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Let politics and differences be forgotten: ‘The Little Basques’ in Cumbria 1937-39¹

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Between 1937 and 1939 some 125 child refugees from the Basque region of Spain were accommodated in various hostels in Cumbria. Wilfred Roberts, MP for North Cumberland, was one of the architects of the policy of evacuating children from war-torn Spain, and providing them with a refuge in Britain. The evacuation received no government financial support, so its success was dependent upon fund raising and volunteer help. Despite having few connections with Spain, Cumberland and Westmorland took up the cause of these children with enthusiasm and supported the main hostel at Brampton until its closure in the summer of 1939. The children became involved in raising money for their keep through giving concerts across the north of England, and in doing so helped to raise awareness of Spain and its civil war across the region. ‘The Little Basques’ were followed in the late 1930s by other refugees from central Europe, many of whom benefitted from what had been learnt from hosting the Spanish children.

Keywords: Basque – Cumbria – children – refugees – Spanish Civil War

2019 marks the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War and the return to Spain of many of the nearly 4000 Basque child refugees who had been brought to Britain during the summer of 1937. In the immediate post-war era the evacuation and return of the refugees had been written out of history, one of the many distortions of the record occasioned by the Cold War. Since the 1990s interest has increased but this evacuation often represents only a footnote in the histories of the Civil War.² The arrival of over one hundred of these children at various hostels in Cumberland and Westmorland represented the first of a significant number of refugees who made these counties their home during the 1930s. That most people welcomed these newcomers into their communities and supported them financially speaks volumes for the openness of society in the two counties in the run-up to the Second World War. This article is a response to Kevin Myers observation that as refugee policies ‘were implemented in regional settings, [so] more detailed local studies are required’, by focusing on the counties’ response to requests to host these children from the Basque region of Spain.³

Who were ‘The Little Basques’?

Popular imagination, then and now, has associated this event with Basque children, rather than children of the three Basque provinces. Although the children came from the Basque region, the majority came from the cities, especially Bilbao. From the late nineteenth century there had been a large influx of Spanish workers and their families seeking jobs in the thriving industries around Bilbao, so consequently many of the evacuees in 1937 were the children of Spanish immigrants into the Basque region. There is no evidence of ethnic tension between these ‘adoptive Basques’ and the ethnic

Basques, and the former would no doubt have acquired some knowledge of Basque culture. As few of the evacuees were ethnic Basques, and as most probably came from the urban areas, few, unlike their more rural counterparts, seem to have spoken the Basque language *Euzkera*, and in any case by the 1930s even the Basque speakers would have been bilingual. All of the names of children who came to Cumbria which I have had at my disposal, as well as their teachers, are straightforwardly Spanish. It would have been more accurate to refer to the children as 'from the Basque provinces', but the needs of headline writers led to the shorthand of 'Basque children', a confidence trick that might also have led to greater sympathy in the host communities who probably saw themselves supporting a persecuted ethnic minority.⁴

The national response

As so often seems to be the case, British government policy towards refugees in the 1930s was out of step with the compassion shown by British people. Stanley Baldwin's National Government, along with other democratic governments in Europe, had chosen a policy of public non-intervention with regard to the warring factions in Spain, and thus their default position was to maintain a 'hostile environment' so far as immigration from Spain was concerned. However, church organisations, the labour movement and the charity sector did not believe that non-intervention should mean the denial of humanitarian aid. A delegation of six members of parliament, led by the Liberal MP for Cumberland North, Wilfred Roberts, known as the 'MP for Spain', travelled there in November 1936, and from that visit the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJCSR) was established in January 1937 – Roberts became its joint-Secretary. Its broad-based leadership encompassed the Liberals, the Conservatives, the Trades Union movement and the Communist party, and was promoted by its Chair, the Duchess of Atholl, in a letter to the Prime Minister as 'a great drawing together of members of different parties in the cause of humanitarian relief in Spain'.⁵ In the aftermath of the bombing of Guernica in April 1937, the NJCSR went on to establish the powerful and broadly-based Basque Children's Committee (BCC) in May, of which Wilfred Roberts was Secretary.⁶ 'The idea of the Basque Children's Committee was to set up a non-political, humanitarian relief programme behind which all groups could unite'.⁷ The NJCSR, supported by the Roman Catholic Church and the Society of Friends, lobbied both the British and Basque governments for permission to evacuate children from Bilbao which was threatened in the summer of 1937 with aerial destruction similar to that at Guernica. On behalf of the NJCSR Wilfred Roberts wrote to Stanley Baldwin asking for his personal support for the project, for financial help, and for the assistance of several government departments.⁸

Public outrage at the bombing of Guernica and NJCSR pressure led the Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, to authorise the Joint Committee to bring 2000 (a figure quickly raised to 4000) children aged 5-15 to the United Kingdom, so long as the committee took responsibility for the arrangements and no public money was spent on the evacuation, the education or the welfare of the children whilst they were in the country, and provided that it would take responsibility for their eventual repatriation.⁹ The Basque government agreed to such an evacuation, the children being described in the Basque press as 'our brave expeditionary infants', on condition that they were

housed in hostels, rather than individually fostered out, so as to better preserve their national identity, and that they were accompanied to Britain by teachers, young female helpers (*señoritas*) and priests.¹⁰ Consequently the whole enterprise was funded by donations from the British public. In effect the Basque children represented a private as opposed to a state-organised evacuation. The fact that the government had sanctioned it was a triumph of persuasion over politics. As Wilfred Roberts wrote 'We are the first people since 1914 to have persuaded the British government to allow the entry into this country of refugees (without private means)'.¹¹ Roberts' leading role was endorsed by the Duchess of Atholl when she wrote that he 'has worked like a slave for it. He is a very fine fellow'.¹² This chasm between government and people led Yvonne Kapp and Margaret Mynatt to argue in their polemic, *British Policy and the Refugees 1933-1941*, for 'a consistent pro-refugee policy' rather than the existing 'anti-refugee policy with loopholes'.¹³

The NJCSR appealed for financial help, and sought to establish 'colonies' in buildings that could be made available as hostels. Various organisations responded and each 'colony', whether situated in an empty hotel, a reinstated sanatorium, a mediaeval castle or a disused workhouse established its own character. Some had religious affiliations, others political connections to the Labour Party and the TUC, and the Salvation Army also played a significant role. By 31 May 1937 ten hostels had been approved and an offer from Cumberland of the disused Brampton Workhouse (Fig. 1) was on the table but had still to be sanctioned. According to the minutes of the first meeting of the BCC the local committee was prepared to take financial responsibility for 50 children, but stated that the NJCSR would need to provide support for any greater number.¹⁴ It had already been established that the owners of the Brampton Workhouse, Messrs J. Millar and Sons of Carlisle, were prepared to make it available to the Relief Committee.¹⁵ The costs of conversion were underwritten by members of the local community and the building was rapidly renamed 'The Children's Hostel'. Once the building had been identified and arrangements for its use agreed, an appeal with sixty signatories, fronted by leading clergy representing a variety of denominations, local Members of Parliament, civic dignitaries and prominent members of the public was launched locally in early June. It asked that individuals or groups contribute five shillings per week which was the sum, it was felt, that would be necessary to support each child. In deference to the government's policy and the differing political views of many potential supporters, the appeal went out of its way to distance itself from any side in the conflict. It announced that:

