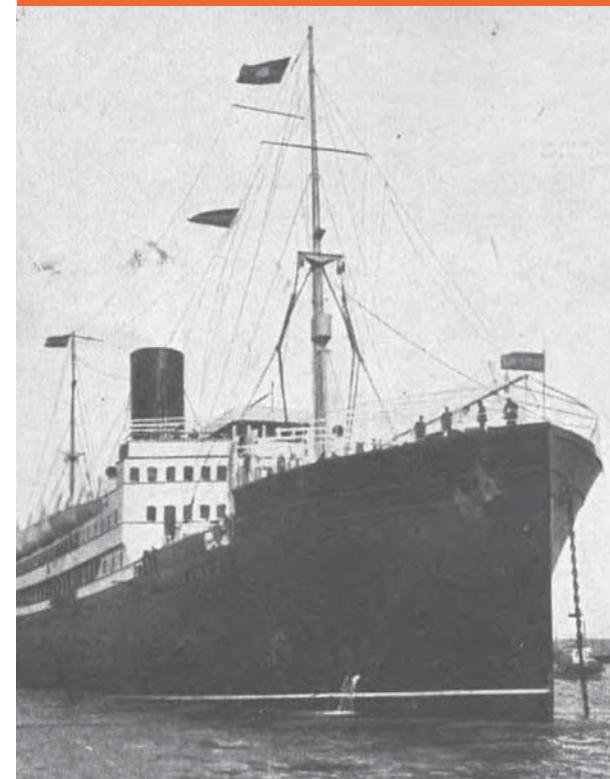


**1937
2007 BILBAO
SOUTHAMPTON**

CONMEMORACIÓN COMMEMORATION



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**SOUTHAMPTON SOLENT UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE CENTRE
CENTRO DE CONFERENCIAS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD SOLENT DE SOUTHAMPTON**

26.5.2007

11:15 – 12:15

Registration, refreshments and viewing of the exhibition

Inscripción, refrescos y apertura de la exhibición

12:30 – 13:40

Speeches, followed by the unveiling of a commemorative plaque

Discursos tras los cuales se descubrirá una placa conmemorativa

13:45 – 15:45

Lunch

Comida

16:00 – 17:00

Showing of the new edition of the film “The Guernica Children” by Steve Bowles

Proyección de la nueva edición de la película documental “Los Niños de Guernica” de Steve Bowles

17:15

Closing speech, followed by a final chance to see the exhibition

Discurso final después del cual habrá una última ocasión para ver la exhibición

18:30

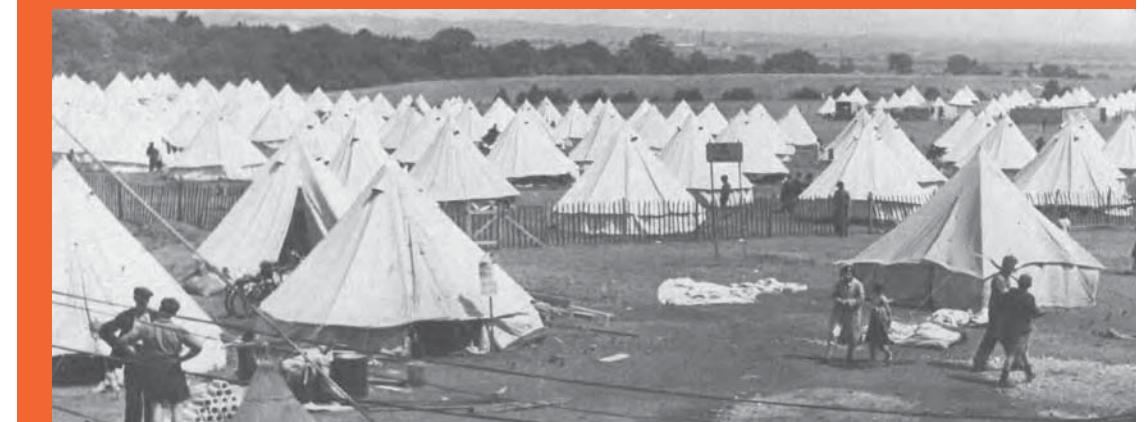
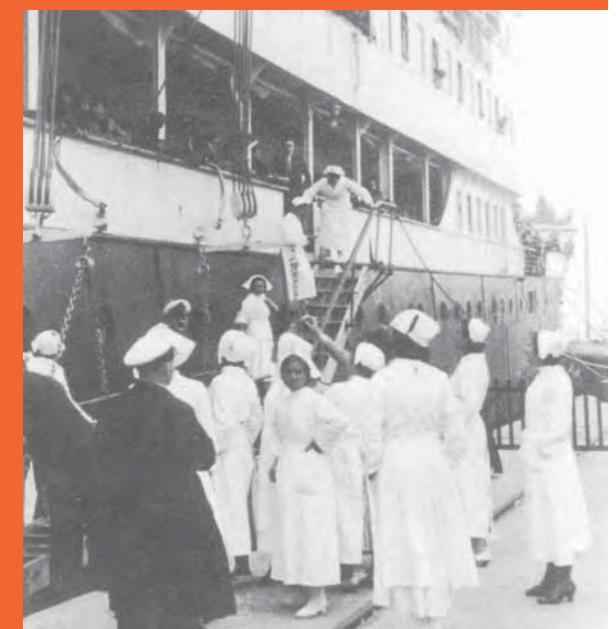
End of the event

