

Basque Children in Sheffield 1937:

the story of the Colony at Froggatt, Derbyshire, and the support given to child refugees of the Spanish Civil War by the people of Sheffield.



'...come to the cook house door' girls ringing the bell to call the Basque children to a meal. Sheffield Colony, Froggatt Edge Guest House.

Simon Martínez
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Sheffield Colony
Christian Holiday Fellowship
Froggatt Edge Guest House

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Introduction

Eighty years ago this year in 1936 the legally elected Republican government in Spain was challenged by a military uprising which led to the three years of the Civil War. The population who supported the government are termed Republicans and the supporters of the uprising Nationalists. The Nationalists employed terror as a policy. This included executions of supporters of the Republic, bombing of civilian areas, and the blockade of ports to reduce government controlled areas to starvation and restrict their freedom to import arms and armaments.

By March 1937 the Nationalist advance had reached the Basque region. The towns of Durango and Guernica and other minor villages of no strategic significance were bombed by planes of the German air force's Condor Legion, the port of Bilbao was blockaded, and the civilian population of that city was experiencing hunger and the terror arising from both the daily bombing of civilian areas, and fear of summary trial and execution should the city fall to the Nationalists.ⁱⁱ

The response of Sheffield, which was a large city famous for its armament industries and had a Labour Council, was complex. There was a public campaign to support the Republican government including rallies, meetings, street collections to raise money and send food and medical aid to Spain to support the government, there were volunteers from the Communist Party and Independent Labour Party who travelled clandestinely to Spain to join the International Brigade, but there was also a humanitarian response to provide

shelter to children who were evacuated to escape the war waged against civilians as a means of war.

This article is a collection of the materials held by Sheffield Libraries Archives and by the Basque Children of '37 Association about the 25 children aged 7 to 15 years and one accompanying teacher who arrived at Sheffield Station on the 20th October 1937 en route for the Holiday Fellowship Guest House at Froggatt, near the still existing Chequers Inn. The story begins in 1936 with the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain, continues with the agitation for support of the Republican government nationally and in Sheffield, and the campaign to allow the Basque children to come to Britain, the arrival of the children, the humanitarian effort to support them, and what happened to them when the colony closed.

My interest in these events is three fold. Firstly, my father Enrique Martínez Baranda arrived in Southampton on the ship '*Habana*' on the 23rd of May 1937 as one of the Basque children evacuated. He was 12 years old and travelled in a party of 3860 children alongside his brothers Juan Antonio and Tomás. Secondly, Sheffield has been my home since 1979 and I am proud of its tradition of internationalism and humanitarianism. Finally the story of the 25 Basque children who were accommodated in the beautiful countryside of the Derbyshire Peak District supported by the humanitarian efforts of the people of my adopted city had not been recorded.

The election of the Republican government and the Nationalist uprising

The 1930's were a turbulent time in Spanish history. Following the dictatorship years of Primo de Rivera where the king was still head of state elections were held in 1931 which saw the election of a broadly centre left government which then became a republic with a president on the abdication of King Alfonso XIII.

This new liberalising government introduced: social reforms largely bringing a staunchly conservative role for women in line with the rest of Europe; educational reforms which introduced universal education and a secularised system from what had been a sphere of life dominated by the Catholic Church; and proposed land reform to tackle chronic seasonal under employment in the countryside. On the fracturing of the agreement between centre left and some of the left parties a centre right government was elected in 1934. Significant labour unrest followed with violent repression by the army and civil authorities of strikes and the miners' uprising in Asturias. This led to a stronger alliance of the centre and left in the Popular Front government in 1936. Spain was managing its social, political and class divisions with changes of government and governments enjoying popular mandates. There was a high level of political agitation and involvement and increasing levels of politically inspired violence but a consensus that democratic institutions like local councils and mayors, elected representatives to the parliament / Cortes, and to the office of president were the best form of governance.

