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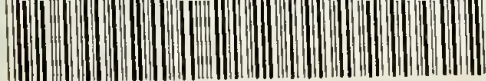
The attitude of the British Labour Party on foreign policy, 1931-1938.

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THE ATTITUDE OF THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY
ON FOREIGN POLICY, 1931-1938



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THE ATTITUDE OF THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY ON FOREIGN
POLICY, 1931-1938

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for
the degree of Master of Science

University of Massachusetts

Amherst, Massachusetts

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Introduction

This is a study of the attitude of the British Labour Party and of Labour groups generally, in Britain, on questions of foreign policy during the years, 1931-1938. It is easier, at this time, to arrive at a reasonably clear picture of the attitude and motives of His Majesty's opposition on questions of foreign policy than it is to interpret the policy of the Government, itself. Although the manifestations of the British Government's foreign policy are reasonably clear, it is difficult to discover the reasons and motives behind that policy. Undoubtedly there are many documents, still unavailable, which would help to explain the reasons which motivated the Government's foreign policy. The Government may often have had information, unknown to the general public, which had a direct bearing on British policy. For example, exact information as to Germany's military strength in 1938 may have dictated the policy of appeasement at Munich. On the other hand, there is material available which makes it possible to determine with reasonable assurance the Labour Party attitude on question of foreign policy, and the reasons for that attitude. The Labour Party was not handicapped by responsibility, and, therefore, could freely express its opinion. For that reason, the material necessary for a study of the Labour Party's attitude and the basis for that attitude is available, while some information necessary to a study of the British Government's foreign policy is still unavailable.

The central problem of the thesis is this: in what respect and to what extent did the attitude of the Labour Party on questions of foreign policy differ from the policies pursued by the British Government during 1931-1938. Some accounts, such as Europe on the Eve by

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Frederick L. Schuman, interpret British policy during these years as being merely an expression of conservative opinion as espoused by Conservative Party leaders. In any objective approach we must ask the question, "Is this interpretation correct, or did British policy reflect post-war attitudes held by all classes and groups in Great Britain?" A study of the attitudes of the Labour Party and Labour groups will help to answer this question.

Following are some of the important problems which will be considered:

1. Was the attitude of the Labour Party on questions of disarmament essentially different from that of the Government?
2. Did the Labour Party oppose the Government's policy of appeasement? If the Labour Party did, how soon and to what extent?
3. Did the Labour Party take a different position than the Government in regard to international collective security and the enforcement of existing international agreements?
4. Did the Labour Party differ from the Government in its attitude toward Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, and the Franco regime in Spain? If the Labour Party had been in power, would its policy have been radically different from that followed by the British Government?

The study has been confined to the attitude of the Labour Party and the groups which supported the Labour Party. The policies of the Independent Labour Party, the National Labour Party, and the Communist

Party have been omitted from consideration. Support for the Labour Party came from the Trade Unions and Socialist Societies, and, of course, from individuals outside of these groups. Most of the membership of the Labour Party came from the Trade Unions. The Labour Party had the support of many British voters, as is evident from the General Election of 1935. In this election, Labour candidates polled 8,326,131 votes, while the Conservative candidates polled 10,498,310 votes. As a result of the election the Conservatives had 378 members to Labour's 154 members in the House of Commons.¹ As in every other political party, there were members who did not support all of the program of the Labour Party. George Lansbury, for example, was a pacifist, so extreme in belief that he was opposed to any sanctions which might lead to war during the Italo-Abyssinian conflict. On the other hand, Colonel Wedgwood early in the period decided that the only way Britain could handle such situations was to rearm. Interesting as their statements may be, they were not representative of the Labour Party. More representative of the Party were such men as Clement Attlee, Hugh Dalton, and Morgan Jones. Resolutions of the Trades Union Congress or of the Labour Party's Annual Conference may usually be considered to represent a considerable number of the persons attending, and thus Labour's attitude. In both cases, however, it is usually true that the resolutions are introduced by the executive group of each body and accepted by the whole conference. This approval does indicate majority support for the policy of the executive groups. As both executive groups are closely associated with the Labour Party, such support is also support for the Labour Party.

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1. Dean E. McHenry, His Majesty's Opposition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1940, p. 190.

By considering the statements of Labour Party members in the Commons, the resolutions of the Trade Union groups, and the opinions in Labour publications, it has been possible, I believe, to arrive at some fairly tentative conclusions concerning the policies supported by British Labour.

This has been chiefly a source study. Almost all statements concerning Labour's foreign policy have been drawn directly from source references. Statements concerning the policy of the British Government have come from secondary works concerned with the international situation during the years 1931-1938. Four main sources have supplied the necessary information on Labour attitudes: (1) Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, which is in the Converse Library at Amherst College; (2) The Labour Magazine and its successor, Labour, found in the Mount Holyoke College Library; (3) The Annual Reports of the Proceedings of the Trades Union Congress; (4) The Reports of the Annual Conference of the Labour Party, which are available in the New York City Public Library.

In using The Labour Magazine and Labour, it was necessary to read all articles pertaining to foreign policy, and to find statements concerning the major topics of this study. This magazine is a joint publication of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. The editors preface their publication with a statement that the opinions of the authors are their own and do not represent the official policy of either organization. In spite of this, the magazine did offer illustrations of the opinions of Labour people. When articles by such persons as Clement Attlee are included, it is clear that the magazine was used to present the Labour viewpoint to the British people. The Annual Reports of the Proceedings of the Trades Union Congress and the Reports of the Annual

Conference of the Labour Party were valuable because each report showed clearly the opinions of the respective groups. Their resolutions adopted at each meeting indicated what courses of action met the delegates' approval. Comments made in support of, or in opposition to, the resolutions, showed whether a plan had unanimous or divided support.

Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, was the most important source. In the course of the debates, the Labour members of the House of Commons showed how and why they differed or agreed with the Government's policy. In the debates the Labour members often stated what they believed the correct policy should be in regard to the problems which faced Britain. In using the Commons Debates, it was necessary to secure a list of the Labour members of the House of Commons. A list was secured from the London Weekly Times following the general elections in 1931 and 1935. With this list it was possible to go to the index for a year of the Commons Debates and to find in what volume and column a Labour member's speech on foreign policy was printed. Although they must be examined critically, the Commons Debates present an excellent picture, both of Labour Party views which had wide support within the Party, and the views of minority groups.

Chapter I

Disarmament

Throughout most of the period 1931-1938, Labour supported international disarmament without taking into consideration the events and political philosophies which made the realization of this aim impossible. It was Labour's contention that disarmament brings peace and security, but the events of the 1930's have not borne out that contention. Rather it has been proved that armaments are necessary to bring security and to keep peace. International conditions in the 1930's made disarmament impracticable. The attitude and actions of the aggressor nations, Japan, Italy and Germany, made it imperative for other nations to have military strength sufficient to prevent undesirable actions. Yet, at that time, many sought disarmament when the acceptance of disarmament would have resulted in weakening the nations who sought to maintain international law, - the very law which those who advocated disarmament wanted to uphold.¹

Disarmament could have been effective only when prefaced by military force, or a threat to use force, preferably by collective action. Collective action could have taken two forms: military alliances, providing for a guarantee of mutual aid in the event that any part to the alliance were attacked, or an international police force, under a world organization

1. Robert W. Seton-Watson, Britain and the Dictators. New York: MacMillan, 1938, p. 10.

John F. Kennedy, Why England Slept. New York: W. Funk, inc., 1940, Chap. I-VII, XIII, passim.

Frederic H. Soward, Twenty Troubled Years 1918-1943. New York: Oxford University Press, 1944, Chap. II, passim.

C.G. Haines and R.J.S. Hoffman, Origins and Background of the Second World War. New York: Oxford University Press, 1943, Chap. VII, passim.

The introductory section, pp. i-iii is based largely on the works mentioned above.

such as the United Nations, to protect the community of nations or any member of that community from aggression. If either of these two forms of collective action had been provided, there would have been security for nations belonging to the system. Under the former each nation would have had to keep its armament strong enough so that combined with other nations it could have prevented an attack from succeeding. Under such a plan partial disarmament might have been possible; on the other hand, an increase in arms might have been necessary so that the coalition could be strong enough to meet any nation or coalition of aggression. If an international police force had been formed, it, too, would have needed sufficient strength to meet any attack. It would have made possible the reduction of any one nation's arms, but the cost of such a force might have exceeded the usual appropriations of the member nations. Neither alternative would have led, necessarily, to disarmament, yet only these two plans could have created security in a world where some nations were determined to use force to achieve their aims.

If a world organization had been responsible for the security of its members, that organization should have been given special powers, designed to prevent aggression. Assuming that all member states had disarmed, the system should have included a plan by which any nation could have been prevented from rearming. This could have been accomplished by creating an international commission to make sure the disarmament pact was not violated. This commission should have had the power to search for illegal arms and the means of producing arms. If violations had been found, then the commission should have had the power to destroy the arms and the factories which produced them. Such action would have made it impossible for one nation to create a force strong enough to defeat collective action.

The ideal situation would have been for all nations to belong to an organization which stood for both disarmament and collective security, and, most important, for each nation to support in practice the world organization and its ideals. Unfortunately, during the 1930's there were nations with isolationist tendencies outside the League, like the United States, and nations within the League of Nations which desired not collective strength but collective weakness. Except for the United States, these countries looked to disarmament with the hope that their relative strength would be increased and gave no support to any plan to provide security. It was security, however, which had to be provided with disarmament, or better still, before disarmament took place. Not until aggression is honestly renounced by all nations nor until collective strength is powerful enough to meet and defeat aggression is disarmament possible. Neither condition had been fulfilled by the 1930's. Disarmament, therefore, was a policy of idealism, not realism.

After World War I Britain reduced her arms to a very low level. She entered into naval agreements which limited her naval strength to a very great degree. Britain agreed to accept naval parity with the United States - the first time she had accepted equality with any nation. In 1922 at the Washington Naval Conference, battleship and aircraft carrier strength was placed at a ratio of 5-5-3 for Britain, the United States, and Japan respectively, with a ratio of 1.67 for France and Italy. No agreement was reached at that time for other types of naval craft. In 1930 as a result of the London Naval Conference, it was decided that the capital ship strength of Great Britain, the United States, and Japan was to be 15-15-9 respectively in 1936. The United States and Great Britain were to have approximately the same tonnage in cruisers, destroyers, and submarines,

but Japan's ratio was increased from 60% to 70% in cruisers and destroyers and Japan was given equality in submarines.¹

Many had high hopes that a reduction of other armaments would come from the League of Nations Disarmament Conference which first met at Geneva on February 2, 1932, but these hopes were not be realized. No compromise was found which would satisfy Germany's demand for equality and France's demand for security. As a result Germany withdrew from the Conference. She returned for a brief period, but withdrew permanently from the League in October, 1933. It was not until March of 1933 that the British government presented the Conference with a definite plan for reduction of arms. This plan included the French suggestion for short service armies, limited war material on a qualitative basis, and abolished military aircraft entirely. It was also proposed that a permanent disarmament commission with wide powers of inspection be established. The British plan fared no better than other plans presented to the Conference which ended in failure.

At home Britain reduced her armaments to a minimum, a policy which amounted to unilateral disarmament. This policy has been considered by many to have been extremely dangerous and partially responsible for the diplomatic defeat at Munich. From 1926 to 1931 appropriations for arms decreased from £ 116,000,000 to £ 110,000,000. The total appropriations for the years 1932-1934 showed no sharp increase, although a definite increase was voted in Commons in 1934. The appropriations approved in 1935 provided for an increased air force and increased efficiency of the army and navy, leading to a rearmament program in 1936. All military services were to be increased, particularly the air force. The years 1937 and 1938 saw these amounts increased to strengthen the military power of

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1. Haines and Hoffman, op. cit., p. 258.

Britain still more. The appropriation made in 1938, £ 342,564,000, was an increase of £ 64,879,000 over the amount voted in 1937. These examples show the decrease in armament expenditures until the threats of the dictators forced Britain to turn to rearmament.¹

The British Labour groups went through an evolution regarding armaments similar to the policy pursued by the Government, but with a difference in emphasis. Labour supported disarmament until it was more than apparent that current international events, and those which seemed imminent necessitated British rearmament. The arguments Labour offered as reasons for a disarmament program were chiefly three: (1) the effects of war upon civilization; (2) the internal effects of an armament program upon the nation, and (3) the benefits of peace to Labour. Since the Labour Party was not in power at this time, it could only urge the Government to follow certain plans at home and abroad to achieve disarmament. Because hopes ran very high that the Geneva Disarmament Conference would decrease world military forces, some of the plans put before the Disarmament Conference received Labour support. The Labour groups wanted any disarmament to apply to all military forces, some forms of which they wanted completely abolished. Their final objective was to secure the elimination of all national military forces. In their stead arbitration, sanctions, and the League of Nations would be used; and, if force were necessary, an international police force should settle disputes or prevent them from leading to war.

The desire to avoid war was one of the reasons British Labour favored a policy of disarmament. Labour believed that war is futile - that even victory in war would not bring peace. The one person in the Labour Party

1. Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 18 and 170

who put forward this claim most strongly was the pacifist, George Lansbury. During and after the Ethiopian affair he repeatedly made this point in the House of Commons. For instance, in 1935, he said, "I would like to call your attention to the fact that the piling up of armaments or the putting your faith in armaments has not saved the world from war, and even victory in war does not save us."¹ A year later he again stated that war would only start another war. A permanent peace could not result from war because war leaves the seeds of future wars.² Two or three other nations would be crushed, but soon they would rearm to start another war.³ Lansbury's solution was complete disarmament.

In support of Lansbury's viewpoint, Mr. G. Hall was of the opinion that ".... it is madness to assume that more armaments are required to preserve peace, to give security, and deter aggression.... Arms have never saved a nation from war nor have given security to either weak or strong nations against attack."⁴

Arthur Henderson also believed in the futility of war, but went further in insisting that it was not inevitable. He also added that there could be no progress until the war system had been stamped out. His substitute for armaments was the Pact of Paris.⁵

Clement Attlee summed up Labour's early attitude by saying, "We do not believe there is such a thing as national defense. We are not persuaded in the least that the way to safety is by piling up armaments. We think that you have to go forward to disarmament not to the piling up

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1. George Lansbury, House of Commons, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2891.
2. Ibid., CCCXVII, November 5, 1936, col. 306.
3. Ibid., CCCXXVIII, October 27, 1937, col. 162.
4. G. Hall, Commons, CCXCIX, March 14, 1935, col. 614.
5. Arthur Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy. London: Labour Party Transport House, July 1933, pp. 18-9.

of armaments."¹ By 1938, however, most of the Labour groups recognized the need for armaments, but still maintained that arms and war would not settle any problem justly or permanently. In general, the Labour viewpoint held that "Just treaties and generous behaviour still remain more powerful for Peace than all the arsenals."²

Labour stressed the horrors of war even more than its futility. If war came, they believed that it would be a conflict more horrible than the world had ever experienced. Labour made the gloomy prediction that the next war would destroy civilization, particularly western civilization. Mr. Henderson was of the opinion that, unless world peace could be built upon a firm foundation, sooner or later, "a cataclysm will come upon the world which will engulf all we care about western civilization which we have inherited from the past."³ At the 1933 Annual Conference of the Labour Party, the Right Honorable Sir Charles Trevelyan proposed a resolution, which was accepted, setting forth a policy to prevent war. One of his proposals was to publicize the appalling nature of the modern methods of warfare and their results.⁴ Two years later Noel-Baker warned in Labour that if the pre-war arms race was repeated, "our western civilization would collapse in ruin about our heads."⁵ Greenwood presented

the picture vividly by declaring that within sixty minutes of a declara-

1. Clement Attlee, Commons, CCCV, October 22, 1935, col. 46.
2. J.S. Middleton, "Labour's Lead for the Victory of Peace", Labour, February 1938, V, London: Transport House, p. 132.
3. Arthur Henderson, "Work for Peace During 1930" (Text for broadcast to U.S.) Labour Magazine, January 1931, IX, London: Transport House, p. 337.
4. Sir Charles Trevelyan, Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Conference of the Labour Party: held at Hastings, October 2-6, 1933. London: Transport House, p. 188.
5. Philip Noel-Baker, "'Rearmament' and Collective Security", Labour November, 1935, III, p. 62.
6. Arthur Greenwood, Jr., "The War Against War", Labour Magazine, July 1933, XII, p. 199.

tion by a European Power, bombing planes could be over England, and a single bomb could poison every living thing in an area of three-quarters of a square mile.¹ A writer in Labour states that the workers would be murdered by the tens of thousands, that any survivors would starve, and that hunger would be followed by disease. The wealthy would move to the country where they would be safe, but the workers would have to remain in the crowded cities which offer an easy target.² Class feeling was stressed as well as the danger of war.

Labour looked at the positive side of the picture as well, realizing the selfish as well as the humanitarian values of peace. The economic and political advantages of peace and a peace policy became a center of Labour thinking. In 1931 the President of the Trades Union Congress in his annual address recognized the economic advantages when he stated that success of the Disarmament Conference would go far to produce international conditions leading to the revival of industry and trade.³

While Labour believed that economic advantages would result from Disarmament, the party also used disarmament as a reason for criticizing Government policy. Thus Labour leaders could warn the country of possible dangers resulting from rearmament or place the blame for the need of arms upon the Government, in each case seeking to discredit the Government. In 1935 and thereafter, in advocating disarmament Labour was in direct opposition to the Government. In foreign affairs the Government was

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1. Arthur Greenwood, Jr., "The War Against War", Labour Magazine, July 1933, XII, p. 199.
 2. Alexander M. Thompson, "Beware of Imitations", Labour, November 1935, III, p. 52.
 3. "President's Address", Report of Proceedings at the Sixty-third Annual Trades Union Congress held at Bristol, September 7-11, 1931, Walter M. Citrine, editor; J. McIntosh, reporter; London: Cooperative Printing Society Ltd., p. 71.

attacked by Labour because, according to Labour, the Government's policies could not be trusted to keep England out of war. In 1935, Milner said that increased arms were driving England to war. He stated that the Government was sincere enough in believing that they would prevent war, but such a policy was one of "absolute despair".¹ Attlee said that he opposed the increase in arms in 1935, because there was no guarantee that the arms would be used in pursuit of a sensible foreign policy.² A statement appeared in a Labour editorial in 1938 to the effect that if the "Tories" had honored their obligations in foreign affairs, the wasteful spending for armaments could have been avoided during the period 1931-1938.³

In addition to the political advantage gained by placing themselves in direct opposition to the official government policy, the Labour Party felt that a peace policy was popular with the voters. It was hoped that this policy would bring the Labour Party into power. Also, peace was a necessary basis for the type of government they wished to provide. As Crompton said in 1933: "Socialism is impossible without settled peace..⁴" Henderson also was of this opinion.⁵ Attlee believed that socialism and peace must come together. He said, "We shall go into this fight with our

1. J. Milner, Commons, CCXCIX, March 13, 1935, col. 883.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCXII, May 21, 1936, col. 1428.

3. "All the World Over", Labour, May 1938, V, p. 195.

4. Crompton, "Chairman's Address", L.P. Annual Report, 1933. pp. 135-6.

5. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 2.

program of Socialism and Peace absolutely convinced that the true policy is that if you want Socialism you must have peace, and if you want peace you must have Socialism."¹ If the Labour Party could convince the electorate of this policy, it could come into power.

Since disarmament was the chief method advocated by the Labour Party in support of its peace policy, the Labour members used almost every opportunity to oppose new expenditures for armaments. Their first point of opposition was based on the idea that Britain could not win an armament race if one should develop. Mr. Baker said that an increase of aircraft would only force Germany to build more.² Attlee pointed out further that air-power threatened Britain's security. Still the Government would not consent to the abolition of military planes at the peace conference.³ Submarines were another serious threat to Britain. Despite Britain's superior fleet in European waters, the battleships and cruisers were only targets for submarines,⁴ Mr. Adams in the House of Commons made the same observation in 1935. He regarded as "sinister" the chance of the Germans building as many submarines as the English. Submarines had threatened British existence more than any other single weapon in World War I.⁵ England had just signed a naval treaty, permitting Germany to build a navy equal to 35 per cent of the tonnage of the royal navy, and even more submarines.⁶

Secondly, the Labourites emphasized the expense involved even if Britain should be able to win the armament race. Because they were

1. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVIII, November 1, 1937, col. 1669.
2. Noel-Baker, "'Rearmament' and Collective Security", Labour, November 1935, III, p. 63.
3. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVIII, November 1, 1937, col. 1669.
4. Crompton, pp. cit., pp. 135-6.
5. V. Adams, Commons, CCCIV, July 22, 1935, col. 1598.
6. Haines and Hoffman, op. cit., p. 363.

expensive, money for an increase in social services was lacking. In the President's address before the Trades Union Congress in 1931 the statement was made that the crushing burden of expenditures "upon armaments is one of the factors which keeps the world impoverished."¹ Attlee opposed an increase of £ 4,581,000 for the military services the same year. He pointed out that this increase came at a time when the Government was at its wit's end to balance the budget.² In 1931, the Labour Party made the following motion concerning the army estimates: "That this house is of the opinion that the expenditure on armaments is a crushing burden on the people of the world and a menace to the continuance of Peace, and that in the interests of mankind a speedy and substantial reduction should be made in war-like expenditure."³ Even Colonel Wedgewood, who soon came to favor a rearmament program, said that an enormous amount of money could be saved by not building the ships which the Government wanted to build.⁴ The same trend of thought existed in Attlee's mind when he asked, "Is the burden of defense to go on and crush us?"⁵ In 1937, Mr. Greenwood stated that rearmament had been paid for in increased taxes, a lower standard of living, and increased prices.⁶

The Labour party members of the House of Commons stressed the point that it would be better to cut the amount spent for arms and turn it over to the social services. This opinion was held throughout the period under

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1. "President's Address", op. cit., p. 71.
2. L. MacNeill-Weir, "The Rebellion of the Bright Young Things", Labour Magazine, April 1933, XI, p. 567.
3. L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 97.
4. Colonel J.C. Wedgewood, Commons, CCLXXXIII, November 27, 1936, col. 999.
5. Attlee, Commons, CCCXVII, November 12, 1936. cols. 1095-6.
6. A. Greenwood, Commons, CCCXXVIII, November 27, 1937, col. 92.

discussion. J. R. Clynes said in 1932 that the expenditures upon arms make impossible a high standard of health and education.¹ A couple of years later Lawson said it would be better to feed and clothe the poor than to increase the appropriations for the army.² Morgan Jones also believed that the costs of arms took money from the social services. He said before Commons in 1936 that if the expenditure upon arms went on, Britain's social services would be "in pawn" for a generation.³ A month later he said that rearmament puts up obstacles to social progress. He claimed that the House of Commons had no right to deprive future generations of social progress because of the confronting international relations.⁴

It may be well to examine Labour's reasons for advocating disarmament and consider their validity. Is war futile? In a world war many millions of people are killed, and many millions more die from disease and starvation which follow war. Too often, as Henderson pointed out, a defeated nation lives only to avenge its national pride and to regain lost territory, and another war is the result. On the other hand, victory in war for a nation may preserve a way of living and prevent its people from living in a condition of servitude. The history of the world would be quite different if victories had not been won at times when a particular civilization was threatened. The past twenty-five years would unquestionably be of a different character if the Central Powers had been victorious in World War I and had imposed terms similar to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on the western allies.

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1. J.R. Clynes, L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 229.
2. Lawson, Commons, CCLXXXVII, March 15, 1934, cols. 617-8.
3. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXVII, November 5, 1936, col. 371.
4. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXVIII, December 18, 1936, col. 2827.

The claim that huge armaments have never prevented war is not more true than the idea that disarmament by one nation prevents war. Britain followed a policy of disarmament but became involved in World War II. Other nations lacking means of defense such as Abyssinia and China also found this to be true. Unilateral disarmament does not guarantee freedom from war.

When the Labour members pointed out that arms cost money, they were right. A large portion of any nation's debts result from spending for armaments and the costs of war. If money spent for war and weapons had ever been spent in any nation for social services, there would undoubtedly be a better fed, clothed, educated, and housed people in that country than there are today. On the other hand, a rearmament program or a war practically wipes out unemployment and raises wages for labor. This, of course, often leads to inflation and its problems. The contention of Labour, however, that the costs of armaments are oppressive and that money is taken away from social services for these costs is true. A full rearmament program may leave little to be expended for social services. Since Labour was thinking primarily in terms of the welfare of the labouring man, it is not surprising that it opposed rearmament.

A few Labour members even wanted Britain to undertake disarmament by herself as an example. They hoped that this example would be followed by the nations of the world. The majority, however, held that it would be far better to achieve disarmament as a result of agreements with the other nations of the world.

One important change in Britain's armament program, which Labour advocated, was the nationalization of the manufacture of arms in Britain. During the entire period being discussed, continued agitation was carried on for this step. It was thought that nationalization would prevent profits

from being made by war, and thereby one of the causes of war would be removed. The change was advocated in articles in Labour Magazine by Arthur Greenwood, C. Delisle Burns, Francis Williams, and Fred A. Smith. Greenwood presented the following argument: "In our fight against war we must strive to destroy the influence of the armament manufacturers." He continued, "If armaments are necessary...then they must be produced under national control, and the industry must be freed from the intrigues of the Secret International of armaments manufacturers who, in common with capitalists are the only ones who profit from war."¹ C. Delisle Burns said that a future Labour Government would abolish the private manufacture and trade in arms.² Williams protested in 1936 "that in the biggest rearmament program of this country's peacetime history there is to be no real check on profiteering."³ Mr. Smith objected to the sending of armaments to nations with whom Britain might go to war. He did not want British men killed with British bullets. He added that potential enemies could not build up their stores of arms from their own resources.⁴ These examples show that Labour writers wanted to place the manufacture of arms under rigid government control. In addition,

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1. Greenwood, "The War against War", Labour Magazine, July 1933, XII, pp. 118-9.
2. C. Delisle Burns, "War and Labour Policy", Labour, September 1933, I, p. 9.
3. Francis Williams, "The National Government Backs an Arms Ramp", Labour, April 1936, III, p. 194.
4. Fred A. Smith, "Why Should We Arm Our Enemies", Labour, August 1937, IV, pp. 285-6.

the same thing was urged in the House of Commons by Gordon MacDonald,¹ Morgan Jones,² J. Milner,³ and Clement Attlee.⁴ Arthur Henderson expressed the same opinion before the Annual Conference of the Labour Party in 1933.⁵ Their speeches in the House of Commons show the unanimity of British Labour in desiring the nationalization of the manufacture of arms.

