

CANADA'S FOREIGN ENLISTMENT ACT:
MACKENZIE KING'S EXPEDIENT RESPONSE TO THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

by

THOR ERIK FROHN-NIELSEN

B.A. (Hon.), The University of Victoria, 1979

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of History, University of British Columbia

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 1982

© Thor Erik Frohn-Nielsen, 1982

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of HISTORY

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

Date 28.4.1982

ABSTRACT

Twelve-hundred Canadians volunteered for the republican cause during the Spanish Civil War. Along with the large number of recruits, committees were formed, fund raising begun, rallies organized, and parliament petitioned. Interest was widespread in Canada, and tended to become emotional as the conflict became a battlefield of ideals. Whether communist labourers, socialist intellectuals, or simply champions of democracy, English speaking Canadians were inclined to support the beleaguered Republic in its battle against Franco and his fascist allies.

Though English speaking Canada tended to be sympathetic toward the Republic, Mackenzie King's Liberal government passed the Foreign Enlistment Act nine months into the war, which forbade any Canadian from volunteering for either side in the conflict. Why did the Prime Minister, usually so careful in his dealings with public opinion, pass legislation that seemed to go against the wishes of the electorate?

This thesis will attempt to prove that King was, in fact, paying scrupulous attention to popular sentiments, and passed the Act after a thorough analysis of his government's situation. It will be shown that opinion in Quebec, a federal Liberal stronghold, had become increasingly reactionary, and by 1936 was indeed sympathetic

to Franco. King believed, quite rightly, that the vehement anti-republicanism in Quebec was simply much stronger than the pro voice from the rest of Canada. The Foreign Enlistment Act was shrewdly designed to placate Quebec voters without alienating too many English speaking Canadians.

To facilitate this study it will first be necessary to examine public opinion, and the role of the media in English Canada. An analysis of the Quebec situation will then be made. Finally, a chapter will be devoted to Mackenzie King and how he dealt with the rift in public opinion exacerbated by the Spanish Civil War. This chapter will show the Prime Minister as a political animal par excellence, who in this case, put political survival before moral principles.

A Note on the Vocabulary

One of the most confusing aspects of the Spanish Civil War is the antagonist's myriad of names and titles. For the purposes of this thesis, those Spaniards who supported the elected Spanish Republic will be referred to as republicans or loyalists, while those who fought for General Franco are rebels or nationalists. Franco was, strictly speaking, not a fascist, but has been labelled as such since July 1936, and will be so in this thesis. It is hoped that this small semantic indulgence will, in fact, help to keep the themes clearer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.	1
Notes to the Introduction.	11
CHAPTER I	
The Civil War Thorough English Canadian Eyes	12
Notes to Chapter I	37
CHAPTER II	
The Pivotal Role of Quebec	40
Notes to Chapter II.	60
CHAPTER III	
Mackenzie King and the Civil War	62
Notes to Chapter III	88
CONCLUSION.	91
APPENDIX I	
The Foreign Enlistment Act of 1937	94
APPENDIX II	
Order in Council to the Foreign Enlistment Act . . .	100
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	101

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor C. Humphries, for his time and encouragement, and for helping me keep the subject within its proper perspective in the grand scheme of things. Thanks also to Wayne Westergard-Thorpe, for reading the thesis and offering much constructive criticism. A special thanks to you Debbie. Had it not been for you, your enthusiasm, gentle encouragement, and long hours at the typewriter, the project would still be a dream.

I humbly offer this thesis to all those friends who have shared the dreams and ideals. May you remain romantic and optimistic, sometimes indignant, but always able to laugh.

INTRODUCTION

Few twentieth century conflicts have stirred the emotions of western man quite like the civil war that raged in Spain from 1936 to 1939. The eyes of the world were on the Iberian Peninsula from the morning of July 18 1936 when nationalist artillery first rumbled, until Franco's ultimate victory three bloody years later. Why were the hearts of so many ordinary citizens moved by a vicious civil war that did not concern them directly, and which was being fought thousands of miles away? What could make someone forsake the comparative tranquillity of Canada and travel to a foreign land to face death in a shallow republican trench? Hugh Thomas, who has written the definitive study of the conflict, postulates:

Spain became the central point of life, work, and artistic inspiration. Stephen Spender wrote that Spain "offered the twentieth century an 1848." Philip Toynbee said of Spain "the gloves are off in the struggle against fascism".... Spain gave intellectuals a sense of freedom, the thought of rubbing shoulders with the dispossessed in a half-developed country, above all, the illusion that their "action" would be effective.

Jason Gurney, a former English volunteer to the International Brigades, reiterated this in his memoirs:

The Spanish Civil War seemed to offer the individual the chance to take positive and effective action against fascism. One could stand on an issue which seemed absolutely clear.... By fighting against fascism in Spain, we would be fighting against it in our own

country and every other². . . . It may have lacked realism, but it was heady stuff³ to a young man who was by nature a romantic.

A struggling, but freely elected republican government was, after all, being brutally attacked by the country's rebellious military machine. Actively supported by Germany and Italy, Franco's Spanish and Moorish troops were sweeping over Spain, looting and pillaging as they tightened their noose around the neck of Largo Caballero's Popular Front government. Most national leaders looked away when Madrid appealed for international aid to combat this latest fascist menace, but their civilian populations sat up and watched the debacle with mounting curiosity. It was not long before volunteers went to the aid of the beleaguered Republic, where they fought and often died side by side with armed Spanish workers and peasants.

Eventually some 40,000 internationals, including 1,200 Canadians, answered the republican call to arms.⁴ What is not a little astonishing is that according to Victor Hoar, author of The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, "no other country provided so great a number of volunteer soldiers in proportion to its population as did Canada."⁵ Though individual Canadian citizens did go to Spain, and many more helped supply the loyalists with badly needed materials, sympathy for the Republic was far from universal in Canada. Nor did the Liberal government under Prime Minister Mackenzie King rally to the banner of a fellow democracy in her hour of need. As Hugh MacLennan has pointed out in The Watch that Ends the Night, no matter whom Canadians supported,

the crisis in Spain captured their imaginations. The civil war, in fact, rekindled the strain in national unity as Quebec tended to support General Franco, while the sympathies of many English speaking Canadians were with the republicans. It was this split which eventually forced the Canadian government to take a reluctant but definite foreign policy stance with regard to the Spanish Civil War. King's ultimate aim was to maintain Canadian international integrity and independence, while carefully steering a course away from issues that could divide the country. Passing the Foreign Enlistment Act was an expedient method of achieving this as it legally prevented Canadians from volunteering for the Spanish crusade.

Canadian foreign policy has rarely been considered either strident or aggressive. On the contrary, since the day it began conducting its own external affairs, the country has often been accused of sitting on the fence, watching from a safe distance as battlefields periodically filled with the clatter of innumerable armies. This interpretation, hardly new, was promoted by historians like C.P. Stacey and James Eayrs. They were the scholars who, during the Pearson era, examined the King years, compared the two, and found the latter wanting. Both Canada and the Age of Conflict, volume two,⁶ and In Defence of Canada, volume two, show the authors to be less than enthusiastic with the Liberal government's international stance during the 1930s as they suggest that Canada had a similar foreign policy to that of the western nations who appeased the dictators. It could be argued that this interpretation was a product of its time. Canada

did, after all, play a more aggressive role in international politics during the 1950s, and it is possible that historians like Eayrs and Stacey, writing during that time, found the diplomacy of the late 1930s weak by comparison. This thesis tends to follow their basic interpretation, not because Canadian foreign policy is necessarily more dynamic in 1982 than it was in 1936, but because the documents available support this argument. The various Canadian Prime Ministers have, after all, repeatedly stepped aside to allow more daring heads of state to find a safe passage through the miasmatic swamp of international affairs. Only then have they ventured to follow safely behind, rarely tip-toeing from the security of the tested path. At no time was this mouse-like mentality more firmly entrenched in government policy than during the Mackenzie King era, and then in particular during the latter half of the 1930s.

There were a few exceptions. To do him justice, Walter Riddell, one of the Canadian delegates to the League of Nations in the mid-1930s, did once attempt to rectify this unimpressive position by taking the initiative for Canada. He called for an oil embargo against Italy after Mussolini's armour had rumbled across the Ethiopian frontier in 1935. Everyone lauded the moral courage of Riddell with the exception of the Italians and his own government. When Mackenzie King came to power in the autumn of 1935, and learned to his horror that Canada was suddenly and unexpectedly the standard-bearer of the League Covenant, retribution was swift and ruthless. Riddell was immediately recalled for consultation, and the government made it clear that their representative had been speaking solely for

himself. "I am certainly going to give him a good spanking," was the Prime Minister's immediate response.⁶ The "Riddell incident," as it became known, briefly propelled Canada to the forefront of world diplomacy, but the subsequent nervousness in Ottawa was so acute that the new position was ignominiously ended. The incident was not only the first Canadian foray into the limelight of foreign affairs during the 1930s, it came to exemplify the ultimate Canadian diplomatic faux-pas, and served as an embarrassing lesson for the timorous Department of External Affairs. International initiatives could be officially cheered, and even supported, but were not to emanate from the government of Canada.

Staying clear of international conflicts became one of the government's most important foreign affairs programmes, and the resulting noncommitment policy reached its zenith during the first months of the Spanish Civil War. The Canadian government zealously tried to remain uninvolved from the morning when rebellious soldiers first took up arms, until Franco's victory in 1939. What many Canadians objected to was that the Liberals were in Ottawa, apparently doing nothing to stop the pitched battles on the Iberian Peninsula which increasingly threatened to spill over the Pyrenees and to engulf the world in yet another inferno. When asked why he chose his particular stance, the Prime Minister tended to ignore his questioners, and spoke of preserving national unity. King did not hop from the fence until March 1937, nine months after the conflict had begun, and then only because he was finally forced to do so by a divided Canadian public.

The question therefore is: why did the Canadian government follow its particular path during the Spanish Civil War? Was King in fact shirking his responsibility toward international peace and democracy? Was, as the Prime Minister argued, the Canadian stance only logical considering the country's internal disunity? Was the government's handling of the civil war simply an example of a weak foreign policy permitted to meander along by an apathetic Canadian public? Or was King chiefly concerned with his Liberal majority?

These questions can best be answered through an examination of the period from the beginning of the Spanish Civil War to the passing of the Canadian Foreign Enlistment Act on March 19 1937. This was the formative period when Canadian citizens and the government alike, taken aback by Franco's sudden rebellion, had to decide which side, if any, they would support. The government, fearing controversy and alienation from an increasingly divided public, believed caution to be the logical answer. The Enlistment Act, once passed, established official policy toward Spain for the remainder of the civil war. For this reason, it is unnecessary to follow Canada's conduct during the course of the conflict beyond March 1937. What is important is to examine why official policy evolved as it did, what pressures influenced it, and whether it acted as an effective poultice on the wound to national unity aggravated by the crisis.

To facilitate this study, it will be necessary to examine and evaluate English speaking Canadian public opinion and the civil

war. This will be done through an analysis of media coverage, editorial comment, and the letters to the editors of not only mass circulation Canadian dailies and magazines, but also in some of the more esoteric publications of the time. It will be weighed further by measuring the debates in the House of Commons, and by delving into the many letters received by Prime Minister Mackenzie King and Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe. Though no surveys are known to have been taken on Spain and Canada, and though public opinion is by nature intangible, a careful scrutiny of the aforementioned sources, augmented by secondary material, should yield a reasonably accurate picture of English speaking Canadians and their sympathies in the Spanish Civil War.

The first chapter will hopefully show why many English speaking Canadians quickly became sympathetic toward the republican cause. It will suggest the vital role played by the media, how this led to changes of perceptions and to the introduction of the vital ideological element. It will also be illustrated that pro-republican public opinion seemed to gather its own momentum once it was accepted that the war was a great deal more than a protracted palace coup. Finally it will be shown that support for the Spanish Republic, though strong, was not universal in English speaking Canada. Those who shied away from the loyalists were not necessarily attracted by the right, but were members of that body of Canadians who did not want their country involved in any European powder keg.

Conditions in Quebec must be examined next. In this chapter it will be shown that the Liberal government had to pay close attention

to French Canadian sentiments if it were to remain in power. Much of Mackenzie King's support came from Quebec, and French Canada, in a conservative mood by 1936, had to be treated accordingly. Problems were compounded by economic conditions, as the tradition of animosity between English and French speaking Canada was exacerbated by the social tensions of the depression era. French Canadian leaders were making a concerted effort to alter the course of Quebec's history as they were seriously afraid that their cultural solidarity was being eroded by foreign forces beyond their control. Men like Premier Duplessis and Cardinal Villeneuve saw liberalism and communism as the enemy that threatened Quebec, and encouraged a general turn to the right as the best means of defence.

It will be shown that the Spanish Civil War aggravated Quebec's sense of insecurity and the rift between it and the rest of the country. Unlike English Canada which tended to rally behind the republican banner, most of Quebec saw Franco as a conservative nationalist who was trying to purge his country of communism. Quebec did not perceive the rebellion as an affront to democracy, but rather, viewed it as an heroic attack against imported ideologies that were destroying Spain. To many French Canadians, supporting republican Spain was tantamount to aiding all those influences that were threatening Quebec herself. Thus it is no wonder that French Canadians wanted nothing to do with the Spanish Republic, and found it inexcusable that loyalist sympathizers were allowed to recruit volunteers from their province.

The final chapter will deal with Mackenzie King and his government's attitude toward the Spanish Civil War. The Prime Minister was already faced with public opinion that was divided between English and French speaking Canadians, and the civil war widened the rift. He therefore had to create a policy that would satisfy as many as possible, hopefully ease the animosity between the two, and maintain his seat in power. It was not a simple matter of mending the internal split, however, as King also had to weigh Canada's position on the international scene. He had to consider whether the country would toe the British line, strike out forcefully on its own, or build a foreign policy based on Canada's geographic isolation. Britain did, after all, pass its own Foreign Enlistment Act, and did pressure Canada to follow suit. It could be argued that Canada's own Act was passed as a result of this pressure, but the evidence does not support this. It will be shown that the Prime Minister initially attempted to calm Canadian emotions by keeping the country as uninvolved as possible, but that this policy became untenable by early 1937. It will then be suggested that the Foreign Enlistment Act was carefully and shrewdly conceived as the most expedient solution to the divisive problems aggravated by the civil war in Spain. It was an Act created, not in haste, but after a thorough analysis of all the factors involved. As such, it stood as an early example of King's policy formulation method for the duration of his years in office. Indeed the roots of his successful tactics over conscription during the Second World War may be found in minor policy positions like the Foreign Enlistment Act. The

conclusions will be strengthened by an examination of the Prime Minister's personal allegiances and the government's perceptions of the war.

A number of conclusions may be drawn at this point. It should be possible to suggest why sympathy for the Republic came almost exclusively from English speaking Canada, and whether this was because susceptible idealists had been duped by a sensationalistic media. Conclusions may be drawn concerning Quebec, why the province was in a reactionary mood by 1936, and how French Canadian affinities for General Franco were encouraged. Finally it may be suggested that the Foreign Enlistment Act was King's way of paying careful homage to the province that traditionally gave him much of his support. The Act was not introduced out of any concern for the Spanish people, nor for Canada's international situation. This interpretation differs from the one reached by Victor Hoar in The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. He seems sympathetic to the Prime Minister who called it an Act which would "prevent Canada from being drawn into foreign conflicts by the actions of manufacturers of munitions or of organizers of recruiting."⁷ Hoar accepts this quote at its face value, though the evidence suggests that the Prime Minister's stated intentions were different from his privately held aspirations. King hoped the Act would be gentle enough not to alienate his government from too many English speaking Canadians while being severe enough for the anti-republicanism of Quebec. It stands as an excellent example of shrewd legislation introduced by a political animal par excellence. King, in essence, attempted to legislate a thorny problem out of existence.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

- ¹Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, third edition, (Bucks: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd., 1977), p. 347.
- ²Jason Gurney, Crusade in Spain, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1974), p. 36.
- ³Ibid., p. 49.
- ⁴Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, p. 982.
- ⁵Victor Hoar, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969), p. 1.
- ⁶C.P. Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), II.
- ⁷James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), II, p. 26.
- ⁸Victor Hoar, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, p. 105.

CHAPTER I

THE CIVIL WAR THROUGH ENGLISH CANADIAN EYES

[The Spanish] people are making [a] desperate and heroic effort to defend their homes against the savage onslaughts of Foreign Mohamedan Barbarians and other Foreign mercenaries, the lowest human or perhaps inhuman, scum of all.
Lapointe Papers, vol. 22, file #70, P.A.C.