This all changed in the summer of 1936 with the military uprising in urban centres and garrisons on the 18th July led by Generals Franco, Mola and Queipo de Llano, supported by the Carlist Monarchists and the Catholic Church except for its priests in the Basque country. The government of the Republic with popular support and some guile and luck put down the insurgents in most cities. Without the support that the Nationalist were able to mobilise from their German and Italian allies and the policy of non intervention and appeasement adopted by Britain, France and the USA, the military uprising would have failed. What happened instead was a 3-year war in Spain. The war waged by Franco, Mola and Queipo de Llano was modern in its use of war on civilians to undermine their opponents will to fight. With Franco's victory in 1939 nearly 40 years of a repressive ultra conservative dictatorship continued until his death and the return to a Constitutional Monarchy with democratically elected governments and the king as the Head of State, which Spain enjoys today.

Members of centre left and left wing parties in Sheffield had followed international events through the period after the end of the First World War and were active in shaping public opinion and trying to influence government policy. The local daily papers in Sheffield – The Sheffield Telegraph and The Independent – reflect the interests of the paper buying public throughout this period and covered international events on its front and inner pages, as well as the national news of the coronation and local society weddings, murders, strikes for wage improvements and holidays. Sheffield was a busy northern industrial city so the papers also covered the modernisation of the city with house building and the vexed issue of whether or not to include public houses on the new estates, reservoir and civil engineering projects, and the prowess of the steel works that were expanding in step with the re-armament policies of the governments of the 1930's both Labour, National and Conservative. The papers also covered the activities and concerns of the supporters of the Republican government in Spain.

Responses in Sheffield to the news from Spain in 1936

The Labour Party in Sheffield led the council and returned a majority of MPs to Parliament but the party had suffered nationally its second electoral defeat in 1935 and so was cautious in identifying itself too closely with the Republican government in Spain. It was also concerned about the impact on its electoral chances of being unduly influenced by Communist Party members and policies. The Conservative Government decided to pursue joint policies of non-intervention and appeasement, and the Labour Party both locally in Sheffield and nationally did not wish opposition to this to affect its electoral chances.

Locally in Sheffield the failure to influence the national policy led to an emphasis on finding alternative ways of supporting the Republican government's war efforts. The 'Aid for Spain' was medical, financial and nutritional.ⁱⁱⁱ Meetings were held to promote food collections and cash collecting envelopes were circulated across the city. Collections started in early 1937.

At meetings organised to inform and educate the public about events in Spain 'quiet words' were had with individuals and 15 volunteers responded and set off on the weekend return train tickets to Paris and from there onto Spain to join the International Brigade.

The meetings were organised by broad groupings such as the Peace Council and the Left Book Club.

News of total war in Spain and the development of the humanitarian response

The Sheffield papers covered the war in Spain and covered in detail the bombing of Durango 'town bombed to ruins'^{iv} and Guernica 'Basques holy city in ruins' and 'hospitals wiped out'^v. Many observers travelled to Spain and were reported in the local papers. One church delegation is reported commenting on the impact of the blockade on the port of Bilbao and the consequent disruption to food supplies for the civilian population. 'The suffering of civilians, especially children, particularly from the lack of proper food was the most distressing aspect. Arrivals of cargoes are rare and uncertain owing to the naval blockade.'^{vi}

The collection of food – tins and dried goods - was organised in Sheffield and collected in a barge which was taken along the canals to the port of Hull where it joined collections from other cities to be shipped to Bilbao.^{vii}



