

### **Non-intervention Agreement**

Twenty-eight countries signed up to the agreement of non-intervention in the war, initially proposed by France, strongly championed by Britain, and flagrantly ignored by, first, Italy and Germany and, later, by the Soviet Union.

A non-intervention committee was established in London to oversee and investigate any breaches of the agreement, but its hopelessly ineffective British chairman, Lord Plymouth was constantly out-manuevered by the representatives of Russia, Italy and Germany. As no representative of the Spanish Republican government was eligible to attend the committee, suspected contraventions by Franco's allies had to be raised by the Soviet representative, Maisky.

Nevertheless the British Government, fully aware that several countries were bypassing the agreement, turned a blind eye and the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, later remarked, 'better a leaky dam than no dam at all', even though he well knew that the Nationalists were benefiting far more from the agreement than the Republicans.

Thus it was hardly surprising that opponents of the agreement portrayed it as 'a cloak' to hide German and Italian intervention and believed that Spain was being sacrificed by the western powers to their wider strategic objective of appeasement.