

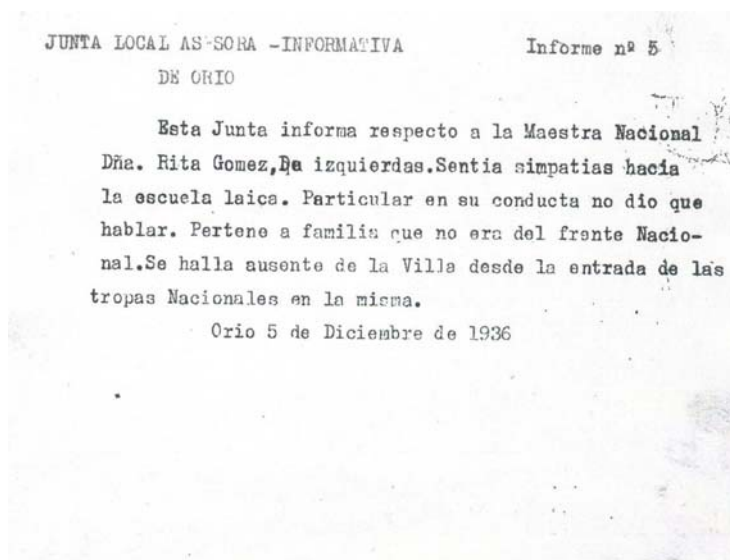
Unknown, unseen but not forgotten.

The first visit I made to Spain was in the summer of 1949 where I spent my six weeks school holidays with my mother's family in a small town called Urnieta just south of San Sebastián. I had just turned six years old and memories from that age are very scarce and patchy. The one thing I do remember so vividly is smell – the smell of the countryside, of fermenting hay, of freshly cut grass and of the animals, all of which were so new to me.


My mother had taken me there having travelled from London to Newhaven then by cross channel ferry to Dieppe then on to Paris to change trains and eventually arriving at Hendaye and crossing to Irun on the Spanish side of the frontier. From there we travelled by rickety wooden seated train to San Sebastián and somehow on to Urnieta. By the time we reached our destination over 24 hours after we left London I must have been near to collapse.

There were two reasons for this visit – first, for me to see my mother's family for the first time and second, for my mother to see her mother for the first time in ten years and the rest of her family for twelve years. Also, to see her nieces whom she had never seen other than in photographs.

My mother, Rita Victoria Gómez Mateo had been a teacher at a school in a small town called Orio along the Basque coast west of San Sebastián and east of Bilbao. With Franco's army advancing rapidly west from San Sebastián, my mother decided in December 1936 to flee to Bilbao. This was probably due to the hatred Franco had of secular female teachers and that she would have been shot should they have captured her. The following 'Junta Local' memo no.5 explains that she had left leaning sympathies, was not of the National front family and had absented herself from the town.



-80-16. COMISION DEPURADORA DEL MAGISTERIO
INFORMES SOBRE LA CONDUCTA DE LOS PROFESORES
(1936-1937)



Some five months later and one month after the destruction of Guernica my mother sailed on the ageing vessel 'Habana' overflowing with over 4,000 'niños', teachers, helpers and priests heading for Southampton.

Of all the names that have been listed by the Basque Children's Committee and the lists of names subsequently published, there remains one name (and possibly more) that we collectively do not know about. This was a person who selflessly made her way from Spain through France and on to Southampton to help at the Eastleigh camp and later at Moorhill House. She stayed at Moorhill House from June 1937 until December 1939.

Her name was Eulalia Mateo Urteaga de Gómez – she was my grandmother.

Here we see my mother greeting her mother Eulalia on her arrival at North Stoneham where the refugee camp had been established.



At the camp at Eastleigh Eulalia soon made herself useful with cooking, washing and generally assisting where she could.

At Moorhill House Eulalia became an important part of the staff with my mother alongside Miss Vessy and Miss Lewis who were in charge of the house.



Her signature on reverse side - bottom right alongside the signatures of the majority of the children.

Felice Sáiz, José Luján, Felicidad Azumendi, Amparo
 Purita Tejedor, Ma Luisa Leticia, Eloisa de la Fuente, Catalina
 Pablo García, Purificación Juncado
 María Luján, Ana María Stucheg, Rodrigo Tejedor, Consuelo Yruca
 Martina Yruca, Mariano Tejedor, Matheo Yruca
 Alfonso de la Fuente, Herminio de la Fuente, Manuel Gari
 Araceli García, José Luis Galán, Pili Peña, Lucía Peña
 Pepe Mañá, Angelita García, Joaquín Peña, Aquedita
 Pedro Mari, Milagros Ortiz, Jacinto Martínez
 Javier Leticia, Alberto Sáiz, Serafín Pérez
 José Ortiz, M.ª Angélica
 Papirito Azumendi, José A. Marijuán, Marijuán
 Felice Luján, Laura Galán, Rita Gómez, Eulalia de Gómez
 M.ª Camino Goni, Carmen C. de Orbeagoena

At Moorhill House arrangements were made for visits and excursions to take place but as the circular below states that because of a case of scarlet fever on this particular occasion it had to be cancelled. However, it does show all the interested parties who were willing to help the children and adults. My mother and grandmother are numbers 24 and 25 respectively.

