

**Letter to BCA'37 UK from Savannah Hawley, University of Cincinnati, Ohio.
Recent visit and talk by Carmen Kilner at Harlaxton Manor**

I am a student at the University of Cincinnati located in Ohio in the United States. I am staying at Harlaxton Manor in Grantham, England as I take a course on the lasting cultural impact of the Spanish Civil War. On May 16, my class was honored to welcome Carmen Kilner from the Association for the UK Basque Children into our classroom for an excellent presentation on the Basque children refugees. I was fascinated to hear Carmen's parents' stories and their contributions to the safety and survival of the Basque children during a time of chaos and mass destruction.

In the United States, the Spanish Civil War is not implemented into the school curriculum. It is astonishing that before this course, most of us, as American students, had never heard of this tragedy nor of the plight of the Basque children, even though we had heard of similar rescue efforts like the Kindertransport in WWII. I was also surprised to hear Carmen explain that lessons about the Spanish Civil War are not widely implemented into the British or Spanish education system, either. Carmen informed us that the people of Spain generally did not speak of the war, in part, because of the extreme censorship that prevailed in Spain to protect its foreign image even after the death of Francisco Franco in 1975.

It is important and necessary that the Association for the UK Basque Children continues to deliver the stories of those involved in the Spanish Civil War, as these events can be relevant to what is going on in the world today. In situations where the lives of innocent civilians are in danger, we must consider the responsibility of those who have the means to help. Learning about the Spanish Civil War has been an eye-opening experience. It is fortunate that, as historian Tom Buchanan has said, "the essence of Spanish culture has survived the trauma of civil war and its bitter aftermath.

Savannah Hawley







Savannah Hawley at Guernica