That government control of private manufacture of arms would aid disarmament was another viewpoint of Labour groups. If Britain did not add to its military forces during discussions of disarmament, that failure, too, would facilitate disarmament. Hall and Cripps were the persons who supported this idea. In 1933, Hall said that it would be a good "gesture" to the Disarmament Conference to "have some relaxation regarding the laying down of these cruisers."⁶ In 1935, Cripps said that unless the government would do its utmost to bring about a standstill agreement in armaments while the negotiations for limitations went on, Labour would not support the proposed increase of air forces. If an agreement was not forthcoming, then Britain alone should hold up its own expenditures for a specified time. Such a step would make it unnecessary to scrap the program in three months when limitations would come into effect.⁷

Labour members of Commons had other reasons for voting against the service estimates besides a standstill agreement. From 1931 to 1936 Labour

1. Gordon MacDonald, Commons, CCLXII, March 8, 1932, col. 1736.
2. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXX, July 5, 1933.
3. Milner, Commons, CCLXXXIII, November 27, 1933
4. Attlee, Commons, CCXCIII, November 8, 1934, col. 1293.
5. A. Henderson, L.P. Annual Report, 1933, p. 189.
6. Hall, Commons, CCLXXV, March 16, 1933, col. 2174.
7. Sir Stafford Cripps, Commons, CCCII, March 3, 1935, Col. 1460-2.

members of the Commons consistently opposed the estimates for the military and naval forces of Britain. On March 8, 1931, the Labour Party put forth a resolution asking that a "speedy and substantial reduction should be made in warlike expenditures" because they were a "menace to peace".¹ Two years later Morgan Jones opposed air armaments because they might cause the Disarmament Conference to fail.² Hall and Attlee opposed the £ 1,000,000 increase for work at Singapore.³ Hall also stated his determination to vote against the naval estimates.⁴ In 1934 Attlee declared his intention to vote against the increased air estimates because of the striking power of an air force. He preferred to see air forces internationalized.⁵ Lawson opposed the army estimates in the same year.⁶ In 1935, MacLean was on his feet in Commons to object to his country being committed to an air arms race. He denied the Air Minister's claim that the planes could be used for civil purposes, because the civil airplane could easily be changed to "a death dealing machine."⁷ Jones opposed the rearmament program because even if the navy were a hundred times stronger, Britain still would not be able to carry out its League duties any better.⁸ Attlee said in 1936 that the Labour Party could not support the Government's request for armaments because Labour did not trust the Government with the use of the arms

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1. L.P. Annual Report, 1931, p. 97.
2. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXIII, March 23, 1933, col. 1007.
3. Hall, Commons, CCLXXXVII, March 12, 1934, col. 61.
Attlee, Commons, CCLXXV, March 9, 1933, col. 1383.
4. Hall, Commons, CCLXXXVII, March 12, 1934, col. 62.
5. Attlee, Commons, CCLXXXVI, March 8, 1934, cols. 2047-8.
6. Lawson, Commons, CCLXXXVII, March 15, 1934, cols. 617-8.
7. N. MacLean, Commons, CCCIV, July 22, 1935, col. 1578.
8. M. Jones, Commons, CCCVII, December 5, 1935, col. 421.

or the building up of the efficiency of the services.¹ Even in 1937, there were still some disarmament die-hards in the Labour Party. At the Annual Conference of that year a resolution was introduced opposing support of the Government's rearmament policy. This resolution was supported by S. Harrison, T. Kennedy, H. Harvey, and Lord Ponsonby. The wind had changed, however, and the resolution was defeated.²

Some Labour members proclaimed that if the Labour Party won an election and thus controlled Commons, it would make this opposition to rearmament the official policy of Britain by passing a peace act. This peace act would provide all necessary machinery to make disarmament successful. It would cover all phases of disarmament and its corollaries. C. Delisle Burns discussed in Labour the action he believed was necessary: A Labour Government would pass an "Act through Parliament making it necessary for any British Government to submit its international disputes to peaceful settlement, preventing any British Government from the use of threats in a dispute, and enabling it to take immediate action when economic, financial pressure, or other measures" were required under the Covenant of the League. Henderson, in his Labour's Foreign Policy, described the provisions of the Peace Act in considerable detail. He would pass a Peace Act for two reasons: first, to make clear to the world Britain's position and to enlighten public opinion upon Britain's stand in regard to non-recourse to war, arbitration, and co-operation, with other nations to keep peace: and secondly, to show that the value of a law depends upon the belief that it will be enforced. Great Britain could do much to help that attitude. The Peace Act would

1. Attlee, Commons, CCCXII, July 21, 1936, col. 1428.

2. L.P. Annual Report, 1937, pp. 196-7.

3. Burns, op. cit., p. 9.

provide that in all cases, without exception, the Government would submit its international disputes to peaceful settlement, and that at no time would the Government mobilize its armed forces except to repel actual aggression, and that the Government should have full powers to take all economic, financial and other measures required to fulfill all obligations under the Covenant, the Locarno Treaties, and other instruments by which Britain may be bound.¹ In 1934, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress said that the next Labour Government would bring before Parliament a bill to accomplish all that Henderson had proposed.²

Although there was some opposition to rearmament, and some support for a Peace Act, there is only a little support recorded for a policy of unilateral disarmament. In the President's address before the Trades Union Annual Congress in 1931 there is a statement to the effect that a Labour Government would set a good example in the matter of armaments.³ The same year Sir Ben Turner asked, "Is it feasible? I recognize that amongst a great mass of the people themselves they have not brought themselves to the idea that we can afford to do without war weapons; but I believe there is a great moral force behind example - and if Britain led the way, I think it would be safer for Britain and safer for the world."⁴ Turner was speaking in opposition to the resolution proposed at the Labour Party's Conference by Hugh Dalton and supported by Arthur Henderson. The resolution was, nevertheless, adopted by the conference; it called for a "reduction of armaments by mutual agreement."⁵ The idea of multilateral disarmament expressed in

1. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 19-20.

2. T.U.C. Report, 1934, p. 159.

3. "President's Address", op. cit., p. 71.

4. Sir Ben Turner, L.P. Annual Report, 1931, p. 186.

5. L.P. Annual Report, 1931, p. 42.

this resolution was the one which the majority of British Labour supported.

Attlee stated clearly the Labour Party's opposition to disarmament by Britain alone: "As a party we do not stand for unilateral disarmament."¹ It was disarmament of all nations by an international agreement which British Labour and the Labour Party stood for. Eventually some hoped to achieve total disarmament.

Such words as "drastic" and "substantial" frequently described the extent of disarmament desired. W. Arnold-Forster made such a statement: "...I want immediate limitation and drastic and progressive reduction of the armaments of all nations..."² Burns said that one action of a future government would be a "drastic reduction of British armaments under international agreement..."³ Arthur Henderson said exactly the same thing except that the "drastic" disarmament would be accomplished by "international agreement."⁴ Numerous other examples could be quoted. What Labour specifically wished to accomplish was best summed up by Morgan Jones in his proposals which he desired to have presented at a Disarmament Conference meeting at Geneva:

"(a) the general abandonment of all air bombing

"(b) the general abolition of all weapons at present forbidden

Germany by the Treaty of Versailles

"(c) the international control of civil aviation

"(d) an immediate reduction by all nations in their expenditure
upon armaments

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1. Attlee, Commons, CCCII, May 2, 1935, col. 375.

2. W. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, p. 350.

3. Burns, op. cit., p. 9.

4. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 21-2.

- "(e) the suppression of all private manufacture and trade in armaments
- "(f) international inspection and control of armaments in all countries
- "(g) the creation of an international police force; and
- "(h) the definition of aggression on the basis of the proposals made by the Conference committee."¹

A disarmament conference seemed to Labour in Britain the only way to achieve these objectives. They believed that all nations should sit down at a conference table under the auspices of the League of Nations and reach an agreement. Here all phases of disarmament would be discussed and settled for the benefit of the world.

All organized groups of Labour supported the Disarmament Conference of 1932-1934. Arthur Henderson who had been Foreign Secretary in the Labour Government expressed his support at the Labour Party's Annual Conference in this manner: "I believe if you are ever going to get any serious measure of disarmament, you will get it through the joint efforts put forward through the League of Nations. The Disarmament Conference is a League of Nations Conference and if we go to the League of Nations Conference and put up the strong case that can be put up by international agreement, I believe we are more likely to succeed..."² He was urging this as the better method as compared to unilateral disarmament. At the same meeting a resolution was reported which expressed unqualified support for the Disarmament Conference by the Executive Committee of the Labour Party. This resolution which was adopted April 21, 1931, said, "The National Executive of the Labour Party records its conviction that the General Disarmament Conference which will be held early next year is one of the most momentous events in the history of the

1. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXI, November 13, 1933, col. 579.

2. Henderson, L.P. Annual Report, 1931, p. 187.

World, and especially of European civilization."¹

Hugh Dalton at the Party's Conference moved, among other things, that "It [the conference] welcomes the opportunity afforded by the World Disarmament Conference to deal effectively with this question [disarmament]..."² This resolution was adopted by the Labour Party's Conference.³

It was in 1931, also, that the Trades Union Congress put its support into a resolution which was adopted. The resolution expressed the belief of the Congress that the future of the League of Nations would be "jeopardized" unless the Disarmament Conference of the next year reached an agreement upon disarmament.⁴ In 1934, the National Joint Council wanted the British Government to put forward certain proposals at the Conference to aid disarmament.⁵

In the House of Commons the Labour members strongly supported the Disarmament Conference. Attlee stated that it would be a "tragedy" if the Disarmament Conference resulted in rearmament.⁶ Here is a good indication that the progress of the Conference was not regarded with favor. In general many of the Labour members of Parliament seemed to be most concerned with the conference when it appeared that nothing would be accomplished. In 1934, Cocks asked for a statement on the position of the Disarmament Conference.⁷ In

1. Henderson, L.P. Annual Report, 1931, p. 42.

2. Ibid., p. 184.

3. Ibid., p. 187.

4. T.U.C. Report, 1931, p. 374.

5. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1934, pp. 156-7.

6. Attlee, Commons, CCLXXXIV, December 21, 1933, col. 1501.

7. F.S. Cocks, Commons, CCXC, June 4, 1934, col. 553.

1935 Morgan Jones asked the Government to call the Disarmament Conference again--to give evidence that the idea of disarmament had not been given up.¹

MacLean, a week and a half later, also wanted a conference to discuss armament.² He was followed by Lansbury with the same request.³

As late as 1936 Grenfell asked for information on the position of the Disarmament Conference.⁴ He probably needed no answer.

When the discussion of the Hoover Proposals, which consisted of the suggestions that all existing arms be reduced by one third, took place at the Disarmament Conference, considerable approval was expressed. Before Commons on June 28, 1932, Lansbury called the Hoover Proposals the "most magnificent proposals that have yet been put forward."⁵ The Labour Magazine in an editorial said that these proposals would save from £ 2,000,000,000 to £ 3,000,000,000 annually. The editorial said that Hoover's proposals were the "minimum programme" which the working classes would accept. Even these would have to be supplemented by other measures.⁶ The same editorial said that it was the only "simple and comprehensive proposal devised to reduce the number of soldiers on the continent of Europe."⁷

That the Labour Party supported whole-heartedly these proposals can be proved by following the progress of the Annual Conference of the Labour

1. M. Jones, Commons, CCCIV, July 11, 1935, col. 609.

2. MacLean, Commons, CCCIV, July 22, 1935, col. 1584.

3. Lansbury, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2892.

4. D.R. Grenfell, Commons, CCCVIII, February 4, 1936, col. 56.

5. Lansbury, Commons, CCLXVII, June 28, 1932, col. 1773.

6. "Editorial", Labour Magazine, July 1932, XI, p. 123.

7. Ibid., p. 122.

Party in 1932. The executive report to the Labour Conference contained this: "The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party cordially welcomes President Hoover's proposals for immediate disarmament. They regard these proposals...as a substantial first step towards total disarmament..." The statement continued to say that the same persons "express the hope that everything will now be done to secure the immediate adoption of President Hoover's proposals as a minimum programme."¹ This statement was made on June 23, 1932. At the same conference a resolution was introduced by J.R. Clynes. Part of this resolution was devoted to the Hoover Proposals in these words: "The Conference is of the opinion that loyal and effective co-operation with the United States on the basis of President Hoover's proposals is in the highest interests of the world peace..."² This resolution was carried by unanimous vote.³ It was only during the year of 1932 that this active support was carried on. It is interesting, however, that Morgan Jones as late as 1937 said that the Hoover proposals could have been accepted.⁴ He meant by this statement that the Hoover proposals were workable and should have been accepted by the Disarmament Conference of 1932-34. His statement is an indication of the impression which the Hoover Proposals made upon the Labour Party.

Another plan which received some support from Labour was that all nations

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1. "Executive Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 60.
2. L.P. Annual Report, 1932, pp. 228-9.
3. Ibid., p. 232.
4. M. Jones, "Don't Despair of Disarmament", Labour, February 1937, IV, p. 139.

disarm to the level of Germany as imposed upon her by the Treaty of Versailles. This would have limited greatly armies and navies, and abolished some of the means of waging war. The treaty limited Germany to an army of 100,000 men.¹ W. Arnold-Forster, writing in the Labour Magazine gave his whole-hearted support to the Federation of the League of Nations Societies' proposal to abolish all weapons prohibited by the Peace Treaties.^{2 & 3.} In the House of Commons Cocks said that the nations at the Disarmament Conference should agree to "abandon every weapon forbidden to Germany".⁴ Jones and Milner supported this view and the latter wanted Britain to take the lead in proposing this plan.⁵ These members of Parliament were evidently following the position taken by the Labour Party at its annual conference in 1933. At this conference J.R. Clynes proposed that the Party's conference take this stand on disarmament.⁶ His proposal was accepted by the conference.⁷

If all nations had agreed to accept the degree of armaments which Germany possessed, there would have been equality among all nations. W. Arnold-Forster quoted and supported the resolution of the I.F.T.U. and L.S.I. concerning equality, in his article published in the Labour Magazine. The resolution said, "The system of Disarmaments will only be complete and durable if it

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1. Victor L. Albjerg and Marguerite Hall Albjerg, From Sedan to Stresa, Europe Since 1870. New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1937, pp. 743-4.
2. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.
3. Arnold-Forster, "The Crisis in Disarmament", Labour, April 1934, I, p. 205.
4. Cocks, Commons, CCLXX, November 10, 1932, col. 1571.
5. Milner, Commons, CCLXXXIII, November 27, 1933, col. 629-30.
M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXI, November 13, 1933, col. 579.
6. J.R. Clynes, L.P. Annual Report, 1933, p. 192.
7. L.P. Annual Report, 1933, p. 194.

is based on equality of rights and duties."¹ The Trades Union Congress
Annual Report carried the same statement.² Arnold-Forster still held to
 this principle in 1934.³

Not only did Labour want equality in rights and duties but also equality
 of armaments - in disarmament. This idea hit straight at the idea of
 keeping Germany at the bottom. Arnold-Forster openly said that he believed
 in equality for Germany in arms. He continued to say that disarmed countries
 should not be permitted to rearm. "Obviously, it is most desirable we should
 equalize by leveling down,..."⁴ The Trades Union Congress agreed with the
 joint resolution of I.F.T.U. and L.S.I. which Arnold-Forster discussed.⁵
 In 1935, Morgan Jones stated in the House of Commons that Germany should
 have been granted equality by disarmament.⁶

Another phase of disarmament which Labour wished to see come about was
 a scheme of international control of the manufacture of arms. Cripps, speak-
 ing before Commons, proposed that both the manufacture and the sale of arms
 be placed under international control.⁷ It may be assumed that the instru-
 ment of international control would be the League of Nations. Jones was of

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1. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine,
 December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.
 2. "Disarmament Resolution", T.U.C. Report, 1931, pp. 241-2.
 3. Arnold-Forster, "The Crisis in Disarmament", Labour, April 1934, I, p. 205.
 4. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine,
 December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.
 5. "Disarmament", Resolutions, T.U.C. Report, 1931, pp. 241-2.
 6. Jones, Commons, CCCIV, July 11, 1935, col. 609.
 7. Cripps, Commons, CCLXXVI, March 23, 1933, col. 607.

the same opinion, enlarging upon the suggestion to include the suppression of all private manufacture and trade in armaments.¹ Not all the Labour members of Commons believed that this would be accomplished with ease.

Cocks said that an international system for the control and inspection of arms would only bring about evasion. He was of the belief that no country would divulge to international police the location of any arms or factories.²

It may be assumed, however, that Cocks was in the minority because Attlee supported this plan. Attlee criticized the Government because it opposed the proposal of the United States to inspect the private manufacture of arms.³

A resolution of the Labour Party Annual Conference, which was adopted in 1933, called for the suppression of all private manufacture of arms.⁴

The magazine Labour printed articles which included demands for international control of armaments. C. Delisle Burns said that the abolition of the manufacture of arms under international agreements would be one of the first steps of a Labour Government.⁵ W. Arnold-Forster wrote that "...we ought to support the French in pressing for suppression of manufacture of arms for private profit. Failing that we ought to at least support the French scheme for control."⁶ In the same article Forster said that an international agreement for disarmament must provide for the abolition of the private manufacture of arms.⁷ Henderson wanted to control the sale of

1. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXI, November 13, 1933, col. 579.

2. Cocks, Commons, CCXCV, November 23, 1934, col. 321.

3. Attlee, Commons, CCXCIX, March 11, 1935, col. 39.

4. Clynes, L.P. Annual Report, 1933, p. 192.

5. Burns, op. cit., p. 9.

6. Arnold-Forster, "The Crisis in Disarmament", Labour, April 1934, I, p. 204.

7. Loc. cit.

arms by a system similar to that used to control the sale of drugs by a convention.¹

Another check upon the building of arms of all types which Labour wished to obtain was a cut or a check on budgetary allotments of all nations for armaments. The Labour Magazine printed the draft resolution of the National Executive of the Labour Party Annual Conference of 1931 which expressed this desire. This resolution urged the British Government to "put forth at that Conference (Disarmament Conference) proposals for drastic and far-reaching reductions, by international agreement, in the numbers and equipment of all armed forces and in military, naval, and air expenditure."² The proposal was adopted at the Labour Party's Conference.³ W. Arnold-Forster, as might be expected, supported a cut in appropriations for armaments. He placed his support behind the Federation of the League of Nations Societies' proposal to cut world spending for armaments by twenty-five per cent.⁴ This twenty-five per cent was the only definite clue as to how much Labour wanted to reduce spending for arms.

The Trades Union Congress also favored cutting expenditures for arms. It supported a petition, representing the British Trades Union Movement, the Labour Party, and the British Cooperative Union, which was sent to the Prime Minister and Arthur Henderson (who was President of the Disarmament Conference). Included in the petition was a request for a reduction of expenditures for war materials.⁵ In 1934, the National Joint Council, on June 28th, called upon the British Government to submit proposals for

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1. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 21-3.
 2. "Labour Constructive Proposals - Draft Resolutions for the Scarborough Conference" submitted by the National Executive of the Labour Party to the Scarborough Conference, Labour Magazine, October 1931, X, p. 263.
 3. L.P. Annual Report, 1931, p. 187.
 4. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.
 5. "International" T.U.C. Report, 1932, p. 174.

"immediate reductions of expenditures" for arms to the Disarmament Conference.¹ These examples show clearly that the Trades Union Congress and the groups which it represented wished to reduce the amount of money for arms.

This trend of thought is reflected in the speeches of some Labour members in the House of Commons. Morgan Jones said, in discussing disarmament, that there should be "budgetary limitations, for that, after all, is not an unimportant part in the problem."² Four months later he included the same idea in his proposals which he wanted the Government to send to the Disarmament Conference.³ Sir Stafford Cripps also suggested that the funds available for arms be cut at the Disarmament Conference.⁴

Arthur Henderson supported a limitation upon the amount of money spent on arms. In his Labour's Foreign Policy he said that "strict limitation of budgetary expenditure upon armaments" would be one of the things which the next Labour Government would try to bring about.⁵ This, of course, would have been included in a Disarmament Treaty.

There is a wealth of printed material which states Labour's desire to achieve disarmament. On the other hand, there are only a few men who had definite ideas as to what they wanted to reduce or abolish. It is only by examining considerable material and examining the support of the various plans that one is able to get a complete picture of just what the Labour groups desired in the way of disarmament.

In regard to the army, Labour had proposals which touched upon peace time effectives, the period of service, the size of guns, tanks and of the army.

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1. "International", T.U.C. Report, 1934, pp. 156-7.
 2. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXX, July 5, 1933, col. 443.
 3. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXI, November 13, 1933, col. 579.
 4. Cripps, Commons, CCLXXVI, March 23, 1933, col. 607.
 5. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 21-3.

It was pretty well agreed that the size of an army should be limited or, at least, that all armies should be reduced. The Trades Union Congress said that the peace time effectives must be reduced.¹ In 1932, a petition was presented to the Prime Minister in which a request was included for an "immediate and substantial reduction of effectives..."² The National Executive of the Labour Party in 1931 submitted resolutions to the annual conference of the Party which included a proposal for "drastic and far-reaching reduction by international agreement, in the numbers and equipment of all armed forces..."³ This resolution was proposed to the Conference by Hugh Dalton; its acceptance was voted.⁴ These are the only comments made in Labour publications which refer directly to the size of national armies.

Labour also hoped that some agreement could be reached on the terms of enlistment in a national army. The Trades Union Congress hoped that an agreement could be reached at the Disarmament Conference on the "period of service in the conscript armies."⁵ The Hoover Proposals made no mention of how long enlistments should be. The Treaty of Versailles fixed enlistments for enlisted men at fifteen years and for officers at twenty-five years.⁶

It is difficult to know exactly how long Labour thought enlistments should be. They did, however, hope to modify the conscription policies of other nations such as France. It is more than likely that Labour in Britain would have supported the plan to reduce all armies to 100,000 men and fix

1. "Political aspects of the Unemployment Crisis", T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 133.

2. "International", T.U.C. Report, 1932, p. 174.

3. "Labour Constructive Proposals", T.U.C. Report, 1932, p. 263.

4. L.P. Annual Report, 1931, pp. 184 and 187.

5. T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 133.

6. Albjerg and Albjerg, op. cit., pp. 743-4.

enlistments for enlisted men and for officers for a specified time, as indicated by its support of the proposal to reduce all arms to Germany's level.¹

Labour also wished to take some action in regard to reserves. The Trades Union Congress said that "reserves available for mobilization" should be reduced.² W. Arnold-Forster said that disarmament at the outset would be unequal because of conscription. He added, "Some means must be found to mitigate this inequality which is given to the Powers with short service-enlistment reserves available for rapid expansion in wartime."³ It is hard to believe that Labour wanted conscription to continue, yet the period of service in conscript armies is mentioned. Probably the truth is that they opposed conscription; but, as Arnold-Forster suggests, they thought it could not be abolished at this time.

Although the size of an army is important, Labour also saw that an army's equipment might make aggression possible, as well as its size. Henderson wanted to abolish all heavy artillery and tanks.⁴ Arnold-Forster agreed with Henderson's suggestion of action as a means of carrying out the provision in which the victors promised to disarm.⁵ The Hoover Proposals also proposed to abolish "all mobile land guns of more than six inch calibre" and to prohibit tanks.⁶ From the enthusiasm expressed for the armament proposals of the Peace Treaties and the Hoover Proposals, it is probable

1. Albjerg and Albjerg, op. cit., pp. 743-4.

2. "Disarmament", T.U.C. Annual Report, 1931, pp. 241-2.

3. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.

4. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 21-2.

5. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.

Arnold-Forster, "The Crisis in Disarmament", Labour, May 1934, I. p. 204.

6. William Starr Meyers, The Foreign Policies of Herbert Hoover, 1929-1933. New York: C. Scribners Sons, 1940, p. 142.

that all Labour groups were in accord with the plan to abolish tanks and to limit the size of heavy guns to six inches calibre or less. Arnold-Forster thought that reductions of arms should take place to the "point of abolition of all arms except such as may still genuinely be required to prevent, or in the last resort to put a stop to, breaches of the public peace."¹

The navies of the world would also be reduced. Battleships and submarines were the chief targets for abolition. The Trades Union Congress went on record in 1931 as favoring a reduction of all navies.² Sir Stafford Cripps believed that "naval disarmament" should be part of disarmament.³ W. Arnold-Forster supported the Federation of the League of Nations Societies' proposal to proceed in negotiations on the basis that all naval vessels be limited to the size imposed upon Germany.⁴ Arthur Henderson was of the same opinion in his Labour's Foreign Policy.⁵

From the above example it is clear that the Labour groups wished to abolish all warships over 10,000 tons and all submarines. The Treaty of Versailles permitted Germany to have the following navy: six battleships, six cruisers, and twelve torpedo ships. Germany was permitted to have no submarines.⁶ This plan would have reduced many navies to token forces.

The Hoover Proposals were not so far-reaching; they were chiefly plans to reduce existing navies by one-third and abolish some types of ships. Hoover suggested that aircraft carriers and submarines be abolished; that Japan, Britain, and the United States reduce cruisers, destroyers,

1. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, p. 350.

2. "Disarmament", T.U.C. Report, 1931, pp. 241-2.

3. Cripps, Commons, CCLXXVI, March 23, 1933, col. 607.

4. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.

5. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 21-2.

6. Albjerg and Albjerg, op. cit., pp. 743-4.

and battleships by one-third; and that Italy and France build no new ones.¹

If there was any one weapon which Labour groups most wanted to abolish, it was military aircraft. All sections were united in desiring particularly to have bombing planes outlawed. Attlee was one of those who thought that Hitler's proposal to agree to non-aggression pacts, to fix limits on armaments and to place "restrictions" on bombing planes should be considered by a Disarmament Conference.² MacLean stated that he supported a plan to reduce the air forces of other nations to the size of England's and then to reduce all air forces by another one-third.³ Both of these men later made other statements calling for the abolition of all national air forces.