From the first volley of gun fire on July 18 1936, the fascist rebellion in Spain offered table d'hôte to those looking for excitement and drama. Canadian newspapers initially focused on the sensationalistic aspects of the war, offering their readers graphic descriptions of severed heads lying in pools of blood in the narrow streets of Madrid; churches being viciously sacked and burned; fascists raping innocent Spanish women and children; and republican workers bearing arms. Canadian feminists could see women stand fast behind cobblestone barricades, looking like so many copies of Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People". Even the popular Shirley Temple found the graphically ghoulish news flashes from Spain hard competition. The child star lasted for one brief day on the front page of the Vancouver Sun before being dispatched to the middle sections by the flood of news bulletins from the Iberian peninsula. As it did elsewhere, Spain captured the imaginations of the Canadian people.

Was the conflict viewed by Canadian editorial writers as a bitter battle of ideals? Was there a legitimate emotional connection between the bloody struggles in Spain and the beslippered fire-side reader in Edmonton? Did the portrayal of the civil war make Torontonians clench their fists in anger or did it make them doze off complacently? How was the Spanish situation initially portrayed to Canadians, and what was their reaction?

Though the perspectives altered as interpretations changed, the implications of the Spanish Civil War quickly hit all Canadian newspapers and magazines. Within a week of July 18, papers across the country were reflecting Canadian opinion and curiosity. Was Franco's rebellious outburst merely another coup that would replace a bankrupt government with a more insidiously efficient fascist version? Would there indeed be a winner, or was Spain to offer the world, in graphic detail, another example of the horrors of protracted warfare? Editors of Canada's major dailies were initially unanimous on one critical point: that there could be no real victory in the civil war since a repressive and highly volatile dictatorship would likely be installed no matter which side won. The Toronto Globe and Mail provides a good example of this general belief. The paper editorialized on July 29 1936: "Most certain however is the fact that whichever side emerges victorious nothing will be solved."¹ From the West Coast, the Vancouver Sun editor wrote on July 22, that "whichever side wins now--and the winner is anybody's guess--Spain will be just as far from peace and order as she was in the beginning."² The lucid editor of the Winnipeg

Free Press J.W. Dafoe, passed early sentence on the situation on July 24. After a lengthy and accurate analysis of the first few days of the civil war, the article ended on a distinctly pessimistic note, suggesting that "a virtual dictatorship--either socialist or fascist--seems the likely outcome."³ The Canadian left, which later championed the republican cause, was initially very doubtful of the outcome. Writing in October, the editor of the socialist Canadian Forum hypothesized that "whichever side wins will inherit a Spain impoverished and embittered, with some of its best and finest men and women slain."⁴

Had the Spanish situation been without significant interest to Canada and Canadians, the press would not have been as vehement in its unanimous condemnation of the war. The Spanish Civil War crystallized Canada's perceived role in world affairs. The average Canadian tended to be cautiously smug in his geographical isolation, wanting little to do with a conflict in which neither side was likely to introduce a government embodying Canadian democratic ideals. It can also be argued that most Canadians felt a distinct aversion to both communism and fascism, seeing them both as violent extremes, more disruptive than constructive. The Spanish Civil War was initially viewed as a prime example of all that Canada was against. Later seen as a war between democracy and dictatorship, the war in Spain was first perceived as a fight between communism and fascism, and thus evil against evil. To the isolationist, Canada followed its particular foreign policy precisely to avoid embroilment in a nonsensical situation like that in Spain. For

the first months of the war, Canadians took heed, watched with curiosity, and were glad not to be involved.

To the Canadian newspaper industry the Spanish Civil War clearly exemplified the ongoing disintegration of Europe. Given the wishful thinking of the left and the policy of isolation advocated by the right, the latter was approved as the most pragmatic for Canada. With that in mind, editors of most Canadian dailies stressed the purely local nature of the civil war, adamantly characterizing it as a Spanish conflict between two illogical evils, and delved deeply into Spanish history to substantiate their claims. The Toronto Globe and Mail, for example, suggested in late July 1936, that the war resulted from a lack of democratic tradition in Spain.⁵ The Vancouver Sun in a pontificating article, suggested that the conflict was due to the biological make-up of the Spaniards:

We believe that the racial factor which contributed more than any other to the eventual collapse of Spain, was the national miscegenation forced upon that unhappy country when she was over run by Moors and Arabs for almost four centuries.⁶

By attributing its origins to distant and abstract factors inherent in the Spanish heritage, the editors had minimized the relevance and import of the more immediate ideological dimensions of the conflict. The war was simply inevitable anarchy once again appearing over the Iberian Peninsula. This analysis helped mollify the fears of those few Canadians who were watching the general European situation with mounting

apprehension and who had linked the civil war to the seemingly inexorable rise of fascist dictatorships. If Canadian editors saw the Spanish conflict as an inevitable, purely internal conflict, and not as an example of world fascism versus democracy, Canada need not feel any obligation to get involved. Indeed, were this thesis correct, the civil war could never boil over the Spanish cauldron nor could it create a major European or world conflict. Thus Great Britain and the Dominions would thankfully remain uninvolved.

There were those, however, who were not placated by the rather forced isolationist editorials. Canadian left-wing intellectuals, saw beyond this editorial analysis, and soon supported the ideological spirit of republican Spain. This group, so vividly portrayed in Hugh MacLennan's novel The Watch that End the Night, was more than a collection of liberal intellectuals championing that year's fad. Deeply concerned with the spread of fascism, they soon interpreted the political and social significance of the Spanish Civil War, and made an impassioned plea for democracy to Canadians. The editors of New Frontiers, one of the better Canadian intellectual magazines, wrote in October 1936:

Labour and progressive groups in Canada cannot ignore this lead. The events in Spain have mercilessly exposed the isolationist policies advocated by many Canadian liberals and socialistsThe immediate task for those who desire to keep Canada out of another war is the most active support of the Spanish government.

Though these people made their allegiances patently, and in leftist fashion, pedantically obvious, filling their pages with social-

ist jargon and dogmatic rhetoric, their analysis of the Spanish situation tended to be extremely lucid and tragically prophetic: "If fascism is victorious in Spain, then the fantasies of the Canadian pacifists and isolationist will be smashed to pieces by the reality of another World War."⁹ The Canadian Forum, more perceptive than it had initially been, noted in an editorial that "The present civil war in Spain has turned into a dress rehearsal for the bigger European war which everybody over there now expects."¹⁰

Canadian intellectuals though highly vocal, comprised a definite minority of the population. Small groups of Canadians had become politically polarized by the depression, and by the emergence of fascism and communism as potential alternatives to democracy and capitalism. This schism was largely between fringe groups, however, leaving the bulk of the population as stolid upholders of middle class ideals and ethics. As mentioned, the reaction to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War illustrated that most Canadians felt an aversion for extremist European ideologies, few heeding the histrionic call to arms from the far left or right. The Vancouver Sun echoed this sentiment in an editorial of August 11 1936: "We fail to see why anybody should worry about whether Fascism or Communism will control Europe because not only is the one as bad as the other but to all intents and purposes they are one and the same thing."¹¹ To the eyes of the middle class in Canada, the Spanish Civil War was initially seen, if nothing else, as un-Canadian.

Isolationism was one of the most dominant trends in public opinion in Canada during the 1930's. There were the many immigrants who, having turned their backs on their ancestral lands, had arrived to start a new life in Canada; there were those who felt that Canada had everything to lose and nothing to gain from joining another European war; many justifiably felt that anything but strict isolation could divide the country into ethnic, and particularly English versus French camps of allegiance. Finally, there was also a strong feeling among many Canadians that Europe, long past its zenith, was in its waning years, that the warring nations and ideologies should conclude their own quarrels without dragging in the rest of the world. The horrendous memories of Canadian participation in the European trenches of the Great War were made particularly poignant in the summer of 1936 with the unveiling of the Canadian memorial at Vimy Ridge. "Never Again" feelings were strong throughout the country.

Newspapers were certainly against any Canadian involvement on the Iberian Peninsula. The editors took a rather patronizing stance when analysing the daily front page reports of horrors and atrocities committed by republicans and rebels alike. The Vancouver Sun had spoken of the waste of time worrying over Europe,¹² while the Winnipeg Free Press stated: "Any leaving [sic] away from neutrality might mean the spread of war over Europe between those adhering to Fascism and those whose ideal is Communism."¹³ Their allusion to "Splendid Isolation" would not be an exaggeration.

When it became clear, in the first weeks of August 1936, that the Spanish conflict had mushroomed into a full scale civil war, the editorial denunciations in Canadian newspapers increased appreciably. The front pages still featured photographs of rifle-carrying women giving the republican clenched fist salute, accompanied by racy action-packed stories, but the political analysis became increasingly sombre and pessimistic. On July 31, the Toronto Globe and Mail first mentioned the possibility that the Spanish situation could escalate into a full fledged European war.¹⁴ Reports had been circulating that the Italians, and perhaps the Germans, were about to give the rebels material support. Léon Blum, the French socialist Premier, watched apprehensively. He was very aware of the dangers of Franco's flag flying over Spain--his country would be all but hemmed in, surrounded on three fronts by fascist dictators. A republican sympathizer by conviction, he did not hesitate to offer support to the loyalists (support which was officially withdrawn in short order), and sent stern warnings to the Axis powers to stay clear of Spain. In the autumn of 1936, Europe was a veritable powder keg, and each power seemed to be striking matches with abandon. The Winnipeg Free Press headline of August 5 illustrated Canadian fears: "Anxiety Over Civil War in Spain Grows. Division of Europe into two camps is indicated."¹⁵ One spark that very nearly set the charge occurred on August 7, when four German citizens were shot by Spanish republicans. incensed, the Third Reich issued stern warnings and shunted part of the German navy into the Bay of Biscay; France responded to the move by verbally lashing out at the Germans, ordering Hitler to keep clear of the war; the republicans marched through the streets; and England

tried to soothe the raw tempers by supporting the new French demand for general non-intervention in the war. The Winnipeg Free Press again epitomized Canadian newspaper headlines: "Events in Spanish Revolt Near Climax". The article declared Europe to be on the brink of war over the Spanish situation.¹⁶ The Canadian Forum held similar views, but went further, admonishing England for her inaction in the war:

Spain is far away, but we doubt whether many of our readers will be able to view her troubles with the complete detachment of the British Foreign Office. They reveal very clearly how the class struggle converts domestic into international politics. Every country¹⁷ in Europe is swayed by the Spanish Civil War.

Europe was indeed on the verge of war over Spain. By mid-August it had become patently obvious that initial media analysis had been rather simplistic if not naïve--blame for the crisis could no longer be pinned on the inferior genetic composition of the average Spaniard. An already divided Europe had been further split over the conflict, making it increasingly difficult to ignore the ideological differences between the two warring factions on the Iberian Peninsula. This realization was reiterated officially in Canada when Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary for the Dominions in London, sent a telegram to the Department of External Affairs on August 5. In it he remarked that "the struggle between military and government is becoming a fight between fascism and communism."¹⁸ This was an analysis which carried world-wide social and political implications, and led to yet another shift in media coverage.

No Canadian newspaper had its own correspondent in Spain when fighting broke out in July, but that changed as the war became one of the century's major media events. The fluid nature of the Spanish battles provided a perfect testing ground for some of the newly perfected high speed communications techniques of journalism. For the first time sensational and often stirring photos and stories could be flashed from Spanish trenches to Canadian parlors in a scant few hours. Thus it was not long before all the major papers had syndicated journalists combing Spain, risking life and limb for exclusives and "human-drama" articles. One of the first Canadian war correspondents to leave for Spain was Henning Sørensen, a young Danish émigré who went on behalf of the Canadian Forum and New Commonwealth. He left in early September, but changed his vocation after he was offered an opportunity to work with Dr. Bethune's new mobile blood transfusion clinics.¹⁹

English dailies like the Winnipeg Free Press, Vancouver Sun and Toronto Globe and Mail had initially relied on Associated Press news service for their bulletins, which meant that Anglo-Canadian newspapers drew from the same stock of material and therefore tended to have similar interpretations.²⁰ French-Canadian papers, on the other hand, received most of their information from S.P.A. news service.²¹ With Canadian Press supplying very little information, it was therefore easy for Quebec papers to reach their own, rather different, interpretation of events in Spain.

The role of Associated Press was soon usurped by Canadian Press service, which by October 1936 controlled most of the Canadian information emanating from Spain. It would seem that Canadian Press managed to retain that monopoly for the duration of the war. With most of the Spanish news being funnelled through one major news service before entering Canada, it can be conjectured that biases of single Canadian Press reporters could filter their way into most major Canadian dailies, thereby helping sway public opinion. Perhaps the most influential subjective interpretation transmitted to Canada was that Spain was becoming the turf for an ideological jousting match between fascism and democracy. The international and emotive character of the war tended to have a negative effect on objective journalism. Ernest Hemingway's reports were, after all, not appealing to cold intellect.²² Even the London Times was not free from bias. The paragon of objective journalism had their man, Kim Philby, reporting on the nationalist side, unaware that their reporter was in fact a Russian agent.²³

Once the notion was accepted that Spain had become the battleground for two of Europe's most controversial ideologies, Canadians began to look at the conflict from a new perspective. Isolationism was no longer enough as it did not provide an answer for the ethical, ideological, and practical questions inherent in the Spanish Civil War.

The Canadian Forum not only supported the legality of the Spanish Republic, but also questioned the moral aspects of the crisis. The appeal in the October issue exemplified what was to become standard

fare for the magazine throughout the war: "Every socialist, every liberal, we would almost say every man of any decent feeling, can only hope that the [Spanish] government will prevail."²⁴ People responded, began to take sides, and, much to the dismay of staunch isolationists who rejected any assistance to foreign combatants, the newly aroused consciousness soon led to direct aid. When it was learned that the New York local of the International Ladies Garments Workers Union had donated \$5,000 to the republicans, the conservative Toronto Globe and Mail, in an article entitled "Meddling in Spain's Revolt", stated that "governments [should] put a ban on the materialistic sympathies of their nationals."²⁵ The editor, no isolationist, advocated a strong new foreign policy that would bring Canada into closer alliance with Great Britain. He felt that "any foreign policy devised by the Dominion that failed to dovetail with that of Britain would be of no serious importance in world affairs and might as well be forgotten before it is started."²⁶

Given Moroccan imports of Canadian industrial goods, however, Mackenzie King's government could not simply ban the "materialistic sympathies" of Canadians without appearing to approve of the rebels. Franco's rebellion had, after all, been born in Spanish Morocco, and the country was firmly under nationalist control. To his consternation, the Canadian Prime Minister, wanting to keep the country uninvolved in the civil war, found private citizens sending goods to the republicans while Canadian business circumvented the Non-Intervention Treaty by pumping materials into "neutral" Morocco. The first to question the

morality of this ambiguous situation was the Canadian Forum. The magazine insisted that there was no justification for sending goods to a "neutral" which was, in fact, totally under the control of General Franco and the rebels:

The "Mail and Empire's" Ottawa correspondent assures us that "the [Canadian] authorities have no delusions about where the shipments are going to ultimately--to General Franco, but they don't feel called upon to take any action. After all, we get our money.²⁹

The government's export policies were also attacked in the House of Commons itself. Vancouver C.C.F. opposition M.P. Charles G. MacNeil openly criticized King, saying that "unquestionably large profits are being made on material exported to Morocco for the assistance of the fascist insurgents in Spain." The assertions, both from the media and from the opposition, gained tremendous credence when Canadian war material export figures for Morocco were released.

1935	Sept.	\$ 1,929	1936	Sept.	\$ 296,752
	Oct.	\$16,461		Oct.	\$ 291,135
	Nov.	\$ 4,392		Nov.	\$ 678,101
	Dec.	\$ 4,836		Dec.	\$ 505,809

Canadian War Material Export to Morocco.²⁹

Much later the Prime Minister, with the political success of the Foreign Enlistment Act by then behind him, had an Order in Council passed in July 1937 prohibiting the export of any war material to either side in the conflict.²⁹ Though his ethics might perhaps be questioned, there is no doubt that King, a political animal par excellence, effectively

eliminated a potential thorn in his side by legislating it out of existence.

