policy[242] nowhere offers evidence that supports the accusation that the Chamberlain government's policy towards Hitlerian Germany was motivated by the hope of a Nazi-Soviet war. The guarantees to Poland, Greece, Rumania and Turkey in 1939[243] also contradict such an accusation; as also does the review of the debates

---

[242] For example, D.B.F.A. 3rd series, Vol. I, presents no evidence to support the suggestion that at the time of the Anschluss or before, the British government had tried to purposely direct Hitler's interest Eastwards. As for the meeting between Halifax and Hitler in November 1937, Halifax' own version is that he referred to Danzig, Austria and Czechoslovakia in the context of discussing the revision of the treaty of Versailles, Halifax, op. cit., pp. 186-87; and no official report concerning that conversation was available to the present author. Again, the study of the Czechoslovakian crisis does not seem to support the Soviet accusations. See the meetings of Chamberlain and Halifax as officially reported in D.B.F.P., 3rd series, Vol. II, pp. 338-51: the Berchtesgaden meeting; pp. 463-73: Godesberg meeting; pp. 630-40: Munich meeting. See also D.G.F.P. series D, Vol. II, pp. 786-87, 898-908, etc. All that appears from what Hitler's interpreter recorded, Schmidt, that Chamberlain insisted that "Great Britain way interested in the maintenance of peace", D.G.F.P., Series D, Vol. II, p. 793. The same goal --peace-- also emerges as prominent from the reading of the dispatches that preceded the meeting and where it was stated that Chamberlain was going "at once to Germany to meet Herr Hitler in a last attempt to find a peaceful solution", Lord Halifax to Sir Eric Phipps, D.B.F.P., 3rd series, Vol. II, p. 318.

[243] S.I.A., 1938-1946, Vol. II, Part II.

in the House of Commons,[244] the available passages from Neville Chamberlain's diaries and speeches,[245] and the memoirs of other politicians of the period. Thus, available sources do not support the Soviet accusations although Maisky wrote:

> Today the materials of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs captured by the Soviet Army in Berlin show that these were more than sufficient ground for our distrust.[246]

He did not however support this statement with any specific reference from any source, nor did he make his point undisputable.

If the available evidence does not show that the Chamberlain government's policy towards Germany was motivated by the desire for a Nazi-Soviet war, it still seems that anti-Soviet bias affected British attitude

---

[244] Review quickly, for example, the main debates on Foreign Affairs in general or on particular issues like Austria and Czechoslovakia.

[245] Neville Chamberlain, op. cit.; Keith Feiling, op. cit.

[246] Maisky, op. cit., p. 73.

towards Nazi Germany in 1937-1939.[247] Thus, Germany occupied Austria after having broken so many treaties and promises, and actually moved Eastward after having refused to have the Eastern Locarno project limit her Eastern frontier. And what was the British Government's comment? Once again loud protest at the method used, no more. Here is what Chamberlain had to say in the House of Commons on March 14, 1938:

> We had, indeed, never refused to recognize the special interest that Germany had in the development of relations between Austria and herself, having regard to the close affinities existing between the two countries. But on every occasion on which any representative of His Majesty's Government has had the opportunities to discuss these matters with representatives of the German Government, it has always made it plain that His Majesty's Government would strongly disapprove of the application to these problems of violent method.[248]

Such a statement was also an open admission that the British had discussed with the German leader a possible Anschluss. Even if the British thought it would take

---

[247] It still remained that: "Ingenious observers expected Hitler's next move to be into the Ukraine --a move expected by Western statesmen with some pleasure, by Soviet statesmen with dread", A.J.P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1961), p. 192.

[248] Great Britain: 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXIII (1938), 51-52.

place with the approval of Austria (which they did not inquire about) they knew what the Soviets would think of such statements. But they did not care to spare Russia. This was demonstrated over and over again. For example, when Halifax and Hitler met in November 1937, "the substance of these Anglo-German conversations remained a closely guarded secret. But the Russians may well have been worried by current press comment in Great Britain and other countries",[249] and yet nobody took the trouble to give some reassuring account --in fact any account-- of what had been discussed in the obviously political visit of the Master of Middleton Hounds Halifax.[250]

Much more serious was the total lack of reference to and concern for the U.S.S.R. on the part of the Prime Minister who asserted in the House of Commons on February 21, 1938: "The peace of Europe must depend upon the

---

[249] Beloff, op. cit., p. 108.