^{vii} *Food Aid to Spain*

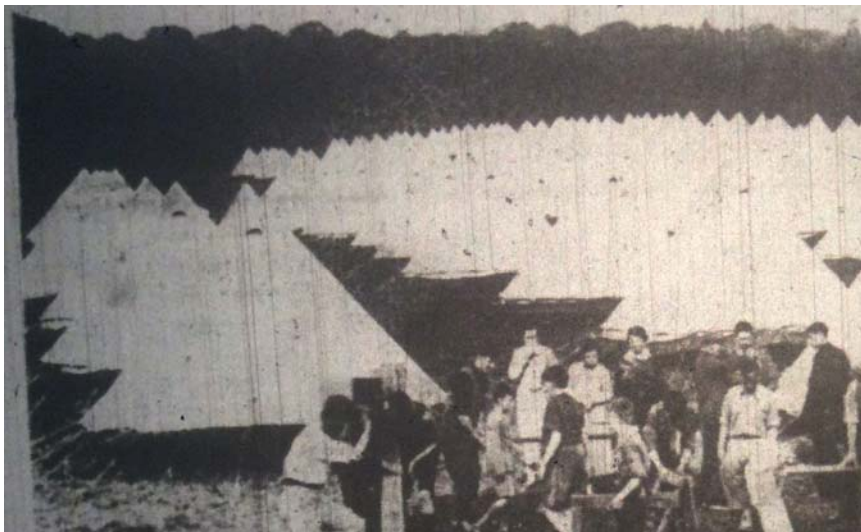
The Sheffield Telegraph adopted a neutral position on the war and for example reported two accounts of the bombing of Guernica. 'German aviators are now officially charged with the ruthless destruction on Monday of Guernica', and 'Nationalists deny responsibility'.^{viii}

The May Day parade in Sheffield was used to highlight the impact of the war on civilians with a lorry decorated as a house destroyed by bombing. Several small children were carried on this lorry, two of them with bandages representing casualties. The Telegraph notes that 'many members of the Communist Party took part in the procession and demonstration'.^{ix}

The Basques had sought and been granted independence by the Republican government in 1936 and through its president and ministries was organising the army for its defence, organising the administration of schools, health, supplies of food, organising the cities with air raid precautions, and maintaining order. As the front got nearer to the main city of Bilbao they were forced into a decision about what to do with the increasing numbers of

children, women and the elderly (non combatants) who needed to be kept safe. As with the British war cabinet in 1940 the decision was reluctantly made to evacuate this civilian population to safety and it appealed to countries to open their borders, and their arms, to welcome these refugees. The British government faced initially in two directions both warning the Insurgents that attacks on refugees in international waters would not be tolerated but that Britain would not respond positively to the request to host refugees. The first policy was maintained and fortunately for the 3,860 Basque children and accompanying teachers, priests, and volunteers who travelled on the ship 'Habana' from Bilbao to Southampton arriving on the 23rd of May the second was reversed. This benefitted the Basque children and later the Jewish children brought to Britain by the Kinder Transport.

The preparations for the arrival of the children were reported including a report on the erection of the camp at North Stoneham to receive the children. The departure of the children from Bilbao in 'the pouring rain and their happy arrival in Southampton on May 23rd' is reported. 'Thousands of Bilbao's citizens stolidly faced pouring rain last night to see off the army of Basque children who are to be evacuated to this country. Seven trains successfully steamed out of the station for the dockside carrying 600 youthful passengers each^x. My father Enrique and his two brothers Juan Antonio and Tomás were amongst the children. They were all medically checked before leaving Spain and again on arrival in England. Tomás was sent to a medical tent for the treatment of impetigo which his eldest brother, my father, maintained was caused by banging himself on the bunks on the 'Habana'. This different account was probably caused by his brother being sent to one tent for isolation and the stern instruction my father received from his parents to look after his younger brothers. Having Tomás separated from him was not what he had planned for.



xi Setting up the camp at North Stoneham to receive the children

The children settled into a life in canvas tents and the national Basque Children's Committee (BCC) which reported to the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJCSR) set to supporting groups in towns and cities in England, Scotland and Wales to provide a longer term solution to accommodating the refugees. Government policy continued to be that the children could only come and stay if they remained the sole responsibility of the BCC. The Sheffield Telegraph carried reports on how the children were settling to their life in the camp at North Stoneham. 'Safe from bombs and bullets. Children in camp here. Thin bodies and sunken cheeks spoke eloquently of the suffering of the Basque children. 2,000 of whom spent last night tucked in the warm blankets of the English countryside.'^{xi} Some of the reporting is inaccurate but gives generally even handed accurate reporting of the events. The children camped as the scouts of the time camped in heavy canvas bell tents sleeping on mattresses that they had stuffed with straw. The total number of children and staff was 4,000.