SOUTHAMPTON HOME FOR BASQUE CHILDREN.

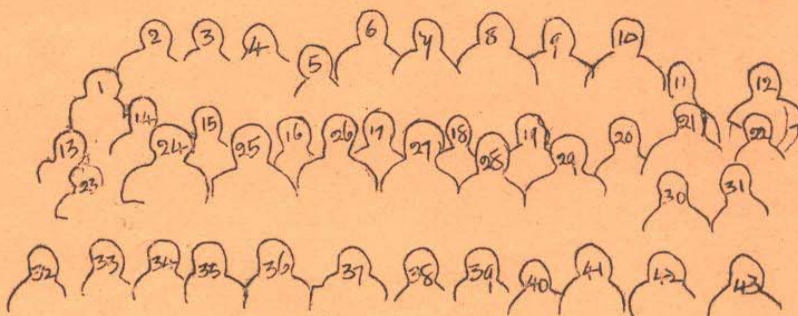
Moorhill House, West End,
SOUTHAMPTON.
25th August, 1937.

To the Secretaries of
Contributing Units.

Dear Sir or Madam,

VISITATION AND EXCURSIONS. Since our circular letter was sent to you on Saturday last, owing to a case of scarlet fever having arisen and being removed to the local Hospital, it has been decided to POSTPONE ALL VISITS TO THE HOME, and the taking out of children from the Home for Excursions, for about a fortnight. We will advise when this ban on visits and excursions is lifted.

PHOTOGRAPH OF PARTY. In order that sections may identify the child or adult allocated to them, the following rough of the photograph is given with accompanying list:-



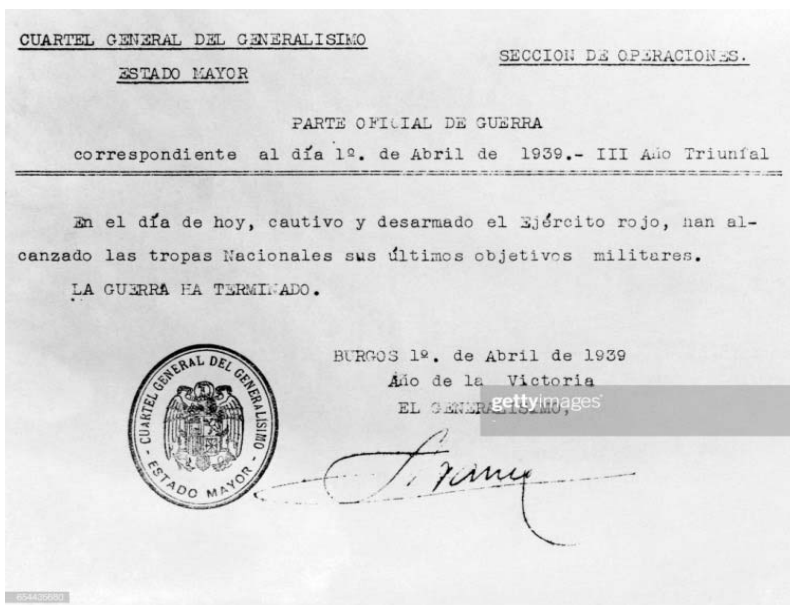
- | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Pedro | Brown Bros. | 32 Manuel | Women's Co-op G |
| 2 Louis | So'ton Teachers | 33 Francisoo | So'ton Teachers |
| 3 Ofelia | do. do. | 34 Norberto | Communist Party |
| 4 Purificacion | Itchen Sec. School. | 35 Javier | Shepherd & Hedg |
| 5 Jose | P.O. Telephones | 36 Alfonso | Mr. H.C. Hobbs & |
| 6 Maria | do. do. | | Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Coll |
| 7 Lucia | Supermarine | 37 Herminio | The Mayor - |
| 8 Felicidad | Girls Grammar Sch. | | Alderman H. Chick, J.P.) |
| 9 Avelina | Strangers, Ltd. | 38 Manuel | Strangers, Ltd. |
| 10 Laura | So'ton Teachers | 39 Serafin | Clarion (Eastleigh |
| 11 Maria | Boro' Education Dept. | 40 Javier | Building Trade |
| 12 Ana Maria. | Co-op Central Grey. | 41 Jesus | Gas Co. |
| 13 Amparo | Tyrrell & Green | 42) | 2 brothers being transfer |
| 14 Pilar | Communist Party | 43) | back to Camp. - to accomoda |
| 15 Eloisa | St. Mary St. Tradesmen | <u>Not in photograph:- family par</u> | |
| 16 Maria Luisa | Hants & Dorset | Consuelo - Co-op Office (on | |
| 17 Milagros | Girls Life Brigade | sick list). | |
| 18 Araceli | Plummer Roddis | <u>To come from the Camp:-</u> | |
| 19 Joaquin | Post Office. General | 3 Boys - So'ton Clarion; | |
| 20 Jose Louis | So'ton Teachers | C.I.S. (District); Tauntons | |
| 21 Felix | Adult School | School; and | |
| 22 Maria Molet | Boro' Treasurers Dept. | 3 Girls - Co-operative Soc. | |
| 23 Aqueda | Society of Friends | Bitterne Park, Woolston, an | |
| 24 Senorita Rita | Post Office. General | Shirley. | |
| 25 Senora Eaularlia | - Electricity Works. | ----- | |
| 26 Miss Vessey (Matron) | | Party when completewill number | |
| 27 Miss Lewis (Cook) | | 21 Girls. | |
| 28 Senorita Maria. | Shell-Mex, and others. | 21 Boys. | |
| 29 Senorita Carmen | So'ton Teachers | ----- | |
| 30 Jose | Boys Brigade | | |
| 31 Jose Mata | Tyrrell & Green. | | |