[250] Influential people and circles were aware of how political was indeed Halifax' visit to Germany. On November 15, 1937, Thomas Jones wrote:

> The week-end sensation is the news that Halifax is going to visit a Hunting Exhibition, being as how he is a Master of Fox Hounds. Incidentally he will call on Mr. Hitler. This is how we must announce those exchanges.

Jones, op. cit., p. 377.

attitude of the four major powers --Germany, Italy, France and ourselves."[251] Then:

> If we can do that, if we can bring these four nations into friendly discussions, into a setting of their differences, we shall have saved the peace of Europe for a generation.[252]

Coming a month after Vansittart's change of post and a day after Eden's resignation considered by many to be a sacrifice to the Fascist Dictators and after the speech of Hitler in which he attacked Eden,[253] this omission of the U.S.S.R. was very unfortunate. The repercussions of this implication of policy were seen in the ensuing events wherein the U.S.S.R. was completely put aside, "without seeking any counter-poise from Russia which might have held the balance in our favour."[254] Commenting on Chamberlain's speech of February 21, 1938, Max Beloff wrote:

---

[251] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXII (1938), 64.

[252] Ibid.

[253] Mowat, op. cit., p. 598; Beloff, op. cit., p. 116.

[254] Rowse, op. cit., p. 75. The responsibility of Chamberlain in creating a "Four Powers" mentality can be illustrated by contrasting it with the insistence by the Conservative press as late as 1936 on the need for

> The omission of Russia can scarcely have been accidental or regarded as such by Moscow, it was indeed the prelude to a year when every mention of the Soviet Union seemed to be systematically excluded from the pronouncements of British statesmen.[255]

Thus, on July 26, 1938, at the hour of the most serious crisis yet faced by Europe, Chamberlain said:

> In accordance with our general policy and in close association with France, we have done everything that we could to facilitate a peaceful solution of the dispute.[256]

But had they? Evidence shows that the British policy-makers of the time did not even try to consider all the possibilities available before accepting Hitler's demands. It is remarkable for example that Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary of the crucial years 1938-1939 hardly ever mentioned the Soviet Union.[257] Thus when

---

Five-powers talks to preserve peace in Europe. For example, see Spectator, July 31, 1936, pp. 188-89, where all the hopes for peace were placed in five powers conversations and the system of collective security.

[255] Beloff, op. cit., p. 161.

[256] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXVIII (1938), p. 2956.

[257] Halifax, op. cit.

the French and the English governments were discussing in London on September 18, 1938,[258] a solution to the Czech problem, there was a flagrant neglect of the role of the U.S.S.R. For example they had been discussing for hours how to solve the issue when Halifax spoke in a way that revealed his awareness of the U.S.S.R., but at the same time his neglect of its role and possibilities:

> We all knew . . . that whatever actions were taken by ourselves, by the French Government, or by the Soviet Government, at any given moment, it would be impossible to give effective protection to the Czechoslovakian State . . . . The British Government like the French Government had to face hard facts. They were concerned with the French Government to devise some means to save Europe from destruction and catastrophe, and with the French Government we were searching for a peaceful solution.[259]

Twice Halifax repeated "with the French Government" and forgot the Soviet one. On the one occasion that Sir Samuel Hoare publicly spoke of the Soviets, his feeling of despise was unconcealed: He described how he participated in the conversations that took place in the summer of 1938 between Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon and himself,

---

[258] D.B.F.P., 3rd series, Vol. II, pp. 373-393.