The children have been selected at Bilbao without regard to the politics, or creed, or circumstances of their parents; and no political question as to the rights and wrongs of the war in Spain can arise in making this appeal on behalf of children.¹⁶

Many of the local relief committees were supportive and undertook to raise the necessary funds to maintain the children and their adult helpers. However, five shillings per child per week turned out to be an underestimate; according to a financial statement prepared for the BCC at the end of August 1937, Brampton Children's Hostel was costing 10 shillings per week per child which still made it amongst the cheapest of the hostels to run.¹⁷

The Cumberland and Westmorland response

Cumberland and Westmorland were not counties where one might have expected particular sympathy for the plight of Basque children. Unlike the Welsh valley communities which had close industrial links and political ties with the Basque provinces and where a significant Spanish population lived, the north-west had no such obvious connections.¹⁸ Although a surviving list of individuals who offered to accommodate children in their homes does not include any addresses in Cumberland or Westmorland, the fact that the former was one of the counties which led the national response to the NJCSR appeal must reflect the influence of Wilfred Roberts and his leading role in the campaign.¹⁹ His equally liberal-minded parents, Charles Roberts and Lady Cecilia Roberts of Boothby, Brampton, became instrumental in the local campaign to pay for the conversion of the Brampton workhouse for children's accommodation, but as Charles Roberts said at a Carlisle meeting 'the children were not to be the special care of Brampton alone, but Cumberland and Westmorland'.²⁰ Brampton became one of about 70 'colonies' established across the British Isles.



FIG. 1. Brampton Workhouse in 1958 prior to demolition *Carlisle Image Bank: ct04535*.

Money was needed urgently to help finance the conversion and support the running costs of the hostel for at least three months, the period of time it was initially thought that the children would be in Britain. There was already a committee in existence in Carlisle where Currock House Community Centre became an early supporter as its warden was a regional representative of the NJCSR. The Centre also made available a Spanish speaker.²¹ Local committees were soon formed in communities across

the two counties, Workington, Wigton and Cockermouth being amongst the first in Cumberland.²² The committee at Brampton involved the Carlisle Trades Council, but locally the driving force was the Roberts family who organised for around 100 volunteers to make the hostel ready for the children's arrival.²³ On 12 June it was reported that 'rooms have been distempered, whitewashed and papered and during this week furniture is being purchased'.²⁴ The Roberts's bore part of the initial expense, a donation of \$100 was received from an American visitor, and the community rallied around, both with financial help and support in kind. Beds were supplied at near cost by Messrs Dickinson of Brampton, various local tradesmen helped out with the conversion, and electric lighting was installed by workers from the Kirkhouse Brick and Tile Company and from Naworth Collieries working in their own time.²⁵ Equipment for the school-room was given by Cumberland County Council. Raising money for The Children's Hostel had to compete with similar appeals which were being made for other Spanish causes. For example, Kendal's mayor was promoting at the same time the 'General Relief Fund for Distressed Women and Children in Spain', another 'entirely neutral, non-political and impartial [fund in which] supplies are being sent to both sides in this unhappy conflict', as a result of a campaign in the letters page of the *Westmorland Gazette*.²⁶

In the event 100 children along with two Spanish women teachers and an interpreter arrived by train at Citadel Station, Carlisle on 18 June 1937 and were transported by bus to Brampton.²⁷ They had travelled from Bilbao on *SS Habana* and arrived in Southampton on 22 May where they underwent a rigorous medical examination before being taken to the tented transit camp at North Stoneham, near Eastleigh, and thence on to Brampton.

Unsurprisingly the *Carlisle Journal* reported the children's arrival in considerable detail, given that the paper was owned by Wilfred Roberts.²⁸ The paper commented on the underwhelming scene at Carlisle station and the more demonstrative welcome at Brampton. It drew attention to the attractive environment that had been created within the workhouse, to the medical and other staff who were on hand (some of whom were Spanish speakers) and to the precaution taken to place all the children in further temporary quarantine despite having undergone earlier medical inspections in Bilbao and on arrival at Southampton. The reporter, with some foresight, commented that the children 'were very well behaved, but they may not always be so, once they are settled down. There is spirit in those children'.²⁹

Within twentyfour hours of their arrival at Brampton the city of Bilbao fell to the Nationalists, so one of the first tasks for the organising committee was to break this news to the children. Some 200,000 people, mostly Republicans, and almost certainly including the parents of many of the children, were evacuated from the city.³⁰ Although this news provoked a distressing reaction amongst the remaining children at North Stoneham, and led to some bad headlines in the press which did not make fund raising any easier, it seems to have been handled sensitively at Brampton where it was reported that a boy, like most of the children vehemently anti-Nationalist, calmly told Lady Roberts that 'it is just an incident. We shall have it again'.³¹

The 'colony' at Brampton was organised on secular lines, but there were two other hostels in Cumberland run by the Roman Catholic Church. Nationally the church took responsibility for 1200 children from Catholic families, of which 25 children and a teacher were accommodated at the convent of Nazareth House in Carlisle, (Fig. 2) and a further ten young girls at the diocesan orphanage in Wigton under the supervision of the nuns of the Convent of Mercy.³² Currock House in Carlisle took six boys expelled from the hostel at Scarborough after some disturbances there. Brampton created a satellite hostel at Fairfield Guest House in Ambleside in Westmorland and for a short time some of the Brampton children were transferred there.³³ An offer to make available High Cross Castle, Windermere for another 'colony' for 50 children in September 1937 was not taken up by the BCC.³⁴

Living in the Cumbrian 'colonies'

