

QUOTATIONS FROM PEACE NEWS "UNDER THE OAK TREE"

The most striking thing to a visitor or a newcomer to Basque House is the friendliness of the children here. Every visitor is welcomed with smiles and waves of the hand, and the parting guest has a royal send-off, with "Goodbye, goodbye" from all sides. With complete unselfconsciousness the children accept strangers and, with a natural charm which far exceeds any art, make them welcome. They are almost unfailingly cheerful and always ready to help with any work to be done. Some of them indeed are so zealous that we have to take care that they get a fair share of all the pleasures going, otherwise they would spend too much time helping with the cooking, washing and cleaning.

Bella Hooper, "Under the Oak Tree", Peace News, 28th August 1937

Five miles out of Colchester on the Ipswich Road a fine old oak in the middle of a grass triangle marks a turning on the left leading to the hamlet of Langham. This local landmark is known as the Langham Oak. Following the turning (and bearing first right then left) for about half a mile, the traveller comes on a solidly built, comfortable-looking house of grey stone standing in finely-kept grounds and called "The Adelphi Centre." Here Middleton Murry's community for the study and practice of the new Socialism has been in action for a year. Now the whole house is being surrendered to the family of 29 Basque girls and 24 Basque boys for which the P.P.U. has recently made itself responsible. Before it became the Adelphi Centre ("The Adelphi" is the monthly magazine, now well-known to pacifists, which Murry started in 1924) the name of that house was – and in the locality still is – "The Oaks". As you approach it you realise why: for in front of the house and overshadowing the road is one of the most majestic oak trees I have ever seen. So it seems strangely fitting that these little Basques, whose own ancient oak was one of the few things left standing in Guernica, should have come to Langham; and that the house which is to be their temporary home should link in its name the Basque and the English tree.

Dorothy Plowman, "Under the Oak Tree", Peace News, 12th June 1937