[259] Ibid., p. 385.

with Alec Cadogan, Horace Wilson and Vansittart as their official advisors.[260] Continual meetings of the cabinet and of the "Big Four"[261] Ministers were taking place. Yet the one time he mentioned the Soviets, it was to describe how Maisky the Soviet Ambassador was actively working behind the scenes stimulating criticism against the Government and

> implying that it was only our hesitations and the cold-shouldering of Russia that were endangering peace. The story that the Soviet was only waiting for our invitation to help, was no more than the stock Communist propaganda for making mischief. Stalin had at the time no intention of involving Russia in a quarrel between Germany and the Allies that seemed all to his own interest . . . . The troubled waters were giving the Ambassador the best possible fishing conditions.[262]

Three remarks at least can be made on that statement. That Maisky reminded them of their "cold-shouldering" of Russia and Hoare did not even take the trouble to make a remark on it, nor did the "Big Four", then, think it

---

[260] Templewood, Nine Troubled Years, p. 301.

[261] This is how Templewood described himself and the other three, and entitled the chapter XXV that way.

[262] Ibid., p. 302.

over. That the first reaction --and the only one-- was to immediately attribute Maisky's efforts to "stock Communist propoganda for making mischief" and fishing in troubled waters. In fact this was an expression often used by Templewood when he referred to the Russians.[263] Thirdly, whether the Soviets actually were in earnest or not vis à vis Czechoslovakia, the British did not even offer them the opportunity to participate in resolving the crisis. As A.J.P. Taylor wrote about their claims to be ready to help Czechoslovakia, "their bluff --if it were bluff-- was never called."[264] Jones also gave evidence of the restless efforts by Maisky to have the British leaders take into consideration Russia. Maisky thus complained that the Russian proposals for a joint policy in regard to Czechoslovakia had been ignored; that he had gone to Halifax "but beyond expressing an interest in hearing the views of Russia, Halifax made no sign."[265] Trying to justify the Munich settlement, Thomas Jones gave a leading place to the following argument:

---

[263] The same expression is used, Ibid., pp. 115-350.

[264] A.J.P. Taylor, op. cit., p. 163.

[265] Jones, op. cit., p. 419.

> Had the French Parliament been summoned not more than ten Senators would have voted for war. Had the Government left Paris when the bombing began, the chances were high that a Communist provisional government would be set up in Paris.[266]

On October 20, when Europe had just come out of an international crisis provoked by Germany, Jones wrote: "Chamberlain is much more prejudiced against Labour than Baldwin; there is also the Russian complex",[267] a statement that may clarify why Chamberlain had not mentioned the U.S.S.R. when he expounded and justified the Munich settlement to the assembled House on October 3.[268]

This neglect of the factor of the U.S.S.R. occurred at a time when influential Conservatives believed the League of Nations had become ineffectual. For Lord Lothian, the League had lost its "world wide power"[269] and its value as "a system of peace for Europe"[270] since the

---

[266] Ibid., p. 413.

[267] Ibid., p. 418.

[268] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXIX (1938).

[269] Marquess of Lothian, "The World Crisis of 1936", Foreign Affairs, XV (October, 1936), 134.

[270] Ibid.

Abyssinian crisis. Chamberlain was convinced that: "Today the League is mutilated; it is halted and maimed",[271] and:

> I ask what small country in Europe today, if it be threatened by a larger one, can safely rely on the League alone to protect it against invasion? I challenge Hon. Members opposite to answer that question. There can only be one, honest answer to it, and that is "none."[272]

With the League weakened, Chamberlain became aware of the role each nation had to play in preserving the Balance of Power. Yet he and his colleagues spoke of four-power pacts and carried them through without investigating the possibilities of the U.S.S.R. This was deliberate, in view of the fact that the Opposition was constantly attacking the government's attitude and questioning its wisdom. Artlee, the Opposition leader, thus said:

> Who are going to guarantee the new Czechoslovakia without its defensible frontier? Is it just ourselves and France? Are the United Soviet Socialist Republics out?[273]

---

[271] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXII (1938), 1565.

[272] Ibid.

[273] Ibid., CCCXXXIX (1938), 61.

Again:

> There is not the time for four power pacts, for new alliances, for power politics: this is the time for a new peace conference and an all-in peace conference . . . . and let us not exclude the U.S.S.R.[274]

Yet, Russia was excluded until the last moments, despite the fact that the British cabinet and Parliament were strongly aware of the military unpreparedness of Britain which they often discussed[275] and which was used by many appeasers as an excuse justifying concessions to Germany. The British neglected the U.S.S.R. partly because they underestimated the latter's capacities. This argument was extensively used by the appeasers to justify their

---

[274] Ibid., p. 65.