Meanwhile, the debate on the moral issues continued unabated. The Winnipeg Free Press, an advocate of a more independent Canada, and much more liberal than the Globe and Mail, sided with the republicans on August 8 when the editorial read:

[the rebellion] is a revolt against a properly constituted government with a majority in a popularly elected assembly and has no more status from a legal point of view, than a mob trying to take the law into its own hands or a gangster resisting the police. . . . Technically then, other European powers would be right in permitting the shipment of arms to the government of Spain, wrong in allowing their nationals to give any aid to the fascist cause.³⁰

According to J.W. Dafoe, influential editor to the Winnipeg Free Press, the Spanish Civil War had crystallized public opinion on Canadian foreign policy vis á vis general currents in Europe. At a conference on Canadian-American affairs in early 1937, he noted that the conflict had polarized public opinion into five camps:

- 1) the strict isolationists. These were mostly pacifists who felt that Canada should not involve herself in any external conflict or treaty. If the country came under attack, the isolationist contended that Canada should rely on the United States and Great Britain for any military assistance.
- 2) The isolationists who felt that Canada should remain neutral at all costs, but should be able to defend her borders

as needed. 3) People advocating a foreign policy rejecting any advance commitments, but allowing Canada to go to war if it were deemed necessary. 4) The collectivists, who were glad to see Canada's modest re-armaments programme because it meant more power to the League of Nations and the idea of collective security. 5) The imperialists, who called for a melding of Canadian foreign policy with that of Great Britain.³¹ Dafoe felt that preparations for defence with no commitment of any kind (i.e. number 3) "constituted a policy which suited a very definite majority of the people in Canada."³²

There were those who felt a great deal stronger about the Spanish conflict. A week after the war broke out, letters began to trickle in to the editors of the various Canadian dailies. Most echoed the following theme: "Can anyone be in doubt as to which side is the right when wives and sweethearts are marching side by side with their loved ones to defend the 'People's Front'."³³ And on July 25, a more rhetorical letter typical of the Canadian Communist Party: "All honour to the Spanish people, who defend with their lives their hard won democracy; a noble people marching proudly and defiantly on the road to emancipation."³⁴ The Anarchists may have been pillaging Catholic churches, but as Canadian novelist Morley Callaghan noted, the rebels, despite what Quebec clergymen said, were hardly upholders of Christian ethics either:

The spectacle of the devout Foreign Legion thugs
and pious infidel Moors, the ancient enemy of the
Christian Spanish people marching to the tune of
Onward Christian Soldiers leaves me very cold
indeed.³⁵

An anonymous poem submitted to the Canadian Forum in October 1936 followed the same lines:

Battle Hymn for the Spanish Rebels.

The Church's one foundation
Is now the Muslim sword,
In meek collaboration
With flame and axe and cord;
Deep-winged with holy love
The battle-planes of Wotan,³⁶
The bombing-planes of Jove.

There were a few English-Canadians who thought championing the loyalist cause foolhardy, unworthy, or downright meddling. Some like the author of the following letter, could not understand what the fuss was all about:

Having received a letter from the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, soliciting financial help. . .
[I am surprised to find a Canadian committee]
that under the sacred stand of humanitarianism,
would meddle with the internal affairs of a nation
4000 miles away from Canada, and towards which
nation, the British government is endeavouring to
ensure the neutrality of other nations by means of
a concentration of its fleet off its shores.³⁷

Excluding Quebec, however, anti-republican sentiments were very limited. Prime Minister Mackenzie King and Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe received several hundred letters and petitions from English Canada during the first nine months of the conflict, of which but two were anti-loyalist, and one of them can be eliminated as it came from the town of Falher, Alberta, which was ninety-nine percent French-Canadian Catholic.³⁸ The author of the other, who also sent Mr. Lapointe a

sampling of Germany's propaganda minister Dr. J. Goebbels's interpretations of the Spanish Civil War, could not have been taken too seriously considering his concluding analysis: "Oh for an 'Anti-Communist League' England, America and even here is seething with Bolshevism."³⁹

* * *

Canadian public opinion is notoriously fickle and difficult to judge. Unlike the citizens of so many other countries, even wrathful Canadians rarely build barricades, take to the streets in vast numbers, or storm their legislative buildings. Whether it is the Anglo-Saxon heritage of the stiff upper lip, or the newly arrived immigrant's fears of deportation, the fact remains that Canadians tend to assert their feelings in unobtrusive, innocuous ways that are consequently difficult to assess. Letters to the editor are indeed one indicator, but one that must be used with caution as there are always those contributors who will write anything to see their names in print. Editors also carefully sift through the incoming mail. Therefore it is virtually impossible to know whether, in fact, the letters printed are an honest reflection of those received. Perhaps a safer clue to public opinion is an examination of the letters written by groups or individuals directly to the government. There is very little ego involved in a message to the Prime Minister's office; it will not be published; will be routinely answered, often by an unsympathetic secretary; and will then be relegated to an obscure shelf in the public archives. Letters to the government therefore tend to be written from conviction

rather than vanity, often with the co-operative hope that enough similar messages will bring the desired changes. Though it is a tiny percentage of the population which actually writes Ottawa, the letters, analyzed in conjunction with previously mentioned sources, can justifiably be used as reasonable indicators of Canadian public opinion.

The emotive character of the Spanish Civil War led to innumerable appeals and petitions pouring in to the offices of the Prime Minister and Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe for the duration of the conflict. For the purposes of this paper, however, only those letters will be examined that had been received by the time of the Foreign Enlistment debates in March 1937. Furthermore, for the sake of clarity, French-Canadian letters will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

The literally hundreds of messages and resolutions sent during the first nine month period may be broken into five distinct categories, each dealing with a specific aspect of the Spanish Civil War: 1) popular responses to the government's threatened ban on exports to Spain; 2) the uproar, in September 1936, when loyalist Spain's membership in the League of Nations was not renewed; 3) the disappearance, in February 1937, of General Emile Kleber, first leader of what was to become the International Brigades, and reputedly a Canadian citizen; 4) general views on Canada and the Spanish Civil War, and finally; 5) the ethical and moral questions involved in the proposed Foreign Enlistment Act.

As has been mentioned, left-wing Canadian magazines like the Canadian Forum and New Frontiers demanded that the Spanish Republic be permitted to buy any material it needed from Canada. This sentiment also found expression in letters to King and Lapointe. Typical of these was a petition sent by the "Canadian League Against War and Fascism for Peace and Democracy":

Be it resolved that this Mass Meeting of one thousand Canadian citizens urge upon the Dominion government that it permit the transport of supplies to the friendly government of Spain in accordance with International law and that it will not attempt to place restrictions upon Canadian citizens who may wish to aid the Spanish people in their defence of the principle of constitutional and democratic government.⁴⁰

As with the above resolution, few authors restricted themselves solely to the question of supplies, but rather dealt with both material and human aid. Many of the letters reflect the highly charged emotional nature of the Spanish Civil War through their strong indignation:

In conclusion I beg to ask if it is proposed in this bill, to prohibit the sending of further cash and material aid to such a worthy and admirable citizen of this country as Dr. Norman Bethune who is carrying on such a noble work in literally snatching from the jaws of death, hundreds if not thousands who otherwise, would be numbered among the hundreds of thousands who have been sacrificed to the God of Finance Capital in Spain, through her trusted lieutenants, the Fascist and Nazi butchers of Italy and Germany. . . .⁴¹

Spain's membership in the League of Nations came up for renewal in September 1936. To the consternation and surprise of many, the

League ousted Spain by rejecting the Republic's application on September 20th. That alone could have resulted in general indignation from the democratic world, but when it was learned through the Canadian press that Senator Dandurand, Canada's representative to the League, had voted against Spain's re-admission, letters positively flooded the Prime Minister's office. The government of Alberta, having little sympathy for the federal Liberals, went so far as to pass a resolution condemning the action.⁴² H.R.L. Henry, the Prime Minister's private secretary, answered all the protestations, carefully pointing out that since the vote had been by secret ballot, Canada's position could not have been known to the press. Though Dandurand did in fact vote for Spain's re-election,⁴³ the public outcry, particularly from the West, went a long way to prove that English Canada did not want Spain isolated from the world, and was indeed sympathetic toward the legally elected republican government.

The disappearance of Emile Kleber in February 1937 caused a minor public uproar in English speaking Canada. Kleber, a professional revolutionary and veteran of the Russian revolution, reached the stature of a folk hero in the fall of 1936 after skillfully commanding a motley crew of internationals in the defence of Madrid.⁴⁴ To many Canadians Kleber not only stood for liberty, justice and idealism, but as a naturalized Canadian of Austrian origin, was almost a native son. Thus interest in Spain was further heightened by the fact that one of the first leaders of the International Brigades was Canadian.⁴⁵ Mackenzie King received dozens of letters and telegrams from the time Kleber was first reported captured by Franco's Moorish troops until his eventual re-emergence several weeks

later. Every one of them called, with varying degrees of civility, for the Canadian government to go to Kleber's aid, or at least to ensure his safety. The petitions were not only from left-wing groups, but were also from individual concerned citizens throughout Canada (including Quebec).⁴⁶ Recurring incidents such as this were embellished by papers like the communist Daily Clarion, and became vital to the construction of the mystique surrounding the Spanish Civil War.

The smallest category of letters sent to the government during the first nine months of the war concerned general impressions of the crisis. These notes were not written as a result of any particular incident, and were therefore more expressions of general concern rather than specific angry complaints. A typical example was the following note from the "Lutheran Workers Literary Association" of Toronto: "Tramp [the fascist] down and end all the butchery which they have caused without any right or reason."⁴⁷ There were also seventy-two copies of a pro-republican anti-rebel petition allegedly representing a total of 4,331 people. All stemming from British Columbia, most from the Vancouver area, they were sent in mid-October 1936, and tended to emanate from C.C.F. clubs with a smaller assortment of women's groups, German, Italian and church organizations also represented. This category of letters was again overwhelmingly sympathetic to the Spanish Republic and tended to see the war as an ideological struggle.

The government's proposed Foreign Enlistment Act drew by far the greatest response from the electorate throughout the first nine

months of the Spanish war. Letters from across Canada flooded in to the offices of both the Prime Minister and Ernest Lapointe from late January 1937 until the Act was passed in March. As with the other categories, they seem to have been weighted evenly between those sent by individuals and those dispatched under the auspices of particular groups or clubs (in the latter case, labour groups tended to dominate). Though the letters differed in their approach the emphasis, less than five percent actually supported the proposed Act while most condemned it outright. Vehement rejection of the Act revolved around two central and political issues: the democratic right of Canadians to come and go as they pleased, and the increasing fascist threat to democracy and legally elected democratic governments. The following resolution adopted at a C.P.C. chaired "mass meeting" in Winnipeg furnished a good example of the former case:

As free Canadians we demand the right to go to the assistance of any injured person, group of persons, or a nation who is suffering under these or similar circumstances, either as combattants, or as non-combattants.⁴⁸

Even elements from within Mackenzie King's own Liberal Party rebelled against the perceived anti-democratic nature of the Act. The Liberal Club of St. Jacques, Montreal, sent the Prime Minister a polite note informing him that it believed the proposed Act to be "contrary to democracy".⁴⁹

The emotionally indignant character of the letters also took a personal form, with attacks on the integrity of King himself: "I had always thought that you were in favour of democracy, but today I perceive the contrary. I hope that your attitude will change in the next few days."⁵⁰

And this rather vicious and scornful statement: "It appears to me that you have been overwhelmed by [Britain's Prime Minister] , Mr. Baldwin and company and the entertainment in their care."⁵¹

Many Canadians saw the Act as tacit government approval for the rebel cause. Though the Enlistment Act was to prevent Canadians from volunteering for either side in the Spanish war, the number who wished to join Franco's Foreign Legions was so miniscule that the Bill was logically perceived as an attack solely upon the loyalists. A C.C.F. candidate from West York felt that the Act would be "tantamount to countenancing rebellion against a constitutionally chosen government of a friendly power."⁵² McGill University's "Social Problems Club", actively following events in Spain, wrote to the Justice Minister:

It has been unmistakeably shown that [passing the Act] would amount in practice to intervention on the side of the rebels. . . . Certainly⁵³ the Canadian people are not partial to the rebels.

Many protests, though less academic, were never-the-less obvious in their intent:

What dark and sinister object is behind the bill? Surely an opponent of democracy in Spain, would, be an opponent in Canada. An advocate of government by the Thug, like his friend Franco, the Fascist Baby-butcher. If this damnable outrage is permitted to become law, I shall never again cast a Liberal vote.⁵⁴

Protestant religious groups also joined in attacking the government over the foreign enlistment issue. Their letters, exemplified by the following, tended to dwell on the moral aspects of the Act:

As a citizen of Canada and a clergyman of the United Church, I wish to add my voice to those which are protesting against the government's announced intentions to introduce a bill prohibiting Canadians from fighting for democracy in Spain. Such legislation would, in my judgement, be a totally unwarranted infringement on civil liberties, a gross insult to a friendly government, a shameful encouragement to world-wide fascism, and a clear breach of international law. I fervently hope that the professedly Liberal government of Canada will not disgrace itself by introducing this abominable bill.⁵⁵

Perhaps the best example of all the letters dealing with the Foreign Enlistment Act is the following succinct note to the Prime Minister. Torontonians Leith McMurray quickly illuminated the central issues that seemed to disturb so many English Canadians about Canada and the Spanish Civil War:

I consider it a crying shame that only when a clique of reactionary generals conspire with foreign capitalists to overthrow a government, democratically chosen by a people, do you consider it necessary to forbid Canadians to join that people's armed forces.⁵⁶

One crucial inference may be gathered from the many letters sent to the government during the early stages of the Spanish Civil War. As has been mentioned, of all the incidents and issues revolving

around Canada and Spain for the first nine months of the conflict, none aroused as much attention from English Canada as the Foreign Enlistment Act. The plausible explanation for this is that English Canada, though pro-republican, did not want to become physically involved in Spain's civil war. Private collection agencies like "the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy" and volunteer recruitment efforts gave English Canada a sense of solidarity with the loyalists without actually dragging the country into the muck of their war. Forcedly stopping the sale of materials and the trickle of recruits to Spain would mean blocking English Canada's sole ideological and legal vent. That, whether conscious or not, was the crux of the matter.

Of more vital import to this paper was the obvious English Canadian support for the Spanish republican cause. Why did the Prime Minister, well aware of this sentiment from English Canada, encourage the Foreign Enlistment Act and the ban on military sales to either of the Spanish antagonists? The answer to that question lies neither in English Canada, nor with the personal sympathies of Mackenzie King and his colleagues, but rather in the province of Quebec.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

- ¹Toronto Globe and Mail, 29 July 1936, p. 4.
- ²Vancouver Sun, 22 July 1936, p. 6.
- ³Winnipeg Free Press, 24 July 1936, p. 11.
- ⁴The Canadian Forum, editorial, October 1936, p. 4-5.
- ⁵Globe and Mail, 20 July 1936, p. 4.
- ⁶Vancouver Sun, 25 July 1936, p. 4.
- ⁷New Frontiers, editorial, vol. 1, #6, October 1936.
- ⁸Ibid., vol. 1, #5, September 1936, p. 3.
New Frontiers says of the fascists and their attempted overthrow of the Spanish government: "The insurgents continue to fight like the cornered rats they are."
- ⁹Ibid., vol. 1, #11, March 1937, p. 3.
- ¹⁰The Canadian Forum, editorial, February 1937, p. 5.
- ¹¹Vancouver Sun, 11 August 1936, p. 4.
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³Winnipeg Free Press, 6 August 1936, editorial.
- ¹⁴Globe and Mail, 31 July 1936, p. 1.
- ¹⁵Winnipeg Free Press, 5 August 1936, p. 1.
- ¹⁶Ibid., 8 August 1936, p. 1.
- ¹⁷The Canadian Forum, editorial, September 1936, p. 4-5.
- ¹⁸John A. Munro, ed., Documents on Canadian External Relations, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1972), VI, p. 754.
- ¹⁹Victor Hoar, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1969), p. 10.
- ²⁰The Winnipeg Free Press initially used Associated Press Service, then combined it with Canadian Press, the latter dominating the paper by January 1937. The Vancouver Sun seems to have used both press services for the first nine months of the conflict, while papers like the Toronto Star had its own correspondent, M.H. Halton, in place by October 1936.

- ²¹Montreal's Le Devoir used S.P.A. news service exclusively for the first two months of the conflict after which time they supplemented it with a few dispatches from the Canadian Press Service.
- ²²At least one member of the International Brigades, Jason Gurney, was not impressed by Hemingway's machismo: "The most controversial of [the distinguished visitors to the republican trenches], was Ernest Hemingway, full of hearty and bogus bon-homie. He sat himself down behind the bullet-proof shield of a machine-gun and loosed off a whole belt of ammunition in the general direction of the enemy. This provoked a mortar bombardment for which he did not stay." Jason Gurney, Crusade in Spain, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1974), p. 67.
- ²³see Andrew Boyle, The Fourth Man, (New York: Bantam Books, 1980).
- ²⁴The Canadian Forum, editorial, October 1936, p. 5.
- ²⁵Globe and Mail, 5 August 1936, p. 4.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷The Canadian Forum, editorial, November 1936, p. 4.
- ²⁸Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Debates, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 15 February 1937), p. 885. Hereafter cited as House of Commons, Debates.
- ²⁹J.A. Munro, Documents, p. 977.
- ³⁰Winnipeg Free Press, 8 August 1936, p. 7.
- ³¹J.W. Dafoe, "Canadian Foreign Policy," Conference on Canadian American Affairs, (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1937), p. 224-231.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Vancouver Sun, 25 July 1936, p. 5.
- ³⁴Ibid.
- ³⁵New Frontiers, vol. 1, #8, December 1936, p. 14.
- ³⁶The Canadian Forum, October 1936, p. 23.
- ³⁷Globe and Mail, 19 January 1937, p. 1.