Brampton

Brampton appears to have been an independent-minded hostel in which 'a liberal tradition prevailed ... where around eighty (*sic*) children were under the wing of Lady Cecilia Roberts', the, 'imposing and splendid mother of Wilfred Roberts MP'.³⁵ Like most of the hostels it was inspected during the summer of 1937 by an inspector for the Ministry of Health. Miss Quinlan's report lists the staff as a superintendent and matron (a Spanish speaker who was not trained as a nurse), two men who had lived in Spain in the past, a Red Cross worker, two Spanish women servants (probably the Spanish teachers), a cook, a kitchen boy and about five volunteers. A local practitioner, Dr Nelson, visited daily and had discovered a variety of minor ailments such as tonsillitis and sores. The building contained five bathrooms, five indoor water closets, spacious dormitories with straw or fibre mattresses, a large dining room, a good kitchen, and a separate isolation building. Fresh milk and vegetables were provided by Mr Roberts from his farm. The inspector commented that the dormitory floors were bare, and that there were no lockers, so consequently the rooms were untidy with clothes and toys strewn around. Overall she commented that 'these children have very dirty habits and the staff have much cleaning and teaching to do'.³⁶ A less clinical description of the refurbished hostel was provided by visitors from Edinburgh a few weeks later. They described it as a 'shabby, old red brick building ... [with] long whitewashed flagged corridors ... [but] rooms gay with sunshine and vivid coloured wool and little girls knitting ... a dining room, bare but cheery with white and blue check oilcloth on the tables, and vivid bold pictures, the work of the children themselves, on the walls'.³⁷ There was also a room 'fitted up as a chapel for religious purposes [although] it is understood that not all the children are Roman Catholic'.³⁸

That all was not well with the running of Brampton was apparent to the inspector during her visit. Lady Cecilia clearly considered the hostel 'hers' and was unwilling to hand much, if any, responsibility to the superintendent. The inspector described the superintendent as 'a capable woman [who] understands Spanish children' but there was tension between her and Lady Roberts who 'does not give her a free hand, objects to any small punishments, and is said to interfere all the time'. Clearly the inspector herself also felt intimidated as she had to explain to Lady Roberts that the purpose of her visit was to give 'helpful advice if necessary', and her suggestion that the children

should have the opportunity to see a dentist, was clearly not welcome as it amounted to an implied criticism.³⁹

Day-to-day life is vividly described in the later testimonies of some of those who lived there. They tell us that the children attended lessons given by the two Spanish teachers supplemented by an art teacher, Lady Cecilia's daughter Winifred (Nicholson), 'the most marvellous person who began giving us watercolour classes and, as we progressed, introduced us to oils and organised for paintings by the Brampton children to be sent to an exhibition in London.⁴⁰ There was also a Mr Froelich, a Jewish refugee from Austria, who was 'a talented physicist and fluent in Spanish and English' and also a pianist as he often accompanied the children during their concerts.⁴¹ Although some of the children appreciated what they were being taught, others, such as Valentin Sagasti Torrano, who left Brampton in the summer of 1939, claimed that 'my education at Brampton had been nil and my knowledge of English matched it'.⁴²

The Brampton 'colony' was amongst the larger ones and thus must have had a considerable impact on the life of the town, although the local press stays largely silent on the subject. It is difficult to know how much contact the children had with the Brampton community, but it is clear, following the government requirement that education was the responsibility of the NJCSR and should make no call on the public purse, that there were no shared activities with the Brampton schools.⁴³ Lady Cecilia invited the children to her home, a 'beautiful country house, which seemed like a palace. I remember her showing us some beautiful trinkets. On other visits she would show us round her wonderful garden. We were always taken there and brought back by her chauffeur'.⁴⁴ However the Basque children were not invited to the Christmas party organised by Lady Cecilia at the Brampton schools.⁴⁵ Some of the children were befriended by other well-wishers. Ángeles Cubas Piñera and her sister were taken on excursions and holidays by a Scottish gentleman.⁴⁶ Scotland was the destination for a camping holiday for 12 of the Brampton children in August 1938. During the week the children were taken to the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow where appropriately they visited the Peace Pavilion which reflected anxieties at the deteriorating international situation and which promoted the League of Nations and the peaceful aspirations of nations. This was another event that could have been enjoyed alongside the Brampton children who had visited the Exhibition the previous June, but no attempt seems to have been made to share the experience.⁴⁷

The testimonies on the whole paint a rosy picture of life in the Brampton 'colony'. However there is a single reference to being hungry, and one of the refugees remembers minor high spirits – stealing potatoes and chasing chickens on neighbouring land.⁴⁸ None, however, have confessed to having been involved in what the authorities considered to be vandalism, and local landowners defined as trespass.

The inspectors who visited the hostels in various parts of the country over the summer of 1937 reported on very different situations regarding discipline. The report on St Mary's Convent at Southall in Middlesex stated rather worryingly that 'these boys seem to be full of almost alarming vitality and to be entirely without any idea of discipline', whereas that on St Joseph's Home for Children at Barton-on-Irwell, Manchester found that 'the children appeared happy and friendly and are said to give

no trouble'.⁴⁹ Tensions between the Basque children, especially those at the secular hostels, and some local communities surfaced during the summer of 1937, a trend witnessed by a Mass Observation recorder in the Manchester region.⁵⁰ There were difficulties at Scarborough, a 'riot' at Brechfa in Carmarthenshire, and indiscipline at Hexham where it was reported that the couple in charge had to barricade themselves into their room and call the police, and six boys absconded heading towards Brampton hostel which they seem to have failed to reach.⁵¹ The warden of Currock House speaking as a travelling inspector for the NJCSR found it necessary to tell an audience in Kendal that the children at the 'colony' near Scarborough had been 'considerably provoked' and it would be wrong to describe the boys as 'young desperadoes'.⁵² In August Wilfred Roberts sent a press release on behalf of the NJCSR in which he addressed the 'hostile rumours being circulated about the children' and restated the charity's policy with regard to repatriation.⁵³

Despite such attempts to explain that behavioural issues were perhaps unsurprising given what some children had witnessed and the difficulties for them of living in strange environments in a foreign country where few spoke Spanish, the patience of the authorities at Brampton was tried over the reported behaviour of some of the children during the autumn of 1937. There emerged a distinct difference of opinion between those who welcomed the refugees, those who, while not necessarily being unsympathetic, became concerned at the petty vandalism in Brampton which was perhaps too easily laid at the door of the Spanish children, and those who seemed to be antagonistic from the outset. Between September and the end of November, the Clerk to the County Council was in regular correspondence with the Basque Children's Hostel Committee over minor damage done to the authority's buildings and grounds which adjoined the hostel. A sense of exasperation can be detected in the wording of a letter from the Clerk to the Public Assistance Officer:

The fact is there is no holding the children, or I should say 'young persons'!. They just do as they like...From what I understand, the Basque Community are almost wild, and nothing can be done to restrain them. They really ought to be in some place like Bootle where there is not much they can do in the way of damage to other people's property.⁵⁴