[275] Debates in the House of Commons pointed out to the problems of the military unpreparedness of Britain. Summarizing those problems, Winston Churchill said once: "In the Army we are, of course, weaker in every respect, relatively and actually, than we were in 1914", Great Britain: 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXII (1938), 1600. The problem of the British Navy and its need for more budget and more construction are illustrated by Duff Cooper, Old Men Forget (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), pp. 207-224. Also helpful is Hugh Dalton, op. cit., chap. 12: "Grave Doubts on Air Defense."

policies.[276] However, how genuine was this underestimation of Russia? Certainly, there was the feeling that the Russian purges had considerably weakened the Soviet army. Thomas Jones wrote that Czechoslovakia had been sacrificed to Hitler partly because: "Russia has killed off her generals and her army is in charge of young and inexperienced officers",[277] and: "No one seemed able to state with any certainty what Russia was prepared to do, or what the result of the slaughter of the generals would be."[278] Charles Lindbergh gave on one occasion "his impressions of German and Russian air preparedness, exalting the former, depressing the latter."[279] As Churchill explained:

> To Mr. Chamberlain and the British and French General Staffs the purge of 1937 presented itself mainly as a tearing to pieces internally of the Russian Army, and a picture of the Soviet Union as riven asunder by ferocious hatreds and vengeance.[280]

---

[276] Jones, op. cit., pp. 407, 409, 411, 412, 413, 414ff; Templewood, op. cit., pp. 331-37; Lothian, loc. cit., p. 138.

[277] Jones, op. cit., p. 407.

[278] Ibid., p. 409.

[279] Ibid., p. 418.

[280] Churchill, op. cit., p. 224. See also Beloff, op. cit., pp. 126-27; Coulondre, op. cit., p. 128.

However, even in the estimation of the Russian military strength there was a bias that favoured Hitler. It was remarkable how the same Conservatives who insisted that Russia was weak had for years --during and after the purges-- claimed the opposite and presented Russia as dangerous. In December 1938 the Round Table published an article describing how the Red Army had been purged of its "world-revolutionary offensive spirit" and was to an "exceptional degree" geared to defensive purposes.[281] It was then observed that: "On all accounts the Soviet Government has good reasons for trying to avoid commitments at a distance",[282] namely that wartime demanded oil supplies, a system of communications and other factors that Russia had not yet perfected.[283] If that was so, how were the "offensive purposes"[284] alleged to have until then characterized the Russian

---

[281] "The Soviet Union and Europe", Round Table, XXIX (December, 1938), 112.

[282] Ibid., p. 113.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Ibid., p. 112.

army to be carried out? Such factors as lack of preparation in communications and oil supplies were not overnight new factors on the scene and had always been there, only the Conservatives had not wanted before to see them. Besides, Conservatives had not tried to find out how weak was really the Russian army and they refused to even consider such opinions as that of Noel-Baker who pointed out on October 3, 1938, to the existence of: "3,000 modern Russian aircraft, 2000 Russian tanks and a vast Russian mechanized army."[285] In any event, they had not attempted to collaborate with Russia during all the years when her military strength had been known. In 1935 Eden had shown British awareness of Russian military might when he had said: "The Soviet Union is given 500,000 men as compared with 200,000 for France, Italy and Germany."[286] Lord Lothian referred in 1936 to "the immense and rapidly increasing forces now at the disposal of Russia."[287] Thomas Jones knew from Dr. Flexner in November 1936 that the Russian army was considered

---

[285] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXIX (1938), 505.

[286] Avon, op. cit., p. 146.

[287] Lothian, loc. cit.

to be strong.[288] For a foreign observer in 1937 the British army had "fallen behind",[289] the German army had shown since the Nazi advent to power "a great expansion not altogether to its qualitative advantage",[290] and: "The Red Army, by contrast, is undoubtedly more powerful in its tank forces, while also the most original in its method."[291] Thus: "In one way, . . . the Russian Army is better equipped than any other to bring about the breakdown of the enemy",[292] while: "The most striking features of t he Red Army are its developments of tanks and air-borne units. Today they are said to be about 6,000 tanks in service; over a 1,000 have been seen on manoeuvres in one area alone."[293]

For years, Russian military power had been reputed as great and yet British Conservatives had not attempted to collaborate with the Soviet Union. It was a rationalization to pretend after the Czechoslovak crisis that Russia's newly weakened power had partly

---

[288] Jones, op. cit., p. 281.