The situation in Bilbao had been terrifying for the children and their behaviour at North Stoneham reflected their experiences. Children were alarmed by planes flying overhead and saved bread in their pockets in anticipation of failed meals. Individual kindness to some children was shown to children with pre-existing links to Sheffield. Gifts from the steel and engineering firm Arthur Balfour and Co were delivered by Mr J Rose to the children of one of the firm's employees in Bilbao who had travelled on the '*Habana*'. The two girls and their brother were aged 15, 12 and 8 years.^{xii}

Worse news from Spain followed and was reported in the Sheffield Telegraph. When the Basque capital Bilbao fell to the Nationalists panic in the camp was reported and runaways from the camp had to be brought back by search parties^{xiii}. The Sheffield daily papers had an editorial policy of reporting news in an even handed manner and this balanced approach influenced their reporting of events and so included reference to the stoning of a radio van by the children. The Basque government had requested that the children be kept in groups, especially family groups, so that they could maintain their culture. These groups were housed all over Britain in what were known as 'colonies'; some were small of only a dozen or so children, some much larger of over a hundred children. The local BCC committees by this time had set up colonies for the children and, after the premises and staffing arrangements had been inspected by voluntary staff from the BCC, the children started to leave the camp. The balanced reporting by the Sheffield Telegraph included news of the disturbances at the Brechfa colony in Wales and included calls for the children responsible ('hooligans'^{xiv}) to be removed and sent back to Spain.

Preparing for the arrival of the Basque children

The Sheffield BCC was not inactive in these summer months and efforts were being made to identify suitable premises, raise money to support them once the children had arrived and raise public awareness of the humanitarian issues involved in why the children had come to Britain and why they should be supported. Two sites for the Sheffield colony were initially identified – Queens Tower in Sheffield and Hollowford campsite at Castleton – and both encountered different difficulties in being progressed with.

The Queens Tower was a mansion with extensive grounds owned by the Duke of Norfolk and offered by the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk. An offer which was rejected by the BCC on the grounds of cost. Alterations to the building would be needed and the Sheffield BCC did not have the necessary funds to hand (£1,000). The discussion concerning the offer of Queens Tower is documented at length in *The Independent*.^{xv}

The Dowager Duchess had written to the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Councillor Mrs A E Longden, who read out the letter to a representative committee, which was meeting at Sheffield Town Hall and was convened by Councillor A E Hobson who was secretary of the Sheffield Trades and Labour Council. The meeting elected a committee of 13, chaired by Reverend Alfred Hall, Minister of the Unitarian Upper Chapel. The NJCSR were represented at the meeting by Mr B Thompson who reported to the meeting that he was not certain that the Sheffield offer would be taken up, as he did not know if more places for children would be needed. His internationalism is apparent as he reported to the meeting his view that 'the average Englishman had very little idea of the cruelty that was being perpetrated in Europe generally'.^{xvi}

The community at Castleton, where Hollowford is, waged a campaign through the council and enlisting the Sheffield Medical Officer to oppose the colony being sited there. The councillors opposed the colony on the following grounds. It was suggested the children were a source of contagion where endemic eye infections were a reason for keeping the Basque children away and that there was an outbreak of diphtheria in the village and the Hope Valley, which would be a risk to the children. This argument appears to have been supported by the Sheffield Medical Officer. This health argument appears in line with the earlier concerns about the children being 'hooligans' as 'hooligans are known to harbour diseases'. The local councillors also argued that the sanitary provisions at the campsite were unsatisfactory and that the site was at risk of flooding. This did not seem consistent with the fact that the council officers had inspected the site when it was used by the Sheffield Settlement for its summer educational camps and had approved the sanitary arrangements.