Charles Roberts, who was Chair of the Committee, and also at that time Vice Chair of Cumberland County Council, was critical of the lack of empathy of some of the council officers and taking note of the contents of his son's earlier press release, reminded them that these children were traumatised, had little or no knowledge of what had happened to their parents, had no idea when they could return home, and were in a country whose language they could not speak, and pointed out that Brampton's own children were not above some vandalism of their own.⁵⁵ By the end of November tempers had simmered down and an uneasy truce broke out.⁵⁶ The tension had been kept from the local press perhaps because of concerns over the willingness of the community to continue to support the children financially. In contrast a different event attracted the attention of the *Daily Mirror* which ran a report on how an angry farmer attacked a Spanish teacher who was taking 20 children on a ramble in the Brampton area for 'trespassing'. A squabble was followed by the farmer hitting 'the *Senorita* on the thigh with his drover's stick'. Although he was eventually required to apologise, he did so in bad grace saying that 'we have had great provocation'.⁵⁷

Nazareth House, Carlisle and Convent of Mercy, Wigton

Miss Quinlan visited these two colonies in August 1937. They differed from Brampton in being run by Roman Catholic sisters who took in the Basque children alongside the orphaned children who already resided there. At Carlisle 14 boys and 11 girls joined the 174 children already in residence, and at Wigton (Fig. 3) ten girls lived alongside the other 36 children. Each group was accompanied by a Spanish teacher. The Basque children had their own sleeping accommodation, with in each case the Spanish teacher sleeping in a partitioned cubicle at the end of the girls' dormitories. The inspector considered facilities and behaviour were good, and the children's health raised no concerns. Education was provided by the Spanish teachers in rooms set aside as schoolrooms for the Basque children. It seems that the children benefitted from an environment that was already looking after children, and at Wigton it was observed that 'all the children play together and appeared very happy and friendly', while at Carlisle it was said that 'the Basque children enjoy the English food'. Interestingly Lady Roberts visited Wigton, but nothing is said about what she may or may not have learnt about running hostels for children!¹⁵⁸



FIG. 2. Nazareth House, Carlisle *Undated postcard courtesy of Chester Forster.*

Financial concerns at the hostels

By the autumn of 1937 many hostels were facing increasing financial problems. Although it had been intended that the children would only remain in Britain for three months, it quickly became clear that for the majority, their stay in Britain would need to be extended. The chaos in Spain, following the fall of Bilbao, meant that it was very difficult to locate the parents of the children as many were imprisoned, exiled or dead, and it was agreed that the children could only be repatriated if the British authorities were certain that they could be looked after adequately in Spain.



FIG. 3. Convent of Mercy, Wigton *Undated photograph courtesy of Trevor Grahamslaw.*

It was going to be necessary to raise substantial further sums. Where accounts have survived, as in Birmingham, it is evident that after the first couple of months, contributions from both organisations and individuals fell precipitously as the media no longer focussed on the children as innocent casualties of war, but increasingly reported that some children were badly behaved, highly politicised and anti-clerical.⁵⁹ In Cumberland organisations such as Brampton Town Club, Brampton Methodists, Brampton Toc H and local parishes had been and continued to be generous with their support.⁶⁰ However, private donations were going to be needed on a large scale. The requirement to extend the relief effort led to some reorganisation of the relief committees. At a meeting in Carlisle at the end of October 1937 it was decided to create a joint committee for Cumberland and Westmorland, affiliated to the NJCSR, with representatives from all the local committees.⁶¹

A money-raising idea involving the children themselves was adopted across the country.⁶² From early on, the children had been invited to sing and dance at local events wearing national costume. Given that many of the children were from working-class families from the city of Bilbao, they had to be taught the songs, the dances and how to make the costumes presumably by the *señoritas* who accompanied them. Performances drew on both Spanish and Basque traditions, but whether such differences were clear to their audiences is far from certain. These performances were not the most appropriate of events for these largely urban children, but they seem to have adapted to them and they became a significant fund-raiser.⁶³ The first public engagement for the Brampton children was in mid-July 1937 when some of the girls gave a display of country dancing at the opening ceremony for the new Brampton playground, given to the town by Lady Cecilia and Charles Roberts and dedicated to the memory of their relative and supporter of the Spanish republicans, Basil Murray.⁶⁴ Towards the end of the month 40 of the children were taken to Carlisle to give a display of dancing, singing and music to members of the Carlisle Spanish Relief Committee,

as a thank you for all the work that had been undertaken on their behalf.⁶⁵ These led to large numbers of concerts given by the children in village halls and the homes of well-wishers across the counties and beyond (Fig. 4).⁶⁶ Such events were organised by local committees, individuals who made their houses available and organisations such as Toc H. Typical were concerts given at Longtown, Ambleside and Windermere. At the former Mrs and Miss Marshall asked 11 of the children and a teacher to their home and invited friends to attend. The children gave a performance of Spanish songs and Basque dances, were entertained to tea, and a collection was made for Spanish relief.⁶⁷ At Ambleside a public event was organised in the YMCA Hall in Ambleside where a concert was given 'to raise funds for their own maintenance'. The organiser 'made a plea for generous support, saying that there were about 70 Spanish children at Brampton, but the hostel was in serious financial straits. They were making a series of efforts to make the continuance of the hostel safe for those children whose parents were dead, exiled or imprisoned, and who would therefore have no means of support if they returned to Spain'.⁶⁸ A fuller than usual report of a concert at Windermere reveals that the children were dressed in Basque national colours. It stated that the girls 'were dressed in red and green with white headdresses, black aprons, laced bodices, and in some instances red, white and green skirts'.⁶⁹ This may have been usual and if so would have served the purpose of foregrounding the Basque origins of the children as opposed to the red and gold of Nationalist Spain, the red, gold and



FIG. 4. 'Basque children in their colourful costumes in which they gave an entertainment at 'Yews' Windermere.' Group also includes Lady Cecilia Roberts and Lady Scott [the owner of the house]. *Westmorland Gazette*, 8 July 1939.

purple of the Republic, or the red or red and gold of the revolutionary factions within the Republic. Occasionally fund-raising concerts were held out of area. In February 1939, Brampton children gave a concert in Newcastle, and a group from a 'colony' at Middlesbrough had toured Cumberland and Westmorland in the previous September, performing at a number of locations including Wigton, Penrith and Kirkby Stephen.⁷⁰