Yours truly,

Here Eulalia is seen at a party at Swaythling Senior School given by the St. Nicholas Ward Labour Association with Eulalia top left, second from the left. This was one of two parties given for 700 children.



Franco's declaration of Victory April 1, 1939



BCC letter written to Eulalia dated 6th December, 1939 regarding her repatriation and the children she was to accompany.

BASQUE CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: THE DUCHESS OF ATHOLL, D.B.E., D.C.L.
VICE-CHAIRMEN: MISS ELEANOR RATHBONE, M.P.
H. V. TEWSON, Esq.

HON. SECRETARIES:

WILFRID ROBERTS, Esq. M.P.
LT.-COL. J. R. J. MACNAMARA, M.P.
D. R. GRENFELL, Esq. M.P.

HON. TREASURER:

VISCOUNT CECIL OF CHELWOOD, F.C., K.C.

ORGANISING SECRETARY:

DR. BETTY MORGAN.

30, ECCLESTON STREET,

LONDON, S.W.1.

TELEPHONE: SLOANE 9866

6 de diciembre 1939.

Señorita Eulalia Mateo.
c/o Mrs. H.G. Giles,
Hill Crest,
Wickham Road,
Curdridge.
Botley Hants.

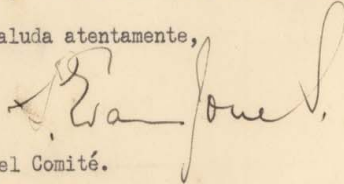
Estimada Señorita: Nos enteramos del Señor Consul de España en Londres que Ud. ya tiene sus pasaporte en regla para su regreso a España, y que Ud. puede regresar con la primera expedición de niños repatriados, la cual saldrá dentro de pocos días.

Para que Ud. pueda ser incluida en dicha expedición es imprescindible cumplir las siguientes formalidades sin el menor retraso.

1. Rellenar los tres impresos ingleses adjuntos (FormP)
2. Rellenar el impreso adjunto referente al control de racionamiento. R.G. 10.
3. Enviarnos su tarjeta de identidad inglesa.
4. " " libreta de racionamiento.
5. " " pasaporte Español, debidamente visado para entrar en territorio Español.
6. Remitirnos su Carnet de Policia (Certificate of Registration)

En caso de que no recibamos dichos documentos por Correo Expres, y sin el menor retraso, lamentamos el tener que informarle que no le será posible salir con la mencionada expedición.

Le saluda atentamente,



Por el Comité.

*Mandado
a Miss Lilian Smith
Basque Children's Committee
30, Eccleston St.
London, SW1
8/12/39*

Accompanying the repatriation of niños and helpers in late December 1939.



My visit to Urnieta in the summer of 1949 was the first and last time I ever saw my grandmother. She died in 1952.

I would like to pay my respects to a woman who suffered like so many in the Spanish Civil War for her courage to travel through the Nationalist held part of the Basque country and to arrive in a foreign land to help others. Nowhere will you find her name other than here.

Saludos Eulalia.

Gerald Hoare

24th March 2020