The balanced reporting allowed Mr CW Carpenter on behalf of the Sheffield BCC to respond. He is reported as saying that the site was for temporary use as it would accommodate the children under canvas until more suitable accommodation was identified and got ready. 'It is ridiculous to suppose any children would be allowed out of the Southampton camp if they were suffering

from anything infectious. Similarly we would not allow them to go to Castleton if there was danger of them catching diphtheria'.^{xvii} The Sheffield Telegraph reporter also canvassed opinion in other villages in the Hope Valley and found them to be of a different view than the councillors in Castleton and reported that they believed their neighbours were demonstrating 'clannishness' and that they 'strongly deprecated' their views. The children did not go to Castleton and I suspect that the real reason was that they might have affected the tourist trade, which the village relied on.

The work of the Sheffield BCC continued in other ways throughout the summer. A weeklong exhibition on Spain was hosted in what had been the Independent's offices on Fargate and the collection associated with it raised £130. Sheffield industry was in the thoughts of Alderman Thraves, Deputy Lord Mayor, when he opened the exhibition 'In Sheffield they had one firm making armour plate which no shell could pierce, and on the other side a firm making shells that would pierce any armour plate that could be made'.^{xviii}



xviii The exhibition on Fargate for the Basque children

Behind Alderman Thraves a display on the reorganisation of the militias of the Republican government into a 'new peoples army' capable of combating the insurgent army's total war can be seen, which demonstrates that the organisers of the exhibition whilst having humanitarian objectives in supporting the Basque children also supported the maximum prosecution of the war to defeat the Nationalists.

The Sheffield BCC's collection van was also busy. It would drive round the streets playing over the loudspeaker Paul Robeson singing 'Sometimes I feel like a motherless child' which he had specially recorded. Milk tokens were on sale in Co-op shops and the cash collections continued.

The arrival of the Basque children

Finally on the 20th of October the Sheffield Telegraph and the Independent were able to report on the arrival of 25 Basque children and one accompanying Spanish Teacher / Maestra^{xix} at Sheffield station en route for the Holiday Fellowship owned Frogatt Guest House.

The 4,000 children evacuated from Bilbao on the *'Habana'* had been accompanied by priests from the Catholic Church, and teachers known if they were female as *maestras*, or assistants known as *auxiliares*. There were 96 *maestras* and 118 *auxiliares* who travelled on the *'Habana'*. The *maestras* had been introduced as part of the educational reforms of the Republican government. Those that remained in Spain were ill treated by the Nationalists as they took control of Republican areas. The educational reforms were reversed and education returned to the Catholic Church. Of note the Catholic Church in most of Spain with the exception of the Basque country supported the insurgents. The Basque priests in contrast supported their Basque government.



The arrival of the children at Sheffield station

The children aged from 7 to 15 years mostly in family groups had left the North Stoneham camp in June to travel to Salford, Manchester where they were part of a larger number of 250 who were accommodated across Manchester by different organisations. 4 months later they were on the move again to Sheffield. 'It took 20 minutes to load up their bus with the cases (bought with money donated locally), toys and their other belongings.

The crew of the *'Bartello'*, a Spanish ship berthed in Salford Docks, raised £20 and took the children on a shopping trip buying the boys new suits and the girls new party frocks which they were wearing as they left Salford. The children were apparently weeping as they boarded the bus, crying 'No more Salford, No more Salford'.^{xx} They appear to have been looking forward to the move to Froggatt, which they had been told was in the countryside. I suspect that the burden of supporting such a large number of children in Manchester was recognised and the BCC needed to call on other local groups who had been raising money and were in a better position to carry on supporting the children. The BCC's Frida Stuart reported on the children whilst they were in Salford describing them as 'listless and bored'. She did not approve of the 'commandante' in charge of the Salford colony and describes her as having little interest in the children apart from food and clothing.^{xxi}

Earlier in 1937 the Froggatt Guest House had suffered a fire and been rebuilt and refurbished so it was in good order for the children who were looking forward to some time in the pretty countryside of the Derbyshire Peak District. The Sheffield BCC took on the whole site and the existing staff. The inspection report goes on to describe the Guest House as overstaffed. From arrival in the North Stoneham camp the Basque children had been expected to be involved in daily tasks and Frida Stuart does not show her approval of the warden, 2 maids, and Mrs Cragoe the 'commandante'. A staffing structure that would be costly for the Sheffield BCC to maintain and leaving perhaps too little for the children to do as they were excluded from attending local schools.