Cultural interaction

Although there must be some uncertainty as to whether audiences appreciated that they were usually witnessing some amalgam of Spanish and Basque traditions, these concerts provided an opportunity for information sharing and cultural interaction between the colonies and the wider public leading to better understanding of the civil war and the politics of Spain, at least from Basque and Republican perspectives. Concerts were frequently accompanied by senior figures from the NJCSR and local committees, or recent returnees from Spain who explained what was happening. Typical was an event at Tebay where Miss Sonia Lings, Secretary of the Windermere Spanish Aid Committee, spoke on 'the conditions [of the Spanish refugees] in the concentration camps in France, and explained the scheme for the transportation of 40,000 of the refugees from these camps to Mexico'.⁷¹ At some events the entertainment also consisted of performances by English children. A particularly good example was the Christmas concert held at Bede's Girls School in Sunderland in December 1938. A Christmas dinner was followed by seven of the Brampton children singing Spanish songs and performing folk dances. The newspaper report stressed that the Bede girls showed great interest in the 'Andalusian art' and the Basque and Spanish languages. The Bede girls then sang English carols and performed English, Czechoslovakian and German folk dances – an interesting link to other refugee groups in Britain at that time.⁷² These events had the capacity to increase understanding and respect between the different nationalities, as did football matches arranged between Basque boys and local teams, although there is no evidence of a team at Brampton despite the existence of a football field adjacent to the hostel. A different type of event involving a party of Newcastle women visiting Brampton to learn more about Spanish national food could have had a similar consequence.⁷³

Repatriating the child refugees

With the Nationalist conquest of the Basque region on 2 July 1937, there were immediate calls for the repatriation of the children.⁷⁴ Francoists in both Spain and Britain and the Roman Catholic Church argued that conditions were improving, there was peace in northern Spain and parents were requesting the children's return. On the other side of the argument were the Duchess of Atholl who believed that 'Francoism represented the destruction of culture and decency', British charities, and much of the political establishment in Britain who argued that unless the children's parents could be traced the children were safer in Britain than in Francoist care homes and education system. Behind these differing views was the belief that those who had access to the children would control their souls. The stakes were thus extremely high.⁷⁵ Some small-scale repatriation took place in the autumn of 1937, but the issue did not begin to dominate NJCSR agendas until the end of the year.⁷⁶ From January

1938 larger numbers began to return to Spain.⁷⁷ Amongst the January group were 13 from Nazareth House in Carlisle and four from Wigton.⁷⁸ It is unclear whether any of the Brampton group returned, although one, Alfonso Ruiz López, left around this time in order to act as a translator for the American Quakers.⁷⁹ In both December 1937 and February 1938, the NJCSR appealed for more funds to support the children for the foreseeable future.⁸⁰ The December letter signed by Wilfred Roberts made a particularly strong moral case:

The Basque Children must be maintained. Owing to all the propaganda around the subject of their return to Bilbao, the funds for support of the Basque children have been affected in many areas, We are all of us anxious to do all we can to help the refugees who face starvation in Eastern Spain. Many of the mothers and brothers and sisters of our own children are among them; but we cannot do anything like as much as we would wish until the position of the Basque children here is secured; therefore we urge you to make the greatest possible use of the Christmas appeal and to have a big drive for securing a very much greater number of 'adoptions'.⁸¹

Although the NJCSR attempted to ensure stability for the children by not moving them from hostel to hostel, it was not always possible. In November 1938, the 'colony' at Tynemouth was forced to close as the lamentable conditions in the mining communities which had provided most of the finance meant that major sources of funding were drying up. 17 of the 18 boys at the hostel, aged 6-15, and one of their teachers were transferred to Brampton.⁸² One of the boys was seven years old Herminio Martinez who, despite the policy, had moved from Eastleigh to Swansea and then to Tynemouth before being sent to Brampton.⁸³

The protracted repatriation revealed a weakness resulting from the government's insistence that education should be in the hands of the NJCSR. The limited education that was on offer, and the limitations on English-language teaching and the lack of opportunities for the children to assimilate, became apparent. 'The position of the [Spanish] children is in many ways less advantageous than that of those under the care of the World Movement [for the care of Children from Germany] who saw that those who arrived without parents were absorbed by the education system and consequently they learnt English and were able to assimilate more easily'.⁸⁴ As the hostels closed, the remaining children were increasingly distributed around private homes where their lack of Englishness left some of them vulnerable.

By the end of May 1939, 2726 children and some of the adult teachers and helpers had been repatriated leaving 1155 children and the majority of the adults in the United Kingdom.⁸⁵ There was a particular problem for the adults as in 1936 Franco had passed the Law of Political Responsibilities as a vehicle for the wholesale imprisonment or execution of Republican supporters, which included most of the adults. The teacher at the Catholic Nazareth House in Carlisle chose to emigrate to America rather than return to Spain with the children.⁸⁶

The closure of Brampton hostel

Children continued to live at Brampton until the summer of 1939. In May of that year the civil war ended and on 19 May Franco staged his victory parade in Madrid. Even though Franco made it clear that there would be no magnanimity towards the

defeated and that he saw the repression as a long-term undertaking, repatriation for children whose parents could be found was accelerated with a consequent closure of hostels.⁸⁷ In the first fortnight of June, seven hostels closed, leaving 33 open. Six more were listed as likely to close. Included in this group was Brampton which at that time accommodated 42 boys and girls.⁸⁸ The children continued to give concerts in Westmorland during the summer of 1939. The Westmorland Committee for Spanish Relief raised £107 at these events which, given the imminent closure of Brampton, was used to finance seven Spanish refugees to be sent from the camps in the south of France to Mexico.⁸⁹

Repatriations continued during the summer of 1939, and in August or thereabouts Brampton hostel closed. The Annual Report for the NJCSR and its associated committees was published in September and provides an overview of the situation at the start of the Second World War. In a covering letter Wilfred Roberts wrote that the NJCSR was still responsible for about 600 children who could not be repatriated. He drew attention to the £115,000 which had been raised for the children in the previous seven months, and asked for further funds not only for the children, but also the other causes supported by the NJCSR. The Annual Report reminded well-wishers that 'these six or seven hundred who will be left in England are thus entirely dependent upon us for their existence, and the obligation on us to maintain them is stronger now than ever, since so many of their parents are now [refugees] on French soil'. The report went on to say that funds, clothes and private hospitality were now urgently needed.⁹⁰

In October the central office sent advice to all supporting groups as to what to do now that Britain was at war. In a circular it suggested that:

As funds at the disposal of the NJCSR are very low, and are largely earmarked for the support of adult refugees ... we suggest that homes should make strenuous and immediate efforts to place their children in private families...and to send out a special appeal to their local supporters and adopters ... and emergency appeals for clothes should be made locally as soon as possible.⁹¹

