Yolanda Powell, *The Basque Children in Britain, Committees, colonies and concerts*, (Amazon Digital Services, 2022), pp. i + 178, (paperback £10.99; kindle version £6.99).

This is the latest book on the Basque children in Britain, but, if all had gone according to plan, it might well have been the first. Yolanda Powell, daughter of the Basque refugee Alicia Pedrero Alberdi (1925-1995), began work on the project when she graduated from Oxford in the 1970s. This book, which is largely the product of that early research, is based on archive material ("committee meeting minutes, telegrams and letters") provided by the Liberal MP Wilfrid Roberts, as well as interviews conducted with former refugee children and their British helpers in the 1970s and 1980s. Powell has completed the project to coincide with the 85th anniversary of the children's evacuation.

The main elements of the Basque children's story are by now well-known, notably through the work of Dorothy Legarreta, Adrian Bell and other historians. However, Powell writes well and her book, drawing heavily on primary sources, contains much that is of interest. In her introduction she notes that, having set out to tell the story of the children, she found herself drawn increasingly into describing the debates within the organisations that supported them and the problems faced by the British volunteers. Indeed, the balance of the book – presumably reflecting the preponderance of the source material – deals with the decisions taken by the hard-pressed administrators and committee-members of the Basque Children's Committee. Here, Powell finds herself sympathising with the less militant staff who argued that the children should be repatriated – when certain criteria had been met – not only because the immediate cause of the evacuation had passed with the fall of the Basque country, but also because the children were costly to maintain at a time when resources were needed to alleviate starvation in Republican Spain.

The point is well-argued, but the account of committee decision-making can be heavy going at times, and readers may well find the later, interview-based chapters more appealing. There is an excellent chapter on the work of Poppy Vulliamy in setting up homes for the older (and more troublesome) boys, initially in Diss and later on Lord Farringdon's Buscot estate near Oxford. Direct and "blunt" in manner, and supported by a small allowance from her father, Vulliamy clearly did a remarkable job, preferring to rely on her own fundraising efforts rather than forming a committee, and encouraging '"her boys"' to run their own affairs. Many stayed in touch with her for years afterwards, and one even sent his girlfriend from Spain to garner her approval. There is also an interesting chapter based on interviews with seven of the children, which describes their experiences in various 'colonies'. A number of these recollections deal with life in the Catholic-run homes which often receive less attention in the literature.

The book's major flaw is that there is no real attempt at referencing the material consulted. This is unfortunate, given that the book draws so closely on archival sources, and it means that for historians the book's value is inevitably diminished. In fact, the bulk of the primary sources cited are available in the Wilfrid Roberts papers, now held at the University of Warwick's Modern Records Centre (Mss.308). The book is nicely illustrated with fifteen photographs of the children in the "colonias", primary source material and publications.

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