

Leicester's refuge for Basque children from the Spanish Civil War (Part 2)

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This article continues the story of Leicester's role in the evacuation of child refugees from the Spanish Civil War where a colony of Basque children was established at Evington Hall in July 1937. In Leicester, support and friendship came from many members of the local community, including Fred and Mary Attenborough, and the children's arrival generated extensive and daily reporting on the war in Spain, not only in the national press, but also in the pages of the *Leicester Mercury*.

The Repatriation Debate

Initial thoughts of a temporary stay soon turned into the realisation of a much longer stay, particularly for those children who did not know the whereabouts or fate of their own family. Although 7 children were reported to have gone back to Spain by January 1938, and a further 22 children who were considered to have parents or friends with homes in comparatively safe parts were repatriated the following March, 45 children were recorded as being at Evington Hall in May 1938.

After May 1938 there is no more reporting in the local press from Evington Hall. Instead, through the spring and summer of 1938, we see comments and views expressed by correspondents through the letters pages. The British public was fairly well-informed at the time about the context for the evacuation of the Basque refugees. By the middle of 1938 it seemed clear that Franco's Nationalist rebels would be the eventual 'victors' in Spain even though the conflict only formally ceased almost a year later. Events in Central Europe were now dominating the news, with the conflict in Spain being replaced by daily reporting on the fruitless attempts to appease Hitler. As Britain faced its own external threats, and as the conflict in Spain extended into a second and a third year, the events at Guernica became more remote in the public memory. More often now, when the public remembered the refugees, a sense of impatience was expressed that as the conflict in Spain had been 'resolved', even though in reality, the situation was far from resolved by Franco's 'victory', the Basque refugees should return home so that Britain could focus instead on the mounting threat to its own existence and identity.

On 26th May 1938 the *Leicester Mercury* published a letter from a group known as the Spanish Children's Repatriation Committee, chaired by Sir Arnold Wilson and based in



Evington Hall in 1937, home to Basque children refugees. Leicester Mercury, June 1937. (Reproduced by permission of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office.)

London. The letter was in response to comments made in an article on 18th May. The letter claimed that the new Spanish Nationalist Government had made education 'a very special feature in the reconstruction of Spain ... and the number of schools already constructed in war time is considerable'. (1) The letter goes on to say that readers need have no concerns about the treatment of children '... returned to their own country and people, as they should be at the earliest possible moment. Any of them who have lost their parents, or whose parents cannot for the time being be traced will be well and carefully looked after by the social welfare organisations of National Spain. These centres have been personally inspected by three members of this committee, who can vouch for their humanity, efficiency and the good food supplied therein, all children being treated with impartiality, quite irrespective of the political colour or acts of their parents.' (2) This letter produced a swift response from Mary Attenborough in her role as Hon. Secretary of the Leicestershire Committee for the Basque Children who wrote to the group saying it 'has not helped to repatriate any of the 1,800 children that have been sent back to their parents by the Basque Children's Committee'. (3) Mrs Attenborough continues:

We know that at least three of our families in Bilbao and one in San Sebastian are not able to attend school. In one case the aunt of a child still at Evington wrote saying how thankful she was that her

niece was receiving regular lessons since her little friend who lived in the same street in Bilbao and who had been repatriated to her parents had to ‘run the streets’ ... We now have 45 children at Evington whose parents are either prisoners or refugees. Sir Arnold Wilson’s Committee has previously suggested that these children, too, should be sent back en masse to Bilbao, there to be cared for in institutions – where, no doubt, they would be taught that their parents are traitors and the cause for which they are fighting is wicked.’ (4)

Directly addressing those who have supported the cause in Leicestershire, Mrs Attenborough concludes:

We should be failing in our duty to the children, and to their parents who confided them to our care, if we adopted the course urged by these gentlemen, and I cannot believe that charitable people in Leicester would agree for one moment that we should do so. Our desire is to be able to keep our Leicester children until they can return to their parents, but at the end of June our funds will be exhausted, and if we are not to fail in our task we must beg all our friends to help generously once again. (5)

The continuing debate, both locally and nationally, reflected the divided political sympathies, even in this country, sparked by events in Nationalist Spain. The Spanish Children Repatriation Committee members continued their ‘dialogue’ with Mary Attenborough through the letters pages of the *Leicester Mercury*. In an attempt to clarify the position once and for all a letter from J. H. McCallum Scott of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, in London, states:

The position regarding repatriation is perfectly clear. The Spanish Children’s Repatriation Committee is perfectly aware of this. All those children whose parents are in Bilbao and at liberty are being returned ... The children remaining in this country cannot be reunited with their parents, who are either missing, or political prisoners, or refugees in France or in any other parts of Spain. According to the information we have received (from perfectly trustworthy sources) such children would not necessarily be well-treated on their return to Bilbao. (6)

The Spanish Children Repatriation Committee remained single-minded in its view. In reply to Mr Scott:

We can without hesitation, affirm that all children, whether their parents can be traced or not, and whatever the politics of parents

or relatives, will be cared for by the social welfare centres of Nationalist Spain with the utmost kindness; there is, in fact, no reason why all the Basque children now in this country should not be sent back to the Basque region of Spain. We might mention that three members of this Committee have personally inspected these social welfare centres, and can vouch for their efficiency. (7)

In her final word on the matter Mary Attenborough makes her most impassioned statement yet in a letter in early August:

If we were to write to the refugee mother of one of our families at Evington and say that we had decided to send her children back to Bilbao into the hands of those same people who are holding her husband prisoner, it would not be much comfort to her to be assured that, in the words of your correspondent, her children will be treated ‘with the utmost kindness’. It is difficult for her to realise that the same authority who is still bombing open towns and villages with unparalleled barbarity can be relied upon to treat her children ‘with the utmost kindness’ ... If we can send back children to parents with homes to receive them, then we think that they should go, whether the parents are in Nationalist or Government Spain – but we will not deliver the children up to their parents’ enemies. (8)

The end of the Leicester colony

After August 1938 there are no further reports or letters about Evington Hall in the *Leicester Mercury* until March 1939 when the newspaper reported that the Hall was to become a Convent School:



The only known surviving envelope cover of a letter sent to a child at Evington Hall, sent to Luciano Lambarri from Bilbao on 22nd July 1938 - note the Spanish military censor stamp bottom left. (Cover reproduced with acknowledgement to Cliff Kirkpatrick.)

Evington Hall, which has eleven acres of land, and which at present is the home of the Basque refugee children, is to be acquired by the Sisters of the Order of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin for use as a convent secondary school. The Leicester settlement of the Order is the only one of its kind in the country. There are eighteen sisters now in residence at their present Convent in Glenfield Road, opposite St. Paul's (Anglican) Church. The Convent School has scholars from kindergarten age up to eighteen. It is stated that the school has outgrown itself, the increasing numbers of scholars and a waiting list making necessary consideration of new premises. The Order will move into Evington Hall in September, and in the meantime the Hall will be adapted for its new purposes. The present Convent is likely to be sold. The cost of the Evington Hall conversion will, it is stated, run into many thousands of pounds. (9)

At the time of this article the colony was still at the Hall, although in view of the comment that adaptation work will be carried out 'in the meantime' it is likely that the numbers of children present had dwindled significantly by March 1939, and it may have been possible to start some conversion work with minimal disruption to the remaining refugees. Evidence that a sale to the Sisters was under consideration as early as the autumn of 1938, is found in the archives of former Leicester auctioneers and estate agents, Warner, Sheppard & Wade, *Evington Hall sale 1938-39*. A letter to solicitors acting for the purchasers, dated 4th October 1938, stated: 'As previously mentioned the sale is at the sum of £5,600 ... The property is at present let to a committee responsible for the Basque children ... In the case of the tenancy of the Hall, as soon as the contract has been signed we will make arrangements so that possession can be available before Easter next.' (10) The minutes of the national Basque Children's Committee meeting in London on 8th November 1938, record that: 'A formal note had been received from Mrs Attenborough informing the Committee that Evington Hall must be closed next Easter, and the Leicester Committee could not obtain alternative accommodation. It was agreed to use the Leicester Home to its fullest capacity as long as it remained open, as the children there enjoy many advantages not available elsewhere.' (11) In February 1939 the Central Basque Children's Committee minutes record that:

Mrs Attenborough reported that when Evington Hall closed, the House Committee would continue its work for the purpose of keeping in touch with the children who were in private houses in the district. Mrs Attenborough thought her Committee would be very willing to cover the whole of the Midland area for the Central Committee if this were necessary. (12)

Mary Attenborough attended the next meeting of the Central Basque Children's Committee on 20th March 1939, but did not attend the next two on 22nd June and 14th July. There is no specific mention of Evington in the list of recently closed colonies reported to the June Committee. However, confirmation that the proposed sale probably proceeded on schedule comes in a book by A H. Kimberlin entitled *The Return of Catholicism to Leicester 1746-1946*. In a reference to the Convent and School of the Nativity, Kimberlin notes:

'Removed in 1939 to Evington Hall (then part of Sacred Heart Parish) where a school could be established in larger grounds and with wider possibilities for education. The school quickly flourished in spite of war difficulties; and reached rapidly the number of 210.' (13) The Convent School remained at Evington Hall until 2011 when it moved to alternative premises. Today the Hall is home to a Hindu faith free school. From the evidence above it must be assumed that the Committee relinquished the lease and vacated Evington Hall sometime between



Plaque situated at the entrance to Southampton Library and Art Gallery, designed by Herminio Martinez for the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Basque children aboard the Habana.

April and July 1939. How many refugees remained by that time is not known. Presumably the remaining children were repatriated, transferred to other 'colonies' or found new homes, and possibly employment within the host community in Leicester or elsewhere. It is not clear what happened to the Basque teachers, señoritas and priests, who originally accompanied the children, and who faced serious personal risks if they returned to Nationalist Spain. Fred and Mary Attenborough were to continue their work with refugees and by July 1939, they had taken in two young Jewish refugees from Berlin, Irene and Helga-Maria Bejach, who were to remain in their care for the duration of the war. (14)

Memories of Leicester

In much the same way that there are very few contemporary records of the Leicester colony apart from the reports and correspondence in the *Leicester Mercury* there are also very few later references after its closure in 1939. However, the very paucity of references makes it worthwhile recording

whatever is available before it all becomes lost with the passing of time and the generation of 1937. One of the aims of the Basque Children of '37 Association, when it was founded in 2002, was to gather and record as many testimonies as possible from surviving refugees and their families, a task never attempted before in any systematic manner. In 2012 to mark the 75th anniversary of the sailing of the *Habana*, the Association published a volume of collected testimonies entitled: *Memorias: The Basque Children remember and are remembered*. Helpfully, it contains two references to the Evington colony, one from Vicente Alti Carro, the other from Manuel Villeras Martinez.

Vicente Alti Carro describes how he, aged about 6, and his younger sister, Ana, about 5, arrived with 50 other children 'in front of an enormous house, headquarters of a huntsman's club ... The boys' bedrooms were on one side and the girls' on the other. There were army-style beds, but they were comfortable. Life followed its smooth course. We used to go to classes at the Art and Technology College, and at the weekends English families would invite us to spend the day with them. We made a lot of friends like this. The one who used to come most frequently was the well-known film producer, Richard Attenborough. There were other friends, too. Thanks to people like them our exile was made more bearable'. (15) Vicente eventually moved to stay in a family home at Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, and then to another colony, before being sent back to Spain in December 1939 with his sister and another group of children without having had any news of his parents in the meantime. His father had been interned in a concentration camp in France before being 'rescued' and travelling to exile in Chile. Back in Spain, the next few years for Vicente, at home with his mother, grandmother and younger siblings, were times of privation. The whole family was eventually re-united in Chile in August 1945, eight years after Vicente had left Spain on the *Habana*.

On returning to Spain, Manuel Villeras Martinez kept in touch with friends from the Leicester colony who had also returned to Spain, mostly to the Basque region. In 1987, fifty years after they had arrived in England on the *Habana*, a number of surviving former refugees in Spain decided to revisit the places they had stayed at. Manuel was one of a group of twelve who returned to Leicester in September 1987: 'We were full of anticipation when we went to St. Pancras Station to take the train to Leicester.' (16) The Civic authorities had been contacted and a reception arranged at Leicester Town Hall: 'After waiting for a few minutes, the Mayor was ready to receive us. And, oh, what a surprise! The Mayor and his wife were Hindus! He was wearing European clothes, but his wife was looking fantastic wearing the sari of her native country. I had to speak with the Mayor, tell him about our wanderings during the Civil War, which

he only knew about through Hemingway's books, as he must have been about thirty or forty years old.' (17) The *Leicester Mercury* reported this event very briefly: 'Childhood memories of life in Leicester came rushing back when a group of Spaniards made an emotional return to the city.' Referring to 'the dozen visitors' we learn that: '50 years on, the evacuees were greeted by the Lord Mayor Mr Gordhan Parmar and his wife Lalita and chatted about their memories over lunch.' (18) Manuel Martinez explains how the Mayor's secretary accompanied the group in taxis, expressing how surprised he was at the changes which had taken place between 1937-1987:

... [the Mayor's secretary] pointed out the little town on the outskirts, Evington, where the colony had been. I remembered various streets which by dint of going to school the same way every day had become etched in my mind; they still existed, but you can imagine how much a town changes in fifty years! In fact, Evington was there but it wasn't the Evington we had known and the drivers were getting very annoyed as we kept on asking the inhabitants we saw. The fields, where the colony Evington Hall had been, contained a whole lot of skyscrapers, each one very close to the other.