In the House of Commons Attlee, MacLean, Lansbury, Jones, Cripps, Milner, and Adams all wanted to see every national air force destroyed. Morgan Jones said he wanted "the complete abandonment of all air bombing."⁴ Sir Stafford Cripps declared that an increased air force would not give any protection to Britain. The only sound defense would be to "abolish aerial warfare altogether."⁵ Attlee agreed, saying that although air power threatened England's security, the government did not try to abolish military aircraft at the Disarmament Conference.⁶ The Trades Union Congress also went on record as favoring the abolition of national air forces. It supported a joint resolution of the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. calling for the abolition of national air forces "without delay" in 1931.⁷ In 1934, the

1. Meyers, op. cit., p. 142

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCII, May 22, 1935, col. 374.

3. MacLean, Commons, CCLXXV, March 14, 1933, col. 1809.

4. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXI, November 13, 1933, col. 579.

5. Cripps, Commons, CCCII, May 22, 1935, col. 471.

6. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVIII, November 1, 1937, col. 328.

7. "Disarmament", T.U.C. Annual Report, 1931, pp. 241-2.

Congress said that in order to achieve international security "all national air forces" must be abolished.¹

The Labour Magazine and its successor, Labour, carried articles by Noel-Baker, MacNeil, Weir, Smith, and Arnold-Forster which advocated the abolition of national air forces. Walter R. Smith wrote: "It is of very particular importance to get rid of the air armaments which the nations now maintain."² This statement is characteristic of others in the publication.³ The Labour Party Annual Reports mentioned this phase of disarmament only once, in 1933, when the report included a request for the abolition of military aircraft. It is a little surprising that there were not more requests in view of the activity of the Labour Members of Parliament on the behalf of destroying national air forces.

One other weapon which Labour wished to abolish was poison gas. The Trades Union Congress expressed its approval of the joint resolution of the I.F.T.U. and I.S.I. which included a statement calling for the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological munitions.⁴ Arnold-Forster seconded the Federation of League of Nations Societies' plan which included the prohibition on chemical warfare.⁵ Noel-Baker also said that since there was no protection against gas, it should be abolished.⁶

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1. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1934, p. 159.
2. Walter R. Smith, "The Way to Peace", Labour, December 1934, II, p. 78.
3. Arnold-Forster, "The Crisis in Disarmament", Labour, May 1934, I, p. 204.
Noel-Baker, "'Rearmament' and Collective Security", Labour, November 1935, III, p. 63.
MacNeill-Weir, op. cit., p. 568.
4. "Disarmament", T.U.C. Report, 1931, pp. 241-2.
5. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, pp. 350-2.
Arnold-Forster, "The Crisis in Disarmament", Labour, May 1934, I, p. 204.
6. Noel-Baker, "'Rearmament' and Collective Security", Labour, November 1935, III, p. 63.

It was hoped that the limitation of some arms and the abolition of others would gradually lead to the end of all national armies and navies. According to Arnold-Forster and others "complete" or "total" disarmament was the final objective. Arnold-Forster wanted the reductions to be "carried as rapidly as possible to the point of abolition of all arms except such as may genuinely be required to prevent, or in the last resort to put a stop to, breaches of public peace."¹ The petition of the British Labour Party and the British Trades Union Movement called for a reduction which would lead "to complete, universal, and controlled disarmament at the earliest possible moment."²

At the Annual Conference of the Labour Party in 1933, J.R. Clynes introduced a resolution which was accepted. This resolution called for the "total disarmament of all nations".³ Henderson, before the Conference of the next year, stated that "Labour's policy is directed towards the abolition of war...by...the substitution of an international police force under the League's authority for national armed forces."⁴

In the House of Commons Attlee and Grenfell expressed the desire to see partial disarmament give way to complete disarmament. Grenfell said that he wanted complete disarmament from the Disarmament Conference.⁵ In 1935, Attlee said that the Labour Party's policy was to reduce and then abolish all armaments.⁶

The achievement of complete disarmament would not automatically end

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1. Arnold-Forster, "Our Case in the Disarmament Campaign", Labour Magazine, December 1931, X, p. 350.
 2. "International", T.U.C. Report, 1932, p. 174.
 3. L.P. Annual Report, 1933, pp. 192 and 194.
 4. L.P. Annual Report, 1934, p. 154.
 5. Grenfell, Commons, CCLXXVI, March 23, 1933, col. 525.
 6. Attlee, Commons, CCCII, May 22, 1935, col. 370.

The achievement of complete disarmament would not automatically end the possibility of international disputes. Since these disputes could not be settled by war, some other means had to be provided. Labour, therefore, supported arbitration under the League of Nations, economic sanctions, and an international police force to maintain international order. Only one of these - the International Police Force - will be discussed here because the others are treated in later chapters.

This international force would provide all the protection necessary. It was to be under the authority of the League, or, in other words, under the direction of all nations who were members of the League. Henderson said that such an organization was one of the steps in Labour's policy to abolish war, and emphasized the point that this force would be substituted for national armed forces.¹ It was the opinion of most Labour leaders that this police force should be established as a result of a disarmament conference. Jones included the proposal for a police force among several to be made to the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1933.² Mander asked that the Foreign Secretary call upon the President of the Disarmament Conference to call it together to achieve reduction of arms and "special consideration as to the possibility of establishing an international air police force."³ During Italy's attack on Ethiopia, V. Adams said that an international force would have made it impossible for Mussolini to "flout the League".⁴

In Labour's support of disarmament there is much evidence that it had

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1. Henderson, L.P. Annual Report, 1934, p. 154.
2. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXI, November 13, 1933, col. 576.
3. G. Mander, Commons, CCCIII, July 3, 1935, col. 1841.
4. "The International Situation", L.P. Annual Report, 1936, p. 182.

the support of the British people. Interesting evidence on this point is found in the Peace Ballot of 1936 and another poll conducted in 1933. In this latter poll, according to the Labour Party's Annual Report, 34,000 questionnaires were sent out to all classes of people. One-half of the questionnaires were returned; 57% of those returned favored unconditional, probably unilateral, disarmament by Great Britain.¹ The more famous poll was the Peace Ballot which was started by the League of Nations Union and carried out by a "National Declaration Committee" which included the Union and thirty-eight other organizations. The questions and results were as follows:

"Are you in favor of an all around reduction in armaments by international agreement?

Yes - 10,470,469; No - 862,775; Doubtful - 12,062

Abstentions - 213,389.

"Are you in favor of an all around abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement?

Yes - 9,533,558; No - 1,689,786; Doubtful - 16,976;

Abstentions - 318,845.

"Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?

Yes - 10,417,329; No - 775,415; Doubtful - 15,076;

Abstentions - 351,345."²

It is not surprising, in view of the results of the ballots, that British Labour favored disarmament; indeed, the Peace Ballot influenced the Government's policy. As the minority party, the Labour Party could not afford to oppose the electorate and still hope to gain more votes. It is

1. Major Bellerly, L.P. Annual Report, 1933, pp. 192-3.

2. Frederick L. Schuman, Europe on the Eve; The Crisis of Diplomacy 1933-1939. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942, p. 175.

possible that this public opinion for disarmament may have been created, in part, by the activity of the British Labour groups. If this is true, then there was a circle which could only have been broken by a change of policy by the Labour groups or by the impact of a crisis in foreign affairs. Whatever the cause, British Labour maintained its support for disarmament after the British Government had turned to rearmament, and public opinion is unquestionably one factor which led Labour to continue to work for disarmament throughout the period, 1931-1937.

The position of the British Government in regard to armaments in the period 1931-1938 has been the subject of considerable comment; much of that comment was adverse criticism. An examination of Labour's position does not lead one to think that its policy would have been much different or that it would have been wiser from the standpoint of British interests. Labour's policy on armaments was directed towards achieving international disarmament, a policy which became increasingly impossible as the years passed. Labour's policy was probably motivated by two considerations: first, their pacifist background, and second, their opposition to Government policy.

There can be little doubt of Labour's sincerity in its belief in disarmament. Too much was written and said on the behalf of disarmament over a considerable period of time to classify Labour's aim as only politics or chicanery. This belief is at least partly the reason why Labour was blind to certain aspects of world conditions. Labour made many statements concerning the danger of the totalitarian nations to peace, yet still worked for disarmament. Either Labour did not feel that there was a real threat or did not realize that arms alone could prevent aggression from succeeding. Along with this sincerity of belief was the factor of the Labour Party being the

party of opposition. This factor alone would have prompted the Labour Party to oppose the Government when it started its rearmament program. This attitude could have prompted Labour to advocate rearmament before the Government had started to press for a greater rearmament program. But at that time the Labour groups had good evidence that the British people believed in disarmament. Thus, Labour could not afford to give up the policy of disarmament, expect an increase of its power at the polls. This belief of the British people may have been partly the result of Labour's continual agitation for disarmament. If this is true, then Labour groups must share the responsibility for the position in which Britain found herself in 1939. Whatever the cause or effect Labour did not support rearmament until some time after the British Government had taken steps to increase British armaments.

The British Government moved towards rearmament in 1934 starting with the air force.¹ In March of 1936 the Government provided for large scale increases for military and naval forces.² Yet, it was in 1936 in debate on these increases that Attlee moved, "...as the safety of this country cannot be secured by reliance on armaments but only by the resolute pursuit of a policy of international understanding, adherence to the Covenant of the League of Nations, [and] general disarmament...this House cannot agree to a policy which in fact seeks security in national armaments alone..."³ Not until November 1, 1937, did Attlee say, "In the conditions which now exist as a result of their [the Government's] policy we agree that any government would have to provide an increase of armaments."⁴ Here is clear evidence

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1. Summarized by Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France between Two Wars, Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940, p. 374, footnote 14.
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. Attlee, Commons, CCCIX, March 9, 1936, cols. 1841-2.
 4. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVIII, November 1, 1937, col. 670.

that Labour lagged behind the Government in supporting rearmament. Certainly there were signs which pointed clearly to the need of armaments before November of 1937. Abyssinia had fallen to Mussolini; the Rhineland had been fortified by Hitler; and Franco was receiving military help from both dictators. If their activities were to be halted, a threat of force backed by real strength, or force, had to be used. Labour's policy until 1937 would have made such a step impossible.

Ideally, it is the duty of a political party to keep a nation informed as to the nation's needs. A party should take any opportunity to point to certain matters either domestic or foreign which need attention, and offer a program to correct these conditions. Labour to some extent was able to do the former, but completely unable to do the latter in regard to armaments. Since, in many respects, the government had failed to take that step, then it was of the utmost importance for the opposition to provide the necessary leadership. Labour leaders quickly saw Hitler as a menace to democracy and peace, but failed to offer a program which would have destroyed that menace. Certainly in the beginning of the Government's rearmament program, Labour's attitude may have in part been responsible for the slowness with which the rearmament program proceeded. If Labour had supported the rearmament program, more British people would have supported the program. Britain would have been able to present a united front to aggression.

The disarmament program put forward by British Labour and the Labour Party was idealistic rather than practical. Throughout the greater part of the period 1931-1938, Labour groups failed to realize that the determination of Japan, Germany, and Italy to expand at the expense of weaker nations would not be prevented by adverse public opinion. It is one of the inconsistencies of Labour's foreign policy that on the one hand, Labour advocated

collective action and at the same time would have denied the means by which collective action could have succeeded. Labour would have weakened the ability of Britain and other nations to make collective action effective by disarmament. Even if all other nations had agreed to international disarmament, these three nations would have violated the agreement. Thus, at the time when collective action should have been strong, there would have been no power with which to meet the aggressor nations.

The chief reason why disarmament was not achieved during this period was the fact that the nations of the world were compelled to rearm to meet the aggressor nations who did not believe in disarmament and certainly did not intend to disarm no matter what other nations did about their arms. Consequently, the peace-loving nations could not see how they could disarm and still have security. It was evident to many nations that disarmament was not the way to security with some nations outside of the League who would not accept disarmament. On the contrary, the way to security was by rearmament --force to meet force.

The point which most needed to be emphasized concerning disarmament was the matter of security. No nation concerned with its own security could consider disarmament by itself, without regard to the overall question of security and defense. It is true that Labour groups recognized this to some degree. But for the most part they took the stand that security would come after disarmament. The skeptics insisted that security was necessary before disarmament could be achieved. With world conditions as they were, the skeptics showed wisdom and realism. The redeeming feature of Labour's policy towards disarmament was Labour's insistence that disarmament be universal, and also that a world police force be established to deal with the violators of the peace. These two conditions were certainly necessary to make disarma-

ment successful. The chief criticism is that Labour's drive was for international disarmament primarily, and for an international police force, secondarily. The order should be reversed even in times of tranquillity, and it is imperative that it should be in times of stress. The years, 1931-1938, constituted a period of suspicion and fears--fears which could only have been allayed by security. The policy of the Labour Party did not offer this remedy. Thus, it was working for an objective which could not be fulfilled, and Labour's efforts were fated for defeat.

Chapter II

Manchuria

The first example of the aggression, which was to become almost commonplace in the 1930's was the Japanese conquest of Manchuria. In the summer of 1931, there were two conflicts between Chinese and Japanese nationals. The first of these came at the end of June when a Japanese captain and three assistants were murdered by Chinese soldiers in Manchuria. This action was followed in early July by the Wanpaoshan affair, a riot caused by a dispute between Korean and Japanese farmers in Manchuria, which led to anti-Chinese riots in Korea in which five hundred Chinese were casualties, and to an anti-Japanese boycott by the Chinese. Although Baron Shidehara, the Japanese Prime Minister, desired a policy of conciliation, Japanese military authorities decided to use force. Following an explosion on the South Manchurian Railroad, Japanese troops seized the barracks, arsenal, and airfield in mukden on the night of September 18th and the following morning. Within the next four days many strategic points along and near the railroad were in Japanese hands. By the beginning of 1932, Japanese troops held all of Southern Manchuria. This aggression was continued until all of Manchuria was occupied and a puppet state under Japanese control was established.¹

The Chinese Government brought the matter before the League of Nations on September 21, 1931, under Article XI of the Covenant.²

1. W. N. Medlicott, British Foreign Policy Since Versailles. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1940, pp. 144-5.

2. Article XI of the Covenant reads:

1. "Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency shall arise the Secretary-General shall on the request of the Members of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

2. "It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member
(Continued on next page (47) as footnote)

The next day the matter was debated by the Council, to whom the Japanese delegate said that the question could best be settled by direct negotiations of the two nations directly concerned. After some discussion, the League council decided to try to persuade both sides to stop fighting and return their troops to their original positions. An appeal to this effect was sent to both nations. A report of the meetings of the Council was sent to the United States because it had signed the Washington Pact and the Kellogg Treaty. The United States indicated its approval of the League action, but said that it did not wish to take part in a commission of inquiry. Although the Council had received a note from Japan stating that troops would be withdrawn to the railroad zone, the Japanese forces pushed forward. Further League Council discussion produced no plan leading to the cessation of hostilities. In December, on request of the Japanese delegate, a commission (which came to be known as the Lytton commission) was appointed to investigate the facts of the case. On January 7, 1932, Secretary Stimson sent his famous nonrecognition note to Japan.

The Stimson Doctrine stated the refusal of the United States to recognize any agreement which would "impair the treaty rights of the United States or its citizens in China including those which relate to the sovereignty, the independence, or the territorial and administrative integrity of the Republic of China, or to the international policy relative to China, commonly known as the open-door policy, and that it does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the Covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris of August 27,

(Footnote continued from page 46)

of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends."

1928, to which treaty both China and Japan, as well as the United States, are parties."¹ Not until March 11th did the Council of the League of Nations adopt a resolution, drafted by Sir John Simon, which stated that no member of the League would recognize any new situation contrary to the Covenant or to the Pact of Paris.

The Lytton Commission made its report to the League in October of 1932. It was recommended in this report that Manchuria be given autonomy under Chinese sovereignty and new treaties be signed by both China and Japan to safeguard the rights of both parties. The Council began consideration of this report on November 21st, and on November 28th sent the report to the Assembly. The Assembly asked the Council of Nineteen to study the report and to make recommendations to the Assembly. This Council made recommendations which implicitly condemned Japan's actions; it urged that Manchuria be restored to Chinese sovereignty and that Japanese troops be withdrawn to the railway zone, where they had the right to be. The Assembly accepted the proposals by the vote of all members present except Japan. This was followed by the withdrawal of the Japanese delegation from the Assembly, and on March 27, 1933, the Japanese Government announced its intention to withdraw from the League of Nations.² This mere condemnation of Japanese action by the League, without any attempt to enforce sanctions, was ineffective, and Manchuria still remained a Japanese protectorate.

The British Government's policy during this period was, generally

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1. Quoted by Irving S. Friedman, British Relations with China. New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, Publications Office, p. 19, footnote 1.
 2. Friedman, British Relations with China, pp. 39-42.

speaking, directed towards mediation. A few days after the Japanese attack on Mukden, China brought the matter to the attention of the Council of the League, which called upon both China and Japan to withdraw their troops immediately. Viscount Cecil, the British member of the Council, approved of the Council's action and stated that only when peace was assured, could the dispute be settled. On September 28th, Cecil expressed approval of the Chinese suggestion that a committee investigate the dispute. He also hoped that by direct negotiations the Chinese and Japanese Governments could reach an agreement for the evacuation of troops. On October 16, 1931, Prentiss Gilbert, an American, attended the Council meeting at the Council's invitation which was supported by the British delegate. The British delegate assured the Japanese that Prentiss Gilbert would not sit as a member. On October 22nd, Lord Cecil stated that the British Government had been made uneasy by the bombing of Manchurian cities and could not see the justification for such action. At a later meeting of the Council on November 16th, the British delegate gave his support to the resolution which provided for sending a commission (the Lytton Commission) to Manchuria to investigate. On the same day Lord Cecil took note of the "difficult and exceptional" position in Manchuria, but hoped that such a condition would not lead to more hostilities. Thus, Britain accepted in part, the Japanese assertion that disorder in Manchuria made military action necessary.

On January 7, 1932, Secretary Stimson sent his non-recognition note to China and Japan, expressing the hope that Britain would take similar action. In an official reply the British Foreign Office stated that Britain still supported the open-door policy, but, because Japan had stated that it intended to continue the open-door, such a note was unnecessary. This was considered as a rebuff to the United States by many, and evidence

that the United States and Britain would not present a united front to Japanese aggression. This reply, it was explained in 1938, was not intended to alienate the United States, but had been drafted by permanent officials of the Foreign Office and sent to the newspapers without realization of its implications. When Manchukuo asked for Britain's recognition, Simon told the House of Commons that recognition would be premature. From February 28, 1933, to March 13, 1933, an embargo was placed on the shipment of arms both to China and Japan by the British Government, the only government which did this. On December 6, 1932, the League Assembly began its discussion of the Lytton Report. At that time Simon called attention to the parts of the report that mentioned disorderly conditions in China. He stated that it was necessary to recognize "realities" and indicated that a restoration of the status quo before the Mukden incident would not be the correct solution. He, however, did wish to uphold the principles of the League, and he thought the League might be able to offer its good offices for conciliation of the dispute. This speech was pro-Japanese and indicated Britain's acquiescence in the Japanese conquest of Manchuria.¹

There is evidence that British Labour would have preferred a more aggressive policy. Some Labour members wanted financial and economic sanctions levied against Japan, as well as the moral sanctions of non-recognition and the withdrawal of ambassadors. In addition, some Labourites would have sent arms to China. The great danger to the League of Nations, to peace, and to other possible victims of aggression were foreseen.

In November of 1931 Lansbury warned Commons by saying that if Japan succeeded in its attack upon Manchuria, other nations might commit aggression by the "same method".² The Labour Magazine presented a similar warning in

1. Gilbert Ernest Hubbard, British Far Eastern Policy. New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943, Chapter II, *passim*.

2. Lansbury, Commons, CCLX, November 25, 1931, cols. 462-3.

editorial in February of 1932 which stated that the League of Nations and the Briand-Kellogg Pact would become scraps of paper if the war were ignored. The writer went on to say that it was a "grave situation which threatens the peace of the world..."¹ Attlee believed that Japan was the second danger point after Austria.² In 1934, one delegate to the Trades Union Congress said that the immediate danger of trouble was Japan, not Germany which was incapable of waging war at this time.³

In 1935, Attlee, with the advantage of hindsight, said that the British Government had defaulted on all of its pledges, such as the Pact of Paris and the Nine-Power Treaty. He quoted Secretary of State Stimson's statement that if Japan were permitted to violate China's territorial integrity, a new naval race would be inevitable, and war was possible in the Pacific. Attlee continued by saying that the failure of the British Government and other governments to uphold the rule of law had killed security throughout the world. "From that moment rearmament became the order of the day, and the advocates of physical force all over the world were encouraged, including Hitler."⁴

The conflict, moreover, placed the British people and British interests in jeopardy. These things were quickly recognized by all sections of the Labour movement. A statement to this effect by the National Joint Council which represented the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, the National Executive of the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Labour Party, was published in the Annual Reports of the Labour Party's Annual Conference

1. "Editorial", Labour Magazine, February 1932, X, pp. 456-7.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCLXXXIV, December 21, 1933, col. 1503.

3. T.U.C. Report, 1934, p. 329.

4. Attlee, Commons, CCXCIX, March 11, 1935, col. 38.

and the meeting of the Trades Union Congress of 1932. This statement said that the Japanese attack was unwarranted. If the nations of the world did nothing to support the League, the League would fall; other wars would certainly follow; and if the situation became worse, there could be no hope for disarmament. Furthermore, British lives and interests were in danger and should be protected.¹ This statement contained suggestions for action to stop the war which will be stated later.

The aggressor was declared to be Japan. It was admitted in some quarters that Japan had some rights, but not the right of breaking treaties and seizure of Chinese territory. The National Joint Council feared that Japan wanted more than Manchuria,--that Shanghai as well was a goal of Japanese aggression.² The Council stated definitely: "It is clear that a state of war exists between China and Japan for which Japan is responsible."³

It was admitted by inference that there was political disorder in China. Nevertheless the National Joint Council did not consider this any justification for attack. "Political disorder in China is no justification for the invasion of its territory by any foreign power." The Council pointed to the British Memoranda of 1926 as the basis for this opinion. This memorandum said that no nation should interfere in China but rather should maintain friendly relations with China while waiting for the establishment of a strong national government. It was this policy which Japan should follow.⁴

Cocks, Jones, and Henderson were quick to point out that the Japanese

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1. "Executive Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 68.
T.U.C. Report, 1932, pp. 179-80.
 2. L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 68.
 3. T.U.C. Report, 1932, pp. 179-80.
 4. Loc. cit.

attack was a violation of treaties guaranteeing the political and territorial integrity of China, Cocks pointed out in Commons in March of 1932 that the invasion of Manchuria affected the Nine-Power Treaty.¹ Morgan Jones repeated this assertion a year and a half later saying that the present regime in Manchuria (1933) violated China's integrity, as guaranteed by various treaties and was incompatible with peace in the Far East.² In his pamphlet, Labour's Foreign Policy, Henderson said that treaties should not be "torn up with impunity."³

Not only did some Labourites believe that the Nine-Power Treaty had been violated, but also that the Covenant of the League of Nations had been ignored, - making this conflict the concern of the League. Therefore, Labour leaders urged the British Government to take an active part in proposing to the League such plans as a request for the cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of the ministers from Japan, and the denial of recognition to Japan's conquest by the League states.

In 1932, the Executive Report made to the Labour Party's Annual Conference stated that any war or threat of war is of concern to the entire League and to every citizen of a League member.⁴ Lansbury declared, "There is an obligation not only upon Japan to honour its word, but upon those who signed the Covenant to honour their word."⁵ A few minutes before he had said that Japan's attack was in defiance of the Covenant of the League.⁶

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1. Cocks, Commons, CCLXIII, March 22, 1932, col. 934.
2. M. Jones, Commons, CCLXXXIII, November 27, 1933, col. 498.
3. Henderson, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 26-7.
4. "Executive Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 68.
5. Lansbury, Commons, CCLXXV, February 27, 1933, cols. 44-5.
6. Ibid., col. 35.

If the League were to take up its duties, some Labourites wanted the cooperation of the United States and Russia in any action. Wallhead, a Labour member of the House of Commons, said in 1934 that England, with the backing of France and the United States and several other powers, would be enough to deter Japan.¹ A couple of months later Wedgewood asked the Foreign Secretary if he was in communication with the United States, trying to secure concerted action in regard to China.² Cripps made the definite proposal that England get as close cooperation as possible with Russia and the United States as well as with the League in dealing with the Far-Eastern situation.³

The cooperation of these two nations would make more effective any League action such as a request for cessation of hostilities which some wanted the League to make. A week after the Japanese attack on Manchuria, Lansbury urged the Foreign Secretary to press for a cessation of hostilities and urge that the "whole question be referred to an impartial tribunal for settlement."⁴ After M. Tardieu announced that the "full authority of the League" would be placed behind the proposal for an armistice and an arrangement for a neutral zone for the protection of the International Settlement at Shanghai, the Labour Magazine in an editorial stated that any settlement or agreement should apply to Manchuria as well.⁵

If hostilities continued, it was suggested that all nations should withdraw their ambassadors and ministers from Japan. It was hoped that such expression of disapproval toward Japanese aggression would cause the

1. R.C. Wallhead, Commons, CCLXXXV, February 7, 1934, col. 1169.

2. Wedgewood, Commons, CCLXXXVIII, April 23, 1934, col. 1366.

3. Cripps, Commons, CCLXXXIX, May 18, 1934, col. 2061.

4. Lansbury, Commons, CCLX, November 25, 1931, col. 464.

5. "Editorial", Labour Magazine, February 1932, X, pp. 456-7.