- ³⁸Ernest Lapointe Papers, vol. 22, file #70, Public Archives of Canada. Letter dated 12 February 1937, from Mr. L.P. Labbe (in French). All subsequent references are to materials in the Public Archives, and will be referred to as Lapointe Papers.
- ³⁹Ibid., letter dated 21 February 1937, from Alfred Mansfield Esq., Victoria, B.C.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., letter dated 8 February 1937.
- ⁴¹Ibid., letter dated 1 February, from J.W. Gorman, Montreal.
- ⁴²for examples see King Papers, vol. 342, file S-500, Public Archives of Canada. All subsequent King Papers references are to materials in the public archives.
- ⁴³King Papers, J4 series, vol. 212. Volume 167 of the King Papers contains a memorandum to the Prime Minister which says that Senator Dandurand did in fact vote for Spain's membership renewal. The word "confidential" is scribbled in the margin.
- ⁴⁴Victor Hoar, The Mac-Paps, p. 17.
- ⁴⁵memoranda in the King Papers suggest that the Department of Immigration ran a check on Mr. Kleber. The conclusion was that he was indeed not a Canadian citizen nor a landed immigrant.
- ⁴⁶King Papers, J4 series, vol. 212.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., vol. 342, file S-500, letter dated 20 December 1936.
- ⁴⁸Lapointe Papers, vol. 22, file #70, letter dated 7 February 1937.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., letter dated 31 January 1937, from Monsieur L. Rousseau, Secretaire, Club Liberal, St. Jaques, Montreal (in French).
- ⁵⁰Ibid., letter dated 30 January 1937.
- ⁵¹King Papers, vol. 342, file S-500, letter dated 31 January 1937.
- ⁵²Lapointe Papers, vol. 22, file #70, letter dated 3 February 1937.
- ⁵³Ibid., letter dated 31 January 1937, from the sixty members of the "Social Problems Club."
- ⁵⁴Ibid., letter dated 2 February 1937, from Mr. B. Seanlon, Montreal.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., letter dated 5 February 1937, from Rev. J.C. Mortimer, Northport, N.S.
- ⁵⁶King Papers, vol. 342, file S-500, letter dated August 1937.

CHAPTER II

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF QUEBEC

Mackenzie King wouldn't know a principle if he tripped over it. All he was interested in was votes.
Interview with Senator Eugene Forsey, February 1982

After that fateful day when the Bolsheviks first began to board up or convert churches into workers' clubs in the new Soviet Republic, communism had become the avowed nemesis of organized religion. Of all clerical institutions, the Catholic church reacted most vehemently against the new foe, condemning communism from the pulpit, and supporting any group that promised to challenge and destroy the growing red menace. Undoubtedly this was because the Catholic church, through centuries of effective socio-economic and political control, bore the brunt of the leftist attacks, and stood to lose the most.

Thus one of the many reasons for the nationalist rebellion against the Spanish Republic in July 1936, was the realization by the military that the new leftist tendencies of Madrid posed a deadly threat to the traditional position of the Spanish church. Not only were socialists calling for reforms within the Catholic hierarchy, communists and anarchists were reaching sacrilegious heights by calling for the complete eradication of all papal influence in Spain. The Spanish aristocracy, including its military leaders, rebelled against increasing

secularization of the state and the threat to the former semi-feudal state of church, gentry and military, a bastion which had kept all three in positions of wealth and power for centuries. Many Catholics also feared a moral collapse if the influence of the church were to be destroyed. They felt that the old bonds of law, order, and the family would be severed if the vigilant eye of the church were closed. Playing on this sentiment, the right pointed to the apparent decline of the Spanish moral fibre since the creation of the Second Republic in December 1931, repeatedly warning Spain of the dangers of liberalism. There were also less altruistic reasons for fearing leftist anti-clericalism. The Catholic church stood to lose a great deal more than several million Spanish souls were the republicans to institute all their promised programmes. The church, through its vast holdings and the centuries old system of tithes was an immensely rich and powerful organization, which justifiably feared that the left was about to alter this traditional position by expropriating holdings and redistributing them among the Spanish citizens.

By the time war broke out in Spain, the forces of socialism and communism on the one hand, and Catholicism on the other, had called up their respective reserves for the impending battle for the souls and allegiances of western man. Mussolini, the Italian dictator, had scored a major diplomatic coup for fascism, nationalism, and anti-communism by signing the Lateran treaties with the Vatican in 1929. Through them, Pope Pius XI came to terms with the Italian government and publicly endorsed the fascist in their fight against communism. Arriving

at a legal and political agreement with the right meant that the papacy officially shifted its world-wide flock further toward conservatism, ultra-nationalism, and anti-liberalism. Italian fascism, though never completely championed by the Vatican, was generally encouraged from the pulpit as it promised to raise the strongest, and perhaps only effective bulwark against encroaching communism.

This rapprochement between the Vatican and Italian fascism led to immediate and dynamic social repercussions throughout the Catholic world. In the case of French Canada, it added an air of legitimacy to a conservative swing that had been waxing for many years. This acted as a direct threat to the federal system in general, and to Mackenzie King's Liberal government in particular, because it surreptitiously helped widen the old gulf between English and French Canada.

* * *

French Canadians traditionally felt themselves to be members of a proud and unique minority whose cultural survival was perennially menaced by outside forces. The sense of insecurity engendered by this situation was further exacerbated by demographic shifts, and by the depression of 1929. The majority of French Canadians lived, by 1936, in an urban environment, generally around the few industrial centres of Quebec. The rural exodus was recent however, and the old provincial values had yet to make allowances for their new milieu.

The tragic result of this ambiguous situation was the creation of French Canadian proletariat which did not have a culture to reflect its new urban condition. Blair Neatby describes the situation as follows:

There was no place for the urban worker in this idealized version of French-Canadian society; no influential French-Canadians had become spokesmen for the working class and there was little awareness of the problem of an urban proletariat.

The ideas of socialism, trade unionism or even mildly left-wing liberalism were therefore treated as alien or radical ideologies. Viewed as urban threats likely to leave French Canada even more vulnerable to destructive external forces, these radical alien ideas were highly suspect. Most of Quebec's Catholic leaders saw any form of progressive social change as a direct attack on French Canadian culture and race. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the apparent religious intolerance of leftists and Spanish republicans alike garnered little sympathy from Quebec. Unlike the Spanish Popular Front, which was crying for international aid, French Canada was being swept by powerful illiberal clerical nationalism, and to many was indeed ripe for the dynamic right-wing extreme of fascism.

The social swing to the right was also reflected in the political climate of Quebec. Though Prime Minister Mackenzie King had been less than fond of the former Taschereau administration, there is no doubt that he favoured it over the new Union Nationale administra-

tion which Maurice Duplessis had led to a major victory in the Quebec provincial elections of 1936. It can be safely assumed that King was trying to make the best of a bad situation when he noted in his diary:

I am not sorry to have a conservative government in power in Quebec. It is easier to govern at Ottawa with the provinces contra. Also it will help us in dealing with the other provinces, and in meeting constitutional questions etc.²

Supported by Cardinal Villeneuve, Duplessis had ridden to power as the champion of anti-communism. His government's policies and the reactionary mood within French Canada were largely instrumental in shaping Canadian foreign policy vis á vis Spain and the Spanish Civil War.

* * *

The well documented examples of church desecrations in republican Spain, French Canadian fears of communism, and the recent accord between Catholicism and Italian fascism were instrumental in swinging Quebec public opinion away from the legally elected Spanish Popular Front government. Even without these vital forces, however, strong French Canadian isolationism would never have permitted Quebec to endorse any official Canadian support for the Spanish Republic. Isolationist sentiments had always been dominant within Quebec, but were swiftly gaining momentum by 1936. The debacles in the trenches of the First World War, the depression, and the dark clouds that again hung over Europe, made French Canada all the more vociferous in its efforts to keep

the country from being embroiled in the European conflict that so many saw coming. Most French Canadians perceived isolationism and reactionary conservatism as the most effective weapons in their bid for self-protection.

Instincts for preservation in Quebec ran very deeply indeed. It might have been natural for Quebec to feel at least nominal loyalty to the "old country" since the province had little love for England and could trace its ancestry straight back to France. The re-occupation of the Rhineland by Germany in March 1936, proved that this was, in fact, not the case at all. Professor James Eayrs has written about Quebec's reaction to French appeals for international aid against her old foe:

Perhaps the balance of informed opinion came down on the side of Henri Bourassa who, no Anglophile, wrote to Mackenzie King from Europe: "On the Rhine issue, will I shock you in saying that I side with the British against the French? Whether Hitler's peace proposals be sincere or not, they ought to be taken at their face value and Hitler pousie [sic] au pied du mur to deliver the goods."

Though an English language paper, the Montreal Gazette exemplified French Canada's stance by arguing that "Nothing can ever be gained by persistently treating Germany as though she were national enemy No. 1 in perpetuity."⁴ If the isolationist sentiments ran so deeply that French Canadians would not run to the aid of France, there was absolutely no reason to suppose that Quebec would ever rally to the

tattered banner of republican Spain. L.M. Gouin, a prominent businessman, and Mackenzie King's former Quebec lieutenant, wrote of the deteriorating Spanish situation: "French Canadians are in favour of isolation in one form or another, from this it follows that we do not intend to have Canada become one of the policemen of the world."⁵ In his lucid analysis, written five years after Franco's rebellion, professor F.H. Soward noted:

The sense of aloofness from Europe was perhaps even stronger in Quebec than was the willingness to give Franco material support. That may explain why French-Canada was more interested in blocking assistance to the Spanish Republic than in facilitating direct aid to General Franco.⁶

A further example of the staunch isolationist stance in Quebec was that province's reaction to the modest rearmament proposal put forth by the federal government in 1935. According to professor James Eayrs, to defend its sovereignty, Canada in the mid-thirties could shuffle and wheeze forth with:

. . . a sea-going Navy [consisting] of two serviceable destroyers, and two destroyers and a mine-sweeper something less than serviceable. On shore, barracks were decrepit, and wireless inadequate, the naval magazine at Esquimalt (having been condemned as long ago as 1905) a menace to the surrounding community. . . . Not a single anti-aircraft gun was to be found in the entire Dominion. Ammunition was scarce and, on account of its great age, a gamble to fire. Mechanized transport was a rarity. The Air Force could muster twenty-three aircraft, but not one of them was judged suitable for active service.

Though the exact figures can be disputed, the country was, to all intents and purposes, lacking in adequate defences. It is therefore small wonder that Defence Minister Ian Mackenzie pushed so strenuously for a large increase to the meagre defence budget. Though Canada's borders were poorly defended, however, isolationism appeared so strong in Quebec that the Prime Minister received warnings from C.G. Power, the influential Liberal from Quebec East, that "Any extensive defence programme would cost the government the support of the entire province."⁸ Since a large percentage of federal Liberal support came from Quebec, Power's threat had to be taken seriously.

Canada's response to the Ethiopian crisis in 1935 illustrated just how seriously Mackenzie King took the isolationist sentiments from within Quebec. Jean Bruchési's article, "A French-Canadian view of Canadian Foreign policy", typified the Quebec response to Haile Selassie's plea for aid against the Italian invaders. In it he stressed that "the League of Nations as it now exists is not highly prized in the province of Quebec", and that there was very little enthusiasm for a war fought on behalf "of a certain tribe of negroes."⁹ Even when the vague idea of an interventionist war had died its inevitable death and sanctions against Italy were proposed, Quebec newspapers of all political persuasions came out forcefully against them.¹⁰ King's colleague, Ernest Lapointe, reiterated this when he declared:

No interest in Ethiopia, of any nature whatsoever, is worth the life of a single Canadian citizen. No consideration could justify Canada's participation in such a war, and I am unalterably opposed to it.

According to professor Eayrs, Lapointe spoke for French Canada, "and on this issue, French Canada was to speak for Canada."¹² The members of the League, including Canada, turned away while the Italians marched unimpeded into Addis Ababa after a gross and ruthless violation of sovereign territory.

* * *

Prime Minister King, always afraid of divisive elements within Canada, was left in a quandry over the reactionary and isolationist mood of Quebec. The Liberals, taking 55 of 65 possible seats, had won a resounding victory in Quebec in the federal elections of 1935, but could not afford to gloat. It was realized that the federal Liberal party regained its traditionally large majority, not through its own popularity, but largely because of disillusionment with Bennett's former Conservative government.¹³ There is no doubt that this worried the Prime Minister as it was, after all, largely Quebec which had endorsed him as Laurier's successor to the head of the Liberal party. King knew how vital Quebec was to his power base; the problem was how to interpret the province's increasing conservatism, and what actions to follow if reactionary French Canada were to be placated.

As was his wont when dealing with sensitive problems in Quebec, King wisely sent his widely respected French Canadian Justice Minister, Ernest Lapointe, into the fray. However, an old man by the 1930's,

Lapointe seemed incapable of dealing with the dynamic Quebec situation. He was, in fact, so disturbed by events in his home province that it affected his health.¹⁴ An entry in the Prime Minister's diary shows that King could not understand these defeatist feelings in the usually optimistic and buoyant Lapointe:

Lapointe's fear of the Cardinal and Duplessis amounts to absolute terror. No one can convince me that if he, himself, and a few others would begin to expound the doctrines of Liberalism to the younger generation of Quebec, it would not take long to¹⁵ free them from clerical or political intolerance.

An otherwise trivial event that occurred in late 1936 exemplified King's incomprehension of the trends within Quebec. In an effort to garner international aid and support for the Spanish republican cause, four loyalists requested permission to embark upon a cross-Canada speaking tour. An ardent proponent of free speech, the Prime Minister was all in favour, while Lapointe, equally dedicated to the spirits of liberalism, believed that the tour must be stopped as a loyalist visit to Quebec might prove calamitous. Previous incidents between visiting republicans and French Canadians had, after all, led to bloodshed, and the general sentiment in Quebec was against allowing republican propaganda into the province. In a long letter to the Justice Minister, the Association Catholique des Voyageurs de Commerce du Canada reiterated French Canada's fears of subversive propaganda:

We have been advised that Dr. Béthume [sic] is continuing his propaganda in favour of red Spain.

Leaving Vancouver he is coming east indoctrinating the public in favour of Spanish communists. . . . It has been proposed and unanimously resolved to ask you to have this propaganda stopped in the interest of all.¹⁶

The following letter from a law firm in Montreal to the Minister of Justice is also typical of French Canada's feelings towards visiting republican speakers.

Allez-vous, en votre qualité de ministre de la justice et de premier ministre interimaire, laisser entrer au pays un élément inévitablement subversif?

When one such delegation was scheduled to speak in Montreal in October 1936, the resulting violent student protest forced the mayor to cancel the meeting permit. In the aftermath, "the vociferous students were publicly praised by Premier Duplessis for hindering 'communists' from speaking."¹⁸ The incident would have been less sinister had the riot been a spontaneous act, but that was not the case. Deeply disturbed and frightened by the event, Eugene Forsey, then a young lecturer at McGill, wrote to Ernest Lapointe on November 3 1936:

The plain fact is that the city authorities abdicated in the face of threats. Law and order were set at naught. Peaceable decent citizens were deprived of their rights at the bidding of lawless and turbulent adolescents. . . . This affair was carefully organized; former students of mine have in their possession one of the notes sent round ordering the youths to meet at the headquarters of the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique and "bring their canes". It is obvious also that it has approval in high quarters. There is, in fact,¹⁹ a formidable Fascist movement in this province.

Contrary to Premier Duplessis's accusations, Senator Forsey proved conclusively that there were, in fact, no "communist elements" at the meeting.

With passions in Quebec as inflamed as they were, Lapointe believed that entry visas to the second group of republican speakers should not be granted. The Justice Minister feared, quite rightly, that permitting them to speak would be interpreted in Quebec as tacit federal support for the leftist ideas of the loyalists. "He seemed to think", noted King in his diary, "that if they were allowed to come into Canada at all, it might only lead to the secession of the province of Quebec from the rest of Canada."²⁰ Through a compromise, the loyalists were finally permitted to tour and speak, but only in English Canada. The Spaniards were thoroughly checked by the Canadian legation in Washington before entering Canada, and were obliged to sign a document promising to stay well clear of Quebec. On December 24 1936, the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. O.D. Skelton, who had taken personal charge of the investigation, wrote a memorandum to the Prime Minister in which he said: "Satisfactory assurances were received that if the visitors entered Canada they would not visit the province of Quebec."²¹ The republicans entered the country and had a successful tour, well aware that "if they came near Quebec and caused disturbances they would be immediately deported."²² If this ruling appeared intolerant and anti-democratic, it was because Lapointe sensed that in the case of Quebec, the safest policy was to acquiesce to the will of the majority.