[289] Lindell Hart, "The Armies of Europe", Foreign Affairs, XV (January, 1937), 238. The weakened strength of Britain was also described by Air Commodor J.A. Chamier, "England and Air Power", Ibid., XIII (January, 1935), 309-318.

[290] Hart, loc. cit., p. 243.

[291] Ibid., p. 246.

[292] Ibid., p. 249.

[293] Ibid., p. 248.

determined the Munich settlement. Even if Russia was weakened in 1938, it could still be helpful. As Robert Coulondre commented on Chamberlain's rejection of Litvinov's proposals, however discredited was the U.S.S.R. it still represented a serious weight in the balance which could have allowed the Western Powers to bargain with Hitler from a stronger position.[294] This was proved by the fact that when the British leaders found themselves pledged to defend Poland, Greece, Turkey and Rumania, they forgot that the supposed military weakness of Russia had allegedly made her useless at the time of the Czechoslovakian crisis and they thought of negotiating with the U.S.S.R. Once more, however, prejudice proved stronger. Halifax for example did not even give a chance to the Soviets. He wrote that he never believed the Anglo-Russian negotiations of 1939 would succeed because Soviet policy was dominated by two principles, the desire to recover Russia's lost colonies "so that the dictator of Russia's policy would appear to his people as the Peter the Great of the twentieth century", and "the imperative need of

---

[294]Coulondre, op. cit., p. 134.

buying time" until the Russian economy and army would be ready for "the evil day which was probably bound to come, but which might be put off till conditions were less unfavourable."[295] Halifax then concluded:

> For those reasons I gravely doubted whether anything that we or the French could have said or done in 1939 would have had the smallest effect in leading Russia to accept.[296]

Templewood also well exemplified how mistrust dominated the Anglo-Russian negotiations of 1939 from the start:

> We had solid reasons for distrusting the Soviet. For more than twenty years, successive British Governments had suffered from Russian plots and intrigues. British party politics had been constantly poisoned by Russian propaganda. Russian secret agents were continuously exploiting any chance of stirring up trouble, Russian money was finding its way into the pockets of British agitators. The Zinoviev letter that created so resounding a sensation in 1924 was not an isolated instance of Russian interference in our affairs. The attempt to incite mutinies in the fighting services and strikes in the ranks of labour went on unabated during the whole period between the wars, and the Russian Embassy in London never ceased to be a centre of espionage and agitation.[297]

---

[295] Halifax, op. cit., p. 207.

[296] Ibid.

[297] Templewood, op. cit., p. 350.

With this in mind the British started the negotiations:

> Whilst we fully recognized that the prejudices of the past should not deflect our later policy, we should not have been human if we had not been influenced by this long record of Russian duplicity and hostility.[298]

The Russians also were suspicious. The British realized this was partly due to their own fault. Templewood thus wrote: "Stalin was equally suspicious. In particular, he had resented his exclusion from the Munich negotiations."[299] Still, the British did not do much to erase the Russian mistrust accumulated by the British policy of the preceding years. Neglect of the U.S.S.R. was again manifested in the choice of the envoy to Russia. One may wonder why Chamberlain refused Eden's offer to go himself. Eden had found that the negotiations had begun without "sufficent zest"[300] and he proposed on May 3rd to try to reach "a complete understanding with France and Russia."[301] However, in the place of Eden "who had made useful contacts with Stalin some years before"[302], William Strang, head of

---

[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Avon, op. cit: The Reckoning, p. 54.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Churchill, op. cit., p. 300.

the Central Department of the Foreign Office was chosen.[303]

> Mr. Strang, an able officer but without any special standing outside the Foreign Office, was entrusted with this momentous mission. This was another mistake. The sending of so subordinate a figure gave actual offence.[304]

One can appreciate the Russian feeling of humiliation when one thinks that in contrast the Prime Minister himself Chamberlain had seen it fit earlier to take the plane for the first time of his life[305] at almost seventy years of age to go and meet Hitler. British bias towards the Soviet Union was also expressed in the conditions and the delays imposed by the British Government. A careful study of the negotiations[306] reveal British reluctance to give to Soviet Russia the help demanded from it. When the assistance of Russia had to be "available, if desired, and would be afforded

---

[303] S.I.A., 1939-1948, p. 453.