On the closure of the hostel the Brampton children had either been transferred to other hostels or fostered by sympathetic families. The testimonies show that Scotland received some of the children, but it is unclear to what extent foster homes were found in Cumbria. Herminio Martinez was transferred to the Margate 'colony' and Fausto Garcia to the hostel at Montrose. On its closure he was boarded out in Consett, the only Spanish boy in the area.⁹² Valentín Sagasti Torrano was fostered by a Glasgow family 'sympathetic to the cause of Socialism and to the plight of the Spanish refugees'.⁹³ Agustina Pérez San José with her sister and brother also went to Glasgow, before finding herself evacuated with her school to Gatehouse of Fleet.⁹⁴ Alfredo Ruiz López and his brother Luis were sent to Coventry and Glasgow respectively, the former quickly finding work in an engineering firm before joining the Fleet Air Arm at the start of the Second World War.⁹⁵ When the last ship left for Spain in July 1940 some 470 children were left in Britain.⁹⁶ The Annual Reports of the NJCSR for 1940 and 1943 show that three hostels remained open, but that the majority of the remaining children and young adults were fostered, and many of them were in training or had apprenticeships.⁹⁷ After 1945 some of the children (now young adults) chose to return to their families in Spain, while others remained in Britain. When the Basque

Children's Committee was finally dissolved in 1951 there were 270 still living in this country.⁹⁸

The Cumbrian public and refugees in the 1930s

Perhaps the most significant consequence of the regionalisation of the Basque refugee crisis was the way in which ordinary people across the country became involved with the children themselves, with issues of refugee policy and with the politics of the crises which were creating refugees in the first place. Myers makes this point well:

The policy of dispersal meant that cities, towns and villages right across Britain formed committees to support refugee children. In doing so, they also reconfigured local communities, opening them to refugees, establishing concrete links with a foreign country and culture and, despite the mostly temporary stay of the children, establishing a rarely recognised cosmopolitanism.⁹⁹

In Cumberland and Westmorland the public's awareness grew not only through the arrival of the Basque children and the reporting of the concerts, which received considerable publicity, but also through other activities of the various local relief committees as well as the return of volunteers who had served in the International Brigade. In June 1937, the *Westmorland Gazette* reported on the return of Harry Butterworth from Kendal who had fought on a number of fronts in Spain before contracting a fever and returning home to convalesce.¹⁰⁰ In November 1937 the Duchess of Atholl, the Bishop of Carlisle and Wilfred Roberts MP spoke before an invited audience of over 100 religious, civic and county leaders at Dalston Hall. They explained the background to the evacuation of the 4000 children and addressed many of the issues which exercised the public at the time. The bishop focused on the moral and Christian duty of standing by these child evacuees, and stressed that as a non-interventionist he saw no issue with being involved with the rescue of these children as the policy was apolitical. He addressed the issue of their perceived bad behaviour but was not convinced that it was anything more than high spirits by a small number of the children. The Duchess emphasised that the NJCSR was a non-political organisation with wide support. She said that a policy of repatriation had in a small way already begun, and that as more information came from Spain as to whether parents were in a position to support their children, the process would no doubt speed-up. Wilfred Roberts spoke to the financial probity with which the Brampton hostel had been run, and his father Charles confirmed that costs were slightly less than Cumberland County Council spent on children in its care, and spoke of the need 'for financial assistance to continue the maintenance of the hundred Basque children now staying in the two counties'. A collection at the end of the meeting amounted to £67 – 13s – 1d.¹⁰¹

The following month saw Wilfred Roberts write to his constituents in an optimistic tone: 'The Spanish people maintain their magnificent resistance ... I hardly dare to hope that the democratic forces in Spain may in the end win against the Dictators'.¹⁰² In January 1938, Leonard Muscroft, 'the driver of the first bus to go from Carlisle to aid in evacuating refugees in Spain' was presented with a cheque for £10 at a meeting of the Carlisle Spanish Relief Committee, during which a Miss McColgan, who had been working in Spain for the previous nine months under the National Joint Committee described conditions there – an event reported in detail in the *Carlisle Journal*.¹⁰³ Films from Spain were regularly shown around the communities

of Cumbria, for example at Brampton in December 1937, in Carlisle in January 1938 and Kendal in February 1939.¹⁰⁴ In early July 1938 the Duchess of Atholl wrote a letter published in local papers asking for people to provide holiday opportunities for the Spanish women teachers who had worked without a break since mid-1937. One person who responded was Catherine Marshall of Hawse End, who by the 1930s had become very involved with refugee work especially in relation to events in central Europe. She offered four Spanish teachers from Leeds and Wakefield a holiday at her home on the shore of Derwentwater.¹⁰⁵ In 1939 the League of Nations Union arranged a holiday for German, Czech and Spanish children alongside a group of English children at Forest Side hostel at Grasmere.¹⁰⁶ It is noticeable that in Cumbria, as elsewhere, there was overwhelming good will towards the refugee children. In some cities, such as Birmingham, fascist elements proclaimed in letters columns of local papers 'Britons before Basques', but there is no evidence of similar sentiments in Cumbria.¹⁰⁷

By 1939 the Basque children were by no means the only refugee group being supported by, and hosted in, Cumbria. During 1938 the children at Thomlinson School in Wigton 'had shown [their] sympathy with world affairs by contributing generously to the Basque Children and Czech Relief Funds'.¹⁰⁸ In February of 1939 an event, chaired by the Mayor of Kendal, was organised by the Kendal and District Committee for Spanish Relief. The Mayor began his speech by commenting that Kendal and District had raised over £800 in recent months for relief in Czechoslovakia and the refugees who had fled the Sudetenland as a result of the German occupation. He was therefore conscious that asking for continued support for Spanish relief was likely to be seen as something of an imposition. Attendance at the event was 'moderate'. Perhaps compassion fatigue was setting in – but despite that £42 was raised for Spanish causes.¹⁰⁹ Wilfred Roberts continued to champion the cause of refugees, vociferously opposing government policy over the internment of enemy aliens in a debate in the House of Commons in July 1940.¹¹⁰ As a news story the Basque children were superseded by the arrival of refugees from central Europe in the late thirties, and by the evacuation of thousands of children from British cities in September 1939.¹¹¹ In 1940 Kapp and Mynatt likened the evacuation of the Basque children to a dress rehearsal for the arrival of the central European refugees:

Local committees owed their origin in many areas to the Spanish Civil War. ... English kindness and practical good sense came to the rescue in providing cash, clothes, furniture, lessons, advice on local conditions and the various other means of making the children's lives happier and more homely. As in so many other matters, in this experience also, the Spanish Civil War proved to be the 'try-out'. By the time the Austrian *Anschluss*, the cession of the Sudeten areas and the extradition of refugees from Czechoslovakia had created a refugee problem of proportions unknown in Britain, men and women were already mobilised in the localities who were experienced in working together and whose sympathies were wholly with the refugees.¹¹²

Cumbria's experience in hosting the Basque children meant that there was a reservoir of good will and considerable expertise that could be deployed to support new groups of asylum seekers. How Cumbria absorbed these newcomers while at the same time being at war will be the subject of subsequent articles.