The welcome at Sheffield station was organised on a smaller scale to the coronation fever, which was preoccupying the city and the nation. Local dignitaries including the Bishop of Sheffield and Alderman Thraves welcomed the group and posed for pictures. No speeches were made. Local school children from Firth Park Secondary School attended with a Master and engaged the Basque children in conversation in Spanish. The Sheffield Telegraph also mentions the presence of a group of Sheffield Communists who gave the children their clenched fist salute as welcome. As the banner on the bus taking them on to Froggatt says 'SHEFFIELD WELCOMES BASQUE CHILDREN'. The support for the children was across a broad cross-section of Sheffield civil, political and religious life.

The bus took them on the short journey out of Sheffield into the countryside following their welcome. The organisation of the arrival of the children and their accommodation appears to have been a humanitarian act carried out by a broad cross section of Sheffield civil, political and religious society not a narrow act of party based solidarity. The Holiday Fellowship Guest House at Froggatt had been taken over by them in 1932. It had 20 bedrooms in single story bungalow style wooden construction. A fire before the children arrived had had to be repaired. The building is described as being close to the Chequers Inn and was replaced by a privately owned house in the 1940s.

Life at Froggatt Guest House October 1937 to April 1938

The Sheffield BCC was key in organising activities for the children and took seriously their responsibilities to ensure that the children were happy, well cared for and continued with their education. They were a mixed group of children some with siblings and some on their own. Ages ranged from 7 to 15 years. It is now accepted that children experiencing traumatic life experiences as these children did – war, bereavement, separation from parents, movement across international borders to be cared for as refugees – suffer stress from the trauma which requires support and treatment. It probably benefitted them being in the semi closed environment of the colony where they could rest and play and be amongst children who had had similar experiences. From the photos in the local papers the children look into the camera with self-confidence and smiling, happy expressions.



xxi *Froggatt Guest House*



Photos carried by the Independent show them playing games, performing traditional folk dances and being taught English by the same children from Firth Park Secondary School that had greeted them.

xxii

Games in the gardens of Froggatt Guest House



xxiii *Traditional dancing in the gardens of Froggatt Guest House*



xxiv *Volunteer children from Firth Park Secondary School teaching English at Froggatt Guest House*

The children were also involved in the fundraising activities for themselves and for the BCC. Dressing up 'in the gaily coloured costume of their race' they 'lined the stairway up to the ballroom of the Cutlers Hall'^{xxv} at a fundraising entertainment featuring song and dance hosted by the Master and Mistress Cutler.

The Sheffield BCC was active in supporting meetings and the ongoing collections. Miss Eleanor Rathbone MP was cheered at a meeting at the Central Library when she called for the end of the blockade of Republican Spain's ports and opening of borders to allow refugees to flee.^{xxvi}

Harry Collett recalls the collections. 'Some of the incidents we used to run into were unbelievable, because sometimes you'd get a poorish family and you'd think "Well we'll get nothing here" and they'd probably bring out 4 or 5 tins of sardines or sago or owt else to you where you'd expect least. And then there was this man came out and said "Is this we're highly Catholic here. We're very Catholic." And then he said "We hope its going to Mr Franco's side." We said "Oh no its not its going to the government side"^{xxvii}.

Life continued at the Froggatt Guest House with the children having routines as well as trips out. Mentions in the papers are made of them going to the pantomime at the Lyceum in Sheffield and to the children's Christmas party at Grindleford. The papers also report heavy snowfall in January 1938, which will have been a novelty for the Basque children.