We had lost hope of finding it when we asked an old lady who was passing by whether in her childhood she had heard of a colony of Basque children. She replied quite naturally: 'Yes, sir, I've heard people speak about the colony and I had several friends there. It's quite close, behind those skyscrapers and now it's become a school run by nuns.' We each thanked her in turn and her friendly smile filled us with happiness. It was true that behind the skyscrapers there was a little path edged with trees and a fence: at the bottom on the left, we straightaway saw that it was Evington Hall. We knocked on the door and a small nun came out and I tried to explain to her the reason for our visit. She went to fetch the Mother Superior who, luckily, had lived in Gibraltar and spoke some Spanish. With my English and her Spanish, and with her permission, we went to look round the place where we had lived for three years. Tears flowed freely as we thanked the nun for her help and she told us that she had heard it said that her convent had sheltered Spanish children during the Civil War. We said goodbye, thanking her effusively because thanks to her kindness we had been able to realise the dream we had had for so long. We looked back as we left the place, it surely being the last time that we would see the colony which held so many memories of the 'Children of '37'. (19)

David Attenborough recalled an incident in 2010 when he attended a festival in Santiago de Compostela and 'found myself sitting next to a man of about my own age who said

he had come from a hundred miles or so away to the east in order to meet me, since he had been one of the boys at Evington – and he wished to say thank-you. He remembered the whole episode very well and was anxious to say how grateful they had all been. Apparently after the children returned to Spain many of them kept in touch.’ (20)

By the end of 1939 some 90% of the original *Habana* refugees had been repatriated. However, a significant number of younger children still remained the responsibility of the national Basque Children’s Committee during the war years. Even by June 1941 the Committee had responsibility for 148 children under the age of 14, too young to be financially independent. (21) Most of the colonies had closed by then or retained only small numbers, and the interest of local communities was by now re-focussed onto wartime efforts to protect and in some cases evacuate British children. This increased the financial pressure on the Committee as resources dwindled, and so the idea of ‘adoption’ by willing local families had become seen as more necessary.

One of the refugees affected in this way was Herminio Martinez. He recalls time spent in Leicester, not at the Evington colony, but with a local family. His story was picked up by Adrian Bell, author of *Only for three months*. Herminio arrived in England on the *Habana* with his younger brother in 1937 and had lived in colonies in Swansea, Brampton, Tynemouth, Margate and Carshalton. One day at Carshalton in 1940 Herminio was told suddenly to get ready to move and was introduced to a man, Charles Green, who then drove him to Leicester. Mr Green and his wife had a daughter and had read in a Methodist journal about the Basque children. He had driven down to Carshalton hoping to adopt a girl as a ‘sister’ for his daughter, but was told there were only boys awaiting placement in family homes. Mr Green readily agreed to a change of plan, a gesture, which Herminio described as: ‘lovely and generous. Consequently, I finished up in Leicester ... and there of course I encountered English life for the first time.’ (22) Herminio was to spend three years in Leicester during the war years with the Green family: ‘How my aunt and uncle tamed me, I don’t know. How I adapted to that sort of life, I don’t know. Physically I was very, very active; I was tough and of course I couldn’t keep still; from the moment I left the house I would tear down the road, jumping over all the garage entrances. I went to junior school. In no time at all I had no end of friends. I think I adapted to that way of life incredibly well.’ (23) After three years of a ‘thoroughly English way of life’ Herminio had to leave his ‘pacifist guardians’ in Leicester because of the economic hardships they were suffering in the war. He returned to Carshalton, the last remaining colony by 1943. He reflects; ‘Whilst I think I was very lucky to have spent those three years with my aunt and uncle in Leicester, I think

really that, looking back, it was a period in my life that I value but I’m glad it didn’t continue, because I was losing my Spanish background. I was losing my language. Going back to the colony at that particular time meant returning to an environment which brought out the best of Spanish culture.’ (24)