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Notes

1. The title is a combination of words spoken in advance of the arrival of the Basque children by Lady Cecilia Roberts and reported in *Carlisle Journal*, 1 June 1937; and the headline reporting on their arrival in *Carlisle Journal*, 22 June 1937.
2. The evacuation of the children from Bilbao is hardly mentioned or not referred to at all by the authors of recent histories of the Spanish Civil War: H. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London, 2003); A. Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (London, 2006); P. Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth Century Spain* (London, 2012). For specific reference to the refugees in Cumbria and in particular the role of the labour movement, see D. Watson, 'Politics and Humanitarian Aid: Basque Refugees in the North East and Cumbria during the Spanish Civil War', *North East History*, 36 (2005), 8-41. See also J. Fyrth, 'The Aid Movement in Britain 1936-39', *History Workshop*, 35 (Spring 1993), 153-164.
3. K. Myers, 'History Migration and Childhood: Basque Refugee Children in 1930s Britain', *Family and Community History*, Vol. 3/2, November 2000, 147.
4. I am grateful to the referee of this article for drawing my attention to the ethnic composition of the child evacuees. There is some discussion of this in H. Davies, *Fleeing Franco* (Cardiff, 2011), 12. Davies points out that Basque speakers amongst the children were so uncommon that when Basque was spoken it was commented upon.
5. TNA, MH57/322: Letter from the Duchess of Atholl to Stanley Baldwin, 6 May 1937.
6. Wilfred Roberts was Patron of the International Brigade Dependents and Wounded Aid Committee, and Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee for Spain; A. Jackson, *British Women and the Spanish Civil War* (London, 2002), 245-250.
7. T. Buchanan, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* (Cambridge 1991), 183.
8. TNA, MH57/322: Letter from Wilfred Roberts to Stanley Baldwin, 6 May 1937.
9. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, SCW/14/8i; TNA: FO37/121372; 'only private funds for the operation to preserve the principle of non-intervention and to prevent Her Majesty's Government being exposed to similar demands in other causes'. This was a very small number compared with the refugees that were taken in by France and Russia.
10. Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 661. The numbers were 3861 children, 98 women teachers, 120 *señoritas* and 15 priests: see T. Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge 1997), 111-116.
11. University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre: Wilfred Roberts papers, Roberts to Lord Allen, 3 November 1937.
12. TNA, MH57/322: Letter from the Duchess of Atholl to Stanley Baldwin, 6 May 1937.
13. Y. Kapp and M. Mynatt, *British Policy and the Refugees 1933-1941*, with a foreword by C. Brinson (London, 1997), xx.
14. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, LP/SCW/14/5i.
15. Cumberland County Council, Minutes of Council and Committees, 17 March 1937, 146; *Carlisle Journal*, 28 May 1937. Another workhouse was used at Thame in Oxfordshire: TNA, MH57/323.
16. *Carlisle Journal*, 11 June 1937; *Penrith Observer*, 15 June 1937. One of the first to 'sponsor' a child was Miss Thompson of Workington who guaranteed five shillings per week, *Cumberland News*, 12 June 1937.
17. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, SCW/14/23.
18. For an analysis of the Welsh valleys connections see Davies, *Fleeing Franco*, 19-28. Any importation of Spanish iron ore into Cumbria had largely ended by the 1930s, and had in any case not generated any significant population movement.
19. *Carlisle Journal*, 30 November 1937: report of a speech by the Countess of Atholl, Chair of NJCSR, made at Dalston Hall; Jackson, *British Women*, 264 (note 79); TNA, HO213/288.
20. *Carlisle Journal*, 1 June 1937.
21. *Carlisle Journal*, 1 June 1937; *Carlisle Journal*, 8 June 1937.
22. *Carlisle Journal*, 1 October 1937.
23. Watson, 'Basque Refugees in the North East and Cumbria', 14
24. *Cumberland News*, 12 June 1937.
25. *Carlisle Journal*, 11 June 1937; *Carlisle Journal*, 22 June 1937.
26. *Westmorland Gazette*, 12 June 1937.

27. The balance between boys and girls is unclear. The BCC refers to 57 girls and 43 boys aged between six and ten (Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, SCW/14/19). The *Carlisle Journal* gave the numbers as 33 girls and 67 boys, *Carlisle Journal*, 22 June 1937. The Ministry of Health inspector referred to 34 girls and 68 boys on 2 July 1937 (TNA, MH57/323).
28. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilfrid_Roberts (2/7/2018).
29. *Carlisle Journal*, 22 June 1937.
30. Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 436.
31. *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail*, 24 June 1937.
32. *Carlisle Journal*, 2 July 1937.
33. For Currock House see *Carlisle Journal*, 23 July 1937 and *Yorkshire Post*, 22 July 1937. The latter says that the children at Currock House were six of the badly behaved children from the Scarborough hostel. For Ambleside see *Daily Mirror* 26 October 1937 (refers to 25 Brampton children being transferred there), *Carlisle Journal* 30 November 1937 and *Westmorland Gazette*, 28 January 1939. An Ambleside resident, Joan Newby, remembers that they stayed for a short time and local children were encouraged to play with them in the park. The Basque children did not integrate into the community as they were looked after by Spanish adults and a lack of a common language made communication difficult (pers. comm. 27/9/2018). Fairfield Guest House is now Fairfield Hall of Residence of the University of Cumbria.
34. The weekly cost of 50 children and six staff had been calculated at £39; Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, SCW/14/25. High Cross Castle accommodated Czech refugees in 1939-40.
35. Jackson, *British Women*, 69-70 and Note 115. The quotation comes from Frida Stewart's unpublished memoirs, 176. She was appointed by the BCC as Concert Secretary, and she stayed with the Roberts' at Boothby and called it 'a great Liberal house, where even the soap in the bathroom was stamped 'The Country Needs Liberalism'.
36. TNA, MH57/323.
37. *The Scotsman*, 31 July 1937.
38. *Carlisle Journal*, 8 June 1937.
39. TNA, MH57/323.
40. Winifred Nicholson (*née* Roberts) was the wife of the artist Ben Nicholson and a successful painter in her own right.
41. N. Benjamin (ed.), *Recuerdos: Basque Children Refugees in Great Britain* (Oxford, 2007). The testimonies of Alfonso Ruiz López (144-47) and Agustina Pérez San José (126-130).
42. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: The testimony of Valentín Sagasti Torrano (151-55).
43. The log books for the Brampton Boys' and Brampton Girls' schools make no reference to the Basque children: CAS(C), DS2/1/6 and DS2/1/8.
44. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: Testimony of Agustina Pérez San José (126-130).
45. CAS(C), DS2/1/6 and DS2/1/8: entries for 12 and 13 December 1938.
46. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: Testimony of Ángeles Cubas Piñera (42-3).
47. CAS(C), DS2/1/6 and DS2/1/8.
48. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: Testimony of Agustina Pérez San José (126-130) and of Valentín Sagasti Torrano (151-55).
49. TNA, MH57/323.
50. Bill Williams, *Jews and Other Foreigners: Manchester and the Rescue of the Victims of European Fascism 1933-40* (Manchester, 2011), 119-127.
51. TNA: MH57/327. A memo of 6 December 1937.
52. *Manchester Guardian*, 22 July 1937: quoted in Williams, *Jews and Other Foreigners*, 123.
53. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, WG/SPA/255.
54. CAS(C), CC/4/5/57: correspondence relating to Brampton Basque Children's Hostel.
55. Roberts became Chairman of Cumberland County Council in 1938.
56. CAS(C), CC/4/5/57: correspondence relating to Brampton Basque Children's Hostel.
57. *Daily Mirror*, 26 October 1937.
58. TNA, MH57/323.
59. K. Myers, 'The Ambiguities of Aid and Agency: Representing Refugee Children in England 1937-38', *Cultural and Social History*, 6:1 (2009), 38-9.
60. *Carlisle Journal*, 30 November 1937.
61. *Carlisle Journal*, 1 October 1937.