The closing of the Sheffield Colony

As the war moved on and the Basque country fell to the Nationalist insurgents the BCC began to address the issue of what was to become of the children the Basque government had entrusted to their care. Some of the children had been orphaned, some of the children's parents were exiled and not contactable, some parents were being persecuted and imprisoned subject to extreme punishment including execution.

From the Sheffield papers they continued to report the national and local situation reporting in January 1938 the tearful departure of some 500 of the children^{xxviii} contrasting with a happy account of 4 of the Sheffield colony setting off to be reunited with their mother at a refugee camp in northern France in April 1938.



^{xxix} *Four children leaving Sheffield to join their mother in Northern France.*

The plan had been to use the Froggatt Guest House until April 1938 when it was to revert to its main purpose of providing affordable countryside holidays for the families of industrial Britain. Also with the decreasing number of children remaining in the Sheffield colony and the ongoing high cost of maintaining it with the staff agreed, the Sheffield BCC began looking for alternatives. The campsite at Castleton appears to have been considered again as the Sheffield Settlement was a keen supporter of the Basque children but this did not seem to be necessary in the end. Some children had been found homes with Sheffield families who were supporters of the 'Aid Spain' movement. Other children will have been moved to other colonies. It appears however that most of the children returned to Bilbao. The colony closed at some time in April 1938, 6 months after being opened.



The work of the Sheffield BCC continued after the colony closed and returning volunteers from the International Brigades were willing to publicise the situation in Spain and the need for ongoing support to the people of Spain and its Republican government. Noel Garritt had been a teacher of Biology and Physical Education at King Edward VII School and had fought in the defence of Madrid, wounded at the battle of Jarama where he held the rank of sergeant. He then served as a lieutenant - as a political commissar. The political commissars were responsible for maintaining morale amongst the volunteers and they did this by providing political awareness classes and meetings to the troops and a link to the command structure of the army. It was a similar organisational structure to that developed by the Soviet Union where there were two parallel interconnecting lines of command – one military and one political.

^{xxx} *Mr Noel Garritt, volunteer with the International Brigade*

Twelve children are mentioned by name in the Sheffield papers and these have been cross referenced with the list of Basque children in Gregorio Arrien's '*Niños Vascos Evacuados a Gran Bretaña*'^{xxxii}. Of these 12, 3 were visited at North Stoneham by Mr Rose the employee of Arthur Balfour and Co and they may have not come to the Sheffield colony. Nine children can be identified as coming to Sheffield in October 1937 as part of the group of 25 children.

Ten children had returned to Bilbao by the end of the Spanish Civil War including the three children visited by Mr Rose. The remaining two children stayed in Sheffield with a family associated with the 'Aid Spain' movement and as adults went to France in 1946. The BCC responded to the expressed wishes of the children's parents and relatives and reunited children with them if that was their expressed wish. Some children remained in Britain or went to

join their families where exile had taken them. Where the child was 16 years old their wishes were taken into account.

The 12 children are listed below. For many of the Basque children there are record cards which contain information about where the children's families were living before leaving Spain on the '*Habana*', which colonies they lived in, in Britain, what happened to them after they left the care of the BCC, and what was their parent's political affiliation, but sadly there seems to be no trace for those children who came to Sheffield.#

Basque children and their teacher / *maestra* associated with Sheffield

The following children were associated with Sheffield and have been identified through the Sheffield newspaper reporting or previous articles all held by Sheffield Local Studies Library. Each child had a reference number allocated to them by the Basque Government who kept records on each child, as did the BCC. They are listed in the order in which they returned to the care of their families.