Cardinal Villeneuve, Duplessis, and many other French Canadian leaders would have Quebec and the rest of the country believe that "La Belle Province" was in gravest peril of being overrun by red hords^e. To them, nothing was as pernicious or got better political mileage than communism. Though the powerful industrial elite of Quebec was largely English speaking, protestant, and unsympathetic to Duplessis's French Canadian nationalism, it raised no objection to his tough stance on Spain. After all, the more virulently anti-communist the province became, the better the industrial leaders liked it. A pious, and obedient working class would be a tremendous asset to English manufacturers in Quebec. The size of this communist fifth column must therefore be examined. Unlike the rest of Canada, where the depression served as the best recruiting agent the Communist Party of Can^ada could have hoped for, economic difficulties turned Quebecers away from the left, toward the right and extreme nationalism. This is borne out by an examination of election returns, which show that the Quebec wing of the communist party never garnered more than a few thousand votes, these coming almost exclusively from the industrial areas of Montreal.²³ It is safe to say then, that communism, in reality, never posed any form of threat to Quebec at all.

If, as suggested, communism never really posed a threat to Quebec, why was the fear of anything left-of-centre so rampant throughout the province? One potential explanation is that French Canadians, who tended to be a church-going people, were not only bombarded with anti-communist rhetoric from their government, and the French Canadian

media, but also from the pulpit and those social institutions run by the Catholic clergy. Thus, when all effective media of communication issued steady streams of anti-leftist propaganda, it is small wonder that the already concerned French Canadian population became more firmly entrenched in its conservative outlook. The Spanish Civil War merely intensified those feelings. It was difficult to see Spanish republicanism in an objective, let alone positive light, when Monsignor Antoniutti, the powerful papal delegate to Canada and Newfoundland, introduced General Franco and the rebels as "An army of heroes, justly called 'Christ's militia'."²⁴

The various ethnic groups of Quebec also tended to help sway opinion away from anything remotely left-wing. As mentioned, Catholicism was traditionally a vital anti-communist, pro-conservative force, and many of the non-French ethnic groups in Quebec were staunchly catholic. Chief among these was the large Italian population. Badly impoverished by the depression, these people, who tended to be factory workers in and around the industrial areas of the province, naturally took courage and heart from the reports of Mussolini's new Italy. The Italian-Canadian catholic church buttressed this sentiment further by urging its flock to support Mussolini in word and deed. Veneration of Il Duce reached the point where a giant fresco of the Italian dictator appeared on the walls of the Madonna della Difesa church in Montreal.²⁵ Charles Bayley, who wrote a Master's thesis on the Italian community of Montreal in 1935, estimated that fully ninety percent of the local Italians supported Italian fascism.²⁶ Together, the various Catholic groups in

Quebec manifested so much overt support for the Spanish rebels that Hugh Thomas, author of the definitive study of the Spanish Civil War, observed that Quebec and Brazil offered more moral support to Franco than any other non-fascist province or country in the world.²⁷

Support for the right and virulent condemnation of republican Spain was, however, not universal in Quebec. There were small enclaves, particularly in the urban areas, of men and women who not only supported the loyalists, but who were equally deeply disturbed by the threat of fascism within their own province. As could be expected, the most vocal anti-fascist of these groups seems to have been the Anglo-Quebec intellectual class. A small Quebec chapter of the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy existed, and an equally small but vocal group supported republican Spain because it was the legally and democratically elected government. The following two letters are typical of the many Ernest Lapointe received from the latter group of English Quebecers after the Canadian government refused to sell goods to the loyalists:

. . . .Whatever our opinions might be [the Spanish government] was elected in a democratic manner and should receive our full support as Liberals.²⁸

The government knows that, had the Rebels not been sided by Hitler and Mussolini, and the whole plot engineered in Germany, the legal government of Spain would have overthrown its enemies in a month's time. . . .And since the government knows that, and who can help knowing, if aid is refused to the elected government of Spain, then we are directly assisting the enemies of a constitutionally elected government, and we shall be, ourselves, the enemies of democracy.²⁹

Though no records have been kept, it is likely that this English group also provided many of the Quebec contingent of the Mac-Paps. This is borne out by Victor Hoar's The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, which mentions "at least three dozen" French Canadians of the total twelve hundred man force.³⁰ Since there were over sixty volunteers from Quebec, most of the remaining must have been English.³¹ Very few French Canadians supported the loyalists, and those who did seem to have done so for less idealistic reasons. The motives of the following scathing attack on Franco are rather suspect as the union which wrote the letter represented Quebec workers in the armaments industry:

We feel that the legitimately established Spanish government has the right to buy what they want to protect against the vandals who kill women and children. We ask you to sell arms to the Spanish government who render service to catholic people by putting an end to the terrible battle caused by Col. [sic] Franco and his bandits who commit the most barbaric acts in all history.³¹

The suspicions of more liberally minded Quebecers were heightened further by the introduction in 1937 of Duplessis's Padlock Act. By it, the Attorney General (Duplessis himself), could padlock all premises allegedly used "to propagate communism or bolshevism by any means whatsoever."³² The English and liberal French community in Quebec was outraged and attacked the Act through the Civil Liberties Union. They fought a losing battle, however, since most Quebecers, particularly French Canadians, approved the measure. Adelard Godbout was barely heard, and less listened to, when he told a Quebec City audience "That

the dangerous menace in the province was not communism--the people could never be taken in by that--it was fascism."³³ Since the vast majority of Quebecers showed little sympathy for socialism or communism, and indeed tended to support those institutions and groups which attacked socialists, the minority of Quebecers who feared the rightist trend within their province and the world in general had little impact either on their own province or on Canada as a whole.

* * *

Though the ultra-conservative trends in Quebec were disturbing in their own right, it is unlikely that they would have had much impact on Canadian foreign policy if the Spanish Civil War had not broken out. It was largely the creation of the International Brigades on the Iberian Peninsula, and the subsequent world-wide leftist recruitment drives that forced Mackenzie King's Liberal government away from its policy of non-commitment, towards a positive foreign policy statement, and ultimately to pass the Foreign Enlistment Act. The question posed by the Spanish crucible was whether the Canadian government would allow its citizens to volunteer for the ranks of the International Brigades. On the one hand, English Canada tended to remain indifferent, or sympathetic towards the loyalist cause. While on the other, Quebec tending to see things in black and white (or in this case red and blue), naturally viewed recruitment for the Spanish trenches as another example of an international communist fifth column that had to be ruthlessly nipped at the bud. For example, when asked by

a Montreal Star reporter whether he thought that "anybody who [contended] that the present Spanish loyalists [were] not communists could be classed as a communist on that account," acting Montreal mayor Leo McKenna answered emphatically in the affirmative.³⁴

Duplessis too, as we have seen, used the idea of communist infiltrators to great effect. Though unwarranted, this fear was none-the-less very real, and caused many Quebecers a great deal of concern, particularly when their Premier categorically declared:

that in our province communistic recruiting has been going on, that our young men have been enrolled to fight for the communists in Spain. . . not for one or two young men, but for several, which shows that an organization exists, and indicates that there is something lacking somewhere.³⁵

It was the idea of an organization that disturbed French Canada so much. If volunteering for Spain was a purely individual and spontaneous act, it could perhaps be overlooked if not condoned, but a communist recruiting network could not be tolerated. This problem went beyond Quebec and entered the halls of the House of Commons. When asked by the opposition whether there had been sufficient enlistment in Canada to warrant federal action, the government's reply made it obvious that there was concern:

It is known that a small number of Canadians have enlisted on one side or the other of the conflict, particularly on the side of the government. The number is very small but organized effort is being made to increase it to a substantial scale.³⁶

There was an obvious cloak-and-dagger aura about the whole business as exemplified by the following letter to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. O.D. Skelton:

I beg to advise that paymaster-lieutenant Commander Delage, Quebec Division, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteers Reserve, reported by telephone last night that a doubtful character with headquarters in a Chinese laundry in Quebec City was enlisting young men for the Spanish army and providing each one with a passport.³⁷

The vital issue was that English Canada did not seem overly concerned that small groups of Canadians went overseas to fight for Spanish democracy, while Quebec, following along the conservative path already discussed, categorically refused to allow her citizens to rally behind any red banner. Some, like Liberal Maxime Raymond, did not mind that the volunteers left, saying: "[their leaving], I admit, does not give me any sorrow; it will rid us of these undesirable people, provided that they not return here,"³⁸ but men like him were a definite-minority. Nor could Quebec's vehement stand toward Spain be interpreted only as an isolationist province's desire to remain aloof from the rapidly deteriorating European arena. Condemnation of the Spanish Republic was almost exclusively motivated by politics since Quebec encouraged her young men to fight for Finland when that country came under fire from the Soviet Union, in the winter of 1939.³⁹

The battle lines were drawn up by the beginning of 1937. If the Prime Minister did not alter his own liberal principles and pay heed to the anger in Quebec, he would likely come face to face with one of his greatest fears: a deepening rift in the unity of Canada, and a headlong tumble for his Party. The safest and most politically expedient solution proved to be the Foreign Enlistment Act, passed in March 1937.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

- ¹Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 234.
- ²King Diary, 28 October 1937.
- ³James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, 11, p. 51.
- ⁴Ibid.
- ⁵L.M. Gouin, "The French-Canadians, Their Past and Their Aspirations," World Currents and Canada's Course, ed., V.A. Anderson, (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1937), p. 122-125.
- ⁶F. H. Soward and others, Canada in World Affairs, (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 63.
- ⁷Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, 11, p. 134.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 140.
- ⁹Jean Bruchesi, "A French-Canadian View of Canadian Foreign Policy," Canada the Empire and the League, (Toronto, 1936), p. 146.
- ¹⁰Lita-Rose Betcherman, The Swastika and the Maple Leaf, (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975), p. 84.
- ¹¹Ottawa Citizen, 9 September 1935.
- ¹²James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, 11, p. 4.
- ¹³J. Murray Beck, Pendulum of Power: Canada's Federal Elections, (Scarborough, 1968), p. 206-222.
- ¹⁴Blair Neatby, Mackenzie King, p. 232.
- ¹⁵King Diary, 18 December 1936.
- ¹⁶Lapointe Papers, vol. 22, file #70, letter dated 23 October 1937.
- ¹⁷Ibid., letter dated 22 October 1936, from Vanier & Vanier, Avocats.
- ¹⁸L.R. Betcherman, The Swastika, p. 87.
- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 88.
- ²⁰Blair Neatby, Mackenzie King, p. 233.
- ²¹King Papers, J4 series, vol. 212, memorandum to the Prime Minister from O.D. Skelton dated 24 December 1936.

- ²²Blair Neatby, Mackenzie King, p. 233.
- ²³S, "Embryo of Fascism in Quebec," Foreign Affairs, (April, 1938), p. 455.
- ²⁴Victor Hoar, The Mac-Paps, p. 35.
- ²⁵L.R. Betcherman, The Swastika, p. 8.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 7.
- ²⁷Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, third edition, (Bucks: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd., 1977), p. 362.
- ²⁸Lapointe Papers, vol. 22, file #70, letter dated 1 February 1937.
- ²⁹Ibid., letter dated 31 January 1937.
- ³⁰Victor Hoar, The Mac-Paps, p. 35.
- ³¹Lapointe Papers, vol. 22, file #70, letter dated 8 February 1937, in French.
- ³²Blair Neatby, Mackenzie King, p. 235.
- ³³L.R. Betcherman, The Swastika, p. 98.
- ³⁴The Canadian Forum, editorial, December 1936, p. 23.
- ³⁵Montreal Le Devoir, 26 January 1937.
- ³⁶Lapointe Papers, vol. 49, file #31.
- ³⁷Canada, Department of External Affairs, file #265557, January-December 1937.
- ³⁸House of Commons, Debates, 29 January 1937.
- ³⁹C.P. Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 11, p. 279.

CHAPTER III

MACKENZIE KING AND THE CIVIL WAR

If I am right and public sentiment does favour the Loyalists aren't you politically making a mistake in not disavowing the actions of the Foreign Office?
Letter to King from his friend J.L. Counsell, April 1937

Franco's rebellion, due to its clandestine planning, took the world by surprise. Spain had been in a state of political turmoil for several years, but no one expected the General's legionnaires to burst from the Spanish skies in their borrowed Junkers on July 18th. It has already been discussed how the media initially perceived the bloody fratricide as another curious example of Latin temper, a logical next scene in the "Death of Europe" tragedy. It has also been shown how this interpretation changed as the skirmishes became full-scale battles, as other nations seemed inexorably drawn into the vortex, and as ideology became vital to the conflict. The Canadian Department of External Affairs also attempted to analyze the situation, and to formulate an official Canadian stance. Unlike the media, however, the government was in no hurry to pass judgement on the antagonists, but trod gingerly, never stepping into the mire without first feeling for firm ground. This became King's method throughout the civil war, and the Foreign Enlistment Act is a good example of that policy--move only when absolutely necessary, to a minimal degree, and only after exhaustive analysis of all elements involved.

Was the Foreign Enlistment Act indeed passed purely because it was the safest way out of a Liberal political dilemma, or was that only part of the reason? Could it not be that the Prime Minister encouraged it because it was in keeping with his personal sympathies? Due to their potential impact on the decision making process, King's own allegiances must be established before drawing concrete conclusions concerning the Canadian government and the Spanish Civil War.

The enigmatic Prime Minister produced one of the world's most comprehensive and voluminous diaries, but one that often presents more questions than answers. The references to King's personal allegiances are few, usually cryptic, and often rather stilted. Though consistent with the sentiments of a man who zealously separated his private and public lives, this never-the-less leaves the reader dissatisfied, skeptical, and suspicious that the daily entries were written with an eye toward possible future public consumption. Certain definite subjective trends do emerge, however, and when these are augmented by statements from the Prime Minister's personal correspondence and memoranda, it is possible to paint a reasonably accurate portrait of Mackenzie King's own sympathies in the Spanish conflict.

The diary repeatedly shows that King found all war abhorrent. Nor can there be any question that the Prime Minister believed strongly in democratic and federal systems. Indeed, one need only read brief passages from his Industry and Humanity to see the author's almost childlike reverence for liberalism and his undying faith in the inherent

positive potential of mankind. He had also, as Minister of Labour in the Laurier administration, seen himself as the champion of Canadian workers and of "those in humble circumstances." Though communism was anathema to King, he remained true to the spirit of liberalism, and tolerated red agitators because he felt sure that they would dig their own graves. Finally, though impressed by the trappings of Empire, the Prime Minister, a staunch Canadian nationalist, placed greater emphasis on sovereignty, independence, and national unity.

Conversely, Mackenzie King could also be positively impressed by less than liberal or democratic people. He visited Hitler and the Third Reich in June 1937, and returned impressed, his anxieties mollified by the "great calmness and moderation" of the Fuhrer.¹ In the memorandum on his meeting with the German Chancellor, he wrote:

I confess that the impression gained by this interview was a very favourable one. As I told Herr Hitler in the course of the interview, what he said was a relief to my mind because of the very positive manner in which he spoke of the determination of himself and his colleagues not to permit any resort to war.²

This was not likely a statement of pure naivety since it was common knowledge by June 1937 that the Third Reich had thousands of men and tons of war material engaged in Spain on behalf of General Franco. The memorandum's concluding remark--"[Hitler's] interest in Spain arises unquestionably out of his feelings and fears concerning the spread of communism"³--suggests that King could acquiesce when it came

to war on communism, as long as the battles were fought well beyond Canada's horizon.

As shown in chapter one, many Canadians viewed their Prime Minister in precisely this way, but it was an interpretation that may now be proven false. The Prime Minister could be and was accused of being an unprincipled and ruthless politician, but he cannot be branded as a fascist sympathizer. Furthermore, King's conscience would never have allowed him to support a group of reactionary generals attempting, through civil war, to usurp the power of a legally constituted and democratically elected government. This is verified conclusively by an examination of the personal correspondence between the Prime Minister and his close friend J.L. Counsell. Dismayed and obviously hurt by the personal diatribes against his Spanish policy, King wrote to his friend in April 1937:

I am at a loss to understand how you or anyone else could be of the opinion that my sympathies in the Spanish Civil War have been with Franco and the rebels. As a matter of fact, as the tragic event has continued month after month, I have become increasingly of the opinion which I have held from the outset, that only the gravest sense of oppression on the part of the rural and urban elements of the population alike could account for the determination and endurance they have shown throughout the entire struggle.

