



From left: Niños from the colonies at Margate, Bray Court and Langham.

## 70th anniversary

# In their own words

*We thought that this 70th anniversary issue of the Newsletter should contain articles written by the Basque children themselves when they were young for the various papers they produced in the different colonies. These two articles appeared in Amistad, the paper they brought out in the early 1940s.*

## Why we left Spain

by Julio A (Amistad No. 15)

On 21 May 1937 we left Spain bound for England, fleeing from Fascism. We had to leave Spain, our Fatherland, and our parents, brothers and friends to escape from the peril that Fascism represents.

We had to leave Spain because though children, Fascism would not respect our lives, because our fathers and our brothers fought against them in an unequal struggle, that even though the world doesn't know it, has not finished yet. We came to England representing the Spanish people and their cause, even if we didn't know it then, for we had to show the English people that the "reds" were not savages and barbarians that Franco's propaganda made them believe. Four years has elapsed since then, and though at the beginning the people thought we were uncivilised, at last we have shown the English people that the difference between Spain and England is not much more than the language, and during this time we have made new friends for the cause of the Spanish people.

Many of those who came with us have returned to Spain, and by the letters they write we know that the work they started here has

not been abandoned, and will never be so, no matter which part of the world we find ourselves in.

Those who returned to Spain, as much as those who today remain in England, are very thankful to the English people and Spaniards in this country for the help they have given us during these four years.

## "Why haven't you gone back to Spain?"

by two 16 year-old girls from the Barnet colony (Amistad No. 1)

A great many English people do not know the real cause which keeps us in this country and they want to know why we do not return to our families, now that the war in Spain is over.

But they do not understand that the situation of our country is now in worse conditions than during the period of the war. Because, if during the war we suffered bombardments and lack of food, clothes etc., at least we had the relief of finding ourselves with our families.

Now there is an even greater lack of things in Spain, and moreover we find ourselves separated from our families, for many of them are dead, others are prisoners and there are many who are themselves refugees in France.

It would be horrible now to return to Spain and find ourselves alone and without help of any kind. But we are full of confidence in the English people who up to now have helped us so much, and we sincerely hope they will continue to help us as in the past, and help us to carry our heavy burden of unhappiness as easily as possible.

Our own wish is that the day will soon arrive when all we refugees will be able to return to our countries, and that the time of wars will be ended.

## Goodbye...

*These farewells, both expressed by those who are going back to Spain and by those who are staying in Britain, were written in the Cambria*

*House Journal, the paper produced by the Caerleon colony, in the June 1939 issue.*

### ...by one who is going

After spending two years of happiness and comradeship in Britain, two years during which we have been separated from our parents by this horrible war, a few days ago we had the sad news that 17 of us were to leave on the 21st of this month (May).

It is a great joy to go back to our parents, but it is a sad thing to have to part after living together like brothers and sisters for two years.

Still, however far away I may be, I shall never forget the friends I am leaving behind in Britain.

In the name of the 17 of us who are going away, I want to say Goodbye, and thank you for your hospitality. I want especially to thank the Welsh miners for the great help they have given us.

So, Goodbye, and thank you for all you have done.

### ...by some of those who are staying

● What a joy to the children to see their parents! I envy them because they can say "We are going to Spain", but I am sorry for them because they are going to territory governed by Franco. That is a horrible thing to think of... I cannot write any more, when I think that two happy years have gone by, without our thinking that such a sad day would come. We thought we should all be able to go back together to a free Spain.

● Our friends are glad that they are going back to their loved ones, their parents and their brothers and sisters, but they are sorry they are not going back to our Spain, and also they are sorry to part with these good people who have been so kind to us.

● This and the occasion when we said Goodbye to our parents are the two saddest farewells in my life, and by a coincidence the two days are exactly two years apart.

● Those of us who remain behind do not know where we shall go. There are some of us who cannot go back because their parents are in prison. If they went back, they would be destitute and despised...