Fin del evento



● Above left: There were tearful farewells on the quayside at Santurce, near Bilbao, as the children boarded the *Habana*. Above right: The destruction of Guernica by Franco's Nazi German allies provoked outrage around the world and forced the British government to allow the refugee children to enter the country. Right: Nurses prepare to embark on the *Habana* for the voyage to Southampton. Below: The reception camp at North Stoneham, Eastleigh, near Southampton.

● Arriba a la izquierda: Lágrimas en la despedida de los niños al subir a bordo del *Habana* en el puerto de Santurce, cerca de Bilbao. Arriba a la derecha: La destrucción de Guernica por los nazis alemanes aliados de Franco causó gran indignación a nivel internacional y forzó al gobierno británico a que aceptase la entrada de los niños refugiados en el país. Derecha: Las enfermeras a punto de embarcar para el viaje a Southampton. Debajo: Recepción en el campamento de North Stoneham, Eastleigh, próximo a Southampton.



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The destruction of Guernica in April 1937, which inspired Pablo Picasso to paint his masterpiece of the same name, also brought nearly 4,000 children to Britain as refugees from the Spanish Civil War.

Public opinion was outraged by the bombing of Guernica and other Basque towns by the Condor Legion on the orders of General Franco, who in July 1936 had launched a military rebellion against Spain's elected government. A reluctant British government was thus persuaded to accept the refugees, though it insisted that it would not pay a penny towards their upkeep. The arrival of the children was the biggest ever single influx of refugees into Britain.

There were 3,826 *ninos* (children) on board the steamship *Habana* when it docked in Southampton from Bilbao on 23 May 1937. Accompanying them were 95 teachers, 15 priests and 120 nurses and *señoritas* (volunteer helpers).

The newly formed Basque Children's Committee was entrusted with the care of the children. On arrival at Southampton, the refugees were taken to a camp at North Stoneham. From there they were dispersed around the UK to various "colonies" staffed and financed wholly by individual volunteers, church groups and trade unions.

After the fall of Bilbao and Franco's capture of the rest of northern Spain in the summer of 1937 the process of reuniting the *ninos* with their parents began. Because of the repression in Francoist Spain, the Basque Children's Committee had to vet carefully all requests for the children to be returned. By the late 1940s most of the children had been reunited with their families, either in Spain or in exile.

Over 250 *ninos* settled permanently here, including orphans as well as over-14s who chose to stay. Many of the adults who came on the *Habana* also remained in Britain.

La destrucción de Guernica en abril de 1937 no solo inspiró a Pablo Picasso a crear su obra maestra, que lleva el mismo nombre, sino que también determinó que unos 4000 niños llegaran a Gran Bretaña como refugiados de la Guerra Civil Española.

El bombardeo de Guernica y de otras ciudades vascas por la Legión Cóndor bajo las órdenes del General Franco, quien en julio de 1936 se había alzado en rebelión militar contra el gobierno español elegido por el pueblo, causó tremenda indignación pública. Esto fue determinante para que el gobierno británico, que hasta ese momento se había mostrado poco dispuesto a aceptar refugiados, se decidiera a admitirlos, pero insistiendo en que no contribuiría ni un penique de cara a su manutención. La llegada de los niños supuso el mayor contingente individual de refugiados jamás llegado a Gran Bretaña.

Cuando el buque de vapor *Habana* tocó puerto en Southampton al final de su viaje desde Bilbao el 23 de mayo de 1937 había 3826 niños a bordo. Les acompañaban 95 maestros, 15 curas y 120 enfermeras y señoritas (ayudantes voluntarias).