[304] Churchill, op. cit., p. 300. Also, in S.I.A., op. cit., pp. 453-54:

> "It seems clear, at all events, that the choice of an official of Strang's rank as British emissary was resented by the Russians."

[305] Wheeler-Benner, op. cit., p. 106.

[306] A.J.P. Taylor, Englishmen and Others (London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., 1956), chap. 22: "The Alliance that Failed."

in such manner as would be found most convenient",[307] the British refused to agree at first to mutuel help because:

> His Majesty's Government might be drawn into a war not for the preservation of the independence of a minor European state but for the support of the Soviet Union against Germany.[308]

This, the British anti-Soviet feelings could not permit. Again and again throughout the negotiations the same reluctance to commit themselves to Russia dominated. Maisky said about the delays of the British answers that they were a deliberate "sabotage of the negotiations with the U.S.S.R."[309] Without going so far, one can understand that the British attitude was regarded as negative. It is interesting here to reproduce A.J.P. Taylor's chart of the rythm of British and Soviet proposals:[310]

British	Soviet	British	Soviet
14 April	18 April	1 July	3 July
9 May	14 May	8 July	9 July
27 June	2 June	17 July	17 July
15 June	16 June	23 July	23 July
21 June	22 June	17 August	

---

[307] Ibid., p. 158.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Maisky, op. cit., p. 104.
[310] A.J.P. Taylor, op. cit., p. 163.

"The contrast is startling. The Russians replied within three days, five days, six days; thereafter at breackneck speed, usually on the same day. The British took three weeks, twelve days, thirteen days and then a week or more on each occasion."[311] And Taylor suggested that if the Russians were first and foremost merely concerned to alarm Hitler and to drag negotiations as they were later accused to have done, then the delays should have come on their side.[312]

The 1939 Anglo-Soviet negotiations failed and so was wrecked the last chance for peace. Until the very end social interest and personal prejudice proved stronger than considerations of national interest. On March 21, 1938, one member of

---

[311] Ibid., p. 164.

[312] Ibid., p. 162.

Parliament had asked: "Can the Prime Minister give an assurance that he will not let ideological differences stand in the way of national interest?"[313] The answer proved to be negative.

---

[313] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCXXXIII (1938), 842.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938. Edited by William E. Dodd Jr., and Martha Dodd. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1941.

Great Britain. Foreign Office. Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939. 2nd series, Vol. VI and VII; 3rd series, Vol. I to Vol. VII.

Great Britain. Parliamentary Debates (5th series). (Commons.) Vol. CCC (1935) to Vol. CCCXL (1939).

Germany. Auswartges Amt. Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, series C Vols. I and II; series D, Vol. I to Vol. IV.

The Speeches of Adolf Hitler: April 1922-August 1939. Vol. II. Translated and edited by Norman H. Baynes. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.

Contemporary Sources

Economist, 1935 - 1939.

Foreign Affairs, 1936 - 1939.

Reader's Digest, 1935 - 1939.

Round Table, 1938 - 1939.

Spectator, 1934 - 1939.

The Times (London), 1935 - 1939.

Secondary Works

Albrecht-Carrie, Rene. France, Europe and the Two World Wars. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961.

Atlee, C. R. As It Happened. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1954.

Avon, The Rt. Hon. The Earl of. The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators. London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1962.

_____. The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning. London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1965.

Barghoorn Frederick C. "Some Recent Books on Russia and the Soviet Union", Journal of Modern History, XXI (June, 1949), 115 - 20.