When the national Basque Children’s Committee was finally dissolved in 1951, there were still 270 of the original group of almost 4,000 children living in England. Herminio was one of these. He eventually settled in London as a young adult and trained to become a teacher. Some years later he took an MA degree in Spanish Studies. He expressed the view of a long-term exile: ‘I had this need to establish some sort of roots, intellectual roots, and to find myself. I needed to have a background’. (25) In 2012, on the 75th anniversary of the sailing of the *Habana*, Herminio, then living in a flat in London, was interviewed by Sam Jones, a *Guardian* journalist. The last word belongs to Herminio: ‘I am of that Spanish generation that never was, the Spain that never flowered because it was cut off. Life has been very interesting, but I still have within me a sadness, a loneliness. In essence, I don’t belong.’ (26)

References:

1. *Leicester Mercury*, 26th May 1938, p.12.
2. *ibid.*
3. *Leicester Mercury*, 31st May 1938, p.14.
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. *Leicester Mercury*, 28th June 1938, p.14.
7. *Leicester Mercury*, 20th July 1938, p.12.
8. *Leicester Mercury*, 2nd August 1938, p.10.
9. *Leicester Mercury*, 16th March 1939, p.6.
10. Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR): DE3428. Records of Warner, Sheppard & Wade, Box 43.
11. *Basque Children’s Committee Minutes and Documents 1937-38*, University of Warwick, Archives of the TUC, 292/946/39/9.
12. *ibid.* 292/946/40/10.
13. University of Leicester Library, *Local History* 942 LEI/16/KIM.
14. Richard Graves, ‘From Berlin to New York via Leicester: The long journey of the Attenboroughs’ ‘adopted sisters’, *Leicestershire Historian*, Part 1: 50 (2014), pp.3-10; Part 2: 51 (2015), pp.36-42.
15. Natalia Benjamin ed., *Memorias: The Basque Children Remember and are Remembered*, 2012, p.10.
16. *ibid.* p.102.
17. *ibid.* p.103.
18. *Leicester Mercury*, 21st September 1987, p.8.
19. Natalia Benjamin, op. cit. pp.103-104.
20. Sir David Attenborough, letter to the author dated 23 January 2015.
21. Adrian Bell, *Only for Three Months: the Basque Children in Exile*, (Mousehold Press, 1996), p.183.
22. *ibid.* p.190.
23. *ibid.* p.193-4.
24. *ibid.* p.205.
25. *ibid.* p.247.
26. *Guardian*, 11th May 2012.

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Dr Richard Ellis (1902 – 1966) Dr Audrey Eva Ellis (née Russell) (1902 – 1975)

The names of Richard Ellis and Audrey Russell feature prominently in the story of the evacuation and care of the Basque refugee children. Ellis and Russell were two British doctors sent by the Ministry of Health to Bilbao in early May 1937 to check that each child who would be sailing on the *Habana* was medically fit to travel, and to make sure they would not be bringing disease into Britain. Ellis also assisted in the evacuation itself and undertook follow-up work at the reception camp near Southampton. Ellis became a member of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief between 1937-39.

Richard White Bernard Ellis was a member of the well-known Quaker family, prominent in many aspects of civic and commercial life in Leicestershire. He was born in Leicester in 1902, youngest of four children of Bernard and Isabel Ellis. One of his siblings was Colin Ellis, historian, author of *History in Leicester*, first published in 1948. The 1911 Census shows the family living in Avenue Road, Leicester. Richard Ellis attended Quaker schools at The Downs and Leighton Park before going up to Kings College, Cambridge in 1920 to study Natural Sciences. He later qualified in Medicine at St. Thomas's Hospital, London in 1926, and went on to the MD and MA in 1931. He trained in paediatrics at Boston Children's Hospital, USA, and then became a member of staff at Guy's Hospital, London. Audrey Ellis was born in Southampton on 31st March 1902.

Ellis and Russell co-authored a 'special article' published in *The Lancet* on 29th May 1937, entitled 'Four thousand Basque children'. The article describes conditions in Bilbao in April/May 1937 and the findings of their medical examinations of the children prior to embarkation. The following extracts from this article paint a picture of a city under siege and the impact on the health of its citizens:

The shipload of children from Bilbao, who arrived at Southampton on Saturday is a grim reminder of the magnitude of the refugee problem created by modern warfare. As the arrival of this group of children has already aroused interest and sympathy in this country, we feel that a few particulars of existing conditions in the Basque capital and of our impressions received of both parents and children during the medical examinations carried out there may be enlightening. The Basque Government is making magnificent efforts to deal with conditions becoming daily more impossible. Most of the public services are still operating though the schools have had to be closed owing to the incessant raids, the women and children spending most of the day on the steps of the 'refugios' (or bomb shelters) ready to take cover when the sirens give the alarm. For many weeks the people have been living on beans, rice, cabbage and 35 grammes a day of black bread ... milk and butter are almost unobtainable. There are



Dr Audrey Russell carrying out medical examinations of Basque children in Bilbao, May 1937. (Reproduced with acknowledgement to the Basque Children of '37 Association.)