One of the Prime Minister's few close confidants to judge by the letter's salutation and the warm reply, Counsell answered in a manner that suggests an intimate knowledge of the Prime Minister's sentiments:

My dear Rex: Don't let us get mixed up in this Spanish situation--Our personal opinions have nothing to do with it. All that I have been trying to do is to impress you with the fact that the people in Canada and the U.S. are also behind the Loyalists in Spain to a far greater extent than we are perhaps aware of.⁵

Since King's private allegiance was with the loyalists, it may be concluded that the Foreign Enlistment Act was not encouraged because of any Prime Ministerial predilection for the rebels. This also holds true for the sympathies of Dr. O.D. Skelton, the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs. If anything, Skelton was a confirmed isolationist who believed that Canada's sovereign interests could be damaged by "irresponsible foreign adventuring."⁶ Referring to the Sudeten Crisis, he wrote: "we are the safest country in the world as long as we mind our own business."⁷ Though a confirmed isolationist, however, his personal views on Spain were very similar to those of the Prime Minister. He made this patently clear in a letter to Mackenzie King, written late in the Spanish Civil War:

Whatever mistakes were made by the anti-fascist forces in Spain in their first angry reprisals, they have shown a surprising growth in moderation, courage, unity, and effectiveness. I have followed the record of the Spanish government with surprise and increasing admiration. When their record is compared with that of most of the recent governments in France and England, with their endless muddling and lack of foresight, their cold-blooded concentration on their own immediate interests, there is a lot to be said for the conclusion that if the people of Canada really wanted to get into somebody's European war, they might choose Negrin's instead of Neville's.⁸

The Foreign Enlistment Act, which stood in opposition to these sentiments, was therefore introduced because of outside pressures. Quebec's role thus becomes increasingly obvious.

* * *

Early news filtering into the Department of External Affairs made the Canadian government aware of the gravity of the situation. Already by July 22, a scant four days after the rebellion broke out, the Prime Minister cabled the Canadian High Commissioner to London, Vincent Massey, for information on the safety of Canadians in Spain.⁹ Canada did not have an official representative in Madrid, so Massey had the difficult, but reasonably successful, task of seeking his answer through the British embassy. Few Canadians were in Spain at the time, but there were the inevitable tourists, and some vested interests run by Canadian businessmen. A Canadian company had, for example, organized the distribution of electricity in Catalonia, and much of its personnel was still there.¹⁰ King thought these people might need the protective wing of Britannia.

Once assured that Canadian citizens were in no immediate danger, the government could concentrate on analyzing the potential repercussions of the war itself. Unfortunately for King, it took a mere two weeks for the British Foreign Office to realize that its immediate assumptions about the war had been unfounded. The conflict was unfortunately much more than an extended palace coup. The telegram sent to King

on August 5 by the Secretary for the Dominions suggested ominous political and ideological ramifications, and was to help shift the Canadian government's orientation toward the war:

The struggle between military and government is becoming a fight between Fascism and Communism and there are signs that even if the struggle were to result in victory for Moderate Left Parties composing the government, these would be submerged by Anarcho-Syndicalists and Communists to whom they would have largely owed their victory.

The Liberal government was apparently slightly ahead of the media in its change of interpretation. After all, the Canadian press clung to the "national miscegenation" idea until mid-August (page 1⁵/₄). Thus the Prime Minister knew from early August 1936 that the Spanish Civil War was an ideological struggle. This was an unpleasant realization for a man who feared both the deteriorating situation in Europe, and the dynamism of ideas.

True to King's cautious foreign policy, the first action taken by the Department of External Affairs was to determine what Canada's closest allies were going to do about Spain. O.D. Skelton sent Massey a telegram on August 18, instructing the High Commissioner to discover Britain's position on: 1) arms and ammunition shipments; 2) enlistment of volunteers; 3) transmission of funds; and 4) propaganda.¹² This telegram, sent so early in the war, suggests the Canadian government's full awareness that Spain could become a political crusade for foreign nations and individuals alike, and that contingency plans for such an

eventuality had to be made. Whitehall's answer doubtlessly frustrated King. When finally sent on September 11, the message offered few guidelines for Canada to consider: arms exports would be prohibited, but the rules on enlistment were unclear in cases of civil war; and no action was contemplated regarding propaganda. Mention was not made concerning the transmission of funds.¹³

A day after dispatching the telegram to Britain, the government also decided "informally [to] consult Washington as to its views."¹⁴ The Canadian government was still trying to decide whether to consider the Spanish Civil War a purely internal or a general European affair.¹⁵ Obviously Ottawa hoped that the former was the case, but it must be assumed by August 19 that there were nagging fears that the latter was, in fact, a more accurate analysis of the situation. It is not known, however, whether Ottawa actually consulted Washington at this early date.

* * *

Personally sympathetic towards the republicans by mid-August, Mackenzie King knew that the Spanish Civil War was not merely an attempted coup d'état, but was quickly becoming an ideological battleground between right and left, fascism and democracy. It must now be established whether the Prime Minister and his advisors feared that the war posed a real threat to the peace and security of Canada in particular, and Europe in general. If indeed they did, it will illustrate the seriousness of the government's dilemma, and why it finally forced King into constructing a foreign policy that would deal with the issues.

Using hindsight, it could logically be argued that the Spanish Civil War was never a preview of the second world war, but rather a purely internal affair which Goering used to test the mettle of his fledgling Luftwaffe; which Mussolini used as a bombastic imperial adventure; Stalin promoted as a general European agitator; and which idealistic individuals used as their personal crusade. Indeed there is a degree of truth to this supposition, but it does not go far enough. The fact remains that in the early months in particular, the conflict seemed to build its own momentum, and to very nearly set the rest of Europe and its allies ablaze. Many influential and informed sources on both sides of the Atlantic certainly voiced this fear.

King held high level discussions on Spain with Churchill by mid-October, trying to discover what firm action England intended to take in the conflict.¹⁶ Britain's position was, after all, of vital concern to Canada. Though wishing to assert her new-found independence Canada was still the senior Dominion, feelings of loyalty toward Britain still existed, and there were definite moral obligations to consider. The Prime Minister seriously worried lest Canada be obliged to back Great Britain if England were to go to war over Spain. Nor was this a preposterous idea. By the early fall of 1936 Germany and Italy were pumping massive amounts of military aid to Franco's rebel forces, the Soviet Union supported the loyalists, and British property in Gibraltar had been inadvertently damaged more than once by overly enthusiastic rebel artillery men.¹⁷ If nothing else, the complete European alliance network was becoming involved, which as had been shown in 1914 could have disastrous consequences.

King learned that England hoped for a stalemate in the conflict. The British government believed that if neither side could gain the upper hand, reason would prevail and a truce be the natural result. Prime Minister Baldwin, however, realized that the only realistic way to achieve this was by closing the French-Spanish border. The stream of volunteers for the Republic, steady by September 1936, had to be dammed if there were to be any hope of keeping the Italians out of Franco's trenches.¹⁸ Léon Blum, the French Prime Minister, concurred. He was in an unenviable position, a republican sympathizer who for political and economic reason, believed that he could not afford to offer direct aid to the loyalists. He too was deeply concerned about the situation, as was obvious from Mackenzie King's analysis of their discussions: "Spain, therefore, is likely to remain a dangerous spot in Europe for some time to come."¹⁹ Ultimately it was Blum, vacillating and with the most to lose, who pushed hardest for the non-intervention meetings that were convened in September.²⁰

The Spanish situation was indeed grave, and threatened to get worse. Two of the top Canadian representatives in Europe, Walter Riddell with the League in Geneva, and High Commissioner Vincent Massey in London, both sent their Prime Minister pessimistic if not frightening analyses of the war. The former, conscious of the "good spanking" he had received as a result of his overly enthusiastic part in the Abyssinian crisis, took great care with his later reports to the government. This is certainly illustrated by the accuracy and meticulous research in the following memorandum sent on December 19th:

The appeal of Spain to the Council under Article XI of the Covenant has re-emphasized the danger of the Spanish Civil War developing into an international war. From the reports before the Non-Intervention Committee in London, the statements of the United Kingdom Members of Parliament who visited Spain, as well as from other sources, it is evident that the Civil struggle in Spain is rapidly becoming an international war of ideologies on Spanish soil. . . .I have it on the best authority that the Government of Italy are [sic] carrying on an active programme of recruitment. . . .The Italian Government undertakes to supply all such recruits for this service with unmarked uniforms, a cash gratuity of 3,000 lira and transportation via Spesia to the Spanish front. This campaign of recruitment is meeting with very considerable success. While my informant could not give definite figures he considered that some thousands had already left for Spain. It is quite possible that similar methods are being used in Germany in recruiting the large numbers of Germans which are finding their way into Franco's armies.²¹

Nor was Riddell being melodramatic. It can be assumed that the author had become rather sensitive to committing or implicating himself politically, and that he therefore avoided exaggerating the seriousness of the conflict. From London Vincent Massey also warned King of the world-wide dangers brewing within Spain, and amplified his concern by sending the message of gloom on Christmas day 1936:

It is, of course, possible to exaggerate the gravity of the Spanish situation, but it would be a far greater error to under-estimate its seriousness. . . .it would be folly not to recognise that the Spanish situation, far from improving, has become more dangerous during the past few weeks, so far as the possibility of international repercussions are concerned. . . . Germany and Italy have now made clear that they will not permit the establishment of what they call a Soviet state in Spain and Russia has made it

equally clear that she will do what she can to bring about such an establishment. As the position of both sides hardens, the lines of retreat by the three nations who have taken positions are beginning to close. It is this development which, in my opinion, constitutes the gravest threat to European²² peace arising out of the Spanish Civil War.

It may be concluded that the Liberal government saw the Spanish Civil War as a direct threat to world peace and stability.

* * *

It is now necessary to examine Mackenzie King's foreign policy, to look at the international conditions that restricted its form, and more importantly, to determine why the Prime Minister perceived his foreign policy as an extension of the internal Canadian socio-political situation. This will hopefully illustrate the vital role played by Quebec, and show that King's Foreign Enlistment Act, though it might have appeared politically suicidal and morally bankrupt, in fact showed shrewd judgement, expediently solving a potentially destructive situation.

As in so many other aspects of his foreign policy, Mackenzie King initially succeed in keeping the government out of controversies over the Spanish question. Though Canadian newspapers headlined events in Spain every day for the first three months of the war, they barely mentioned Canadian official reaction. By not committing his government to any particular foreign policy, King carefully deferred to the feelings of the majority of Canadians, who did not want Canada actively

involved in a potential powder keg in southern Europe. No doubt the Liberals had learned some embarrassing lessons in the Riddell affair, and were extremely careful not to declare themselves before absolutely necessary.

Harold Nicolson, author of Curzon: The Last Phase, described the philosophy of a safe foreign policy as follows:

The essence of good foreign policy is certitude [and though] an uncertain policy is always bad, on the other hand, parliamentary press and opposition is less likely to concentrate against an elastic foreign policy than against one which is precise.²³

This definition aptly describes Mackenzie King's careful course once he returned to power in the autumn of 1935. As the Prime Minister noted in his diary:

I would well attribute my being Prime Minister of Canada, after 17 years of leadership of the party, to the fact that I had made as few speeches as possible. . . . I had never suffered from anything I had not said; most public men got into difficulties over what they said.²⁴

The Prime Minister maintained this dodging position whenever possible, and naturally earned the wrath of the Opposition for it. J.S. Woodsworth, leader of the C.C.F., repeatedly threw up his hands in frustration and once remarked with exasperation: "After listening carefully to what the Prime Minister said, I confess I am still at a loss to know just what our

foreign policy is."²⁵ The Liberals in Ottawa argued that Canadian foreign policy need only be precise when the pressure of events demanded it. Otherwise the Department of External Affairs would seek refuge in "complacent, unctuous and empty rectitude."²⁶ Elasticity was the watchword of the day.

King realized that Canada, due to its geographical position, was not obliged to take any foreign policy stance with regard to Europe:

Canada is not exposed to direct and imminent danger of attack and conquest by any country. We are fortunate both in our neighbours and in our lack of neighbours. . . one has only to be in any European country a day to realize how relatively fortunate a position₂₇ it is, and what folly it would be to throw it away.

Thus it could be suggested that Canada's natural choice would have been a declaration of neutrality, but the Prime Minister realized that such a policy would only garner complete support in Quebec, and would likely alienate his government from the imperialists and the many Canadians who felt at least token allegiance to Great Britain. A policy of non-commitment, on the other hand, offered Canada and the King government their best chance for survival. The Prime Minister described his foreign policy as follows:

There are no commitments at the present time, so far as Canada is concerned, for Canada to participate in any war, nor are there any commitments to remain neutral. But the position of this government is that with respect to neutrality or participation, Parliament will decide.²⁸

Deeply aware of the fickle nature of the Canadian electorate, Mackenzie King knew that he would have to pay homage to its wishes if he were to remain in power and keep the country united. The conservative Montreal Gazette exemplified his fears when it warned the government that "neither King nor anybody else in his position will decide this country's course in any crisis. Public opinion does that."²⁹ Public opinion had to be one of King's paramount policy considerations.

By early autumn 1936 the majority of Canadians were frankly nervous about the European situation, and certainly did not wish to become embroiled in another war. So when, on September 26 1936, two weeks after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, King spoke to the League of Nations in Geneva, he carefully stated that:

Canada does not propose to be dragged into a war which she has no interest, and over the origin of which she has no responsibility or control through any automatic obligation. This is simple doctrine and sensible.

This policy paid dividends in the form of editorials like the one that appeared in the independent conservative Ottawa Journal: "Mr. King spoke, we think, for the vast majority of Canadians when he said emphasis on the League's policies should be placed upon conciliation rather than coercion."³¹ It would have been political suicide had King divided public opinion even farther by committing Canada to a precise foreign policy that might involve the country in a European war. The Prime Minister paid heed to his own analysis that "there was in Canada a great dread lest the country should be committed at the [1937] Imperial

Conference to some obligation arising out of the European situation."³² King's guiding principle in the formulation of Canadian foreign policy was therefore the maintenance of his power and Canadian unity. The Prime Minister achieved this by remaining uninvolved, and by not committing Canada to any controversial and apparently useless foreign policy ventures.

As a former colony and as the senior Dominion, Canada had a special relationship with Great Britain. The country was given its independence by the Statute of Westminster in 1931, but many of the old obligations and feelings of fealty remained. This was the crux of the problem, for though Canada could not fail to acknowledge Great Britain's leadership, the Prime Minister's feelings of independence repeatedly led him in an opposite direction. Britain's determined non-intervention stance in the Spanish Civil War became one of the first tests of the new relationship between the two, a baptism by fire, as it were, for the infant Department of External Affairs.

Mackenzie King also had personal feelings of ambivalence toward Canada's former motherland. On the one hand, Great Britain, with her advanced culture and tradition of democracy, represented all those qualities King found worth emulating, while on the other, the country also stood for stifling imperialism and attachments. Furthermore, the Prime Minister was frankly suspicious of Westminster's intentions. Canada in 1936 acted like a rebellious adolescent who had to affirm its independence but felt unsure of the proper direction. Big Brother to

the south was consulted and sought out, but as a voice of support rather than as a mate. The Spanish Civil War merely exacerbated this oedipal dilemma.

As the war progressed, the hands-off policy of Westminster allowed King to follow the British line without making an official commitment to that effect. Thus he garnered the support of Quebec, the Canadian imperialists, and maintained that of the more independently minded Canadians. An advocate of peace and negotiation, King lauded the government of Great Britain for its policy toward Spain. When in January 1937 Westminster outlawed recruiting of her nationals for the Spanish crusade, King applauded the action, suggesting that it was largely because of Britain's stand that the war had not spread across the Pyrenees and into the rest of Europe.³³ This careful statement made the Prime Minister appear as a man of peace, and kept Canada as a nation uninvolved. The Toronto Globe and Mail vindicated King's stance in a January 12 editorial which expressed the sentiments of many Canadians:

Great Britain's decisive action to prevent her nationals fighting in Spain is but further evidence of her ceaseless efforts to isolate the revolution and prevent the disaster of international war.³⁴

Still more flattering, another editorial ended: "[it is impossible to imagine what would have happened] had it not been for Great Britain's backstage leadership."³⁵ There is no doubt that Mackenzie King genuinely advocated peace, but it was fortuitous that in the early months of the war, his foreign policy aspirations, and those of the majority of the

electorate, were upheld by unofficial support of Great Britain's stance toward Spain. The new Department of External Affairs therefore passed its first tests almost by default, any uncertainty naturally resolving itself into the non-commitment policy. King had avoided aggravating the schism between English Canada and Quebec, was as popular as ever, Canadian independence remained intact, and the country still united. As has been discussed, however, sentiments changed, and by early 1937 this maneouvering room had been irrevocably eroded by the polarization of Canadian public opinion over the Spanish Civil War. Had the conflict not become an emotional crusade for so many Canadians, King and the Ottawa Liberals could have continued to avoid a Canadian commitment of any kind.

Luck also came to play on the government's side. Early in August, just when it appeared that the incident of the murdered Germans would create a major crisis in Spain (page 18), and that Britain would have to declare her allegiance, tempers cooled. Hitler called off the German navy after receiving his desired apology from republican authorities; Il Duce, with the alacrity of a consummate actor, promised not to interfere in Spain; Blum, the French Premier, believed Mussolini, and decided to push for a general non-intervention pact; and British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin could breathe a sigh of relief. The Civil War was again officially blockaded behind the shelter of the Pyrenees which so so well confined the dust and tragedy of the conflict.