Beloff, Max. The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929 - 1941. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Beck, Colonel Joseph. Dernier Rapport: Politique Polonaise, 1926 - 1939. Paris: Histoire et Societe d'Aujourd'hui, 1951.

Birkenhead, The Earl of. Halifax: The Life of Lord Halifax. London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., 1965.

Bonnet, Georges. Defense de la Paix. 2 vols. Geneve: Les Editions du Cheval Aile, 1946-47.

Bullock, Allan: The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin. Vol. I: Trade Union Leader, 1881-1940. London: Heinemann Ltd., 1960.

Carr, Edward Hallet. Condiditions of Peace. New York: The Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1942.

Chamberlain, Neville. Struggle for Peace. Annoted by Arthur Bryant. London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., n.d.

Churchill, Winston. The Second World War. Vol. I: The Gathering Storm. London: The Educational Book Co., Ltd., 1954.

Cole, G.D.H., and Raymond Postgate, The Common People, 1746-1938. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1938.

Cole, G.D.H. The Simple Case for Socialism. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1935.

_____. A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1897 - 1947, 2nd ed., revised. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1960.

Collis, Maurice. Nancy Astor: An Informal Biography. London: Faber and Faber, 1960.

Colvin, Ian. Vansittart in Office. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1965.

Cooper, Duff. Old Men Forget. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953.

Cookridge, E.H. The Third Man. New York: Berkeley Medallion Books, 1968.

Coulondre, Robert. De Staline a Hitler: Souvenirs de Deux Ambassades, 1936-1939. Paris: Hachette, 1950.

Craig, Gordon A., and Felix Gilbert. (ed.). The Diplomats, 1919-1939. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Cross, Colin. The Fascists in Britain. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963.

Dalton, Hugh. Call Back Yesterday: Memoirs 1887-1931. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1953.

_____. The Fateful Years: Memoirs 1931-1945. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1957.

Dirksen, Herbert von. Moscow Tokyo London: Twenty Years of German Foreign Policy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952.

Einzig, Paul. Appeasement Before, During and After the War. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1942.

Feiling, Keith. The Life of Neville Chamberlain. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1946.

Foot, Michael. Aneurin Bevan: A Biography. Vol. I: 1897-1945. London: Macgibbon and Kee Ltd., 1962.

Francois-Poncet, Andre. The Fareful Years: Memoirs of a French Ambassador in Berlin, 1931-1938. Translated by Jacques Leclerg. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940.

Gilbert, Martin. The Roots of Appeasement. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.

Graves, Robert, and Hodge, Alan. The Long Week End: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941.

Halifax, The Earl of. Fullness of Days. London: Collins, 1957.

Henderson, Neville. Failure of a Mission: Berlin 1937-1939. London: Hodder and Stroughton Ltd., 1940.

Hume, Sir Alec Douglas. "Munich", B.B.C. Jan 14, 1968.

Inglis, Brian. Abdication. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966.

Jones, Thomas. Lloyd George. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.

_____. A Diary With Letters, 1931-1950. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1966.

Kavalev, Lucy. The Astors: A Family Chronicle of Pomp and Power. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1966.

Kennan, George F. Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1961.

Lammers, Donald N. Explaining Munich: The Search for Motive in British Policy. Stanford University: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1966.

Launay, Jacques de. Major Controversies in Contemporary History. Translated by J.J. Buckingham. London: Pergamon Press, 1965.

Macmillan, Harold. Winds of Change, 1914-1939. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1966.

Maillaud, Pierre. The English Way. London: Oxford University Press, 1945.

Maisky, Ivan. Who Helped Hitler? Translated by Andrew Rothstein. London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1964.

Marwick, Arthur. The Explosion of British Society, 1914-1962. London: Pan Book Ltd., 1963.

McElwee, William. Britain's Locust Years, 1918-1940. London: Faber and Faber, 1962.

Mowat, Charles Loch. Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940. Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1956.

_____. "Some Recent Books on the British Labor Movement", Journal of Modern History, XVII (December, 1945), 356-66.

_____. "The History of the Labour Party: The Coles, the Webbs and some others", Journal of Modern History, XXIII (June, 1951), 146-53.

Namier, L. B. Diplomatic Prelude, 1938-1939. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1948.