Richard Ellis in RAF uniform with Spanish cap. The Spanish caption reads: 'Richard Ellis, one of the English doctors, who cared for the Basque children.' (Reproduced with acknowledgement to the Basque Children of '37 Association.)

small supplies of oranges and olive oil, but only a minimal amount of fresh vegetables. One pregnant mother who brought up five healthy looking children for examination was herself so weak she could hardly stand, and said, smiling, that perhaps she would find some time to eat when her children were in England. Perhaps the most surprising feature of the examination was the good health of the group as a whole, in spite of the conditions of deprivation, anxiety and overcrowding in which they had been living for many weeks. It was evident that even the poorer peasants have a high standard of care for their children, and that before the blockade almost all the latter were well-developed and well fed. The very high incidence of dental caries, however, is probably attributable at least in part to the deficient diet.'



Children lined up for medical examination near Bilbao, Leicester Mercury, 10th June 1937. (Reproduced by permission of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office.)

On 10th June 1937, two weeks after their article in *The Lancet*, the *Leicester Mercury* published a full-page article written by Ellis. This was in the period between the *Habana* arriving at Southampton and the fifty refugees arriving at Evington. The article set the scene for readers in his native Leicestershire by describing conditions in Bilbao and also the conditions on board the *Habana* itself en route to England. The following extracts are taken from the article:

Everywhere the streets and squares were crowded with people, groups of men standing talking or unloading sandbags, women and children for the most part sitting on the pavements around the bomb-shelters that have been set up in every street. The shops are closed, or opened only for an hour or two a day (since they have nearly all long since sold all they had), the cafes remain open as meeting places, but they too have nothing to sell except camomile tea, without even sugar to make it palatable. Coffee can be had three times a week, meat occasionally when a refugee, evacuated from his farm, drives his cattle into Bilbao to be slaughtered, whilst milk, eggs and butter are practically unobtainable. Dogs and cats (which have a not unpleasant taste similar to rabbit) have practically disappeared from the streets. The bombardment of the city is a matter of daily, and often hourly, occurrence. On the second day I was there, the sirens had given warning of planes

overhead, and high explosive and incendiary bombs had been dropped five times before 8 a.m. The schools have all been closed owing to the continual necessity of taking cover, and during clear weather all normal activities are completely disrupted. The city welcomes a rainy day with a sigh of relief, as it means visibility will be too poor for intensive bombing! The children chosen to come to England were selected roughly in the proportion of the different political parties, the Basque Nationalists (who are those particularly anxious to preserve the

Basque language and traditions) being the largest single group. The children were embarked sardine-wise in the 'Habana', an old liner converted for refugee transport, and in the early morning we slipped out of the harbour to meet our British naval escort and a high sea in the Bay of Biscay. Owing to the

extreme expedition and co-operativeness of the port medical authority, Dr Williams, at Southampton the whole four thousand were re-examined and disembarked in two days, and transferred to a huge camp that had been prepared for them at Eastleigh. It is hoped that local committees will be able to organise homes for groups of children and be responsible for the financial 'adoption' of children within the group.

After the outbreak of World War II in 1939 Richard Ellis went to Hungary and Romania where he worked for a while with Polish refugees. He then joined the RAF where he served as a Wing Commander in North Africa, Italy and Belgium. Richard and Audrey were married on 18th January 1941, both aged 38, at St Marylebone, now Westminster, Register Office. Richard Ellis was described on the marriage certificate as 'Flight Lieutenant, RAF, and Doctor of Medicine, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, main residence 22, Harley Street, W1.' Audrey Russell was described as a 'Bachelor of Medicine, resident at 10, Woburn Square, WC1'. Shortly after the war Richard Ellis accepted a post as Professor of Child Life and Health in Edinburgh where he spent the rest of his career, retiring in 1964. He died on 15th September 1966, aged 64, at Cholesbury, near Chesham in the Chilterns. Audrey Ellis died on 10th July 1975, also at Cholesbury, aged 73.