Japanese to withdraw from China. This plan can be found in the Annual Reports of 1932 of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. The Executive Report of the Labour Party urged the Government to request the Council of the League of Nations to consider the withdrawal of the ministers or ambassadors from Tokyo of the members of the League. It was hoped that this action would not be necessary, but that this expression of public opinion would not be "unheeded" by the Japanese Government.¹ The Annual Report of the Trades Union Congress contained the same thought, word for word.² Three and one-half years later Sir Stafford Cripps said that this should probably be the first step to stop Japan.³

The withdrawal of ambassadors from Tokyo might, under the League Covenant, have been followed by sanctions, particularly economic and financial measures, which would have denied to the Japanese resource to wage war. A statement of the National Joint Council which represented the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, the National Executive of the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Labour Party urged the British Government to propose "measures of financial and economic constraint". In fact it was believed that the British Government was "obliged" to recommend such action under its obligations to the League of Nations. These measures were to be "co-operative and gradual" and "in association and agreement with the United States and the members of the League."⁴

The above statement was not the only reference to economic and finan-

1. "Executive Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 68.
2. "International Joint Statement of the Far Eastern Situation", T.U.C. Report, 1932, pp. 178-80.
3. Cripps, Commons, CCXCIX, March 11, 1935, col. 150.
4. "Executive Report" L.P. Annual Report, 1932, p. 68.
"International Joint Statement of the Far Eastern Situation", T.U.C. Report, 1932, pp. 178-80.

cial pressure which could be used against Japan. W. Arnold-Forster wrote in 1934 that if the British Government had taken the lead in defending the collective peace system and restraining Japan "if necessary by economic pressure", the challenge to British and world interests would not have been so "menacing".¹ Cripps, a year later said, "it was our duty" to exert economic pressure.² As late as 1937 an editorial in Labour said that "universal condemnation" was not enough to stop Japan. In addition, action had to be taken "to convince her rulers that political and economic isolation and strict accountability are the penalty for their criminal misconduct."³

One of the forms of economic and financial constraint which could have been used against Japan was the boycott. This means that all nations would refuse to buy Japanese goods, thus depriving the Japanese of one source of revenue. L. MacNeill-Weir quoted Lansbury as saying that if the League was not going to use sanctions and compulsion there was no use of belonging to the League.⁴ Others made specific statements recommending or supporting a boycott. A resolution of the Trades Union Congress General Council and the National Executive of the Labour Party, dated February 22, 1933, came out definitely in support of a boycott. The resolution recommended that if Japan rejected the proposals of the League Committee of Nineteen, all sections of the Labour movement should pass resolutions "calling for the application of an economic boycott in accordance with Article XVI of the Covenant of the League of Nations."⁵ In Commons Wallhead said, "The only thing that will bring her [Japan] to her senses is a form of keen economic boycott."⁶

1. Arnold-Forster, "The Collective Peace System; Labour's Choice", Labour, February 1934, I, p. 133.

2. Cripps, Commons, CCXCIX, March 11, 1935, col. 150.

3. "All the World Over", Labour, October 1937, V, p. 26.

4. MacNeill-Weir, pp. cit., p. 567.

5. "Executive Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1933, p. 51.

6. Wallhead, Commons, CCLXXV, February 27, 1933, cols. 128-9.

Another economic measure suggested was an embargo upon shipments to Japan, and some persons wanted this to apply to China as well. In 1933 the Executive of the Labour Party wanted an embargo of arms to both China and Japan. The Trades Union Congress was of the same opinion.¹ Cocks, too, was desirous of an embargo, but only on goods to Japan. He wanted to make "arrangements between the nations, members of the League and the United States, to place an embargo on certain goods going to Japan or to bring pressure in various ways which would put her at a disadvantage." Specifically mentioned was the following: "all loans should be forbidden to Japan and she should have no power to raise money in other countries" provided that agreement could be reached with other nations.² Attlee and Lansbury wanted the embargo on arms to apply only to Japan. The latter wanted "our government to say at once, that no arms and no ammunition shall be exported from this country to Japan."³ Cripps would go one step farther, - because the League had declared Japan the aggressor, he would send arms to China. He too wanted to persuade the other nations not to supply Japan with arms, but refusing arms to China, he believed, was another way of helping Japan.⁴ By such action these Labour spokesmen believed that it would be difficult for Japan to carry on aggression.

It has been pointed out above that British Labour wanted to settle the Sino-Japanese question by peaceful means. It has been shown, too, that a good share of Labour believed that economic pressure should have been used to accomplish this aim. But, if this failed, would Labour have been willing

1. "International Department, "Executive Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1933, p. 51.

2. Cocks, Commons, CCLXXV, February 27, 1933, cols. 109-10.

3. Attlee, Commons, CCLXXVI, April 13, 1933, col. 2746.
Lansbury, Commons, CCLXXV, February 27, 1933, cols. 45-6.

4. Cripps, Commons, CCLXXV, February 27, 1933, col. 147.

to use military force to compel the aggressor to withdraw? In the light of statements by Labour leaders in the early years the answer must be "no". There is little evidence that Labour supported such action. Only a few individuals came out in favor of military sanctions. Just how far Labour's thoughts were from military sanctions may be illustrated by Attlee's attitude towards strengthening Singapore in 1933. He said, "I have never been in favor of the base myself."¹ It seems that if Attlee were expecting to use force against Japan, he would not have objected to making Singapore strong. On the other hand, this was consistent with his policy on disarmament. No Labour group supported military sanctions until 1938 when the Labour Party did so.

It was not until 1935 that one Labourite, Sir Stafford Cripps, supported military action. He said, "It was our duty, in cooperation with the other nations... to take every possible step...by armaments if necessary."² The National Council of Labour called for "concerted effort" by all nations to stop Japan in 1937.³ This did not necessarily mean military action. In fact, Attlee a few months later said that no one was suggesting war on Japan.⁴

The policy advocated by the Labour Party placed emphasis on the strength of disapproval being sufficient to stop aggression. This disapproval combined with the Labour Party's vague recommendation of economic sanctions was the main part of its proposed policy in regard to the attack on Manchuria. England's policy should have been to persuade the League of Nations

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1. Attlee, Commons, CCLXXV, March 9, 1933, col. 1383.
 2. Cripps, Commons, CCXCIX, March 11, 1935, col. 150.
 3. "All the World Over", Labour, September 1937, V, p. 2.
 4. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXX, December 21, 1937, col. 1798.

to act promptly and forcefully, and to secure the cooperation of the United States and the Soviet Union in this action. It seems reasonable to conclude that in September 1931, the League of Nations should have clamped an embargo on all goods to Japan immediately, blockaded Japan, and attempted to persuade the United States and the U.S.S.R. to do the same. If the embargo had been enforced, the blockade would have been virtually unnecessary since the nations of the League, the United States, and the U.S.S.R. included almost all the nations with goods to export. A blockade, moreover, would have made clear the world's determination to prevent aggression. A blockade would have been difficult to maintain because the United States and Great Britain did not have naval bases from which to operate, as a result of the Washington Conference. At that time they had agreed not to strengthen any base in the Pacific. This factor would have made military and naval sanctions difficult to enforce, but a show of force might have stopped Japanese aggression. If the Japanese had decided to smash such a blockage, they probably could have done so. In addition to taking action against Japan, China should have been helped with loans and shipments of military supplies. In this manner China would have been better able to defend its territory against invasion, making aggression less attractive to the Japanese militarists.

Unfortunately much of this was impossible to accomplish. The United States would not have taken part in a blockade of Japan. Without the aid of the United States it is probable that the League powers would have found it extremely difficult to enforce a blockade if Japan had decided to defy and break the blockade. This being the case, it would have been better not to have placed a blockade around Japan. A defeat for the League blockade undoubtedly would have destroyed the League. It may be doubted, moreover, that the United States would have sacrificed its trade with Japan by cooperat-

ing with an embargo. If Secretary of State, Stimson, had been able to secure support for economic sanctions, it would have been concrete evidence of the world's disapproval of aggression, and would have been evidence of the unity of Great Britain and the United States which Japan feared. Certainly, it would have been difficult for Japan to obtain materials with which to wage war. One of two alternatives would have happened in this event: either Japan would have had to give up its plans for taking Manchuria, or it would have found it possible to continue its attack. If the first had occurred, the value of sanctions would have been proved and the League would have been strengthened. If the second had occurred, it would have proved that economic sanctions unsupported by military force are useless. If the latter were the outcome, this action would at least have had some positive result, because it would have destroyed the illusion of many that economic sanctions alone were necessary to prevent aggression. Sanctions having been tried and found wanting, the persons believing in collective security would have urged stronger measures when the next blow fell. Since they had not been tried, these persons still continued to think for many years that economic sanctions alone would be sufficient.

If it had been impossible to persuade the United States to place an embargo on goods to Japan, the League was under obligation, nevertheless, to place an embargo on goods to Japan, and to boycott goods from Japan. The imposition of economic sanctions would have been an expression of the League of Nations' opposition to aggression and its determination to act.

The British National Government and the Labour Party chose to ignore the possibility of such action. Actually, the policy put into effect by the Government was as strong as the policy advocated by the Labour Party.

The Labour Party seemed to be little concerned at the time of the beginning of hostilities. Not until the Lytton Commission had been appointed and made its report to the League of Nations, did the Labour Party begin to take an active interest. During the same period the British Government was trying to secure the withdrawal of both Japanese and Chinese troops, and for a month did place an embargo on the shipment of arms to both nations. The Government also supported the appointment of the Lytton Commission in November of 1931. Not until the autumn of 1932, a full year after the invasion started, did the Labour Party propose that the League nations withdraw their ambassadors from Tokyo, and suggest "measures of economic and financial constraint". The British Government's policy failed to prevent Japanese aggression, and the Labour Party's proposals came when Japanese success had been demonstrated by the creation of the puppet nation, Manchukuo.

Chapter III

Abyssinia

The Italo-Abyssinian dispute grew out of a clash of troops at Walwal on December 5, 1934. Walwal was a watering place located in the disputed frontier area between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland. It had been occupied by the Italians in 1928, and the occupation had been uncontested until 1935 when Abyssinian troops, escorting an Anglo-Abyssinian boundary commission, challenged the Italian garrison. Abyssinia protested to Rome, and on December 9, 1935 proposed arbitration. Mussolini in return demanded an apology and reparations. It seems to be fairly well established that for about two years before the Walwal incident Mussolini had been directing military preparations in Italian Somaliland and Eritrea for an attack on Abyssinia. Haile Selassie, the ruler of Abyssinia, turned to the League of Nations. While the League discussed the matter, Italy poured arms and troops into Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. In January, Abyssinia invoked Articles XI and XII of the Covenant of the League, and in March, Article XV.¹

1. Article XI states in part that any threat of war is "a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that it may deem wise....."

Article XII states in part that if a dispute arises between members of the League "likely to lead to a rupture, they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to enquiry by the Council, they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitration or the judicial decision, or the report by the Council."

Article XV states in part, "If there should arise between Members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration or judicial decision... the Members of the League agree they will submit the matter to the Council."

"If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of two or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report."

Following the Abyssinian move, Italy agreed on March 22, 1935, to establish an arbitral commission if direct negotiations should fail. On September 5th, this commission absolved both nations of any responsibility for the incident at Walwal. On October 1, 1935, Mussolini sent his army into Abyssinia, and Abyssinia struggled to resist the attack.¹

Haile Selassie informed the League of the attack and asked the League to send observers to confirm his charge. The League Council met on October 5, 1935, to study the report of its Committee of Thirteen which recommended bringing the hostilities to an end. The Council then appointed a Committee of Six to make recommendations. A note from Abyssinia asked the Council to recognize the existence of war and to apply sanctions. The Committee of Six, in its report, declared that Italy had violated the Covenant. On October 19, 1935, the Committee of Eighteen, established by a committee of the Assembly, recommended sanctions on Italy consisting of five parts:

- "1. an arms embargo against Italy;
- "2. an embargo on all loans and credits;
- "3. an embargo on imports from Italy with some exceptions;
- "4. an embargo on exports to Italy of transport animals, rubber, aluminum, iron ore, scrap iron, tin, and strategic rare metals;
- "5. a provision for mutual support in the application of economic and financial measures."²

These measures were accepted by most of the nations of the League, and the United States placed an embargo on arms to both Abyssinia and Italy.

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1. The introductory section of this chapter is based largely on Schuman, op. cit., Chapters V and VI.
Haines and Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 375-90.
2. (Documents on International Affairs, John W. Wheeler-Bennett and Stephen Heald, editors. London: Humphrey Milford-Oxford University Press, 1935, II, pp. 192-262.)
Quoted by Schuman, op. cit., p. 188.

This step was taken with British support.

In the meantime France and England were working behind the scenes to effect a settlement by buying Italy off with territorial and economic concessions from Abyssinia. Out of this came the Hoare-Laval plan. This plan specified that Britain and France would recommend to Haile Selassie that he cede part of Abyssinia to Italy; in return, Abyssinia would receive a strip of Eritrea from Italy giving Abyssinia access to the Red Sea. In addition, Italy would be granted exclusive economic rights in Southern Abyssinia. This plan was abandoned, due to the upsurge of opinion in Great Britain, which forced Hoare from office.

On January 22, 1936, discussion in the League Council turned to the practicability of placing an embargo on shipments of oil to Italy. Eden, who replaced Hoare at the British Foreign Office, urged its adoption, but the reluctance of France to take this step, followed by a ministerial crisis in France, and the death of George V in England all led to delay until March of 1936. At that time, France urged the Committee of Thirteen to make a final attempt to secure a peaceful settlement. Abyssinia agreed, and Mussolini agreed in principle. This caused more delay. In the meantime, Italy completed the conquest of Abyssinia, and on May 1936 with the occupation of Addis Ababa, Haile Selassie left the country. The Council met on May 12th to consider the new situation and postponed a final decision until June. In the intervening period the nations indicated that the sanctions should be lifted. On July 15, 1936, sanctions against Italy were repealed by the League of Nations.

Throughout this long crisis the policy advocated by British Labour differed radically from that of the Government. Labour members were disturbed by the violation of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Labour

did not want to help Italy in its aggression by either passive or active assistance. Instead it sincerely wished to prevent this attack on Abyssinia from succeeding. That the League of Nations should act firmly and promptly in this crisis was Labour's belief.

The following were some of the opinions expressed by Labour and the Labour Party. The League of Nations should condemn Italy's aggression and impose sanctions which would cripple the attack. Italy should be expelled from the League for its crime. All League members should withdraw their ambassadors from Rome to indicate their disapproval of Italy's attack on Abyssinia. The Hoare-Laval deal was strongly opposed because the plan would reward, not punish, the aggressor. Any settlement must be made by the League, so that the authority of the League would be vindicated. Labour also desired to enlist the cooperation of France and the United States.

In the summer of 1935, before the invasion began, Labour members urged the Government to close the Suez Canal to Italian ships carrying supplies and men. When the danger of an Italian attack was apparent, but before Italy's all-out attack, Attlee and Dalton proposed that in the event of hostilities the Suez Canal be closed to Italian shipping. This would make it almost impossible for Italy to supply its army, 2500 miles from home. As early as October 2, 1935, Hugh Dalton, speaking before the Labour Party's Annual Conference, said that the Suez Canal, alone, could be closed very easily, and that such action would leave Italy helpless.¹ Attlee advised warning Italy that if she intended using force, the Suez Canal would be closed to Italian armies.² Another type of support for Abyssinia to be

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1. Hugh Dalton, L.P. Annual Report, 1935, p. 155.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCII, June 7, 1935, cols. 2193-4.

undertaken by Britain alone was suggested by Adams when he presented two possible courses of action to Commons: no help to Italy by any exports whatsoever, and supply to Abyssinia of the weapons of defense.¹ He also attacked the Government's embargo on arms to both Italy and Abyssinia. He would send arms to Abyssinia as soon as the League declared that they were needed for self-defense.²

By and large the Labour groups believed that the Italo-Abyssinian dispute was a matter to be settled by the League of Nations. In September of 1935, Labour said: "The duty of the League is clear. It is to prevent Peace from being outraged by Mussolini."³ The General Council's report to the Trades Union Congress contained a resolution, drawn up by fifty-two representatives of Trade Union Centres and Labour Parties at Geneva in September of 1935, in which they appealed to the League to fulfill its duty and to preserve peace and justice. The imminent danger of war plainly indicated the duty of the League to apply the sanctions of the Covenant.⁴ This resolution was sent to the President of the Council and the Secretariat for distribution to the members of the Council. Adams said that the massing of Italian troops in North Africa "constitutes a danger such as contemplated under Article 10 of the League",⁵ He continued by saying that the League was involved in the Abyssinian dispute.⁶

Attlee was one of those who believed that the League should act and must succeed in this crisis to remain in existence. He said "This incident... is a test of the reality of the League and the sanctity of the

1. V. Adams, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2914.

2. Ibid., col. 2912.

3. "All the World Over", Labour, September 1935, III, p. 2.

4. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1936, p. 185.

5. V. Adams, Commons, CCCII, June 7, 1935, cols. 2204-5.

6. Ibid., col. 2205.

Covenant of the League."¹ Colonel Wedgewood bluntly stated that if the League failed to enforce peace, the League would be dead as far as Labour was concerned,² and later that the Ethiopian conflict was a question of life and death for the League of Nations.³ In 1936, however, Labour continued to support the League after its failure in June. The National Council of Labour reported, "The invasion of Abyssinia by Fascist Italy constituted and still remains a 'threat' to the League of Nations." The Council wished to continue the "measures [sanctions] adopted against Italy."⁴ This was after Abyssinian resistance had stopped. It illustrates Labour's devotion to the League of Nations. It is true, however, that after the failure of the League to prevent Italy from taking Ethiopia, the League no longer had any power to act. Colonel Wedgewood's prediction had become a reality.

Because the League's authority should be vindicated, and because Britain was a member of the League, any League decision should have been supported by Britain. Attlee asked the Government to inform Mussolini that it would uphold the Covenant of the League. If Italy failed to recognize the authority of the League, then she would be declared an aggressor, and Britain would act against an aggressor.⁵ The National Council of Labour called upon the British Government to make immediate proposals in the League Council in order to define the duties of both Italy and Ethiopia. In addition, the Government was asked to "declare that [it] will discharge its duties and obligations as a member of the League without fear or favor."⁶

1. Attlee, Commons, CCCII, June 7, 1935, Col. 2194.

2. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCIV, July 11, 1935, col. 569.

3. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2937.

4. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1936, p. 186.

5. Attlee, Commons, CCCII, June 7, 1935, cols. 2193-4.

6. "Report of the National Council of Labour", L.P. Annual Report, 1935, p. 12.

It is not strange, considering Labour's previously expressed sentiments, that it condemned the Hoare-Laval deal, for it was clearly outside of the framework and spirit of the League of Nations. As stated before, this plan proposed that Britain and France would recommend that Abyssinia cede to Italy the Tigre province and the Danskil country southeast of Eritrea along with much of Ogaden province. In return Italy would give Abyssinia a strip of Eritrea so that Abyssinia would have access to the sea at Assab. In addition, Italy would get exclusive economic rights in the southern half of Abyssinia. Haile Selassie was not consulted, and, of course, protested vigorously.¹

The National Council of Labour correctly condemned the Hoare-Laval plan. It called the agreement a "gross violation of the League of Nations and a betrayal of the Abyssinian people." The resolution stated, also, that the National Council of Labour condemned any form of settlement which awarded territory and political and economic advantages to the aggressor at the expense of the victim. Such a settlement would only encourage further aggression. The Council called upon the League of Nations "to apply effectively the policy of Sanctions...and refuse to recognize the invasion and conquest of any portion of Abyssinian territory as the basis of settlement."² An editorial of Labour charged that the British government had pledged its support to the League of Nations, but within a month of this promise had agreed to a settlement which shocked the entire world. The editorial concluded that no British Government had ever so "basely betrayed" its pledges.³ This was Labour's answer to the Hoare-Laval deal. The

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1. Schuman, op. cit., p. 197.

2. L.P. Annual Report, 1936, p. 33.

3. "All the World Over", Labour, January 1936, III, p. 98.

National Council of Labour represented all Labour groups, and as such can be taken to be the official stand of British Labour. This resolution stated Labour's faith in sanctions, which will be discussed below. Labour's opposition to the Hoare-Laval deal is significant because it shows that Labour did not desire to appease the dictators.

This opposition to aggression was expressed by Henderson, who demanded that Italy should be expelled from the League. On two occasions in April 1936, he asked the Foreign Secretary to consider this proposal.¹ Once again such action would not stop aggression, but would be an expression of disapproval. From the standpoint of League prestige, this would have been preferable to letting Italy walk out of the League because she had been "insulted". It was Henderson, too, who wanted the League States to withdraw their ambassadors. In the spring of 1936, he said on two occasions that there was no reason why the ambassadors should not be withdrawn from Rome.² He stated that such action would have the moral effect of showing Italy how the other states regarded the attack upon Abyssinia.³

The League action which had the enthusiastic approval of Labour was the enforcement of sanctions. Labour's only regret was that they were not more inclusive. By October 19, 1935, the League of Nations, through its Committee of Eighteen, had adopted five proposals of sanctions as stated above, and these proposals were accepted by the overwhelming majority of the League nations. On the other hand, the League did not supply Abyssinia with war materials - in fact, Britain denied arms to Abyssinia as well as Italy - nor was an oil embargo placed, nor the Suez Canal

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1. Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, May 6, 1936, col. 1766.
Henderson, Commons, CCCXII, May 29, 1936, col. 2472.
 2. Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, April 21, 1936, col. 1094.
Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, May 6, 1936, col. 1766.
 3. Henderson, Commons, CCCXII, May 29, 1936, cols. 2471-2.

closed to Italian traffic. Also, the sanctions which were adopted were not too strictly enforced. Almost all arms to Abyssinia were prevented from reaching their destination. France refused to send arms to Abyssinia, and French officials at Djibuti blocked shipments of arms by rail to Abyssinia. After January of 1936, no goods were permitted to pass through French Somaliland.¹

The application of sanctions had the whole-hearted support of British Labour. Most followers believed that the sanctions would succeed and would stop Italy's aggression. There was some opposition within the Labour groups - namely by Lansbury. It was conceded by some persons that sanctions might lead to war, but others believed the opposite. These sanctions were to be a cooperative effort by members of the League. There were certain kinds of materials which might be kept out of Italy's hands, thereby making it impossible for her to wage an aggressive war. Even after the conquest of Abyssinia, the Labour Party did not want to stop the sanctions, even if England had to continue them alone. Labour agreed that the sanctions levied did not have the desired effect, but this they blamed on the British Government.

Attlee cast his support squarely behind sanctions in a statement that they would be effective if applied "promptly, fully, and whole-heartedly."² Grenfell believed that the League would win if it applied sanctions "calmly and firmly".³ Wedgewood also was in favor of sanctions.⁴ In 1935, before the Trades Union Congress the President, Mr. William Kern, said: "The applica-

1. Schuman, op. cit., p. 177.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCV, November 22, 1935, col. 42.

3. Grenfell, Commons, CCCV, November 22, 1935, col. 141.

4. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCV, November 22, 1935, col. 233.

tion of these economic and financial sanctions would, I believe, suffice to restrain Italy's aggression."¹ There were only two persons who opposed sanctions on Italy. Lansbury said, "...I most profoundly disagree with the use of the sanctions of war either by the League of Nations or unilaterally by our own Government." If economic sanctions would lead to war, he would refuse to support such a war.² This statement was made the same day that Attlee, Grenfell, and Wedgewood cast their support in favor of sanctions. Cripps was not much in favor of sanctions, particularly those in force. He called them ones which had no effect.³ These were the only expressions of disfavor toward sanctions until a later date.

Although it was contended by a few that sanctions could lead to war, some still indicated their support. Mr. J. Williams, according to Labour and War Resistance, supported sanctions even if the sanctions led to war.⁴ Mr. William Kern admitted that sanctions may bring the League powers to war, "but war is a certainty anyway unless Italy is restrained."⁵ There is good evidence that some Labour groups were willing to go to war if sanctions led to an Italian attack on a League member. Mr. V. Adams stated in Commons that if sanctions did not stop Italy's war, he was willing to fight under the Covenant.⁶ Citrine told the Trades Union Congress "There is only one way of dealing with a bully, and that is by the use of force... It may mean war, but that is a thing we have to face...If we fail

1. "President's Address", T.U.C. Report, 1935, pp. 67-8.

2. Lansbury, Commons, CCCV, November 22, 1935, col. 67.

3. Cripps, Commons, CCCVII, November 22, 1935, col. 2067.

4. Covenanter, Labour and War Resistance. London: Victor Gollancz and the New Fabian Research Bureau, 1936, p. 11.

5. "President's Address", T.U.C. Report, 1935, pp. 67-8.

6. V. Adams, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2915.

now, war is absolutely certain. I ask you what will happen to Germany if Italy can break her treaties..."¹ After Italy's conquest of Abyssinia was almost complete, Attlee said, "We were prepared to stand for collective security. We asked for sanctions to be applied. We were prepared to stand up to the aggressor should the aggressor attack the League Powers."²

Thus it is clear that at least influential elements in the Labour movement were willing to use arms to prevent Italian victory. Such action was not to be directed against Italy primarily, but against aggression and in defense of the League of Nations. It is to be noted that although the Labour party members thought that war might result, no one except Lansbury objected to sanctions. This indicates one of two things: that Labour did not really expect war, or that Labour was not afraid to face a war for the League of Nations.

The crucial problem in regard to sanctions was the selection of materials to which Italy should be denied access. Nearly all Labour groups approved of the sanctions voted by the League. They wished, however, to add more items to the list. They desired to purchase no goods from Italy, and did not want to supply Italy with any. They wanted no ship of the members of the League to sail to Italy. A blockade was proposed, and an embargo on **oil** was believed to be the most effective way to stop Italy's war machine.

Colonel Wedgewood was one of those who felt that the League sanctions made a good beginning, but he wanted to add oil to the list.³ Henderson wanted more sanctions, although he thought that it was possible that Italy

1. Sir Walter Citrine, T.U.C.C. Report, 1935, p. 349.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCXIII, June 23, 1936, col. 1613.

3. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCV, November 22, 1935, col. 233.

might be brought to terms if the sanctions of the League were continued.¹ This was at the time when it was almost certain that Abyssinia was fully conquered. Henderson wanted a complete shipping embargo upon goods to Italy.² On April 29, 1936, he asked why Britain could not place a shipping embargo and refuse to allow ships of any members of the League to take goods to and from Italy. Such action, he felt, would quickly bring Italy to her senses.³ Mr. V..Adams hoped that the Government would not help the aggressor by any exports whatsoever.⁴ Wedgewood said that if Mussolini were confronted with a blockade of fifty powers, there would be no fight. This was conditioned by Mussolini knowing the nations would do as they had promised.⁵

Many Labour leaders wished to add oil to the list of materials to be denied Italy. An oil embargo by the League of Nations was blocked by France. Wedgewood asked why the discussion of an oil embargo was postponed at the League meeting. He asked the Foreign Secretary to take steps to stop the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company from sending oil to Italy.⁶ In February of 1936, Lees-Smith was of the opinion that an oil embargo with the cooperation of the United States would exhaust the Italian supplies in three and one half months at the current rate of consumption.⁷ On the same day he said that there had been a change in attitude in France which made it more possible to get an oil embargo.⁸ Wedgewood commented that oil sanctions might be risky, but that every good action is risky.⁹ Attlee, less patient

1. Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, May 6, 1936, col. 1766.

2. Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, April 21, 1936, col. 109.

3. Henderson, Commons, CCCXII, April 29, 1936, col. 2472.

4. Adams, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2914.

5. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCV, November 23, 1935, col. 233.

6. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCVII, December 5, 1935, col. 304.

7. H.B. Lees-Smith, Commons, CCCIX, February 24, 1936, col. 67.

8. Ibid., col. 71.

9. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCIX, February 24, 1936, col. 127

than his colleagues, wanted to know why it took four months to achieve nothing in the way of oil sanctions.¹

In March of 1936, Henderson said that he was disappointed because no further sanctions had been put on Italy. At that time he believed that an oil embargo would not be effective until October or November, but that an oil embargo should be levied at once before Italy had a chance to build up stock for the period after the rainy season. He wanted to add iron, coal, and steel to the sanctions list.² By May 6, 1936, Lees-Smith charged that the Government had made no attempt to get an oil embargo.³

Even after the conquest of Abyssinia, the Labour members of Parliament wished to continue the sanctions. In June of 1936, when the conquest was complete, Greenwood said that the British Government should still press for sanctions at Geneva.⁴ At the same time Attlee was in favor of keeping sanctions.⁵ This might be expected since Attlee had opposed Winston Churchill's suggestion to withdraw sanctions in March.⁶ Henderson said that since no new sanctions had been levied for seven months, the policy was not one of progressive sanctions.⁷ He indicated by this that he wished to see more sanctions placed on Italy. If the League were to withdraw the sanctions on Italy, Henderson wanted Britain to continue its sanctions, and to refuse to supply Italy with war commodities. He admitted that he did not believe

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1. Attlee, Commons, CCCIX, February 24, 1936, col. 147
 2. Henderson, Commons, CCCX, April 9, 1936, col. 3049.
 3. Lees-Smith, Commons, CCCXI, May 6, 1936, cols. 1827-8.
 4. Greenwood, Commons, CCCXIII, June 18, 1936, cols. 1216-7.
 5. Attlee, Commons, CCCXIII, June 23, 1936, col. 1610.
 6. Attlee, Commons, CCCX, March 26, 1936, col. 1536.
 7. Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, May 6, 1936, col. 1764.

that this action by Britain alone would be effective, but he wanted Britain to accept and carry out its obligations by going it alone.¹

There is only one piece of evidence that any Labourite wished to repeal the sanctions against Italy. Writing in the July issue of Labour in 1936, Dr. M. Follick said that there was no use continuing an arms embargo against Italy because Italy no longer needed oil. The only thing which could now be done to drive Italy from Abyssinia was to use an army of 500,000 men. This was the only action left because the government would not use "collective collaboration" to freeze her out by sanctions.² In other words the Government had let the situation reach the point where sanctions no longer had any force. This lone statement, however, cannot be taken to mean that Labour's followers wished to see sanctions repealed.

What action could the League have taken after the seizure of Abyssinia had become a fact? One possibility was to deny recognition to Italy's conquest. In 1936, the National Council of Labour called "upon the League of Nations... to refuse to recognize the invasion and conquest of any portion of Abyssinia's territory as the basis of settlement."³ In July of the same year Lansbury declared that it would be a "calamity" if the British Government recognized "de jure" annexation of Abyssinia by Italy.⁴ In 1937, Ernest Bevin, as the President of the Trades Union Congress, said, "We shall protest with all our force against any recognition by the League of Italy's war and plunder in violation of the Covenant and all her treaty's obligations."⁵

Such action had been supported during the Manchurian incident.

1. Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, April 21, 1936, cols. 109-10.
2. Dr. M. Follick, "Has Mussolini Really Won", Labour, July 1936, III. pp. 282-83.
3. L.P. Annual Report, 1936, p. 33.
4. Lansbury, Commons, CCCXV, July 31, 1936, col. 1906.
5. "President's Report", T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 76.

Hence, this was but a continuation of Labour's policy in regard to aggression. Such a policy would not stop aggression, but it would definitely express disapproval of such methods. In contrast, the Government recognized the conquest on April 16, 1938.

Besides working with the League of Nations, Labour wanted Britain to cooperate with at least two other nations during this crisis; namely, France and the United States. Both Henderson and Wedgewood believed that the cooperation of France should be enlisted. During the crisis France showed little inclination of sincerely desiring to prevent Italy's conquest of Abyssinia. Pierre Laval, French Foreign Minister during 1935 and the early part of 1936, was more concerned with obtaining Italian aid against Germany, and, therefore, did not want to alienate Italy. Laval was instrumental in postponing an oil embargo by the League. M. Flandin, Laval's successor to the Foreign Office, did not change the French policy, and consequently, cooperation of France with Britain was not forthcoming. Wedgewood believed that France's cooperation could be secured by pointing out that if the effort to stop the war failed, the Locarno treaty would be gone, and France would lose its prized security.¹ Henderson said substantially the same thing.² This prediction was to come true. France did lose the protection of Locarno and of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

It was recognized by the Labour groups of Britain that if the cooperation of the United States could be secured during the Abyssinian affair, cooperative action would have a better chance of success. Wedgewood said that he was very pleased by the Foreign Secretary's statement that

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1. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2938.

2. Henderson, Commons, CCCXI, April 21, 1936, col. 111.

he had been in touch with the United States on this question. The Colonel believed that it was within the hands of Britain and the United States with the help of France to "preserve" the peace of the world.¹ In connection with the proposed oil embargo, Lees-Smith commented that there was hope and a chance of getting the United States to help. If Britain wavered, the United States would be less apt to help.² As stated above he believed that an oil embargo, and an agreement from the United States not to increase exports of oil, would exhaust Italy's oil supply in three and one-half months.³

The efforts of the British Government, though having the same general aim, seemingly, as those of Labour, never were as energetic as Labour would have liked. Throughout the Abyssinian-Italo crisis, the British Government worked to bring the dispute to a peaceful end before hostilities began, and after armed conflict came, to bring it to a speedy end. While in Rome on June 24th and 25th, 1935, Eden suggested a settlement, giving Italy the portion of Ogaden around Walwal, compensating Abyssinia with a corridor through British Somaliland to the port of Zeila. This suggestion was refused by Mussolini. The next move made by Britain came at the conference of Great Britain, Italy, and France, held in August of 1935 to discuss the affair. Here the British and French delegates suggested that Great Britain, France and Italy lend their aid to Abyssinia. Abyssinian sovereignty was not to be impaired, but Italy's special interests were to be recognized. Once again Italy disapproved. In the meantime, Britain

1. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1936, col. 2939.

2. Lees-Smith, Commons, CCCIX, February 24, 1936, cols. 68-9.

3. Ibid., col. 67.

had brought its fleet and naval bases up to full strength in the Mediterranean.

On September 10th, Hoare and Laval decided that if sanctions were imposed by the League, they would make sure that the sanctions were limited to financial and economic measures only. Britain agreed to the sanctions adopted by the League Assembly in October, but these sanctions proved to be ineffective. On January 22, 1936, Eden urged the League to adopt an oil embargo. France urged delay, and because of other added difficulties, the oil embargo was not adopted. After the May 12th meeting of the Council, by which time Addis Ababa was occupied by Italian troops, Britain decided that the sanctions had failed of their purpose and decided to urge their repeal. The League nations agreed, and on July 15th, the sanctions against Italy were officially ended.

In contrast to the Government's policy, Labour spokesmen urged strong League action. Such action was necessary to maintain the League of Nations and collective security. Thus, British Labour condemned the Hoare-Laval deal as contrary to the ideals of the League. Rather than recognize Italy's aggression, it would be better to prevent that aggression. To make it difficult for Italy to supply its military forces in Africa, some Labourites urged the Government to close the Suez Canal to Italian shipping. Along the same line, Labour gave complete support to the League sanctions, regretting only that the sanctions were not more stringent. Many indicated that they were in favor of sanctions even if sanctions led to war between Britain and Italy. When the British Government decided that sanctions no longer served a useful purpose, and helped to bring about their repeal, many objected and specifically requested their continuance.

They also requested that Italy's annexation of Abyssinia should not

be recognized. British Labour and the British Labour Party thus showed more devotion to the League of Nations as an instrument of collective security than did the British Government.

If one starts with the assumption that it was to the advantage of Britain and other nations to prevent aggression, and maintain the League of Nations as a bulwark against aggression, then the policy of the British Labour group was logical. It was sensible to close the Suez Canal and to ~~send~~ military supplies to Abyssinia. It naturally followed that Italy should have been denied the resources to wage the war of conquest. The same reasoning dictated the use of a naval blockade and military forces to end Italy's dream of an enlarged empire as quickly as possible - if peace were to be maintained. This latter phase British Labour generally neglected, except to ~~make~~ statements to the effect that Labour supported sanctions even if Mussolini did attack any League Power (i.e. Britain) because of this. Perhaps a blockade was unnecessary, but there is some evidence that leads one to believe that if the sanctions had been more comprehensive, Italy's attack would have ground to a halt. Italy is a nation with limited natural resources, lacking coal, iron, and oil - all essentials in constructing weapons and waging a successful war. The sanctions imposed were those which Italy did not need for a short war. An oil embargo might have resulted in a longer war, or even defeat for Mussolini's army. Certainly the air force would have been grounded.

In some ways it is surprising that the British Government did not adopt a more forceful policy in the crisis. A considerable portion of the British people seem to have been in favor of such a policy. The Peace Ballot, sponsored by the League of Nations Union showed this to be true.

One of the questions in the Peace Ballot was, "Do you consider that,

if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by: (a) economic and non-military measures, and (b) if necessary, military measures?" The voting on the question was as follows:

	Yes	No	Doubtful	Abstentions	
a.	10,027,608	635,074	27,255	855,107	1
b.	6,784,368	2,351,981	40,893	2,364,441	

This indicates that most of the people of Britain supported economic sanctions, but indicates that only a little more than half of the population favored military action. Thus it would seem that the British Government could have counted on support for any economic sanctions it desired to place on Italy, but would have received a questionable amount of support for military sanctions. Helen Hiatt, in discussing British opinion in Public Opinion in the Italo-Ethiopian Dispute, states that the result of the Peace Ballot was "a definite instruction to the government". She also states that the Ballot was the chief reason for Hoare's statement in September of 1935: "The recent response of public opinion shows how completely the nations supports the government in full acceptance of the obligations of League Membership." In a footnote she comments that a breakdown by weeks of the vote from November of 1934 to May 1935 showed a steady increase in the number of votes registered in favor of military sanctions, and a corresponding decrease in the number of votes cast for the abolition of military and naval aircraft.² This expression of opinion is one reason why all major political parties supported the collective peace system in the general election held in November of 1935. Therefore, it seems a safe conclusion to state that

1. Quoted by Schuman, op. cit., p. 175, from Arnold J. Toynbee and others, Survey of International Affairs. London: Humphrey Milford-Oxford University Press, 1935, II, p. 51.
2. Helen Hiatt, Public Opinion in the Italo-Ethiopian Dispute. Geneva. Geneva Special Studies, Geneva Research Center, VII, February 1936, No. 1, pp. 19-21.

the British public would have supported any economic measures which the British Government and the League of Nations undertook.

In spite of public support, Labour's policy might have been difficult to put into practice. France under Laval, was not in favor of placing stringent sanctions on Italy. Laval wanted Italy's support to checkmate Germany, and, therefore, did not wish to alienate Italy by supporting the application of sanctions too vigorously. Therefore, France's support at this time was of doubtful quality. As stated before, it was Laval who successfully prevented the addition of oil to the embargo list. A second difficulty standing in the way was the attitude of the United States. The United States had banned the sale of arms and munitions to both Italy and Abyssinia. But would the United States also refused to send other goods to Italy such as oil? The American government did support a moral embargo on oil to Italy. In addition, the Neutrality Proclamation of the United States stated that the Government would not give protection to any American citizen who traded with Italy. Some have contended that this was a clear indication that the United States would not oppose a blockade of Italy.¹ The denial of arms to both sides and the refusal to protect its citizens who were trading with Italy was certainly a departure from the traditional American policy of insisting upon the freedom of the seas for neutral trade. Franklin Roosevelt, moreover, was not friendly to aggression. It seems probable that the United States would not have made any move which would weakened collective action.

Another question concerned the tenor of British opinion if sanctions had provoked Mussolini into attacking a League member. The Peace Ballot shows divided support for military sanctions, giving some indication

1. Henry Bamford Parkes, Recent America, A History of the United States Since 1900. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1941, p. 590.

that if a conflict had come as a result of sanctions, British opinion might have turned against sanctions. It is the author's opinion that the British people placed so much faith in the power of economic sanctions that they expected that no other means would be necessary to stop Italy. They completely discounted the possibility of war arising from the enforcement of sanctions. If war had resulted, the Peace Ballot indicated that only half-hearted support would have been forthcoming from the British people.

10,027,608 persons supported economic sanctions, but only 6,784,368 persons voted in favor of military measures. On the basis of this evidence, only slightly more than half of the British would have given support to military sanctions in order to uphold collective action. There was solid support, however, for collective security. But did that support reach the point of really supporting military sanctions? All of these difficulties combined made effective collective action a doubtful matter.

In spite of the possible obstacles which might have made effective military sanctions a questionable policy, Britain and the League of Nations could have made the conquest of Abyssinia a difficult undertaking. The British Labour Party urged the British Government to take such a stand. Even before the outbreak of hostilities the Labour Party suggested the closing of the Suez Canal to Italian shipping; this step the Government did not consider. The Labour Party favored the application of sanctions by the League nations during the crisis, while the Government seemingly agreed. The British Government did support the sanctions levied by the League and did propose the adding of oil to the embargo list, but was persuaded by France to drop an oil embargo. In the meantime, in contrast to the Government's avowed aims, the Hoare-Laval plan was evolved which met essentially all of Italy's demands. This step brought a strong protest from the Labour

Party which believed that aggression should not be rewarded. When the British Government indicated early in 1936, that it would urge the League to repeal the sanctions, Labour again objected, and instead requested the British Government to continue the sanctions, even if lifted by the League of Nations. Throughout the entire affair the Labour Party maintained complete loyalty to the principle of collective action. It seems reasonable to assume that if that principle had been sincerely accepted and applied, international law could have been upheld.

Chapter IV

Rhineland

By the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Articles 42 and 43, Germany was forbidden to "maintain or construct any fortification either on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometers to the East of the Rhine." Germany was also forbidden to send or keep armed forces in the same area. Article 44 specified that any violation of the above provisions would be a "hostile act" and "calculated to disturb the peace of the world".¹ This restriction did not satisfy France, which wanted an additional guarantee of aid from other nations if an infraction of the provisions occurred.² These guarantees France thought she had secured by the Locarno Treaty of 1925. Article 2 of the Treaty contained the pledge of Germany and Belgium and also Germany and France not to attack each other; this agreement did not hold if either Article 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles were violated. Article 4 read as follows:

- "(1) If one of the high contracting parties alleges that a violation of Article 2 of the present treaty or a breach of articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been or is being committed, it shall bring the question at once before the Council of the League of Nations.
- (2) As soon as the Council of the League of Nations is satisfied that such a violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its findings without delay to the Powers signatory to the present treaty, who severally agree that in such case they will each of them come to the assistance of the power against whom the act complained of is directed.
- (3) In case of flagrant violation of article 2 of the present treaty or of a flagrant breach of articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles by one of the high

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1. Wolfers, op. cit., p. 42.

2. Ibid., p. 43.

contracting parties, each of the other contracting parties hereby undertakes immediately to come to the help of the party against whom such a violation or breach has been directed as soon as said Power has been able to satisfy itself that this violation constitutes an unprovoked act of aggression and that by reason either of the crossing of the frontier or of the outbreak of hostilities or of the assembly of armed forces in the demilitarized zone immediate action is necessary. Nevertheless, the Council of the League of Nations, which will be seized of the question in accordance with the first paragraph of this article, will issue its findings, and the high contracting parties undertake to act in accordance with recommendations of the Council provided they are concurred in by all the members other than the representatives of the parties which have engaged in hostilities."¹

Representatives of Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, and Great Britain signed the Locarno Treaty.

In violation of the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaty, Hitler sent German troops into the demilitarized Rhineland March 7, 1936. Hitler's move fortified his western border so that he could not be so readily attacked during his contemplated advance into Central Europe.

The excuse given by Hitler was that France had broken the Locarno Pact by the Franco-Russian Mutual Assistance Pact which had been signed on May 2, 1935.

Thus, according to Hitler, the action of France released Germany from its obligations under Locarno. Even while troops moved into the Rhineland, Hitler, speaking to the Reichstag, held out peace offers with regard to Western Europe, but no approach was made to nations to the south and east of Germany. Both France and England hesitated to take any action. According to some interpretations of the Locarno Pact, they were entitled to use military force against Germany. The question before

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1. Wolfers, op. cit., pp. 45-6, footnote 25.

France and England was whether or not this deed was a "flagrant violation" of the Locarno Treaty. If it was, then France could use force immediately to drive German troops from the Rhineland. The French cabinet met and decided to act in accordance with Article 4, section 1 of the Locarno Pact; that is, to put the matter before the League Council.

The Council handed down the opinion that Germany had broken the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaty, but did not recommend any action to compel Germany's withdrawal from her new positions. Thus, Hitler turned his attention to Austria, Czechoslovakia, and eventually Poland and the Ukraine with confidence that his eastern frontier was well protected.¹

The re-occupation of the Rhineland did not greatly alarm British Labour, although, since Hitler had come to power in Germany they had opposed his acts and distrusted his promises. Many members recognized, however, that a new danger had been created by this step, and that Germany's action might lead to war. They suggested that the matter be referred to the League, which it was. In this case, Labour members expressed opposition to British acquiescence in any further aggression, or to any nation acquiring a dominant position. At the same time Labour members piously hoped that France would remain convinced that in the event of a German attack upon France, Locarno would still be in effect. The magazine, Labour, pointed out that "Germany's action in reoccupying with her armed forces the demilitarized Rhineland has created a most dangerous situation. It makes a contempt for public law that...cannot be condoned;..."² Hugh Dalton noted the "limited character" and "the absence of certain states" from Hitler's plan to keep the peace.³

1. Parts of the following sources have been used as the basis for the introduction
 Seton-Watson, op. cit., pp. 247-50.
 Schuman, op. cit., pp. 202-220.
 Vera Micheles Dean, Europe in Retreat. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941, pp. 60-3.
2. "All the World Over", Labour, April 1936, III, p. 178.
3. Dalton, Commons, CCCVII, March 9, 1936, col. 1927.

Characteristically, Labour members held that this newly created danger to peace should be dealt with by the League of Nations. On March 26, 1936, two Labour members of the House of Commons referred to the League of Nations. Dalton wished to see a "League of Nations approach" instead of just an approach to the problem from the French and British viewpoint.¹ Attlee criticized the Government proposals because they were based upon Locarno instead of the League of Nations. He sensed the threat of German expansion to the east and urged that any agreement should apply everywhere and not in Western Europe alone.² Hugh Dalton was not opposed to accepting Hitler's proposal for the discussion of ways of maintaining peace in Europe, but he did say that the talks should be blunt.³ Dalton wanted to make clear to Hitler the idea that Britain would not stand idly by while other nations were attacked.⁴ A few days later he expressed this idea in a different form, "Let us say to the German people in all friendship and in all frankness....We wish you no ill. We recognize your title to equality, equality in political status, and equality in economic opportunity...but we do not recognize the right of any nation...to an overbearing and brutal predominance in the world."⁵ Greenwood agreed with Dalton and added that all nations should be asked to take part in a general conference. In fact, Greenwood would "seize" the opportunity.⁶

1. Dalton, Commons, CCCX, March 26, 1936, col. 1452.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCX, March 26, 1936, col. 1533.

3. Dalton, Commons, CCCIX, March 9, 1936, col. 1926.

4. Ibid., col. 1927.

5. Dalton, Commons, CCCX, March 26, 1936, col. 1455.

6. Greenwood, Commons, CCCIX, March 10, 1936, col. 1976.

Dalton added to the previous statement, "I hope we may be able to persuade the French Government....that the Locarno Treaty still stands so far as our relations with them are concerned in the event of an aggressive attack upon them."¹

Thus Labour members were willing to consider a revision of existing agreements with Germany through international action. But they opposed military action in the immediate Rhineland crisis. Henderson commented that Britain should disarm if she expected Germany to respect the Treaty of Versailles.² The most revealing statement of Labour's attitude toward the re-occupation of the Rhineland was made by Hugh Dalton. "It is only right to say bluntly and frankly...the Labour Party would not support, the taking of military sanctions or even economic sanctions against Germany at this time, in order to put German troops out of the German Rhineland." In comparison Hitler has stayed within German borders while Mussolini has not.³

In summing up Labour's policy toward Germany's re-occupation of the Rhineland, it may well be said that the policy was a negative one. While it was admitted that the danger of war was increased, no plan was offered to lessen that danger. Although it is dangerous to assume that one man speaks for a group, it seems safe to do so in this case because no one on Labour's side disagreed with Hugh Dalton's declaration that the Labour Party would not support sanctions. Dalton's position that no aggression had been committed must have been accepted by the Labour Party.

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1. Dalton, Commons, CCCIX, March 9, 1936, col. 1927.
2. Henderson, Commons, CCCIX, March 9, 1936, col. 1877.
3. Dalton, Commons, CCCX, March 26, 1936, col. 1454.

In taking this stand, Dalton and other Labour people failed to realize fully the significance and the possible results of Germany's action. In the first place, as Seton-Watson wrote, Germany gained considerably. "Indeed, from the purely strategic standpoint, successful re-occupation meant for Germany the double gain of 'making herself impregnable in the west and of achieving her maximum offensive power in the West also'."¹ This German action was an indication, as well, of the aggression to take place in Central Europe. The failure to understand this and the failure to propose effective action to prevent the realization of German ambitions appears in retrospect to have been a serious weakness in the Labour Party's position on foreign policy.

The lack of understanding can be illustrated by studying Labour's attitude toward disarmament and rearmament. The doctrine of disarmament was still predominant. The re-occupation of the Rhineland did not bring any sudden demand for more British arms, but there was increased interest in British military strength, most of which came some time after March 7, 1936. There was criticism by Attlee of the Government's rearmament program because there was no co-ordination between the various branches of the military.² Lees-Smith was critical too, but because no defenses had been prepared against air attacks.³ The Labour Party Conference took note of the strength of the dictators when it accepted a resolution proposed by Hugh Dalton. The resolution was as follows:

"That in view of the threatening attitude of the Dictatorships....the armed strength of the countries loyal to the League of Nations must be conditioned by the armed strength

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1. Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 249.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCIX, March 9, 1936, col. 1849.

3. Lees-Smith, Commons, CCCXV, July 20, 1936, cols. 83-5.

of the potential aggressors.

"The Conference, therefore, reaffirms the policy to maintain such defense forces as are consistent with our country's responsibilities as a Member of the League of Nations, the preservation of people's rights and liberties, the continuance of democratic institutions, and the observance of International Law.

"Realizing the relationship between foreign policy and armaments, and...the deplorable record of the Government, the Labour Party declines to accept responsibility for a purely competitive armament policy. It reserves full liberty to criticize the rearmament program of the present Government..."¹

This resolution is significant because it shows definitely the change of the Labour Party's attitude toward rearmament. Since the Conference did not meet until October 5, 1936, it cannot be said positively that it came as a result of the Rhineland seizure. Probably it came as the result of the conflicts in Manchuria, Abyssinia, and Spain. The importance of this resolution is that the Labour Party favored basing the amount of arms needed on Britain's obligations as a League member. This would influence the Labour Party to oppose greatly increased appropriations for arms because it could point to the strength of other League members and claim that the combined strength of the League made a larger increase of military forces by Britain unnecessary. Taking this into consideration along with the number of Labourites who earnestly desired disarmament, it cannot be said that British Labour at this point wanted to embark upon a strenuous rearmament program, but it can be said that British Labour had come to the turning point in its disarmament campaign, and was starting on the path leading to British rearmament.

While British Labour failed to recognize the most important aspect of the situation, Labour did condemn the action of Germany in sending

1. "Resolution by Hugh Dalton", L.P. Annual Report, 1936, p. 182, carried, p. 207.

troops into the Rhineland as the clear case of treaty violation, which it was. The articles of the Treaty of Versailles were violated by this move as well as Article 4, Section 1, of the Locarno Treaty. In view of Labour's belief in the sanctity of treaties, it is not surprising that Labour condemned the German move. Yet, it is doubtful whether, if talks had taken place concerning the right of Germany to occupy the Rhineland, Labour leaders would have been opposed to German re-occupation. Some Labour leaders had been in favor of granting Germany equality by disarmament. Would this not have given Germany equality with other nations if she could fortify any part of her territory? As previously mentioned in this chapter Henderson stated that Germany had some justification because Britain had not disarmed. Dalton's statement that Labour would not support the application of any type of sanctions against Germany also bears out this contention. Yet, it does seem inconsistent for Labour to condemn Hitler's move as a violation of the treaties, and still oppose any step to prevent the infraction from becoming an accomplished fact. Such an attitude is not the way to uphold international law, which Labour leaders believed should guide all the activities of nations.