The temporary relaxation of tensions between the European nations allowed Mackenzie King to spend the autumn of 1936 weighing Canadian public opinion and the crisis in Spain. This lull finally broke down in January 1937 as more and more Canadians involved themselves in the war. As discussed, English Canada tended to offer the republicans material and manpower assistance, while Quebec's sympathies were with the rebels. King realized that his career and Canadian unity depended on his ability to mediate between these diametrically opposed allegiances. The government's foreign policies therefore came under scrutiny, with eventual alteration to accommodate the Foreign Enlistment Act. Spain not only played a much greater part in Canadian internal politics than the Prime Minister would have desired, but pushed the government from its perch on the fence of international relations.

As shown previously, emotions about Spain, whether pro or anti-republican, became very strong by January 1937. Newspaper readers avidly followed the deeds of the renowned Canadian surgeon Dr. Norman Bethune, as he raced from battle to bloody battle, fighting to keep wounded republican soldiers alive;³⁶ trade unions championed the cause of the Spanish left; aid was collected; and Canadian men went to the Iberian Peninsula to fight side by side with Spanish workers against what they saw as the tyranny of fascism. The government could not remain blithely uncommitted when, on the one hand, *ONE CHURCH IN* Quebec had a fresco~~ff~~ of Mussolini on one of its church walls, while on the other, the Trade and Labour Congress of Canada passed resolutions like the following:

This congress wishes to express to the workers of Spain our appreciation of their splendid fight in defence of their liberties. . . [and] places itself further on record in the interest of national solidarity as expressing to the Spanish workers our sincere interest in their struggle and extends to them our whole hearted support in the fight for justice, freedom and peace and our hopes for an early and victorious finish.³⁷

The "Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy" had been founded, and actively solicited assistance for the republicans through mail drives and advertisements in Canadian magazines.³⁸ Whether positively or negatively, the Spanish Civil War had finally become an international crusade. Nor was it difficult to be swept up by the enthusiasm. The usually conservative Toronto Globe and Mail, in a full-page headline story, spoke of "Volunteers pouring through France [to] rush to the aid of the Loyalists. . . and entraining for Barcelona to don the Loyalist uniform."³⁹ In another headline article entitled "50,000 Foreigners on Spanish Front," the Globe wrote that "from a conflict over purely domestic issues, the fight has turned into a general war, fought on Spanish territory, over the fundamental issues of fascism versus communism."⁴⁰ For the first time the paper also mentioned Canadian Volunteers:

No longer is the fact hidden or denied that. . . even Canadians are engaged in a war which ostensibly concerns none but Spaniards. . . One's first thought is that they are inexperienced youths grown up since the catastrophe of 1914-1918 who still have delusions concerning the glamour and splendor of war.⁴¹

It would have been expedient for Canada to step officially aside from Spain if the population were in total agreement, but with one highly vocal group openly siding with the republicans, and another calling for isolation and friendship with Franco, the resulting divided opinions were bound to reach Parliament Hill. Luckily for King, the initial questions on the recruitment of volunteers were sufficiently muted to allow the Prime Minister to answer that his government would make no decision either way, but that "the question would continue to be given consideration."⁴² As passions increasingly flared up, however, the temperature in the House rose correspondingly. While some M.P.'s simply wanted to know why the government allowed Canadians to fight in a war on another continent, others, mainly from Quebec, made the serious accusation that Canadians were lured to Spain by communist agitators surreptitiously working within Canada. Nor, as the Prime Minister was aware, was the accusation idle. The R.C.M.P. had furnished King with a secret report proving conclusively that the Communist Party of Canada had recruited at least twenty volunteers from Port Arthur, twenty from the west, and "seven or eight" from Quebec.⁴³

Whether one supported or opposed the volunteers, the fact remained that questions had reached parliament, which in turn forced the King government to take a stand. Thus on January 29, when again asked for its position regarding recruitment, the government hopped

off the fence, declaring that "legislation banning recruitment is coming in the near future."⁴⁴

Mackenzie King had avoided commitment as long as possible, but by late January had simply run out of time. Nor did the powerful Quebec voice alone clamour for a ban on recruitment. The Foreign Office in London, having imposed its own updated version of the Foreign Enlistment Act, pressured Ottawa to follow suit. England was almost in sight of the Spanish conflict and, as discussed previously, was very nervous about its potential consequences. Though there is no evidence to show that it helped sway King, Malcolm MacDonald's Boxing Day telegram to the Prime Minister was no doubt an attempt by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to cajole Canada into toeing the imperial line:

It is therefore vital if serious international complications are to be avoided, that steps should be taken without further delay to put a stop to the increasing flow of foreign nationals in Spain.⁴⁵

Though rather negative, MacDonald's request was reasonable. Having nationals from all over the world fighting on either side in the Spanish Civil War was an exceedingly dangerous situation. Considering their geographical location, it was small wonder that the democratic European nations did almost anything to ease the danger, even if the morality of their actions could be questioned. Britain logically saw the solution as a cordon sanitaire around the Iberian Peninsula. Many believed that if foreign men and equipment could not

enter Spain, the civil war would not only lose its international flavour, but would peter out from a lack of supplies. Those nations who still believed that the German and Italian leaders could be trusted therefore practiced considerable restraint, and encouraged dialogue until Spain could be effectively quarantined. Their naïvety was really quite astounding. The Non-Intervention Committee decided that the British and French navies would patrol Atlantic Spain while the Germans and Italians would seal off the Mediterranean area. Baldwin and Blum, both weak men and extremely nervous about the general European situation, made every effort to implement their half of the bargain, even with the increasing hostility between Britain and the rebels. The dictators, rather than turning back all ships approaching Spain, methodically ignored those supplying Franco's lines with men and equipment, while accosting all others. Were it not for the secret complicity and sympathy of the French border guards, new loyalist volunteers would have been hard pressed to reach the republican lines.

Up until recently, most historians suggested that appeasement reached its blackest point over the Sudetenland crisis, but it has since been proven that Chamberlain had few choices by 1938. Britain's appeasement in the Spanish Civil War, of which its own Foreign Enlistment Act was an integral part, is less easy to excuse. The free world had manoeuvring room in early 1937, and could have challenged the German and Italian adventures. Denying republican Spain while aware that the fascists actively aided Franco, was indeed a very shortsighted, and ultimately costly, bit of appeasement.

Canada's official Spanish policies are even more difficult to excuse. Mackenzie King was asked to join the twenty-seven member Non-Intervention Committee, but, true to his policy of non-commitment, had declined the invitation.⁴⁷ The Canadian version of the Foreign Enlistment Act was passed, not to ensure the survival of the country, but rather, as an added guarantee for the continued life of the Liberal government. Banning recruitment was the best way of keeping Canadians "out of the limelight" of international trouble spots, of making the Prime Minister appear as a man of peace, and most importantly, of retaining the French Canadian vote. Anti-republicanism from within French Canada was simply louder, more vociferous, and carried far more "political clout" than the pro-loyalist voice from the rest of the country. Had the Act not passed, King could have lost some of the fifty-five Liberal seats from Quebec plus the allegiance of the pro-British, the isolationists, and pacifists. The successful passage of the Bill demonstrated how conscious the Prime Minister was of the importance of public opinion, and is a good example of his expeditious handling of a potential internal rift.

* * *

Any Canadian wishing to fight in Spain had first to secure a valid Canadian passport. Though it took time, money, and a voucher's signature, getting the document actually posed few problems for the potential volunteer.⁴⁸ ^{ORDER-IN-COUNCIL} The ~~Foreign Enlistment Act~~ only authorized a stamp in each new passport invalidating it for travel to Spain or the Balearic Islands. The simple beauty of this, from Ottawa's point of

view, was that the Act obviously only had relevance if one were actually standing at the Spanish frontier, far removed from any Canadian jurisdiction. A volunteer knew he would have to enter Spain illegally, and could therefore not turn to his government if he got into trouble.⁴⁹

Applications for passports could only be refused with difficulty since recruits merely had to say that they wished to visit England, France, or any other nation save Spain.⁵⁰ Forty suspicious passport applications from western Canada were under scrutiny in January 1937, but Laurent Beaudry, Assistant Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, eventually had to grant them as there was no way of proving that the men were in fact on their way to the republican trenches.⁵¹ The Act was therefore very shrewd indeed. It allowed an easy route for those idealists who insisted on going to Spain, while at the same time satisfying that part of the Canadian electorate which wanted Ottawa to clamp down on "communistic recruiting." The fact that seven-hundred men, well over half of the twelve-hundred man contingent, entered Spain after the Act was passed and their passports had been stamped with the new travel restrictions, shows how easy it was for Canadian volunteers to spring to the aid of the loyalists.

Passing the Foreign Enlistment Act was not simply a matter of drafting a Bill and having it enacted through parliament. Canada already had an Enlistment Act--the United Kingdom Foreign Enlistment Act of 1870.⁵³ Not only was this legislation badly outdated, it did not treat civil wars, and, being British, also flew in the face of

Canadian sovereignty. By giving Canada its own Act, King would in essence be cutting into what remained of the umbilical cord linking Canada to Great Britain. In keeping with his suspicions of England and his desire for an autonomous foreign policy, however, the Prime Minister thought independence the better course, and had his Justice Minister, Ernest Lapointe, introduce the Canadian version of the Act. It passed first reading on February 18 1937,⁵⁴ and after a three hour debate, passed third and final reading the following day.⁵⁵ Though there had been little parliamentary opposition to it, the C.C.F. urged a provision making the Act apply to insurgent forces in a friendly state, thus making that party's aversion to Franco's rebel forces rather obvious.⁵⁶

The new Act not only prohibited military assistance to the enemies of a friendly state, but authorized the government by Order in Council to apply it "with necessary modifications to any case in which there is a state of armed conflict civil or otherwise, either within a foreign country or between foreign countries."⁵⁷ One small allowance was made for moral and altruistic principles. Passports would be issued to people going to Spain on humanitarian grounds under the control of the Red Cross "or other recognized Canadian humanitarian society."⁵⁸

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

- ¹James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, p. 231.
- ²Ibid.
- ³Ibid.
- ⁴King Papers, J2 series, vol. 342, S-500.
- ⁵Ibid.
- ⁶J.L. Granatstein, and R. Bothwell, "A self-Evident National Duty," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, vol. 3-4, 1974-76, p. 213.
- ⁷External Affairs Records, vol. 2, file 66-2, "Central European Situation."
- ⁸King Papers, J4 series, vol. 212.
- ⁹Ibid., vol. 223, document #192041.
- ¹⁰Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, p. 335.
- ¹¹King Papers, J1 series, vol. 227.
- ¹²J.A. Munro, ed., Documents, p. 970.
- ¹³King Papers, vol. 230, document #197053.
- ¹⁴J.A. Munro, Documents, p. 971.
- ¹⁵Ibid.
- ¹⁶King Diary, 21 October 1936.
- ¹⁷Globe and Mail, 5 January 1937, p. 1.
- ¹⁸J.A. Munro, Documents, p. 983.
- ¹⁹King Diary, 13 October 1936.
- ²⁰Victor Hoar, The Mac-Paps, p. 13.
- ²¹King Papers, vol. 225, document #193880.
- ²²Ibid., vol. 224, document #192304.
- ²³Harold Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, (Toronto: Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 394-5.

- ²⁴King Diary, 1 December 1936.
- ²⁵House of Commons, Debates, 24 May 1938.
- ²⁶H. Nicolson, Curzon, p. 394-5
- ²⁷House of Commons, Debates, 18 June 1936.
- ²⁸Globe and Mail, 26 January 1937.
- ²⁹Montreal Gazette, 30 September 1936.
- ³⁰Ottawa Journal, 30 September 1936.
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²C. Barnett, The Collapse of British Power, (London: Eyre Methuen, 1970), p. 218-227.
- ³³J.A. Munro, Documents, p. 973.
- ³⁴Globe and Mail, 12 January 1937, p. 6.
- ³⁵Ibid., 11 January 1937, p. 6.
- ³⁶see New Frontiers autumn 1936 editions for information on Dr. Bethune's exploits.
- ³⁷New Frontiers, vol. 1, #8, December 1936, p. 13.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 4.
- ³⁹Globe and Mail, 7 January 1937, p. 1.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 8 January 1937, p. 1.
- ⁴¹Ibid.
- ⁴²House of Commons, Debates, 19 January 1937.
- ⁴³King Papers, J4 series, vol. 212.
The letter contained the following statement: "The Mounted Police have just furnished us with a report on recruiting by the Communist Party of volunteers for service in Spain." Pencilled in the margin was: "The Mounted Police never report on the actions of the other side."
- ⁴⁴House of Commons, Debates, 29 January 1937.
- ⁴⁵King Papers, J4 series, vol. 212.

⁴⁶Globe and Mail, 5 January 1937, p. 1.

⁴⁷Victor Hoar, The Mac-Paps, p. 13.

⁴⁸interview with former Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion member, John Johnston, Vancouver, November 1981.
According to Mr. Johnston, the volunteers left procurement of all documentation in the hands of the recruiters who seem to have had little difficulty obtaining passports. This is substantiated by other recruits.

⁴⁹Those Canadian volunteers who were still in Spain when Franco's victory was assured sent repeated letters for help to the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa. The Department answered that nothing would be done except in the case of minors. This response, though perfectly justifiable, seems rather harsh when it is considered that the safety of the foreign nationals who had fought for the Republic was far from assured. Incidents of brutality were common in nationalist jails, and a Canadian passport would not exempt a volunteer from torture or death.

⁵⁰a popular excuse for travelling to Europe was to see the world exhibition in Paris.

⁵¹J.A. Munro, Documents, p. 974.

⁵²Victor Hoar, The Mac-Paps, p. 14.

⁵³J.A. Munro, Documents, p. 973.

⁵⁴House of Commons, Debates, 18 February 1937.

⁵⁵Ibid., 19 March 1937.

⁵⁶Winnipeg Free Press, 20 March 1937, p. 5.

⁵⁷Canada, Statutes, 1937, Geo VI, c. 32, p. 163.

⁵⁸J.A. Munro, Documents, p. 980.
As Dr. Bethune was sent to Spain by the "Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy," and not by a recognized "humanitarian society," it is unlikely that he would have qualified under the new Act.

CONCLUSION

Most political leaders, whatever their inspiration, strive for power, which once attained, they do the utmost to consolidate. Mackenzie King, who was Prime Minister longer than any other in the history of the British Empire, was no exception. As a result of his impressive record, the political and social lives of the enigmatic King are scrutinized to this day by historians trying to discover the key to his success. It is popularly held that his amazing political longevity was partly the result of a relentless need to please certain ancestors or deceased men who had made a lasting impression on him, or that the Prime Minister tended to be just plain lucky, that situations often resolved themselves before they could seriously hurt him. Though these interpretations have some merit, the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1937 shows them to be highly inadequate.

Spiritualism and luck did play a part in King's long career, but they were secondary or incidental. The Prime Minister owed most of his success to his own shrewd, and often ruthless judgement. An astute politician, he never reacted more than necessary, and therefore rarely had the unenviable task of retracting a policy or statement. Above all, he was highly attuned to public opinion, and knew that he courted disaster were he to go against the wishes of the electorate. The Spanish Civil War had exacerbated the traditional differing allegiances of English and French Canada, but King, concerned with the deepening divisions,

successfully eased them by introducing legislation that satisfied as many as possible while keeping his government in power.

Suggesting that the polarized Canadian allegiances in the Spanish Civil War would have toppled the government had King not acted would be an exaggeration. The Prime Minister realized, however, that the conflict in Spain did have tremendous emotional appeal, and that it would intensify the disunity in Canada if steps were not taken to ^e diffuse the situation. More importantly, he realized that his government could be caught in the middle if it did not take some form of concrete stand. The dilemma was how to satisfy French Canada without further antagonizing the rest of the country, and vice versa.

King's answer, the Foreign Enlistment Act, shows him to have been an astute and shrewd politician. He waited until the situation was thoroughly analyzed, moved only when circumstances dictated, and then passed legislation strong enough to placate his allies yet sufficiently weak to reduce his alienation from the rest. The Quebec electorate simply had to receive special attention as it was the more vocal and provided the federal Liberals with thirty-two percent of their seats (Beck, page 220-221). King realized that the Act would lose him few votes, whereas no action or legislation in favour of the Spanish Republic would be very dangerous considering the reactionary mood in Quebec.