Returned to Bilbao 7.1.1938

	Age	
3650 Ortiz Uribe Echevarria, Evangelina	12	visited at North Stoneham
3651 Ortiz Uribe Echevarria, Felipe	8	visited at North Stoneham
3656 Ortiz Uribe Echevarria, M Paz	13	visited at North Stoneham

Returned to Bilbao 6.4.1938

1896 Collazos Barriuso, Leoncio	14	Sheffield Colony
1897 Collazos Barriuso, Felix	11	Sheffield Colony
1898 Collazos Barriuso, Juliana	9	Sheffield Colony
1899 Collazos Barriuso, Agustina	7	Sheffield Colony
678 Ibanez Echarri, Juana	15	Sheffield Colony
679 Ibanez Echarri, Natividad	12	Sheffield Colony

Returned to Bilbao 18.7.1939

2697 Alameda Tamayo, Pila	13	Sheffield Colony
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Went to France 30.6.1946

528 Morales Arenas, Fernando	12	Sheffield Colony and family
529 Morales Arenas, Emilio	11	Sheffield Colony and family

The children were accompanied to Britain by teachers / *maestras*, priests, and auxiliaries / *auxiliares*. The *maestras* and *auxiliares* were all women who had benefited from the progressive educational policies of the Republican government, and most, like the children, did not return to Spain after the war. Cecilia Martín Torres came with the children to Sheffield and was with them in Salford. When the Froggatt colony closed she continued with the children looked after by the BCC at the Keighley colony. Her record, kept by the BCC shows that she was a

married 60 year old Roman Catholic with a husband and son who remained in Spain. Her qualifications are listed as 'Teacher; teaches sewing; disciplinarian'.

Conclusion

2016 marks the eightieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and 2017 the 80th anniversary of the arrival in Sheffield of these 25 children and their one accompanying adult. For the first time in Europe one side had adopted a plan of waging total war on their enemy. This total war included the bombing, starving, and terrorising of civilians. As the war progressed large numbers of civilians were fleeing the advancing Nationalist insurgent army. 25 children came to Sheffield in October of 1937 and stayed into 1938. The arrival of the 3860 Basque children was the largest arrival at any one time of child refugees and was permitted by the government but money to support them – house, feed, clothe, educate – had to be raised by a broad alliance of churches, political parties and co ops, by the children themselves, and by local groups and businesses. Their parents had entrusted their children to the care of an organisation made up of people who to them were strangers but were partners of the Basque government. That organisation undertook the care and education of the children and the maintenance of contact with the children's parents so that decisions about the children could be made with them. And the organisation, the BCC, undertook to listen to the children's views and where they were 16 years or older let them take decisions for themselves.

The Sheffield newspapers presented a balanced reporting of the events in Spain and the developing support for the Republican government and its supporters. Civil, political and religious groups and individuals actively supported the children and the associated activities of telling the people of Sheffield what they were doing and why they were doing it. This was done through meetings, political demonstrations, door-to-door canvassing, collecting money and food items, and cultural events. Support initially appears to be narrow and partisan but broadened as the months went by to become a remarkable humanitarian effort involving many volunteers and supporters.

Further information on the support given to the Basque children and on other colonies can be found at the Basque Children of '37 Association UK website www.basquechildren.org.

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- i P12 The independent 11 March 1938
- ii The Spanish Holocaust Preston, Paul
- iii The response of the British Labour Movement to the Spanish Civil War with particular reference to Sheffield Brannen, Alex 1988 unpublished dissertation
- iv P7 Sheffield Telegraph 8 April 1937
- v p7 Sheffield Telegraph 28 April 1937
- vi p7 Sheffield Telegraph 8 April 1937
- vii p7 Sheffield Telegraph 28 April 1937
- viii p7 Sheffield Telegraph 29 April 1937
- ix p5 Sheffield Telegraph 3 May 1937
- x p7 Sheffield Telegraph 21 May 1937
- xi p7 Sheffield Telegraph 24 May 1937
- xii p7 Sheffield Telegraph 10 June 1937
- xiii p7 Sheffield Telegraph 21 June 1937
- xiv p7 Sheffield Telegraph 26 July 1937
- xv p7 The Independent 7 July 1937
- xvi p7 The Independent 7 July 1937
- xvii Sheffield Telegraph Clipping from Basque Children 37 (BC37) archive
- xviii p3 & p10 The Independent 17 August 1937
- xix p3 Sheffield Telegraph 20 October 1937
- xx In search of the Basque children in Salford Hignett, Claire, 2014, The Shrieking Violet 'zine, issue 23
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