It has been contended that France and Britain did not have the legal right to take military action against Germany in 1936, but if the purpose of these two nations was to prevent aggression, then this was the time to act. The legal basis for military action was stated in the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaty. Some have contended that this right did not exist when Germany occupied the Rhineland with troops in 1936. This opinion is based on the wording of the Locarno Treaty which states that immediate military action could be taken only

in case of "flagrant violation". According to some persons, the occupation did not meet this definition because it was not a preliminary step to an attack on France. Therefore, Britain was not bound to come to France's aid. Nevertheless, the issue was referred to the League Council under clause 1 of Article IV. Action against Germany would have been perfectly legitimate when the Council condemned German action as a violation of both the Locarno and Versailles Treaties, as it did on March 19, 1936. The decision by the Locarno Powers against action to checkmate Germany was due largely to the policy of the British Government, which brought pressure on France for a policy of conciliation and appeasement. In the end it was decided to take no action whatever.¹

Military action by France alone, or by France and Great Britain, would almost certainly have forced the German troops to withdraw, left Germany unfortified in the West, and made it impossible for Germany to turn to the South and East to absorb Austria and Czechoslovakia, and to attack Poland without being threatened with immediate attack by the French army in the West. From the standpoint of preventing aggression, this is exactly what should have taken place in March of 1936. The real problem, more apparent now than then, facing Britain and other nations in 1936 was to find a way to prevent future aggression. Hitler's troops in the Rhineland, and the subsequent building of fortifications in the area made Hitler's western frontier secure from attack; thus he could safely turn his attention to the South and East. It sealed the fate of Austria and Czechoslovakia. British Labour and the Labour Party made the same error as the British and French Governments. They

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1. Haines and Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 393-96.

condemned the step as a treaty violation, but neither comprehended the danger to the sovereignty of the nations in Central Europe nor the danger to world peace. Having failed to make the correct analysis of the situation, British Labour groups also failed to offer the proper course of action, which was to urge France to use its army in the Rhineland, and to promise full British cooperation, even to the extent of sending troops across the English Channel to France.

Chapter V

Spain

In the summer of 1936 the world was confronted with new international complications growing out of the civil war in Spain. On July 17, 1936, Spanish army units revolted against the Spanish government. The leader of the army revolt was Francisco Franco. The plan was to seize the government of Spain by a coup d'etat. The coup failed, and a civil war which was to last for three years began. Italy and Germany sent troops, planes, and munitions to help Franco win the civil war. Volunteers came to the aid of the Spanish government, including both men and materials from Russia. The civil war took on the characteristics of an international war. Franco won the war in 1939 with the aid of Mussolini and Hitler.¹

The civil war in Spain brought new complications for Britain. A victory for Franco supported by Hitler and Mussolini meant that these potential enemies could neutralize the British position at Gibraltar. Other positions in Spain could be fortified which would make it impossible for Britain to use the western outlet of the Mediterranean Sea. This would lengthen British communications with India and the Near East by several thousand miles if a European war broke out. Fascist victory would also weaken the ability of France to wage war. Control of the Balearic Islands could make it difficult for France to call upon her

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1. The introduction of this chapter is based largely upon the following sources:
 Seton-Watson, op. cit., pp. 368-394.
 Schuman, op. cit., Chapter VII *passim*.
 Medlicott, op. cit., pp. 193-199.
 Soward, op. cit., pp. 233-235.

reserve manpower in Africa, if the Fascist powers used the islands as bases against French shipping. Victory in Spain would also give France another frontier to defend in war. Even if Spain did not enter a European war, the possibility of Spain doing so would necessitate the stationing of military forces along the Spanish frontier and at Gibraltar, thus weakening the ability of the Allies to concentrate their forces against Germany.

France and England chose to ignore these potential dangers, and decided to follow a policy of neutrality in a futile attempt to localize the Civil War. On July 25, 1936, France forbade all arms shipments to Spain. This was labeled Non-Intervention. Britain followed France's lead three weeks later. Italy, Russia, Germany, and Portugal agreed to this so-called Non-Intervention. As events developed, both France and Britain adhered to their agreements, but Germany, Italy and Russia and Portugal ignored Non-Intervention. The result was that Madrid received little help, while Franco received a large amount from Italy and Germany.

A Non-Interventions Committee was set up in London to supervise the application of the pledges. No methods of punishing violations were proposed. The British Government accepted this plan and maintained strict neutrality in the conflict. The only time that Britain adopted a tough attitude was after shipping in the Mediterranean Sea had been attacked mysteriously by submarines and planes. A conference, called for September 10, 1937, resulted in joint naval action against the "pirates". The sinkings ceased at once. Other than this, the British Government remained aloof from the Spanish Civil War.

This lack of action did not meet the approval of British Labour

circles. Labour definitely sympathized with the Spanish government and left no doubt in anyone's mind as to their opposition to Franco. The policy of Non-Intervention was criticized with vigor, and its abandonment was sought. Labour wished to prevent the Rebels from receiving aid from the outside, but it had no objection to the Loyalists receiving all possible aid. Such a course, they felt, would crush the rebellion and save Spain for democracy. This attitude was justified by the contention that the Loyalist government had the support of a majority of the Spanish people, and that it was entitled to treatment as the legal government. The Spanish Civil War was looked upon as a danger to the peace of the world; thus this matter should be dealt with by the League of Nations. In this case there was no demand for sanctions. When British shipping was attacked, a few Labour leaders demanded protection for this shipping. A few recognized the struggle in Spain as a threat to the balance of power in relation to fascism versus democracy, and a threat to the British life-line through the Mediterranean Sea.

The Labour groups of Britain stressed the point that the Spanish government was the legitimate regime, against which conservative and fascist-minded groups had started a rebellion. Wedgewood inquired in Commons what it mattered if the Spanish government had been elected by a minority of the people. It was the established government, against which the army rose in rebellion.¹ On the same day Cocks stated that the Spanish government was supported by a majority of the people.² A month later Jones said that the Spanish government was the "embodiment

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1. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXVI, October 29, 1936, col. 79.

2. Cocks, Commons, CCCXVI, October 29, 1936, col. 105.

of the popular will".¹ Grenfell said that the government was the legal government of Spain because it had an overwhelming parliamentary majority; he offered as proof the support of the government by the people in the war.²

There can be no doubt that the Spanish government was the legal government of Spain. It represented the will of the people as expressed at the polls. The army, led by conservative officers, was in rebellion, but the government retained wide popular support, particularly in urban areas. As Grenfell pointed out, the proof of this popular support lay in the defense of the republic, which held off the Rebels even though a large part of the army had gone over to them. Therefore, Labour's support and desire to help the Spanish Government could be justified on both moral and legal bases.

Thus Labour supported Alvarez del Vayo³ when he charged that the Rebels were being supplied with arms. The National Council of Labour telegraphed Eden, who was in Geneva, on September 30, 1936, to this effect: "...in view of the fact that the French Government initiated the policy with the whole-hearted support of the British Government, the National Council of Labour regards it as the imperative duty of these Governments to take the initiative immediately to have these serious charges investigated and the findings published without delay."⁴ The Labour Party Conference upheld this view and added its insistence

1. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXVII, November 5, 1936, col. 376.

2. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXIX, January 1, 1937, cols. 151-2.

3. The Foreign Minister of the Loyalist Government.

4. L. P. Annual Report, 1936, p. 37.

on investigation and publication of the facts.¹ A year later the Trades Union Congress asked for the same procedure.² These statements refer to the violation of the Non-Intervention Agreements. As Rebels, Franco's armies had no legal right to receive arms shipments from any nation, and also the Non-Intervention Agreements had provided that no arms be shipped to either side in the Spanish Civil War. If the Rebels were receiving arms from foreign nations, this should be proved, and the facts published. It was hoped that these methods would cause the nations helping Franco to stop this aid.

This hostility to Franco is also illustrated in Noel-Baker's six point proposal of 1938. Noel-Baker included within this plan an embargo on trade with parts of Spain controlled by Franco.³ This was consistent with the attitude that the Spanish Rebels should receive no outside aid against the legal government of Spain. The Non-Intervention Plan provided for this, but it was being broken daily by Germany and Italy. The least the Government could do, Noel-Baker contended, was to keep its side of the bargain to the letter. He also proposed to impound any of Franco's funds to recompense ship owners whose ships had been sunk by the Rebels. This was also an attempt to prevent Franco from receiving any supplies.⁴

The hostility to Franco was again illustrated by Labour's wish to prevent supplies of arms from reaching the Rebels. From the very beginning of the Spanish Civil War, Labour heard rumors of Germany and Italy

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1. L. P. Annual Report, 1936, p. 37.
 2. "General Council's Report", T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 173.
 3. Noel-Baker, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, cols. 932-4.
 4. Noel-Baker, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, cols. 932-4.

sending supplies and men to help Franco. As time went on, evidence accumulated that the rumor had all too much basis in fact.

Shortly after the revolt of the Spanish troops began, Morgan Jones asked if the rumors that Italy and Germany were sending supplies to Spain were true. If they were true, the situation was very serious for all Europe.¹ In October of 1936, Cocks told the House of Commons that there were several sources of information which proved that the Dictators were sending help to Franco's armies.² Some time later Grenfell asserted, "This influx of trained men from Germany and Italy into Spain must be stopped, but it cannot be right to stop volunteers from one side only. That would mean stopping volunteers from France and elsewhere while the Germans are sending their trained divisions to win victory over the Spanish people."³

There were many comments along the same lines which indicated the Labour dislike of fascist troops in Spain. This was continued throughout the Civil War. Henderson proposed to end all discussion as to whether fascist troops were or were not in Spain; he called for a committee of investigation to go to Spain in order to find out if there were Italian troops present. His proposal had no chance as long as the Conservative Government was in power. It was, however, the logical thing to do to settle the controversy. If anyone were to find definite proof, he should go to the scene of action. On the other hand, Mussolini had admitted the presence of Italian troops in Spain and had even sent congratulations to victorious troops. What more could anyone want?⁴

1. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXV, July 27, 1936, col. 1116.

2. Cocks, Commons, CCCXVI, October 29, 1936, col. 101.

3. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXIX, January 19, 1937, col. 160.

4. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXI, March 25, 1937, col. 3109.

Attlee charged that Bilbao had fallen under the impact of foreign artillery and foreign aircraft, yet the British Government continued to support Non-Intervention. Henderson said that there was considerable evidence that Non-Intervention was a "farce", that foreign troops had constantly aided the Rebels, and that German planes had bombed Guernica.¹ Williams asked the British Government to "guarantee to the house that they will in no way deviate from the terms submitted to the Non-Intervention Committee, and that in no circumstances would belligerent rights be accorded the Franco Regime before the withdrawal of foreign troops."²

As the farce of Non-Intervention continued, Attlee charged that Franco got supplies through Italian and German violation of international law, while the Spanish government got none because the land frontiers were closed.³ Cocks said that he did not believe a word of the Dictators' promises to withdraw troops from Spain. He pointed to Mussolini's speech of July 1, 1937 in which Il Duce said, "Volunteers will not be withdrawn. The last word will be spoken by guns."⁴ Grenfell inquired whether the Government should not demand the prompt withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain.⁵

Speaking before the Trades Union Congress in 1937, Sir Walter Citrine said that the policy of the Labour Party "was to restrain by force if necessary", the Rebels from being supplied with arms from Italy and Germany.⁶ This was the only reference to the use of force in this

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1. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXV, June 6, 1937, col. 1571.
 2. F. Williams, Commons, CCCXXVI, July 26, 1937, col. 2638.
 3. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVI, July 30, 1937, cols. 3532-3.
 4. Cocks, Commons, CCCXXXII, March 7, 1938, col. 1651.
 5. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, col. 1030.
 6. T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 262.

connection. It seems probable that a strong, firm stand by the British Government would have been sufficient to prevent foreign troops from going into Spain. The Dictators were not ready to fight at that point. The above statements clearly indicate Labour's opposition to the presence of Italian and German troops in Spain, and the desire for the Government to make every attempt to secure their withdrawal. Needless to say, the Government ignored these protests.

It is significant that at the outset Labour did give Non-Intervention its support, and continued to do so until the plan was proved to be unsuccessful. It is also true that many statements indicating support for the plan were qualified, by "if it is carried out". Morgan Jones, in discussing the mediation movement, said that he did not want this latest move to slow down Non-Intervention. He wanted it to be fulfilled.¹ Grenfell said that he was for Non-Intervention if it would be fully carried out, but it had not been. There was no need, he said, for carrying the "farce" further.² Attlee was moved to comment that Non-Intervention could be justified only by success.³ Later, however, he said that there should be an attempt to make a reality of Non-Intervention. To do all this volunteers had to be withdrawn.⁴ Henderson had criticized Non-Intervention to the extent that he was forced to deny that he wanted Non-Intervention abolished.⁵ Grenfell said that there could not be any

1. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXVII, December 18, 1936, cols. 2825-6.

2. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXIX, January 19, 1937, col. 59.

3. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXV, June 25, 1937, cols. 1550-1.

4. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVI, July 15, 1937, cols. 1588-9.

5. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXV, June 25, 1937, col. 1569.

peace in Europe until there was real Non-Intervention. This was in June of 1938.¹ When Attlee stated in Commons that Labour accepted Non-Intervention until it was proved to be one-sided, Chamberlain was moved to interrupt with the comment that it was for a short period.²

In 1936, one of the conditions for Labour's support of Non-Intervention was that it be fully carried out, that no aid from any source should reach either side in the Spanish war. This, Labour hoped, would be to the advantage of the Spanish government. Ernest Bevin urged the Trades Union Congress to adopt a resolution which included the warning that the utmost care should be taken to prevent Non-Intervention from hurting the Spanish government.³ Attlee's resolution, submitted to the Labour Party's Conference of 1936 and accepted, said, "...we demand that our own Government and other Governments who have put their hands to this International Agreement should see that it is being fully carried out."⁴

The Trades Union Congress published the criticism made in July 1937 of the Government's policy by the Labour Party, that no effective plans had been worked out for the complete cessation of foreign help for Franco's armies.⁵ This indicated approval of the Party's statement. Early in 1937, Attlee accused the Government of permitting intervention by the Axis to continue although it was the Cabinet which had played

1. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, col. 1024.
2. Attlee and Chamberlain, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 23, 1938, col. 1352.
3. T.U.C. Report, 1936, p. 367.
4. Attlee, L. P. Annual Report, 1936, pp. 181-2.
5. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 177.

a leading part in support of Non-Intervention. Now, he charged, a shift had been made to support intervention. In the same speech he said that he wanted a plan of control which would work. He would place a definite time limit to test the effectiveness of control. If this plan were not accepted, then Non-Intervention should be done away with.¹ Grenfell said that he had been in favor of Non-Intervention until it was proved to be a failure.² Cocks defended Labour's position by saying that the "main complaint" which the Labour Party had against Non-Intervention was that it had been decided "to stop munitions, but they stop them for the Government and not for Franco. They decide to stop volunteers, but they stop them for the Government and not for Franco."³

If Non-Intervention had been successful in stopping the flow of supplies to the combatants, it seems likely that Labour would have supported Non-Intervention more strongly. There were many who hoped that such a plan would localize the conflict. They quickly saw that Non-Intervention was being put into force by the democracies and being ignored by the Dictator nations. This condition was harmful to the side which Labour wanted to see victorious.

The expression of good will for the Spanish government is shown by one of Noel-Baker's six proposals in his plan to be followed in Spain. He asked that anti-aircraft guns be taken off the non-intervention lists.⁴ This would have given the Spanish government a chance to obtain a means of defense against German and Italian planes in the service of Franco. The government had practically no air force to protect its remaining

1. Attles, Commons, CCCXIX, January 19, 1937, cols. 113-4.

2. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXIX, January 19, 1937, col. 159.

3. Cocks, Commons, CCCXXXII, March 9, 1938, col. 1972.

4. Noel-Baker, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, cols. 932-4.

cities. Anti-aircraft guns would have provided some defense against the bombs which were dropped on Loyalist Spain. Wedgewood objected to British pressure which led France to close its frontiers.¹ He had the same purpose as Noel-Baker, - to let the Spanish government get supplies.

In view of the almost universal conviction in Labour circles the Spanish government should win its fight against the Rebels and fascism, and that Non-Intervention hindered the Loyalists, it is not surprising that there are many statements which expressed opposition to Non-Intervention, and asked that it be abandoned. The first instance of opposition to the Non-Intervention Agreements came on September 10, 1936 at the Trades Union Congress. On this date Sir Walter Citrine asked the Government to lift its embargo in order to help the government of Spain.² Then in October of the same year at the Labour Party's conference, Christopher Addison said that the Labour Party would "commit a profound mistake if it by inference supported the Non-Intervention plan".³ Both of these groups, however, gave qualified support to Non-Intervention.⁴ Late in the same year, the Labour members of the House of Commons began to criticize Non-Intervention as it was operating. Cocks in October asked that the Spanish government be permitted to buy arms.⁵

In January 1938, Grenfell said that there was no need for carrying on a "farce".⁶ In June Attlee commented that Non-Intervention had

1. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, col. 967.

2. Sir Walter Citrine, T.U.C. Report, 1936, pp. 363-4.

3. Christopher Addison, L.P. Annual Report, 1936, p. 174.

4. See p. 102.

5. Cocks, Commons, CCCXVI, October 29, 1936, cols. 106-7.

6. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXIX, January 19, 1936, col. 159.

not been fairly applied. He also said that Non-Intervention had done nothing to relieve international tension, or to shorten the conflict. Therefore, he demanded the end of Non-Intervention.¹ In this he was supported by Henderson.² In July 1937, Attlee said that additional proposals would not make the plan work but bring more unpleasant incidents. He said that the Fascists supported Non-Intervention because it made a convenient screen behind which to help Franco.³ Criticism by other members continued along the same lines. Cocks, Greenwood, Grenfell, and Attlee all urged the abandonment of Non-Intervention.^{4,5,6} Greenwood said, "Non-Intervention Agreement now....is a rotting corpse."⁷ Grenfell summed up the situation with the assertion that aggression was a fact and Non-Intervention had become a "farce".⁸

The Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party's Conference produced more evidence of the same attitude. Mr. W.J.R. Squance moved that the Congress press for the removal of the ban on the sale of arms to Spain.⁹ Sir Charles Trevelyan proposed the following resolution which

1. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXV, June 25, 1937, cols. 1550-2.
2. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXV, June 25, 1937, col. 1571.
3. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVI, July 15, 1937, cols. 1582-3.
4. Cocks, Commons, CCCXXXII, March 9, 1938, col. 1972.
5. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 24, 1938, col. 1420.
6. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 23, 1938, col. 1444.
7. Greenwood, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 16, 1938, col. 528.
8. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, col. 1023.
9. T.U.C. Report, 1938, p. 363.

received unanimous consent of the Labour Party's Conference. That this Conference "...instruct the National Executive Committee to launch forthwith a nation-wide campaign to compel the Government to:

- (1) Abandon the so-called Non-Intervention Agreement...
- (2) Restore to the ...Spanish Government its rights under International Law to purchase arms and maintain its authority and establish law and order in its territory."¹

The National Council of Labour had already passed such a resolution.²

Here is additional evidence of Labour partisanship.

As it had done in the Ethiopian Crisis, the Labour Party asked the Government to present the case of Spain to the League on the basis that such a crisis, since it endangered the peace, was the concern of the League. Attlee and others of the Labour Party requested this intervention of the League. Such requests, however, were not as frequent, nor as persistent as in the case of Abyssinia. This is well illustrated by the fact that the outbreak of the rebellion was not immediately followed by demands that the League act.

It was not until after the speech from the Throne, almost six months after the civil war started, that Attlee criticized the Government because its policy had not been and would not be to co-operate with the League of Nations.³ On June 5th of the next year the Labour Party, according to the Trades Union Congress, "demanded that the League act under the Covenant and take up its responsibilities."⁴ At the same time the Congress considered Sir Walter Citrine's resolution calling for

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1. L.P. Annual Report, 1937, p. 212. Carried, p. 215.

2. "Report of the National Council of Labour", L.P. Annual Report, 1937, p. 7.

3. Attlee, Commons, CCCVII, December 3, 1936, cols. 58-9.

4. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 177.

Trades Union Congress "solidarity" with the Spanish Government's Appeal to the League of Nations. It concluded that it was the duty of the League to propose measures including the withdrawal of foreign troops.¹

In June and July of 1937 this appeal for League action was the strongest. Attlee, Henderson, Wedgewood, and Grenfell all said that the time had come for the League to act. Attlee said the Spanish question must be dealt with by the League of Nations "where it can be dealt with more fully and with greater hope of peace."² Henderson's comment was that the Government was guilty of "hypocrisy" unless Britain was "prepared to face up to our obligations under the Covenant whatever the consequences."³ Wedgewood asked what the League was going to do.⁴ In June, Henderson again said that the League should take some action. The Government should ask for an immediate meeting of the Council of the League.⁵ On the same day Attlee demanded that the League act.⁶

The number of demands for League action varied inversely to the number of plans concerning what the League might do in this case. Not a single request is recorded for sanctions by the League. It would seem that if the Labour leaders had expected the League to act, they would have proposed steps which the League could have taken. The answer may be that Labour had little hope of League action.

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1. T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 266.
2. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXVI, July 7, 1937, cols. 3537-8.
3. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXV, June 6, 1937, col. 1569.
4. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXI, March 25, 1937, col. 3159.
5. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXV, June 25, 1937, col. 1568.
6. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXV, June 25, 1937, col. 1553.

One test of the sincerity of a foreign policy could well be the extent to which it would be backed by the determination to use force. This was true in the case of Ethiopia, where sanctions required the backing of force. If Labour sincerely desired to prevent the Rebels from winning, it would have suggested the use of a fleet to enforce a blockade. This was suggested at one time, but one suggestion cannot be construed to represent the organized policy of a group unless supported by the vote of its followers. Certainly the opinion of one man does not represent the opinion of 10,000,000.

Cocks probably expressed the opinion of Labour as a whole when he said that no one was suggesting the sending of the army and navy to take part in this conflict. All that Labour wanted was to permit the Spanish government to buy arms where it could.¹ Attlee denied that he wanted Britain to go into Spain.² The opinion of Wedgewood was similar. He suggested the possibility of sending British troops to Spain to stop the war, but in the next breath admitted that it was "impossible and impractical". He said that the Spanish would resent such a move, but that they might welcome a League army. He, too, would not send troops to Spain.³

The sinking of British ships was another matter. Henderson said that ships sailing to the port of Bilbao were carrying on legal operations, and thus should have the protection of the British Navy.⁴ Wedgewood followed by praising the British Navy for providing the

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1. Cocks, Commons, CCCXVI, October 29, 1936, col. 91.
2. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 16, 1938, col. 532.
3. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXVIII, December 18, 1936, col. 2841.
4. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXII, March 14, 1937, col. 1076.

"Gebel Ferjon" with escorts, and recommended that it be continued.¹

Grenfell was of the opinion that if Britain protected British ships in Spanish harbors, neither Franco nor Mussolini would declare war.² Attlee also believed that British ships should be protected. He said, "Take the question of Majorca; it is quite possible to blockade Majorca. Why should any other power intervene, if Majorca belongs to General Franco?"³

It is clear from the examples cited that Labour was not ready to go to war to force the defeat of Franco, but that it would protect British shipping on lawful business. This is not to be construed as meaning that British Labour wished to fight in Spain; there is not enough evidence to support such a conclusion. It was a minority opinion, not the official opposition policy.

There is little evidence that Labour thought primarily in terms of balance of power. The central theme of their speeches was that the government of Spain was the legal government, and thus had very definite rights under international law. If the government could win its fight for existence, it would be a victory for democracy. There are, however, hints that the idea of balance of power did enter into the thoughts of Labour. A victory by Franco would upset the balance already tipped in favor of the dictators. Therefore, the Rebels should be prevented from getting arms from any nation, and the government should not be placed on the same footing. Thus, Labour saw the struggle as a threat to democracy, a part of the balance of power. Then, too, a Rebel victory

1. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXII, March 20, 1937, cols. 1671-2.
2. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, col. 1029.
3. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 23, 1938, col. 1349.

would be dangerous to British shipping and to the life-line of the empire. Now was the time for the democracies to stand up to the dictators.

In support of the belief that a victory by Franco would upset the balance between the dictators and the democracies, the "General Council's Annual Report" of the Trades Union Congress warned that the presence of foreign armies was a "challenge" to democracy.¹ Attlee said that if democracy is to survive, it must be prepared to stand up to the dictators.² Grenfell warned that a Franco victory would put Spain in the "pocket of Herr Hitler who would rule over Spain and have full control and command of all the strategic points of advantage which the Spanish peninsula affords."³ The National Council of Labour said that the attempt of the Fascist powers to change the "strategic balance of power in the Western Mediterranean, and thus imperil the vital interests of Britain and France" was a danger of war.⁴ This was the lone reference that was made directly to the balance of power.

Nevertheless here is evidence that Labour was beginning to think less in terms of collective security and more in terms of Britain. It feared a victory for France would put Fascism in a position to threaten the trade of the empire. This was undesirable since it threatened Britain herself. If a democratic government remained in Spain, it would be no threat to this vital life-line.

In the Spanish question there were three important issues at stake for Britain, all of which had some relation to Britain's future

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1. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1937, p. 176.
2. Attlee, Commons, CCCXIX, January 19, 1937, col. 115.
3. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXXXVII, June 21, 1938, col. 1029.
4. "General Council's Annual Report", T.U.C. Report, 1937, pp. 178-9.

security. In Spain the Civil War was a struggle between two opposing groups who were at variance over the form of government desired for Spain. The Rebels, led by Franco, wished to establish a Fascist government; the Loyalists wished to maintain a democratic form of government. The former wished to limit personal freedom, and protect certain groups. The latter wanted to grant personal freedom and make reforms designed to benefit the majority. If the fascist revolt succeeded, a government would be established which was not only hostile to democracy in Spain, but also in Britain. The second issue was the maintenance of international law. The aid given to Franco during the Spanish Civil War was an illustration of the lack of respect for international law or agreements held by Italy and Germany. At this time these two nations did not hesitate to violate international law any more than they had before or were to again. To Britain, the maintenance of international law was important because Britain needed to know that certain procedures would be followed so that she could plan for the future on that basis. The third issue, highly important as far as Britain was concerned, was the threat to her communications as pointed out in the introduction to this chapter.