It could perhaps be suggested that the Foreign Enlistment Act was passed because King genuinely wanted to contribute to world

peace. There is, on the one hand, no doubt that he was a peace-loving man, but there is no evidence, on the other, to suggest that the Act was introduced out of altruism or moral principles. The Prime Minister was, after all, sympathetic to the loyalists, found fascism abhorrent, and certainly did not approve of naked aggression against a legally constituted democracy. Furthermore, the Act was not enforced to any strong degree, as the Canadian government could (and subsequently did) disclaim any responsibility for the illegal adventuring of idealistic citizens. Finally, and perhaps most simply, no document has been found in which King defends the Act as an instrument of peace. Thus it was passed, not out of any moral conviction, but as a politically expedient solution to a small but nagging dilemma.

APPENDIX I

1 GEORGE VI.

CHAP. 32.

An Act respecting Foreign Enlistment.

[Assented to 10th April, 1937.]

HIS Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:—

1. This Act may be cited as *The Foreign Enlistment Act*, Short title. 1937.

2. In this Act, and in any regulation or order made hereunder, unless the context otherwise requires:—

- (a) "Within Canada" includes Canadian waters as defined for the purposes of the *Customs Act*; "Within Canada". R.S. c. 42.
- (b) "Armed forces" includes military, naval and air forces or services, combatant or non-combatant, but shall not include surgical, medical, nursing and other services engaged solely in humanitarian work and which are under the control or supervision of the Canadian Red Cross or other recognized Canadian humanitarian society; "Armed forces".
- (c) "Conveyance" includes ships, vessels, aircraft, trains, and motor and other vehicles; "Conveyance".
- (d) "Illegally enlisted person" means a person who has accepted or agreed to accept any commission or engagement, or who is about to quit Canada with intent to accept any commission or engagement, or who has been induced to go on board a conveyance under a misapprehension or false representation of the service in which such person is to be engaged with the intention or in order that such person may accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement contrary to the provisions of this Act; "Illegally enlisted person".
- (e) "Equips" in relation to a ship, includes the furnishing of anything which is used for the purpose of fitting "Equips".

- or adapting the ship for the sea, or for naval service, and all words relating to equipment shall be construed accordingly;
- "Foreign State". (f) "Foreign State" includes any foreign prince, colony, province or part of any province or people, or any person or persons exercising or assuming to exercise the powers of government in or over any foreign country, colony, province, or part of any province or people.
- Offence to enlist with a foreign state at war with a friendly state. 3. If any person, being a Canadian National, within or without Canada, voluntarily accepts or agrees to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly foreign state, or, whether a Canadian National or not, within Canada, induces any other person to accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in any such armed forces, such persons shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.
- Offers inducement. 4. If any person, being a Canadian National, quits or goes on board any conveyance with a view of quitting Canada with intent to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly foreign state, or, whether a Canadian National or not, within Canada, induces any other person to quit or go on board any conveyance with a view of quitting Canada, with a like intent, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.
- Offence to induce a person to enlist and quit Canada by misrepresentation. 5. If any person induces any other person to quit Canada, or to go on board any conveyance within Canada under a misrepresentation or false representation of the service in which such person is to be engaged, with the intent or in order that such person may accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with a friendly state, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.
- Owner of conveyance may be guilty of an offence. 6. (1) If the person having the control or direction of, or being the owner of any conveyance, knowingly either takes on board or engages to take on board or has on board such conveyance, within Canada, any illegally enlisted person, the person having such control or direction of, or being the owner of any such conveyance, shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.
- Detaining conveyance. (2) Such conveyance shall be detained until the trial or conviction of such person or owner and until all fines or penalties imposed on such person or owner have been paid or security approved by the Court having jurisdiction in the matter has been given for the payment thereof.

1937.

Foreign Enlistment Act.

Chap. 32.

3

7. If any person, within Canada, does any of the following acts, that is to say, Offences.

(a) builds or agrees to build or causes to be built, any ship with intent or knowledge, or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; or Builds ship.

(b) issues or delivers any commission for any ship with intent or knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; or Commissions ship.

(c) equips any ship with intent or knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; or Equips ship.

(d) despatches or causes or allows to be despatched, any ship, with intent or knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the same shall or will be employed in or by the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state; Despatches ships.

such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Provided that a person building, causing to be built, or equipping a ship in any of the cases aforesaid, in pursuance of a contract made before the commencement of such war as aforesaid, shall not be deemed to have committed an offence under this Act, if, forthwith, upon a proclamation of neutrality or any other proclamation notifying or bringing into operation the provisions of this Act, he gives notice to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that he is so building, causing to be built, or equipping, such ship, and furnishes such particulars of the contract and of any matters relating to or done, or to be done under the contract, as may be required by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and, if he give such security and takes and permits to be taken such other measures, if any, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs may prescribe for insuring that such ship shall not be despatched, delivered or removed, or otherwise dealt with, without the permission in writing of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, until the termination of such war as aforesaid. Proviso.

8. When any ship is built by order of or on behalf of any foreign state, when at war with a friendly state, or is delivered to or to the order of such foreign state, or to any person who to the knowledge of the person building is an agent of such foreign state, or is paid for by such foreign state or such agent, and is employed in or by the armed forces of such foreign state, such ship shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to have been built with a view Ships employed by armed forces of foreign state deemed to have been built for such purpose.

to being so employed, and the burden shall lie on the builder of such ship of proving that he did not know that the ship was intended to be so employed in or by the armed forces of such foreign state.

Arming or
equipping
ships for
foreign state
at war.

9. If any person within Canada, by any addition to or substitution in the armament or equipment, increases or augments, or procures to be increased or augmented, or is knowingly concerned in increasing or augmenting the war-like force of any ship, which at the time of its being within Canada was a ship in or of the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly state, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

Offence.

Outfitting
expedition
against
friendly state.
Offence.

10. If any person, within Canada, prepares or fits out any military, naval or air expedition, to proceed against the dominions of any friendly state, such person shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.

Recruiting.

11. If any person, within Canada, recruits or otherwise induces any person or body of persons to enlist or to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state or other armed forces operating in such state, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act: Provided, however, that the provisions of this section shall not apply to the action of foreign consular or diplomatic officers or agents in enlisting persons who are nationals of the countries which they represent, and who are not Canadian Nationals, in conformity with the regulations of the Governor in Council.

Offence.

Proviso.
Not
applicable to
consular or
diplomatic
officers.

Prize of war.

12. If any ship, goods, or merchandise, captured as prize of war within Canada in violation of Canadian neutrality, or captured by any ship which may have been built, equipped, commissioned or despatched, or the force of which may have been augmented, contrary to the provisions of this Act, are brought within Canada by the captor, or by any agent of the captor, or by any person having come into possession thereof with a knowledge that the same was prize of war so captured as aforesaid, it shall be lawful for the original owner of such prize or his agent, or for any person authorized in that behalf by the government of the Foreign State to which such owner belongs, or in which the ship captured as aforesaid may have been duly registered, to make application to the Exchequer Court of Canada for seizure and detention of such prize, and the Court shall, on due proof of the facts, order such prize to be restored.

Application
to Court
for restoration
of prize.

13. Every order referred to in the preceding section shall be executed and carried into effect in the same manner, and subject to the same right of appeal, as in case of any order made in the exercise of the ordinary jurisdiction of such court; and in the meantime, and until a final order has been made, on such application the court shall have power to make all such provisional and other orders as to the care or custody of such captured ship, goods, or merchandise, and (if the same be of perishable nature, or incurring risk of deterioration) for the sale thereof, and with respect to the deposit or investment of the proceeds of any such sale, as may be made by such court in the exercise of its ordinary jurisdiction.

Execution of
Court or
Appeal.

14. Any person, who is guilty of an offence against this Act shall be deemed to be guilty of an indictable offence, and shall be punishable by fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour, or by both fine and imprisonment; but such offence may, instead of being prosecuted as an indictable offence, be prosecuted summarily in manner provided by Part XV of the *Criminal Code*, and if so prosecuted, such offence shall be punishable by fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding twelve months, with or without hard labour, or by both fine and imprisonment.

Penalties.
Indictable
offence.

R.S. c. 36.
Summary
conviction.

15. (1) Any ship in respect of which an offence under section seven of this Act has been committed and the equipment thereof, shall be forfeited to His Majesty.

Offending
ship
forfeited to
His Majesty.

(2) Any conveyance and the equipment thereof and all arms, ammunition and implements of war used in or forming part of an expedition in respect of which an offence has been committed under the provisions of section ten of this Act, shall be forfeited to His Majesty.

Conveyance,
arms, etc.,
part of
expedition
forfeited.

16. For the purpose of giving jurisdiction in criminal proceedings under this Act, every offence shall be deemed to have been committed, every cause or complaint to have arisen either in the place in which the same was committed or arose, or in any place in which the offender or person complained against may be.

Locus of
jurisdiction.

17. Subject to the provisions of this Act, criminal proceedings arising hereunder shall be subject to and governed by the *Criminal Code*.

Proceedings
governed by
Code.
R.S. c. 36.

18. All proceedings for forfeiture of conveyances, goods or merchandise, under the provisions of this Act, may be taken in the Exchequer Court of Canada, or in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Process for
forfeiture.
Courts with
jurisdiction.

Orders in
Council.
Regulations.

19. (1) The Governor in Council may, from time to time, by order or regulation, provide for any or all of the following matters:—

- (a) the application of the provisions of this Act, with necessary modifications, to any case in which there is a state of armed conflict, civil or otherwise, either within a foreign country or between foreign countries;
- (b) the seizure, detention and disposition of conveyances, goods and merchandise;
- (c) the requirement of the consent of an authority or authorities to prosecutions, seizures, detentions and forfeiture proceedings;
- (d) the designation of officers or authorities who may execute any of the provisions of this Act;
- (e) the issue, restriction, cancellation and impounding of passports, whether within Canada or elsewhere, to the extent to which such action is deemed by him to be necessary or expedient for carrying out the general purposes of this Act.

Orders and
regulations
to be
published in
Gazette.

(2) Such orders and regulations shall be published in the *Canada Gazette*, and shall take effect from the date of such publication or from the date specified for such purpose in such order or regulation, and shall have the same force and effect as if enacted herein.

Repeal.

20. The Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, chapter ninety of the Statutes of 1870 (33 & 34 Victoria) the short title of which is The Foreign Enlistment Act 1870, is hereby repealed in so far as it is part of the law of Canada.

APPENDIX II

Order in Council

P.C. 1915

August 6, 1937

WHEREAS under Section 19(1)(e) of "The Foreign Enlistment Act, 1937", it is provided that the Governor in Council may from time to time, by order or regulation, provide for the issue, restriction, cancellation and impounding of passports, whether within Canada or elsewhere, to the extent to which such action is deemed by him to be necessary for carrying out the general purposes of the said Act;

AND WHEREAS the Secretary of State for External Affairs reports that in view of the present armed conflict in Spain, it is not deemed desirable that passports be issued for travel in Spain unless it is clear that the applicants have no intention of enlisting in either of the armed forces or otherwise taking part in the conflict;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs is pleased to order as follows:

(1) Passports shall not be issued for travel in Spain, that is to say, the territories of the Peninsula, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, and towns and territories under Spanish sovereignty in Africa, unless applicants fall within the following categories:

(a) Persons having urgent business reasons for such travel, and persons returning to resume employment there, together with members of their families.

(b) Journalists representing reputable papers.

(c) Persons forming part of surgical, medical, nursing or other services engaged solely in humanitarian work and which are under the control or supervision of the Canadian Red Cross or other recognized Canadian humanitarian society.

(2) Applicants for passports for Spain shall be required to subscribe to the following Declaration:

In connection with my application for a passport to travel in Spain I wish to state that I desire to proceed to for the purpose of

I undertake that nothing will take place in the course of my visit that could be considered as implying any intervention by me on behalf of either side of the present dispute in Spain.

I understand that I travel at my own risk and that His Majesty's Government in Canada undertake no responsibility for my protection or for my evacuation in case of need.

(3) A passport may be issued and endorsed "Valid for a single journey to (here insert name of the place or district in Spain and purpose of journey)" in the case of applications conforming with the above mentioned requirements.

(4) New passports for travel in countries other than Spain and similar passports presented for renewal shall be marked "Not valid for travel in Spain, that is to say, the territories of the Peninsula, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, and towns and territories under Spanish sovereignty in Africa".

(5) Passports issued for travel in Spain may be impounded or cancelled upon evidence of fraud or misrepresentation in the passport application or upon evidence that the holder has not faithfully carried out the undertaking set forth in the Declaration.

(6) These regulations shall come into force on August 10th, 1937.

H. W. LOTHROP

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival material and interviews

Forsey, Senator Eugene. Interviewed in Ottawa, February 1982.

Johnston, John. Former member of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion interviewed in Vancouver, November 1981.

Lapointe Papers. Public Archives of Canada.

Mackenzie King Diary. Public Archives of Canada.

Mackenzie King Papers. Public Archives of Canada.

Newspapers and magazines

The Canadian Forum. July 1936 - April 1937.

The Daily Clarion. July 1936 - April 1937.

Montreal Le Devoir. July 1936 - April 1937.

Toronto Globe and Mail. July 1936 - April 1937.

Montreal Gazette. July 1936 - April 1937.

New Frontiers magazine. July 1936 - April 1937.

Ottawa Citizen. July 1936 - April 1937.

Ottawa Journal. July 1936 - April 1937.

The Vancouver Sun. July 1936 - April 1937.

Winnipeg Free Press. July 1936 - April 1937.

Government publications

Canada, Parliament, House of Commons. Debates. Ottawa:
Queen's Printer, 1936-37.

Canada. Statutes. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1937. 1 Geo. VI, C. 32.

Munro, John A., ed. Documents on Canadian External Relations.
Volume 6. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1972.

Books and journals

Aldgate, Anthony. Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War. London: Scolar Press, 1979.

Barnett, C. The Collapse of British Power. London: Eyre Methuen, 1970.

Beck, J. Murray. Pendulum of Power: Canada's Federal Elections.
Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1968.

Betcherman, Lita-Rose. The Swastika and the Mapleleaf. Toronto:
Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975.

Black, Conrad. Duplessis. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977.

Boyle, Andrew. The Fourth Man. New York: Bantam Books, 1980.

Dafoe, John W. "Canadian Foreign Policy," Conference on Canadian American Affairs. Boston: Ginn & Co., Ltd., 1937.

Eayrs, James. In Defence of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965. Volume 2.

English, John, and Stubbs, J.O., eds. Mackenzie King: Widening the Debate. Toronto: Macmillan, 1977.

Ervin, Randy. "Men of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Toronto.

Glazebrook, G.P. deT. A History of Canadian External Relations.
Volume 2. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966.

Gouin, L.M. "The French-Canadians, Their Past and Their Aspirations," World Currents and Canada's Course. ed. V.A. Anderson.
Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1937.

Graham, Frank. The Book of the XV Brigade. Newcastle: Frank Graham, 1938.

Granatstein, J.L. and Bothwell. "A Self-Evident National Duty,"
Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. Vol. 3-4,
1974-76.

Gurney, Jason. Crusade in Spain. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1974.

Hillmer, Norman. "O.D. Skelton: the Scholar Who Set a Future Pattern,"
International Perspectives. Sept. Oct. 1973.

Hoar, Victor. The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Toronto: Copp
Clark, 1969.

Johnston, Verle B. Legions of Babel. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania
State University, 1967.

Liversedge, Ron, "Memoirs of a Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Veteran,"
unpublished memoirs, Special Collections, University of
British Columbia.

MacLennan, Hugh. The Watch that Ends the Night. Toronto: MacMillan
Co., 1958.

Mackay, R.A. and Rogers, E.B. Canada Looks Abroad. Toronto: McClelland
Stewart, 1938.

Mansergh, Nicholas. A Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Monroe, John. "Christie and Canadian External Relations," Journal
of Canadian Studies. May 1972.

Neatby, Blair. William Lyon Mackenzie King. Toronto: University
of Toronto Press, 1976.

Nicolson, Harold. Curzon: the Last Phase. Toronto: MacMillan
Co. Ltd., 1934.

Pearson, Lester B. Mike. Volume 1. Scarborough: Signet Books, 1973.

Pike, David W. Conjecture, Propaganda, and Deceit and the Spanish
Civil War. Stanford: Institute of International Studies,
1968.

Quinn, Herbert. The Union Nationale. Toronto: University of
Toronto Press, 1963.

Riddell, Walter A, ed. Documents on Canadian Foreign Policy 1917-39.
Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Roberts, Leslie. The Chief: A Political Biography of Maurice
Duplessis. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd., 1963.

Rosenstone, Robert A. Crusade of the Left. New York: Pegasus, 1969.

Stacey, C.P. Canada and the Age of Conflict. Volume 2. Toronto:
University of Toronto Press, 1980.

Thomas, Hugh. The Spanish Civil War. Third edition. Bucks:
Hazel Watson & Viney, 1977.

Watkins, K. Britain Divided: the Effects of the Spanish Civil
War on British Public Opinion. New York: Thomas Nelson,
1963.