_____. In the Nazi Era. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1952.

Nicolson, Sir Harold George. Diaries and Letters, 1939-1945. Edited by Nigel Nicolson. London: Collins, 1967.

Nogueres, Henri. Munich or the Phoney Peace. Translated by Patrick O'Brian. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965.

Orwell, George. The Road to Wigan Pier. London: Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1965.

_____. Homage to Catalonia. 2nd ed. revised. London: Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1959.

Pelling, Henri. The British Communist Party: A Historical Profile. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958.

Peretz, Martin. "Laski Redivivus", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. I, No. 2 (1966), 87-101

Potiemkine, V., et al. Histoire de la Diplomatie. Tome III: 1919-1939. Traduit par Levin, Tarr et Metzel. Paris: Librarie de Medicis, 1947.

Powers, Richard Howard. "Winston Churchill's Parliamentary Commentary on British Foreign Policy, 1935-1938", Journal of Modern History, XXVI (June, 1954), 179-182.

Reynolds, E. E., and Brasher, N. H. Britain in the Twentieth Century, 1900-1964. Cambridge: The University Press, 1966.

Rogger, Hans, and Weber, Eugen. The European Right: A Historical Profile. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965.

Rowse, A. L. All Souls and Appeasement. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1961.

Samuels, Stuart. "The Left Book Club", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. I, No. 2 (1966), 65-86.

Schmitt, Bernadotte E. "British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939", Journal of Modern History, XXI (December, 1949), 320 - 26.

_____. "British Foreign Policy, 1931-22", Journal of Modern History, XXIII (June, 1951), 153-57.

_____. "Munich", Journal of Modern History, XXV (June, 1954), 179-82.

_____. "1914 and 1939", Journal of Modern History, XXXI (June, 1959), 118 - 23.

Scott, William Evans. Alliance Against Hitler: The Origins of the Franco-Soviet Pact. Durham: Duke University Press, 1962.

Seaman, L. C. B. Post-Victorian Britain, 1902 - 1951. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1966.

Spender, Stephen. World Within World. London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., 1951.

Strachey John. The Menace of Fascism. New York: Covici, Friede, Inc., 1933.

_____. The Coming Struggle for Power. New York: The Modern Library, Inc., 1935.

_____. The Theory and Practice of Socialism. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1937.

Taylor, A. J. P. *Englishmen and Others*. London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1956.

_____. *The Origins of the Second World War*. London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1961 .

_____. *English History: 1914-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Templewood, Viscount of (The Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare). *Ambassador on a Special Mission*. London: Collins, 1946.

_____. *Nine Troubled Years*. London: Collins, 1954.

The History of The Times: The 150th Anniversary and Beyond, 1912 - 1948. Part II: *1921-1948*. London: The Office of *The Times*, 1952.

The Ribbentrop Memoirs. Introduction by Alan Bullock. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954.

Thomson, David. *England in the Twentieth Century, 1914 - 1963*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1965.

Thorne, Christopher. *The Approach of the War, 1938 - 1939*. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1967.

Toynbee, Arnold J. (ed.). *Survey of International Affairs*.(1935 - 1939) London: Oxford University Press, 1935-1940.

Vansittart, The Rt. Hon. Lord. *Lessons of My Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943.

_____. *The Mist Procession*. London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1958.

Vital, David. "Czechoslovakia and the Powers, September 1938", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.I, No. 4 (1966), 37 - 67.

Watt, D. C. Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century. London: Longmans, Greene and Co., Ltd., 1965.

_____. "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935: An Interim Judgement", Journal of Modern History, XXVIII (June, 1956), 155-75.

Webster, Sir Charles. "Munich Reconsidered: A Survey of British Policy", International Affairs, XXXVII (April 1961), 137 - 53.

Weinberg, Gerhardt L. "The May Crisis, 1938", Journal of Modern History, XXIX, (September, 1957), 213 - 25.

Wheeler-Bennet, John W. Munich: Prologue to Tragedy. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1948.

Williams, Francis. Ernest Bevin: Portrait of a Great Englishman. London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1952.

Young, Kenneth. Churchill and Beaver-brook: A Study in Friendship and Politics. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1966.