Because of this threat to Britain's security, Britain should have taken firm and decisive steps. This would have eliminated taking the problem to the League of Nations, as suggested by Labour leaders, because by the outbreak of the Civil War, the League had been proven incapable of action by its failure to prevent Italian seizure of Abyssinia. It is true that this was the result of non-support by the major powers, but it is doubtful whether the League nations would have had any confidence in the ability of the League to meet problems

as serious as the Spanish Civil War even if the major powers had sought to activate the League.

It is possible that Non-Intervention was the correct policy to follow at the outbreak of the Civil War. There is some justification for such a policy on the basis that the Spanish people had the right to adopt any form of government by any means they desired. Also, the wish to localize the conflict in an attempt to prevent the spread of the war to the rest of Europe is understandable. If Britain had taken steps to prevent outside aid from flowing into Spain, then the conflict might have been limited to the Spanish peninsula. Such a step might have made it possible, as well, for the Spanish government to put down the rebellion. It became impossible to restrict the hostilities to Spanish forces because Germany and Italy sent military forces to help the Rebel army in complete disregard of the Non-Intervention Agreements. It was at this point that Britain should have insisted upon the carrying out of the Non-Intervention Agreements by all nations. If this could not be done, then Britain should have blockaded the Spanish Rebel coast to prevent Franco from receiving aid. Furthermore, Britain should have sent to the government forces, munitions, supplies, and possibly military advisors. The British Government, in addition, should have cooperated with Russia which was already helping the Loyalists with men and supplies. The stakes were too high to permit a Rebel victory. As soon as Non-Intervention proved to be to the advantage of Franco, Non-Intervention should have been abandoned for Intervention - aid to the Spanish government. Only in this way could Britain have been positive that her position at Gibraltar would not have been rendered valueless, and the Mediterranean would have remained open to her shipping, --

British security would have been maintained.

In contrast to the British Government, which certainly did not recognize publicly the threat to British interests of a fascist victory in Spain, the Labour Party recognized that a victory for Franco might be detrimental to Britain. During the Civil War the Labour Party was more outspoken in its hostility to Franco and the ideas he represented. The Party gave idealistic reasons for their attitude, such as the menace to democracy and opposition to aggression, as well as practical reasons such as the danger to the British life-line and possible upsetting of the balance of power in Europe, for its support of the Spanish government. The British Government adopted the policy of Non-Intervention and maintained that policy to the end of the Civil War. For a few months the Labour Party also gave its support to Non-Intervention, but when it became obvious that Germany and Italy were aiding Franco with men and arms, the Labour Party refused to support the Government. Because, as applied, Non-Intervention worked to the disadvantage of the Spanish government, the Labour Party urged that Non-Intervention be done away with. Instead, the Labour Party adopted the principle that as the legal government, the Spanish government should be permitted to buy arms and munitions in sufficient quantities to suppress the rebellion. This proposal demonstrated the Labour Party's partisanship. Neither the Labour Party nor the British Government was prepared to intervene actively in Spain to insure victory for the Spanish government. Perhaps this was the proper course; if this be true, both the British Government and the Labour Party failed to take this stand.

Chapter VI

Austria

While there is extensive evidence to show how British Labour regarded the questions of Spain and Abyssinia, there is considerably less in the case of Austria. There is so little evidence that it is difficult to determine exactly where Labour stood on the latest threat to the European security system. The only certainty is that the Labour Party was against the annexation of Austria by Germany.

The gravity of the situation did not justify this lack of concern. Hitler had written in Mein Kampf that Austria must be joined to the German Reich. One unsuccessful attempt had been made in 1934 by the murder of Chancellor Dollfuss to set up a Nazi government in Austria. This attempt went astray and the attempted coup failed, many of the leaders being executed. But this was not to be the last attempt, for in 1938 the annexation of Austria took place.

Dollfuss was succeeded by Dr. Schuschnigg who struggled to keep Austria free. Hitler pushed his campaign to annex Austria in spite of an agreement in 1936 to observe the independence of Austria. Schuschnigg was invited to Berchtesgaden to discuss Austro-German relations on February 12, 1938. Hitler accused the Chancellor of persecution of the Austrians and announced that unless certain Nazi proposals were accepted, Germany would invade Austria. Schuschnigg agreed to include two Nazis in his cabinet and to grant full political freedom for the Austrian Nazis and amnesty for all imprisoned Nazis. In return Hitler agreed to respect Austrian independence.

Seyss-Inquart, a Nazi, was appointed to the cabinet post of

Interior and Public Security which had control of the police forces. After a visit by Seyss-Inquart to Hitler, Berlin hinted at a customs union and military co-ordination. When Hitler's speech of February 20th failed to mention Austrian independence, Schuschnigg replied before the Austrian Parliament saying that his agreement with Hitler would be kept, but no more. On March 9th Schuschnigg announced that a plebiscite would be held on March 13, 1938, at which the Austrian people would cast their ballots for or against an independent Austria. This announcement brought fresh demands from Hitler, including Schuschnigg's resignation and the withdrawal of the plebiscite. To these demands Schuschnigg could only submit. Seyss-Inquart became Chancellor and requested German troops to maintain order. German troops moved into Austria on March 12th, and Austria became part of the Greater German Reich.

During this crisis, the British Government made no move to stop the invasion. No threats were made; no opposition registered. The official British Government policy was summarized by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on March 14, 1938. He protested against the German action; he denied that the British Government had given its encouragement or assent to the absorption of Austria into the Reich; he stated that Britain had held consultations with France and Italy as provided for in the Stresa conference of April 1935. The hard fact was, he admitted "that nothing could have arrested this action by Germany unless we and others had been prepared to use force to prevent it".¹

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1. Nedlicott, op. cit., pp. 223-7.

In the light of the developments in Austria the Government decided to increase its rearmament effort.

The British Labour Party had long recognized the German desire to seize Austria, and the dangers which might result. These Labour views were stated as early as 1933. After the plan for the customs union of Germany and Austria had been vetoed by the Great Powers, the Labour Magazine warned that the question would arise again.¹ Attlee, who warned that Austria was one of the danger points of Europe, wanted British influence used against dictatorship, and for democracy against aggression from any quarter.² Hitler's gestures prompted Cocks to predict in 1935 that if Mussolini went into Abyssinia, Hitler would go into Vienna before the end of the year.³ Since the Labour members of Commons were voicing thoughts such as these, it is not surprising that the Labour Party's Annual Conference called upon the British Government to "take all the measures within their power to restrain foreign aggression against Austria; and thus avert the new menace to peace which Fascism in Central Europe now involves".⁴

Although some Labour members of Commons could see danger in the Austrian situation, those who discussed the loan made to Austria in August of 1933 were opposed to this form of help to the Austrians.

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1. "Editorial", Labour Magazine, June 1931, pp. 75-6.
2. Attlee, Commons, CCLXXXIV, December 21, 1933, col. 1502.
3. Cocks, Commons, CCCIV, August 1, 1935, col. 2956.
4. L.P. Annual Report, 1933, pp. 140-1.

Bevan, Jones and Wedgewood found grounds on which to oppose the loan.^{1,2,3}

This confusion was still evident in 1938 when Hitler achieved the anchluss. Labour Parliamentary members expressed concern at the threat to Austrian independence, but put forth no suggestions for preventing the threat from being carried out. Arthur Henderson asked Chamberlain to endorse Delbos' (the French Foreign Minister) statement that the independence of Austria is "an essential element in European peace". Such a statement by Britain, Henderson said, would encourage the people of Austria and bring hope to other small nations of Europe.⁴ He also asked the Government to reserve the right to bring the matter before the League Council.⁵ Two days after the German troops crossed the border of Austria, Attlee warned that if nothing were done this time, other aggressions would follow.⁶ A little later in the day he suggested that the League be called upon to formulate plans and to stop aggression, although he did not mention Austria's case specifically.⁷

Both Attlee and Henderson were disturbed by the method which Germany had followed in acquiring Austria. Attlee said, "whatever may be one's views...with regard to whether Austria and Germany should be one state, there can be but one opinion in deploring the manner in which it has been brought about. There has been a display of naked force at

1. B. Bevan, Commons, CCLXXIV, February 7, 1933, cols. 139-43.
2. J. Jones, Commons, CCLXXIV, February 7, 1933, col. 1480.
3. Wedgewood, Commons, CCLXXIII, December 20, 1932, cols. 962-3.
4. Henderson, Commons, CCXXXII, March 2, 1938, col. 1247.
5. loc. cit.
6. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 14, 1938, col. 1320.
7. Attlee, op. cit., cols. 164-5.

a Government which was preparing to consult the people. Had it been certain that that consultation was going to favour the union of Austria and Germany, it would have been allowed to proceed in peace. That force has been taken, in my opinion, against the will of the Austrians."¹

Henderson said that no member of the Labour party would object to self-determination, but that there had been no self-determination expressed by the Austrian people.² It was Henderson who had expressed the hope that the British Government would urge the completion of the plebiscite without external pressure.³ Attlee summed up with: "We have first of all to see the passing, or what looks like the passing of a great historic State, Austria."⁴

In spite of Mr. Attlee's regrets because Germany annexed Austria, British Labour had only expressed disapproval; no plan to prevent this event had been put forth. Labour leaders were aware of the consequences of German success in Austria, but could only condemn the method by which annexation had taken place; they could not offer a plan to prevent German victory. The nearest approach to a plan was Henderson's suggestion that Britain reserve the right to bring the question to the attention of the League, and Attlee's desire that the League be convened to consider ways to stop future aggression - both futile gestures. Thus, Labour's spokesmen were able to voice a warning and opposition, but unable to offer any sensible program by which German aggrandizement could be prevented at Austrian expense.

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1. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 14, 1938, cols. 53-4.
2. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 14, 1938, col. 67.
3. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXXII, March 10, 1938, col. 2120.
4. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 14, 1938, col. 53.

If Britain sought to maintain the ideals of the League of Nations to maintain a balance of power in Europe or to protect British interests, German expansion had to be prevented. One way of preventing this expansion would have been to guarantee Austrian independence, - by military aid if necessary. It is true that it would have been difficult to send direct military aid to Austria. Military aid could have been accomplished only by an attack on Germany's western border and this necessitated the co-operation of France. It is possible that Britain did not have sufficient military power to make this guarantee in March of 1938. If a strong position in opposition to German desires were to have been taken, the early months of 1938 would have been the time to take that position. A guarantee of Austrian independence might not have saved Austria from attack any more than Poland was saved when a definite stand was finally taken. There is one important difference; Austria and Czechoslovakia had fallen into German hands without Britain and France giving any assurance of aid, or making any real attempt to prevent their conquest. By 1939 Hitler probably felt that Britain and France would once more permit a conquest. In 1938 the precedent had not been established. It is possible that a direct guarantee to Austria would have carried more weight, and might have prevented, or at least postponed, Hitler's move. Also in 1938 there were more possible allies including Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Russia, and if war had resulted, there was a good chance that Germany would have been defeated.

Attlee's suggestion that the problem of aggression be discussed by the League of Nations was of no value at the time. The League, after its failure to halt the Italian conquest of Ethiopia had no power to act because no nation believed that it could act. A mutual

guarantee by the nations of Europe to come to each others' aid in case of attack was far more practical. As stated above, such a guarantee, if backed by force, could have prevented German aggression; no other means would suffice.

It is interesting to note the influence of the Austrian episode on disarmament and rearmament. The desire for disarmament did not disappear, but demands for disarmament were few. M. Jones still wanted to abolish air bombing,¹ and Labour still believed that the money for arms could have been saved if the Government had followed a different foreign policy.² The volume of printed and spoken words concerning disarmament was a mere trickle compared to that of 1935-36. One of the results of the international events of the years before, as well as of 1938, was that Labour's agitation for disarmament was greatly diminished.

Writing in the February issue of Labour, J. S. Middleton said that Labour had been forced by circumstance to accept rearmament. Still he did not believe that British arms could help achieve peace, but rather that just treaties would bring peace.³ The February issue of Labour carried an editorial to the effect that while the Trades Unions recognized the need for arms, they were not willing to give up any of their rights such working conditions and hours because of this need.⁴

The Commons Debates of May, 1938, show that the Labour Party was seriously concerned with the condition and strength of the British

1. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXXXI, February 2, 1938, col. 305.

2. "All the World Over", Labour, May, 1938, p. 195.

3. J. S. Middleton, "Labour's Lead for the Victory of Peace", Labour, February, 1938, V, p. 132.

4. "All the World Over", Labour, April, 1938, V, p. 170.

air force. Attlee stated that not only did Britain lack equality with the German air force, but in fact was falling behind in the attempt to reach equality.¹ He suggested as a remedy that fewer types of planes be constructed and greater standardization be brought about in their manufacture.² Wedgewood, too, was concerned with the small numbers of British war planes and wanted standardization of planes.³ Of the danger, Wedgewood was fully aware: "Labour is only too willing to defend itself, to defend democracy, and to defend England at the present time." "Everything -- Army, Navy, Civil Service, even civil rights -- must give way to the safety of the country, and I think to the mass production of aeroplanes."⁴ Cripps charged that there was inefficiency in the air ministry,⁵ and said there was a need for "immediate and drastic action" to increase the production of airplanes and bolster the nation's defenses against air attacks.⁶

The author does not state, nor does he wish to suggest, that this interest in air strength was the result of the anschluss alone. These examples serve simply to illustrate that British Labour had become aware of Germany's strength in the air, and of the threat of air power to Britain. If this strength was not equaled, Britain, too, might join the list of German conquests.

1. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXV, May 12, 1938, col. 1793.
2. Ibid., col. 1797.
3. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXXVI, May 25, 1938, cols. 1299-1302.
4. Ibid., col. 1304.
5. Cripps, Commons, CCCXXXVI, May 25, 1938, col. 1332.
6. Ibid., col. 1341.

Chapter VII

Czechoslovakia

In October of 1938, Hitler acquired, as a result of the Munich Conference, the Czechoslovakian Sudetenland. The acceptance of Germany's demands at Munich by Great Britain and France represented the climax of the appeasement policy as pursued by the British Government. After Munich, the British Government redoubled its rearmament effort. The establishment of a German protectorate over the remains of Czechoslovakia and the seizure of Memel led the British Government in March to pledge its support to Poland if any event threatened her independence. The end of appeasement had come. It was the guarantee to Poland which led to Britain's declaration of war on Germany, after the attack on Poland.

In the Sudeten area, desired by Hitler, lived many Germans who were discontented and many who wished to be a part of Germany. It was clear in the early months of 1938 that Germany wished to secure autonomy for these Germans or to annex the Sudetenland. This threat should have brought certain treaties, which Czechoslovakia had signed with other countries, into operation. She had signed a treaty of alliance with Russia in May of 1935 which stated that if one party to the treaty were attacked, the other would not aid the attacker. If France came to the aid of the victim, the other would also give military aid. Thus, in this case, if France gave military support to Czechoslovakia, Russia would be bound to aid Czechoslovakia. France had signed a Mutual Assistance Pact with Czechoslovakia in 1925. This Pact provided that if either were attacked, the other would come to her assistance. The only direct commitment made by Britain to Czechoslovakia was that of a member of the

League, as provided for by Article X of the Covenant. During the crisis Britain ignored that obligation; nor was the British Government willing to give a new guarantee as to Czechoslovakian independence. England, however, did have an alliance with France. If France fulfilled its obligations to Czechoslovakia, there was little doubt that Britain would be drawn into the war. Aside from Britain's obligations to France, she could not afford to gamble on the outcome of a war between Germany and France.

On March 14, 1938, M. Paul-Boncour, the French Foreign Minister, assured M. Osusky, the Czechoslovak Minister, that France would carry out the provisions of the treaties signed with Czechoslovakia in 1924 and 1925. The Russians, too, said their commitments still held. The British Government's attitude was expressed by Prime Minister Chamberlain on March 24th when he said that Britain wished to see peace maintained, and that certain treaty obligations such as Locarno would be fulfilled by force if necessary. There were other instances in which Britain would resort to arms if necessary. He admitted that Britain would not guarantee Czechoslovakian independence, yet he did indicate that if war resulted, Britain might be drawn in. On May 14th he expressed his belief that Czechoslovakia should grant the German demands if "reasonable". Throughout the summer of 1938 the Government expressed opposition to any settlement of the Sudeten problem made as a result of force.¹

The German propaganda campaign opened with a manifesto issued by Herr Henlein and the Sudeten-deutsche Partei on March 16th. This

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1. Parts of the following have been used as a basis for the introduction to this chapter:

Medlicott, op. cit., 127-252.

Soward, op. cit., pp. 242-252.

Haines and Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 501-517.

Dean, op. cit., pp. 108-120.

Schuman, op. cit., pp. 359-456.

was followed on April 24th by the Karlsbad programme which demanded the "determination, legal recognition, and full self-government of the German areas, removal of injustices inflicted since 1918, and full liberty to profess German nationality and political philosophy". The Czech government continued to seek agreement and tried to avoid a complete break. On May 7, 1938 the British and French Ministers informed M. Krofta that they expected Czechoslovakia to grant all possible concessions; the Prague Government indicated its willingness to do so promptly. This was followed by an intensive German propaganda campaign, and there were reports of German mobilization of several divisions, in consequence of which the Czechs moved large numbers of troops into the Sudeten area. A draft of the Nationalities Statute which granted considerable local autonomy to the Sudetens, was given to the Sudeten-deutsche Partei which indicated the Statute to be unacceptable. A deadlock seemed to be inevitable.

At the end of July a further British attempt was made to solve the problem. An announcement was made that Lord Runciman had accepted the Czechoslovakian invitation to act as a mediator between the Czech Government and its minorities. During August, Runciman kept the two parties in contact, but all Czech offers were refused by the Sudeten Germans. On four occasions between July 26th and September 1st, Neville Henderson told the German Foreign Office that German military preparations might cause the Runciman mission to fail, and threaten the peace of Europe. German propaganda told of plundering and beating of Sudeten Germans. The Germans' military preparations on September 12th on both the French and Czech frontiers represented force behind Hitler's demand on the fifteenth for the union of the Sudetenland with

Germany. This led to a revolt of the Sudetens which was easily put down by Czech troops.

The final stage of British mediation began with Chamberlain's visit to Berchtesgaden on September 15th. Hitler told Chamberlain that an invasion of Czechoslovakia was imminent and could only be avoided if a guarantee were given by Britain that it would accept the principle of self-determination. On his return to London he consulted the cabinet and held conferences with Daladier and Bonnet. These conferences resulted in the Anglo-French proposals sent to the Czech Government on September 19th including these points:

- (1) that the keeping of the Sudeten Deutsch within Czechoslovakia endangered both Czechoslovakian and European peace;
- (2) that areas in which more than fifty percent of the population were German would have to be ceded;
- (3) that "some international body" should arrange for the adjustment of the frontiers and exchange of population;
- (4) that the British Government would guarantee the new boundaries of Czechoslovakia.

These proposals were accepted by Prague. Again in Godesberg Chamberlain met Hitler who demanded the cession of certain areas by October 1st without a plebscite. These demands were sent without comment to the Czechs who refused to accept them. Hitler attacked verbally again, this time in a speech attacking Benes. Der Fuehrer countered the mobilization of the British fleet and the French army by an invitation asking Chamberlain,

Daladier, and Mussolini to come to Munich. The agreement reached here provided for the occupation of territory in five stages between October 1st and 10th; the holding of plebiscites within those areas; and the assurance that German guarantees would be given, after the settlement of the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities. The latter two provisions were not fulfilled, and in March 1939 the remaining fragments of Czechoslovakia were absorbed by Germany.

The British Labour Party was critical of the Government's policy. Labour believed that Czechoslovakia should not be asked or forced to give up any part of her territory to Germany. Instead, Labour urged the Government to give a definite guarantee that Britain would protect Czechoslovakia's integrity. This step the Government refused to take. Some believed that the League of Nations was still capable of considering the problem. When the Runciman mission left for Czechoslovakia, only conditional approval was expressed. After proposals for the dividing of Czechoslovakia had been supported by the Government, opposition was quickly expressed. The result of Munich was to prove to the Labour Party that Hitler's word was of no value and that democracy had suffered a severe diplomatic defeat. In spite of criticism of the Munich agreement, the Labour Party did give assent to Chamberlain's trip to Munich, indicating that the Labour Party, as well as the Government, was willing to support almost any effort to avoid war.

There were several dangers which some of Labour's proponents could see in the approaching crisis in Czechoslovakia. The danger to the country itself was apparent. As early as January of 1937, an article in Labour pointed out that the international tension might lead to a rupture. If this came, it might be that Czechoslovakia would

be Hitler's first victim, since that nation was located along the German route to the Ukraine.¹ In March of 1938, Greenwood said, "I can conceive a possible situation in which Germany's jack-boot will be lifted and cast a shadow over Czechoslovakia."² In July Morgan Jones added his warning that Czechoslovakia was being "daily menaced".³ Wedgewood warned the Government that every time the "tyrants" are presented an ally, war becomes more inevitable.⁴ Dr. Gerhard Schacher warned that if Czechoslovakia fell, the way would be clear for Hitler, not only to the "Black Sea, but also to a push towards the coast of the Mediterranean, and advance to Poland and the Baltic, and finally the way to Russia".⁵ A month after Munich, Wedgewood saw one of the first results of Munich was in the fact that the nations of Eastern Europe are being "chained to the chariot wheel of Germany".⁶

Because of the dangers involved in this conflict, a few Labourites wanted the League of Nations convened to discuss the problem. Henderson said, "....I suggest that now is the time for the League...to call upon the nations of Central Europe to meet and see whether or not it is not possible to hammer out some sort of settlement".⁷ This was in March of 1938. In July, Morgan Jones said that in his judgment "we have to build

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1. Gustav Winter, "Europe's Danger Spot - Czechoslovakia", Labour, January, 1937, IV, p. 177.
2. Greenwood, Commons, CCCXXXIV, March 4, 1938, col. 79.
3. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXXXVIII, July 26, 1938, col. 2963.
4. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXXVIII, July 26, 1938, col. 2994.
5. Dr. Gerhard Schacher, "Czechoslovakia as a European Problem", Labour, September, 1938, I, p. 17.
6. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXL, November 2, 1938, col. 241.
7. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 24, 1938, col. 1488.

upon the basis of the League. Upon that rock the temple of peace must be founded. If it is so founded, no matter what rains of criticism may descend upon it, nor what winds of adversity may whistle upon it, the structure will stand, for it will be founded upon the rock".¹ After Munich, Clement Attlee criticized the Government because no attempt had been made to bring the question before the League of Nations.²

Labour, commenting upon the sending of Lord Runciman to Czechoslovakia, said, "Lord Runciman's mission to Czechoslovakia must be received with conditional approval. If he has been sent merely as an advisor and conciliator in order to smooth the path of negotiation, it is a welcome sign that the Government is at last aware of its responsibilities to the cause of international appeasement". The editorial expressed disappointment, however, because Chamberlain had neglected to state that pressure would not be exerted upon the Czechoslovakian Government to make greater concessions to the Sudeten Germans, "As Mr. Jones urged, the Czechoslovakian Government must be allowed to determine for themselves at what point unity, independence and integrity of their state demand that they shall put a limit" to their concessions.³

Months before Lord Runciman went to Czechoslovakia, Labourites urged the British Government to take a stand on the question, maintain that position, and seek joint action with France and Russia. In February of 1938, Wedgwood asked the Foreign Minister whether any "approach had been made to the government of the Soviet Union of Socialist

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1. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXXXVIII, July 26, 1938, cols. 2971-2.
2. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIX, October 3, 1938, col. 58.
3. "All the World Over", Labour, August, 1938, V, p. 266.

Republics concerning the possibility of joint or parallel action in connection with Czechoslovakia or whether any such steps are being taken via France or the League?" When Sir John Simon said, "No.", Wedgewood continued with, "In view of the increased danger of the situation to Czechoslovakia, would it not be advisable even now to make approaches to Russia and France with regard to concerted action when next this sort of thing takes place."¹ Arthur Henderson advocated that Britain give to Czechoslovakia a definite commitment. He justified such a move by referring to the statements of those who claimed that the First World War would have been avoided if Britain had made a similar commitment in 1914.² Wedgewood said he hoped that at some time the Government would stand firm because it was the best way to avoid war.³

On September 8, 1938, the National Council of Labour stated:

"The British Government must leave no doubt in the mind of the German Government that they will unite with the French and Soviet Governments to resist any attack upon Czechoslovakia.

Peaceful change can come only through friendly negotiations. Labour can not acquiesce in the destruction of the rule of law by savage aggression."⁴

The Trades Union Congress took a similar stand, adding, "The Labour Movement urges the British Government to give this lead, confident such a policy would have the solid support of the British people."⁵ In October the editors of Labour wrote: "From the beginning the Labour

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1. Wedgewood and Simon, Commons, CCCXXXII, February 21, 1938, cols. 17-8.
2. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 14, 1938, col. 71.
3. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXXVIII, July 26, 1938, col. 2995.
4. "National Council of Labour Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1939, p. 14.
5. "The International Situation", T.U.C. Report, 1938, p. 475.

Party has urged upon the Government the necessity for making a firm stand against aggression."¹

The taking of a firm stand, Labour believed, included a guarantee of Czechoslovakia's independence, and the prevention of dividing Czechoslovakia. Miss Wilkinson and Arthur Henderson both wished to give the Czechoslovakians a definite guarantee of independence. Miss Wilkinson asked if the Government had given or intended to give any guarantee to Czechoslovakia so that her independence would be respected in case of any action taken against her similar to that against Austria.² Henderson said, "I suggest that in the event of France fulfilling her League and Treaty obligations, as a result of aggression against Czechoslovakia, and this being followed by invasion or an attack upon French territory this country will be involved, whether we wish it or not. The Prime Minister prides himself upon his ability to face up to realities; I hope he will face up to that, and make it plain where the British Government stands. It is no use allowing the German Government to imagine that if they attack Czechoslovakia, all that the British Government will do will be the same as they have done in the last few days over Austria."³ Ten days later he said, "....we are already pledged to Czechoslovakia as we are to every other country belonging to the League. All that would happen in the event of a pledge being given to Czechoslovakia is that it would constitute a specific pledge and would impose no greater obligations on this country than are imposed by our general pledge under the League Covenant."⁴ Labour felt that such guarantees would stop any threat of war. The editorial said that British Labour

1. "All the World Over", Labour, October, 1938, I, p. 4.

2. Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 16, 1938, col. 413.

3. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 14, 1938, col. 71.

4. Ibid., col. 1485.

supported the British Government's stand over the crisis in Czechoslovakia and believed that some relief had come as a temporary result. "The Moral is clear. On the only two occasions when the peaceful states have united to resist Fascist terrorism - the first at Nyon - that resistance has been completely successful."¹

Morgan Jones spoke in July: "...by all means let the Czechoslovakian Government strive with all its might to arrive at an agreeable settlement with the representatives of the Germans in the Sudeten Lands but they must be allowed to determine for themselves at what point."²

The National Council of Labour issued the following resolution on September 20, 1938: "The National Council of Labour....views with dismay the reported proposals of the British and French Governments for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia under the brutal threat of armed force by Nazi Germany and without prior consultation with the Czechoslovakian Government."³ The Trades Union Congress expressed the same view in these words: "Every consideration of democracy likewise forbids the dismemberment of the Czechoslovakian State by the subjection of the Sudeten German regions to Nazi Government control. British Labour emphatically repudiates the right of the British or any government to use diplomatic or other pressure to compel acceptance of humiliation."⁴

Not only did some wish to prevent the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, but Labour was opposed to seeing Germany profit at the expense

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1. "All the World Over", Labour, June, 1938, V, p. 218.
2. M. Jones, Commons, CCCXXXVIII, July 26, 1938, col. 2969. complete quotation from this source given on pp. 127-128 of this chapter.
3. "National Council of Labour Report", L.P. Annual Report, 1939, p. 15.
4. "International Situation", T.U.C. Report, 1938, p. 474.

of Czechoslovakia.¹ Henderson and Wedgewood claimed that the German minority of the Sudetenland never were part of Germany.² Wedgewood asked about the other minorities living in the Sudetenland. Should they be given to Germany along with the Germans?³

After Munich, Labour leaders pointed out the danger of taking Hitler's word at face value in the future. Wedgewood said, "Frankly I... distrust the German Chancellor. We do not trust him, and we are anxious for the future of our country far more than are those who put their faith in him. Having that anxiety for the future, we are determined to keep our powder dry and tighten our belts, and to have the fighting aeroplanes by the next crisis."⁴ The magazine, Labour, was sarcastic. "The FOLLY of relying on the promises is shown only too clearly by the violation of the many pledges to Czechoslovakia by Germany at the time of the seizure of Austria."⁵ Morrison said that Britain had only the word of the dictators that they would keep the peace.⁶ The implication was that the pledge meant little.

When Chamberlain announced that he was going to Munich, Attlee said that he welcomed the "fresh opportunity" of further discussions

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1. "All the World Over", Labour, August, 1938, V, p. 266.
2. Henderson, Commons, CCCXXXIII, March 24, 1938, col. 1487.
3. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXXVI, June 3, 1938, col. 2488.
4. Wedgewood, Commons, CCCXXXIX, October 4, 1938, col. 213.
5. "All the World Over", Labour, October, 1938, I, p. 3.
6. H. Morrison, Commons, CCCXXXIX, October 4, 1938, col. 179.

which may lead to prevention of war. "I am sure that every member of this House is desirous of neglecting no chance of preserving peace without sacrificing principles."¹ After Chamberlain had brought back from Munich "peace in our time", Attlee was not so charitable. He said that it was not peace but an armistice. "We have felt humiliation. This has not been a victory for reason and humanity. It has been a victory for brute force."² He continued to say that the Labour Party could not accept the map because it was the "equivalent to the destruction of a state." The failure to tell the Czechoslovakians that Britain would not stand by was a "betrayal".³ "...this is the time for a new peace conference and an all-in peace conference. Let us call in the good offices of the United States of America, and let us not exclude the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I pleaded many months ago in this House that we wanted a peace conference before the next war, but then I did not assume that the next war would be complete defeat, and that is why the Munich Conference was not a real peace conference. It was only the delivery of an armistice."⁴ Attlee, however, offered no plan to put before such a conference.

Lansbury expressed the minority and pacifist opinion. He could only express relief at the outcome of the Conference because war had been avoided. "Let us remember what price would have been paid if there had been war. It is all very well to talk of the price that is being

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1. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIX, September 28, 1938, col. 26.

2. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIX, October 3, 1938, col. 51.

3. Ibid., col. 60.

4. Ibid., cols. 65-6.

paid today in what is called humiliation and degradation and power politics, but I would remind the House that, according to figures presented in various parts of the world, from diseases, from war itself and from other causes, over 100,000,000 persons lost their lives in the last war."¹ He expressed approval of Chamberlain's method of achieving a settlement: "Unless you are willing to meet men face to face - and that is why I appreciate so much what the Prime Minister did in going to see Herr Hitler - how do you expect to get any sort of discussion or any agreement with them?"² Lansbury had supported any policy which would avoid war throughout this period. Since he was an extreme pacifist, no price was too high to pay for peace. That viewpoint colored all his thinking in regard to aggression. The serious diplomatic defeat at Munich did not cause him to abandon his life-time beliefs.

Few in Labour's ranks could accept Lansbury's view. Morrison followed the Attlee line of reasoning. He said, "...we have an element of dishonour in this business, and we know it. I think it is the case that we did betray the Czechs or if you like, that we had to....Are we saved from an early war? Are we given a reasonable time in which people can live in peace and comfort without being subject to the fear of war all the time? That is the kind of peace our people want. The answer is that we are not saved from war. We have only the word of one or two dictators that they will keep the peace. But evidence is on record - I need not recite it now - of case after case where Herr Hitler has made either diplomatic or military offensive, and said, 'This is the last

1. Lansbury, Commons, CCCXXXIX, November 3, 1938, col. 89.

2. Ibid., October 3, 1938, col. 91.

word, the last spot of bother you are going to have, the last surprise; it is the last bit of territory I want,' and he has consistently broken his word."¹ Grenfell proposed the return of British Foreign Policy to the League of Nations.² He also said, "The fact is that democracy has suffered a cruel defeat."³

The attitude of British Labour and the British Labour Party during the Czechoslovakian affair indicated a considerable change of policy from that recommended during the Manchurian crisis. The policy supported during this critical period, however, was not greatly different from that of the British Government. In the first place, the League of Nations no longer occupied the dominant position in Labour's policy. There was only infrequent reference to the League in 1938; this indicates that Labour had recognized the League's inability to act. Any reference to League action was futile, as shown in the case of Austria. The British Government, of course, made no attempt to work through the League of Nations. While contending that Britain was pledged by the Covenant of the League to maintain Czechoslovakia's independence, Labour pressed for a specific commitment to maintain the independence of Czechoslovakia. The Government under Chamberlain refused to give such a commitment, although Chamberlain did admit that if war resulted, Britain might be drawn in. Labour still wished to prevent aggression, and now wished to work within the framework of the treaties signed by Czechoslovakia, France, and Russia, supported by Britain. This did not rule out discussion with Hitler, but

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1. Morrison, Commons, CCCXXXIX, October 4, 1938, col. 179.
 2. Grenfell, Commons, CCCXXXIX, October 5, 1938, col. 351.
 3. Ibid., col. 440.

Labour, although approving beforehand of the Munich meeting as an opportunity to preserve peace "without sacrificing principles"¹, condemned the outcome of Munich as surrender.

Even though Labour urged giving a definite commitment to Czechoslovakia, - did Labour believe that this alone would prevent Hitler from pressing his demands against Czechoslovakia, - or was Labour genuinely willing to back up that pledge by force if necessary? It is difficult to determine. Wedgewood said that he hoped Britain would take a definite stand, that was the best way to avoid war. The National Council of Labour said that the British Government should "unite" with France and Russia to resist aggression. The Trades Union Congress took the same position. Henderson said that such a stand would prevent war. He wished to make clear to Germany the fact that the Government would not be guilty of the same policy as it had been in regard to Austria.² All of these statements, while they sound unyielding, were no guarantee that Labour was willing to go to war over Czechoslovakia. Henderson's statement that a strong stand would prevent war is the key to the answer. Labour probably was not willing to fight a war over Czechoslovakia, and had the naive idea that words alone would prevent aggression.

As far as the Labour Party's plan went, it was essentially correct. Britain should have given a specific pledge to use her military forces to maintain the independence of Czechoslovakia. At the same time, the British Government should have communicated with the French and Russian Governments and pledged its cooperation if they fulfilled the provisions

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1. Attlee, Commons, CCCXXXIX, October 4, 1938, col. 26.

2. See pp. 129 and 130 of this chapter.

of the alliances with Czechoslovakia. These pledges should have been so definite that there would have been no doubt left in Hitler's mind about England's willingness to go to war for Czechoslovakia. Many have contended that this step would have forced Hitler to back down. However, there is some evidence that no such pledge would have stopped Hitler from marching into Czechoslovakia. The Nuremburg Trials brought out testimony that Hitler had deployed troops at strategic points along the frontier of Czechoslovakia on September 23, 1938. By the next day the troops were ready to advance across the frontier. The New York Times reported that according to records kept by an adjutant of Hitler, named Schmudt, "This aggressive move was taken only after careful preparations. The German army had spent the summer practicing to overwhelm the Czech defenses, and Konrad Henrich, Czech Nazi leader, had been put in charge of the Freikorps to provide the necessary incidents for war." At the same time Hitler had so much contempt for the lack of strength in England and France that he sent only five divisions to his western frontier to reinforce the border troops and labor battalions. They alone, he thought, would be enough to hold off any attack there. In addition, he was convinced that France would not act and that England would do nothing without France. Hitler did think that Russia might come to the aid of Czechoslovakia, but that this aid would be only in the form of planes. Events proved that Hitler's supposition was entirely correct. The question of whether Hitler would have marched into Czechoslovakia in the face of a France and England prepared to defend that country, remains unanswered. It is now known that he was prepared to do so, but he had confidence that he moved with impunity.¹

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1. "Germans Poised for Attack at Munich Talk, Court Hears", New York Times, XCV, November 27, 1945, Section I, pp. 1 and 12.

A more important question was whether England and France were strong enough in 1938 to act. That question remains unanswered also. It does seem, however, that military action was justified for two reasons: first, Czechoslovakia, a democracy, was the victim of aggression; and, secondly, some action was necessary to prevent the aggrandizement of Germany before she became so powerful that no coalition of powers could prevent German expansion. It seems probable that the combined strength of Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland would have offset any weakness of England and France. If all these nations had moved their military forces against Germany, she would have been forced to fight on three fronts simultaneously, greatly complicating Hitler's problem of defense. This factor might have brought about the defeat of Germany in less time than required when war did come. A preventive war in 1938 might have been, in the long run, a better alternative than appeasement at Munich.

The British Government chose the policy of mediation and appeasement rather than the alternative of war. Lord Runciman went to Czechoslovakia in the hope that an agreement could be worked out between the Sudeten Germans and Czechoslovakia. His mission failed because, as it is now known, Germany was not sincerely supporting the Sudeten Germans to correct injustices but as an excuse to annex the Sudetenland and eventually all of Czechoslovakia. After the failure of the Runciman mission, Chamberlain entered into direct negotiations with Hitler, ending in the Munich Accord and German victory. The Labour Party was opposed to giving Germany the Sudetenland, and urged as a preventive a specific guarantee of support to Czechoslovakia. This guarantee, the Labour Party believed, would both deter German demands and prevent war. Nowhere was the request for the pledge of support bolstered by

the demand to use force, if Germany insisted on annexing the Sudetenland. The Labour Party's policy meant the strength of words versus the power of a mechanized military force. There could be only one outcome in such a contest; victory for Hitler.

Conclusion

An examination of the attitude of the British Labour Party and British Labour towards foreign policy during the years, 1931-1938, shows that the Labour Party often disagreed with the policy put into effect by the British Government. At the same time, there were occasions when the Labour Party actually gave its support to the Government's policy while claiming to be opposed to it. Both the Labour Party and the British Government sincerely wished to prevent the outbreak of war in Europe, but frequently disagreed as to the way in which the objective could be effectively accomplished. Both groups wanted disarmament, but the Government, under the pressure of events, came much sooner to the conclusion that it was necessary for Britain to rearm. The Labour Party, also, had greater faith in collective security as an effective means of preventing aggression by the fascist dictators. The Labour Party condemned the policy of appeasement as short-sighted, and was more outspoken in its hostility to the fascist ideology. In spite of the fact the Labour Party criticized the British Government's foreign policy, it is doubtful whether the policy advocated by the Labour Party would have changed the course of events during the period, 1931-1938.

During the major part of this period, the British Labour Party pursued the illusive goal of multilateral disarmament. At home the Labour Party opposed the appropriations for British armaments until November of 1937, on the grounds that Britain's armed strength was sufficient to protect Britain. The Labour Party and the Government both desired disarmament; the latter wished to balance the budget, and the former hoped money not appropriated for arms could be used for social

services. Both also believed, for a time, (the Government until 1934, the Labour Party until 1937) that increased armaments were unnecessary for Britain's security. The Government's plan of 1934 to increase the efficiency of the air force became a full-fledged rearmament program in March of 1936. The Labour Party believed that increased armaments were not necessary at that time because the combined strength of the nations of the League was sufficient to provide security, and that a sensible foreign policy would make a large rearmament program unnecessary. It was not until November of 1937, with Abyssinia conquered, the Rhineland re-occupied, and the Spanish Government faced with defeat that the Labour Party gave its support to the Government's rearmament program. Then, it inconsistently criticized the program because the British air force could not meet the threat of the German air force.

As indicated above, the Labour Party's support for British rearmament was party conditioned by faith in the collective security ideal which the Labour Party thought the League of Nations could provide. The British Government did not place nearly as much faith as the Labour Party did in the League of Nations as an instrument of peace and security. The policy followed by the Government and that advocated by the Labour Party during the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 illustrate the difference of opinion. In the case of Manchuria the British Government sought to achieve its ends by having the League of Nations act as a mediator. It also urged the direct settlement of the undeclared war between China and Japan. The Government gave its support to the appointment of the Lytton Commission to investigate conditions in Manchuria, and accepted the League's decision not to recognize conquest by force. When the League Assembly considered the

report of the Lytton commission. Sir John Simon in a pro-Japanese speech before the Assembly called attention to the parts of the report tending to cast discredit on China, such as anti-foreign propaganda and the boycott. It was his belief that direct negotiations would be best and that the League might be able to assist these talks. The Labour Party felt that strong disapproval should be expressed by the League of Nations, - the disapproval to take the form of the withdrawal of ministers from Tokyo by the member states of the League. The Labour Party also urged the member states of the League to adopt measures of "economic and financial constraint". It is problematical whether these steps would have brought about the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Manchuria. The difference between the attitudes of the Government and the Labour Party was not one that opposed League of Nations activity in 1931-1933, while the other opposed League of Nations activity. The basic difference was that while the Government was reluctant to antagonize Japan by urging League to take any steps of a concrete nature, the Labour Party proposed to put its disapproval into a specific plan of action to be undertaken by the League of Nations.

In the case of Abyssinia, the question of collective action came to the fore again. The Conservative Government, after much equivocation, gave support to the sanctions adopted by the League of Nations, and did indicate its support of an oil embargo. The Labour Party strongly supported League sanctions against Italy, and urged the adoption of still more stringent measures, including an oil embargo. The adoption of effective sanctions, the Labour Party argued, would make it impossible for Italy to conquer Abyssinia. This would not bring on war, but, on the contrary, prevent one; Italy would not dare to attack the combined strength

of League of Nations. The Government evidently did not share this view because Hoare worked out a plan with Laval which would have given Italy territory along with economic concessions, thus making it possible for Italy to achieve its aims without war. The failure of the attempt to coerce Italy by the League sanctions was evident by the early part of 1936, and in July the League lifted its sanctions. The Abyssinian crisis was the high point of the collective action policy of both the Government and the Labour Party. After 1936, the Government paid little attention to the League of Nations as a means of preventing aggression. The Labour Party, however, still urged the Government to bring international problems, such as the Civil War in Spain, and the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia by Germany to the attention of the League of Nations. It is to be noted that requests in these cases were not as frequent nor as urgent as before 1936, indicating that faith had changed to hope.

The whole of British foreign policy since 1919 can be described as appeasement, but the particular phase of appeasement associated with Neville Chamberlain may be said to have begun on January 2, 1937, when the Gentlemen's agreement was signed in Rome. The policy was the one followed during most of the Civil War in Spain, and the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland. Chamberlain's policy was dedicated to achieving an agreement between the democracies and the fascist states. The agreement was to come as a result of discussions, but the program involved concessions to the Axis as well as willingness to accept a fait accompli. It is concession that came to be most closely associated with the policy of appeasement although appeasement was often merely the acceptance of the fait accompli. The latter was true in regard to

both the Civil War in Spain and the anschluss of Austria. At Munich the policy of appeasement reached its climax; Hitler received all that he demanded.

In the meantime the Labour Party urged the abandonment of Non-Intervention in Spain, for a policy which would aid the Spanish government. As regards Austria, the Labour Party mildly suggested that the matter be brought before the League of Nations, and there its policy stopped. Perhaps the Labour Party felt that there could be no objection to Germany incorporating Austria because the Austrians were Germans. It did, however, object to the way in which the union was brought about. When the threat to Czechoslovakia developed the Party again suggested that the League of Nations consider the problem. It also urged the British Government to pledge its aid to Czechoslovakia if any attempt was made to impair its sovereignty. This step would keep Czechoslovakia intact and prevent the outbreak of war. By such a suggestion the Labour Party indicated its definite opposition to the policy of appeasement. Yet the Labour Party did not take the out-right position that Britain should use force to protect Czechoslovakia. A guarantee they considered, was all that was necessary. When Chamberlain made the dramatic announcement that Hitler had invited him to Munich, Attlee expressed his approval of Chamberlain's acceptance of the invitation. It seems impossible that Attlee could not have known the probable outcome. After the Munich Agreement was announced the Labour Party, except the pacifist wing led by Lansbury, condemned it as betrayal, an act unworthy of Britain. The Labour Party, however, had not offered a real alternative to appeasement at Munich. Perhaps the reason for that failure was that the League

of Nations upon which the Labour Party based its foreign policy upon was no longer even potentially able to handle a crisis as serious as the one in September of 1938. Throughout the Czechoslovakian crisis, the Government had taken the lead in urging concessions by Czechoslovakia to Germany, while the Labour Party had opposed appeasement and urged that Czechoslovakia alone be permitted to decide what concessions she would she would grant to Germany.

It has been charged by some persons, Frederick L. Schumann for example, that some Conservative Party members and leaders of the Government were sympathetic to fascist ideology. The reason for the attitude was the fear of communism, some even looking to the fascist dictators for a check on the growth and spread of communism. The Labour Party did not share this distrust of communism, probably because the Labour Party believed in evolutionary socialism. To the Labour Party communism was the lesser of the two evils. In Spain, the fascist and communist ideologies came into open conflict. Germany and Italy gave aid to the Rebels while Russia helped the Spanish government. It is not surprising, since many conservatives were sympathetic to fascism, that the Government adopted the policy of Non-Intervention. To the Labour Party a fascist victory seemed the more threatening of the two as far as Britain and particularly British Labour was concerned. For that reason, the Labour Party after first supporting Non-Intervention, changed its viewpoint and urged that the Spanish government be permitted to purchase what-ever was necessary to defeat Franco and his followers. This difference was evident in other instances also. The Labour Party urged the Government to seek the co-operation of Russia, to be better able to meet the threat of aggression, while the Government shied away from any outright co-operation with

Russia. It seems reasonably clear that hostility to or sympathy for fascism or communism influenced the foreign policy of both the Government's and the British Labour Party's attitude, but with different results.

The Labour Party's attitude towards foreign policy was based primarily upon two major principles, international disarmament and collective security. The former would make aggression impossible, and the latter would crush any aggression. These two ideals remained the keystones of the Labour Party's foreign policy during much of 1931-1938. Even at the time of Munich the Labour Party found it impossible to completely forget its hopes of accomplishing peace and security guarded by the League of Nations. For this reason the Labour Party seldom urged the Government to take unilateral action, the one exception being the proposed guarantee of Czechoslovakia's integrity. After the League had failed to halt aggression by the fascist states, the Labour Party seemed unable to bring forth any alternative to what it called a "League of Nations Policy". The Government came much sooner to the conclusion that the twin ideals of disarmament and collective security could not be realized, but the Labour Party from the beginning to the end of the period, 1931-1938, disliked the policy of appeasement, and was desirous of preventing the spread of fascism; indeed, the Labour Party coveted the end of fascism.

Appendix A

Abbreviations

<u>Commons</u>	House of Commons, Hansard's <u>Parliamentary Debates</u>
<u>L.P. Annual Report</u>	<u>Report of the Annual Conference of the Labour Party</u>
<u>T.U.C. Report</u>	<u>Report of the Proceedings of the Trades Union Congress</u>
I.F.T.U.....	International Federation of Trades Unions
L.S.I.....	Labour and Socialist International

Appendix B

* Labour Members of Parliament - 1931-1935

Adams, D. M.
Attlee, C. R.

Batey, J.
Brown, C.
Buchanan, G.
Bevan, A.

Cape, T.
Cocks, F.S.
Cripps, Hon. Sir S.

Dagger, G.
Davies, D.L.
Davies, R.J.
Duncan, G.

Edwards, C.

Graham, D.
Grenfell, D.R.
Grove, T.
Grundy, T.W.
Griffiths, T.

Hall, G.H.
Hall, T.
Hicks, G.
Hirst, G.H.

Jenkins, Sir W.
John, W.
Jones, J.J.
Jones, M.

Kirkwood, D.

Lansbury, Rt. Hon. G.
Lawson, J.J.
Leonard, W.
Logan, D.G.
Lunn, W.

McEntree, V.L.
MacDonald, G.
McGovern, J.
McLean, N.
Maxton, J.
Milner, Major J.

Parkinson, Col. J.C.
Price, G.

Salter, Dr. A.

Thorne, Will
Tinker, J.

Watts-Morgan, Col. D.
Wedgewood, Col. J.C.
Wallhead, R.C.
Williams, D.
Williams, E.
Williams, J.H.

* "1931 Polling Results: The Constituencies", The Times:
Weekly Edition, LXVII, November 5, 1931, pp. 548-551.

*
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Adams, D.M.
Alexander, A.V.
Ammon, C.G.
Anderson, F.
Attlee, C.R.

Barnes, D.J.
Barr, Rev. J.
Benson, G.
Bevan, A.
Bevin, E.
Billenger, F.J.
Branfield, J.W.
Broad, F.A.
Bromfield, W.
Brooke, W.
Brown, C.
Brown, J.
Burke, W.A.

Cape, T.
Charleton, H.C.
Chater, D.
Cluse, W.S.
Clynes, J.R.
Cocks, F.S.
Compton, J.
Cove, W.G.
Cripps, Sir Stafford

Dagger, G.
Davidson, J.J.
Davies, D.L.
Davies, R.J.
Davies, S.O.
Day, H.
Dobbie, W.
Dunn, E.

Ede, J.C.
Edwards, A.
Edwards, Sir C.
Edwards, Sir W.

Frankel, D.

Gardner, B.W.
Garro-Jones, G.M.
Gibbins, J.
Graham, D.M.
Green, W.H.
Greenwood, A.
Grenfell, D.R.
Griffiths, G.A.
Groves, T.E.

Hall, G.H.
Hall, J.H.
Hayday, A.
Henderson, A.
Henderson, F.
Henderson J.
Hicks, E.G.
Holland, A.
Hollins, A.
Hopkins, D.

Jagger, J.H.
Jenkins, A.
Jenkins, Sir W.
John, W.
Johnston, T.
Jones, A.C.
Jones, J.J.
Jones, L.
Jones, Morgan

* "Polling Results: The Constituencies", The Times; Weekly Edition, No. 3071, November 21, 1935, pp. 22-24.

Kelly, W.T.
Kennedy, F.
Kirby, B.V.
Kirkwood, D.

Lansbury, Rt. Hon. G.
Lathan, G.
Leach, W.
Lees-Smith, H.B.
Leonard, W.
Logan, D.G.
Lunn, W.

MacDonald, G.
McEntree, V.
McGhee, E.
MacLean, N.
McLaren, A.
MacMillan, M.K.
Mainwaring, W.E.
Marklew, E.
Marshall, F.
Mathers, G.
Mander, G.
Messer, F.
Milner, Major J.
Morrison, H.
Morrison, R.C.
Montague, F.
Muff, G.

Noel-Baker, Philip

Oliver, G.H.

Paling, W.
Parkinson, J.A.
Pehick-Lawrence, F.W.
Potts, J.
Pritt, D.N.

Quibell, D.J.E.

Richards, R.
Riley, B.
Roberts, F.O.
Robinson, W.A.
Rowson, G.

Salter, Dr. A.
Sanders, W.S.
Short, A.
Silverman, S.S.
Simpson, F.B.
Smith, B.
Smith, E.
Smith, T.
Sorenson, Rev. R.W.
Straws, G.R. Taylor

Taylor, R.J.
Thorne, W.
Thurtle, E.
Tinker, J.J.

Viant, S.P.

Walkden, A.G.
Walker, J.
Watkins, F.C.
Watson, W.M.
Wedgewood, Col. J.C.
Weir, L.M.
Welsh, J.C.
Westward, J.
Williams, D.
Williams, E.J.
Williams, F.
Williams, Dr. J.H.
Williams, T.
Wilkenson, E.
Wilson, C.H.
Windsor, W.
Words, Rev. G.S.

Young, Sir R.

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Reported by J. McIntosh

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- 35th Annual Conference, held at Brighton, September 30-October 4, 1935.
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- 38th Annual Conference, held at Southport, May 29-June 2, 1939.

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Approved by:

Theodore C. Caldwell
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