62. The BCC received its first requests for 'children's money-raising performances' on 20 July 1937: Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, SCW/14/20.
63. A. Bell, *Only for Three Months* (Norwich, 2007), 94.
64. *Carlisle Journal*, 16 July 1937. See also CAS(C) SPC16/80: The document recording the gift of land is dated 17 August 1937, so the opening event seems a little premature. Basil Murray was a Liberal politician and journalist, an anti-Fascist and supporter of the republican side in Spain. He died in Spain in 1937 in mysterious circumstances.
65. *Carlisle Journal*, 23 July 1937.
66. For example concerts took place at Alston (*Penrith Observer* 1 February 1938); Penrith (*Penrith Observer*, 20 September 1938).
67. *Carlisle Journal*, 26 November 1937.
68. *Westmorland Gazette*, 28 January 1939. A similar evening was held in Windermere a few days later: *Westmorland Gazette*, 4 February 1939.
69. *Westmorland Gazette*, 8 July 1939,
70. *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 1 February 1939; *Wigton Advertiser*, 17 September 1938; *Penrith Observer*, 20 September 1938.
71. *Westmorland Gazette*, 8 July 1939.
72. *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*, 21 December 1938.
73. *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 16 March 1939.
74. The first time repatriation was discussed by the BCC was on 5 July 1937: Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, SCW/14/3i.
75. For a discussion of the issues surrounding repatriation see: P. Anderson, 'The Struggle over the Evacuation to the United Kingdom and Repatriation of Basque Refugee Children in the Spanish Civil War: Symbols and Souls', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52:2 (2017), 297-318.
76. University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre Digital collections: 292/946/38/155, Basque Children's Committee Correspondence, Minutes of Joint Executive Committee, 14 December 1937.
77. *Carlisle Journal*, 30 November 1937; Williams, *Jews and Other Foreigners*, 127 and note 218.
78. *Wigton Advertiser*, 15 January 1938. A second group left in March 1938.
79. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: Testimony of Alfonso Ruiz López, 144-47.
80. University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre (MRC) Digital Collections: 292/946/38/162, Basque Children's Committee Correspondence, Circular to supporters, 4 February 1938.
81. University of Warwick, MRC Digital Collections: 292/946/37/12, Appeal, 9 December 1937.
82. *Shields Daily News*, 1 November 1938.
83. Bell, *Three Months*, 101-102.
84. TNA, MH57/323.
85. University of Warwick, MRC Digital Collections: 292/946/38/85, Basque Children's Committee Correspondence, Report on repatriation, June? 1939.
86. Watson, 'Basque Refugees in the North East and Cumbria', 29-30.
87. Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 473.
88. University of Warwick, MRC Digital Collections: 292/946/38/87, Basque Children's Committee Correspondence, Report on Homes and Transfers, June 1939.
89. *Westmorland Gazette*, 15 July 1939. There were concerts at Tebay and Windermere: *Westmorland Gazette*, 8 July 1939; Kendal: *Westmorland Gazette*, 15 July 1939.
90. University of Warwick, MRC Digital Collections: 292/946/38/69, Basque Children's Committee Correspondence, circular, receipts and accounts and Annual Report, September? 1939.
91. University of Warwick, MRC Digital Collections: 292/946/38/73, Basque Children's Committee Correspondence, Circular and Minutes of meeting of 18 September 1939.
92. Bell, *Three Months*, 183.
93. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: Testimony of Valentín Sagasti Torrano (151-55).
94. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: Testimony of Agustina Pérez San José (126-130).
95. Benjamin, *Recuerdos*: Testimony of Alfredo Ruiz López (147-151).
96. Williams, *Jews and Other Foreigners*: 127.
97. University of Warwick, MRC Digital Collections: 292/946/38/24, Basque Children's Committee Correspondence, Annual Reports for 1941 and 1943.
98. Bell, *Three Months*, 222.
99. Myers, 'History, Migration and Childhood', 152.

- ^{100.} *Westmorland Gazette*, 19 June 1937.
- ^{101.} *Carlisle Journal*, 30 November 1937.
- ^{102.} CAS(C), DX2073/2/4: Christmas 1937 letter to Roberts's constituents.
- ^{103.} *Carlisle Journal*, 11 January 1938. The sending of 'eight motor coaches loaded with food and supplies to assist in the evacuation of Madrid' was the first relief action of the NJCSR; *Spain Illustrated*, April 1937.
- ^{104.} *Carlisle Journal*, 24 December 1937; *Carlisle Journal*, 11 January 1938; *Westmorland Gazette*, 4 February 1939. The Brampton showing of *The Defence of Madrid* was organised by the Brampton Labour Party in aid of 'Milk for Spain'.
- ^{105.} *Penrith Observer*, 12 July 1938; CAS(C); DMAR 2/50: correspondence between Miss Marshall and the Leeds and Wakefield Spanish Relief committees in July 1938.
- ^{106.} *Westmorland Gazette*, 18 March 1939.
- ^{107.} *Birmingham Mail*, 23 September, 4, 6, 11 October 1937; quoted in Myers, 'History, Migration and Childhood', 153.
- ^{108.} *Wigton Advertiser*, 22 October 1938.
- ^{109.} *Westmorland Gazette*, 4 February 1939.
- ^{110.} Kapp and Mynatt, *British Policy and the Refugees*, 127.
- ^{111.} T. Buchanan, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, Loss and Memory* (Brighton, 2007), 183.
- ^{112.} Kapp and Mynatt, *British Policy and the Refugees*, 39.

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