

# Great Britain and the policy of non-intervention into the Spanish events of 1936-1939

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Graduation project

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- My graduation project is connected to studying the issues of international relations in Europe before the World War II. More than 60 years historians from different countries have been working in this sphere. The problems related to the World War II and its origins are actual even today. The study of those events are important not only for historical science. Many of the trends and events of the time are projected into the present in different forms, they can be useful in the analysis and prediction of the dynamics of international relations at the beginning of the XXI century.

**The purpose of the work** is to analyze the foreign policy of the United Kingdom in terms of the Spanish problem.

This aim involves setting the following **tasks**:

- to characterize the interests of the major European powers in connection with the armed conflict in Spain,
- to identify the causes, nature and importance of the policy of "non-intervention"
- to consider the influence of the Spanish factor on the relationship of the UK with the leading European states, such as France, the Soviet Union, Germany, Italy.

- The problem of war and peace is one of the main problems of the XX century. Apart from the two world wars, mankind has had to cope with lot of regional conflicts.

The Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 stands among such conflicts. Despite the seemingly domestic character of confrontation, a local conflict with a strong ideological context could not escape the attention of other European countries in the second half of the 30s. of XX century.

- The intervention of the countries that had been standing on opposite sides of the international barrier contributed to the internationalization of the conflict. In fact, the Spanish war has become not a local but a European conflict. It is no exaggeration to say that the origins of the World War II in Europe lasted from Spain.

- For a long time the United Kingdom has been one of the leading powers, which have had a significant influence on the political situation developing in Europe. It has been the power that often determined the fate of a particular event or phenomenon. Great Britain's position had been influencing to the opinions of other European countries. The Spanish conflict was no exception.

Various international aspects of the Civil War in Spain were determined at the initial stage of the policy of its members, with one goal - not to let it be transformed into a European conflict. The solution was found in the proclamation of the policy of "non-intervention".

- Non-intervention, and with it the Non-Intervention Agreement, had been proposed in a joint diplomatic initiative by the governments of France and the United Kingdom. It was part of a policy of appeasement, aimed at preventing a proxy war – with Italy and Nazi Germany supporting Franco's Nationalist Coalition on one side and the Soviet Union supporting the Republican faction on the other – from escalating into a major pan-European conflict.

- During the Spanish Civil War, several countries followed a principle of non-intervention, which would result in the signing of the **Non-Intervention Agreement** in August 1936 and the setting up of the **Non-Intervention Committee**, which first met in September. Primarily arranged by the French and British governments, important members of the committee also included the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Ultimately, the committee had the support of 24 nations.

- A plan to control materials coming into the country was put forward in early 1937, effectively subjecting the Spanish republic to international isolation, but was troubled by German and Italian withdrawals from sea patrols. The subject of volunteers was also much discussed, with little result; although agreements were signed late on in the war, these were made outside the Committee. Efforts to stem the flow of war materials to Spain were largely unsuccessful, with foreign involvement in the Spanish Civil War proving instrumental to its outcome. Nazi Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union consistently broke the agreement they had signed, France occasionally so. Britain remained largely faithful to it.