La responsabilidad y cuidado de los niños recayeron sobre el recién formado Comité de los Niños Vascos. Al llegar a Southampton los refugiados fueron trasladados a un campamento en North Stoneham. Desde allí los niños fueron dispersados a diferentes "colonias" distribuidas por todo el Reino Unido cuyo financiamiento y funcionamiento corrieron en todo momento a cargo de voluntarios, tanto individuos como grupos de varias iglesias y sindicatos.

Tras la caída de Bilbao y tras haber logrado Franco controlar el resto del norte de España en el verano de 1937 comenzó la tarea de reunir a los niños con sus padres. En vista de la represión franquista que se desencadenó en toda España, el Comité de los Niños Vascos tuvo que vetar cuidadosamente todas las peticiones de repatriación que se hicieron. A finales de los años cuarenta la mayor parte de los niños ya se había reencontrado con sus padres, en España o en el exilio.

Unos 250 niños se establecieron permanentemente aquí, incluyendo a huérfanos y a los mayores de 14 años que decidieron quedarse. Muchos de los adultos que les acompañaron en el *Habana* también se quedaron en Gran Bretaña.



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“ When they heard that there would be an evacuation to Great Britain, my parents didn't think twice about it and rushed to put my name down. Parents queued up to register their children. This contrasts with the idea later circulated by Franco's propaganda that the children had been torn from the arms of their parents and taken away.”

“ Saying goodbye was terrible. At Santurce the platform was thronging with parents and children. The moment came to take our leave: my father hugged us and said he would write often. I could see his glasses steaming up – it was the first time I'd ever seen my father cry.”

“ As night came on, lots of children started crying and calling for their mothers. I remember next to me a little boy of about six or seven calling for his mother. I said: ‘Shush, she'll be here soon,’ and he looked up at me and said: ‘Do you know my mother?’ I think I said: ‘Yes’, whereupon he stayed next to me all night. I think he felt protected.”

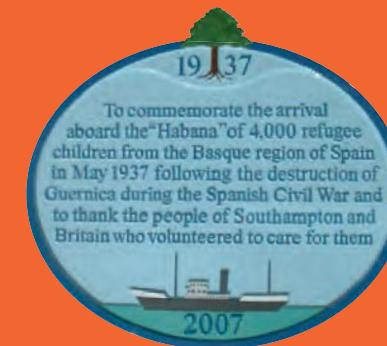
“ I had lost my sister Carmen on the *Habana*, and was only reunited with her when we were filing up for a medical examination. It was a very traumatic meeting. She was found to have a head full of lice and her lovely long hair had been shaved off. At the sight of me she burst into uncontrollable tears and all she could ask was what would *Mamá* say if she were to see her now, when her last words to us had been to look after our hair and keep it clean.”

“ Seeing the strange hats the ladies were wearing and the double-decker buses made us laugh and realise how different life was in this land. We were taken to the camp at Eastleigh, and when we saw the fields full of tents, we said: ‘Indians!’ We had never seen a tent in our lives, let alone thought of sleeping in one.”

Photos/Fotos: Juan J Moreno

ASOCIACIÓN DE LOS NIÑOS VASCOS DEL '37 DEL REINO UNIDO BASQUE CHILDREN OF '37 ASSOCIATION UK

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To commemorate the arrival aboard the "Habana" of 4,000 refugee children from the Basque region of Spain in May 1937 following the destruction of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War and to thank the people of Southampton and Britain who volunteered to care for them

● Commemorative plaque to be unveiled today.

● Placa conmemorativa que será descubierta hoy.



**www.basquechildren.org
+44 (0)1865 459 744**
Registered Charity no. 1115920

With thanks to all those who have made donations towards this event, including:

En agradecimiento a todos los que han contribuido con donaciones a la celebración de este evento, incluyendo a las siguientes entidades:

- Ministerio de la Presidencia
- Embajada de España: Consejería de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales
- Gobierno Vasco / Eusko Jaurlaritza
- University of Southampton
- The Cooperative Society
- A2 Fruit Ltd



Organising committee Comité de organización

Natalia Benjamin, Jim Jump, Carmen Kilner, John Kilner, Herminio Martínez, Manuel Moreno, Alicia Pozo-Gutiérrez

Brochure designed and produced by Jim Jump; translations by Alicia Pozo-Gutiérrez; printed with the assistance of the University of Southampton.
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