

**Humanitarian relief in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39):  
The independent and non-partisan agencies**

---

**Gabriel Pretus**

**Nº 100147516**

---

**Royal Holloway University of London**

**Department of History**

## **Declaration of authorship**

---

I, Gabriel Pretus, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Abstract

---

The thesis looks at a previously unstudied topic: non-partisan humanitarian relief by international agencies during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). It defines these agencies as those offering aid independently of governments and to both sides in the conflict. Thus the thesis covers: the British and American Quakers; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the Save the Children Fund, Britain (SCF) and the Save the Children International Union, Switzerland (SCIU); together with Service Civil International, Switzerland (SCI) and, later in the conflict, one *ad-hoc* co-ordinating agency, the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Spain (IC).

This study constitutes the first fully documented history of the humanitarian work of these agencies in the conflict. It covers the conduct of the agencies; their interactions, diversities and similarities; the problems, successes and failures in their work at the start, during and at the end of the Spanish Civil War; and the way they interacted with the political authorities on both sides of the conflict. It offers an analysis of cases and situations not addressed before, while also offering its own reassessment of other controversial topics: for example, Franco's attitude towards foreign humanitarian aid; the work of the American Quakers and the SCIU in Francoist Spain; and the question of the "safe zone" in the North as an alternative to the evacuation of refugee children.

The contribution of this thesis lies in its coverage of a number of different agencies and their interaction.

It discusses the different approaches of British and American Quakers, shedding light on the respective histories of these two branches of Quakerism, and on the workings of humanitarian relief in the two zones of wartime Spain (Republican and Francoist). It also describes personalities such as Mme Frederique Small of the SCIU and Rodolfo Olgiati of SCI, so important for the relief effort in Spain, whose activities have been virtually omitted by other historical works. As an initiatory study, it also offers an archival "map" of primary material that can assist future researchers.

## **Acknowledgements**

---

I would like to thank my supervisor, Helen Graham, for all the support she has given me. With her outstanding knowledge of Spain, her advice has been fundamental for my work.

Also thanks to my tutor, Rudolph Muhs, who gave me the initial idea for the work and helped in my research.

I extend my thanks to all archivists and librarians that made my research easier and more effective in the archives in which I worked in Britain, United States, France, Spain and Switzerland, and which are detailed in the body of this thesis

Lastly I must thank Marta, my wife, for her love and understanding and Della and David for their technical support.

# Table of contents

---

<b>Declaration of authorship.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Table of contents.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 Humanitarian intervention in conflict.....	10
1.2 The development of independent humanitarian relief agencies.....	12
1.3 Secondary sources.....	16
1.4 Archival sources.....	24
<b>Chapter 2: Independent relief and a military coup that evolved into civil war: the arrival of the agencies (July 1936-Autumn 1937).....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 The scene.....	27
2.2 Spanish relief and the agencies: settings and operations.....	29
2.3 The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): navigating uncharted waters.....	35
2.4 The British Quakers (FSC): independent relief with conflicting souls.....	39
2.5 Service Civil International (SCI) and Save the Children International Union (SCIU): the Swiss connection.....	41
2.6 Service Civil International (SCI): forgetting pick and shovel.....	46
2.7 The Save the Children International Union (SCIU): the Union and the appeal from the Spanish (Republican) Schools .....	48
2.8 Quakers working in opposing camps.....	50
2.9 A first assessment.....	58
<b>Chapter 3: The work of the agencies (1) (1936-1937) .....</b>	<b>60</b>
3.1 The British Quakers.....	60
3.2 The activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross.....	67
3.3 Service Civil International: action in Spain.....	79
<b>Chapter 4: The work of the agencies (2).....</b>	<b>82</b>
4.1 The Save the Children International Union.....	82
4.2 Efforts at coordination.....	99

<b>Chapter 5: The work of the agencies (3): the American Quakers.....</b>	<b>104</b>
5.1 The American Quakers go to Spain.....	104
5.2 American Friends in Republican Spain.....	105
5.3 American Friends in Nationalist Spain.....	109
5.4 The new team: Earl M. Smith and Dan West.....	122
<b>Chapter 6: Full scale war (1). The work of the agencies and the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Spain: relief in years of misery .....</b>	<b>127</b>
6.1 The International Commission: refilling empty bags.....	127
6.2 Work by the British Quakers and the IC.....	129
6.3 The Save the Children International Union (SCIU) .....	132
6.4 Service Civil International (SCI): the effectiveness of the Swiss Connection....	137
6.5 The International Commission (IC).....	138
6.6 Howard E. Kershner and Peace Testimony.....	153
<b>Chapter 7: Full scale war (2). The work of the agencies.....</b>	<b>156</b>
7.1 The Red Cross and the vanishing Spanish Republic.....	156
7.2 The departure of SCI .....	164
7.3 The Save the Children International Union: coping with the new Spain.....	166
7.4 The International Commission and the Quakers: closing down activities in Spain .....	168
7.5 The International Committee of the Red Cross: the other side of the border.....	171
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusions.....</b>	<b>173</b>
8.1 Independence and non-partisanship.....	173
8.2 The failure of the League of Nations and the role of the International Commission (IC).....	174
8.3 Humanitarian aid and religious belief .....	176
8.4 Rodolfo Olgiati and the Swiss connection.....	178
8.5 Lessons of Spain for subsequent humanitarian relief work.....	179
<b>Sources.....</b>	<b>183</b>
Archives.....	183
Press.....	184
Books and journal articles .....	185
Unpublished work.....	209
Annexes to Thesis.....	210

<b>Appendix 1: A historical approach to the independent, non-partisan humanitarian agencies.....</b>	<b>215</b>
1. The Quakers: beliefs, behaviour and action.....	215
2. The Red Cross.....	241
3. Service Civil International (SCI).....	260
4. Save the Children.....	262
Annexes to Appendix 1.....	272
<b>Appendix 2: Politics and humanitarian relief in the Spanish Civil War: the Evacuation of Basque children to England in May 1937.....</b>	<b>298</b>
1 Introduction.....	298
2 The War in the North.....	301
3 The Aguirre Appeal and the Evacuation.....	305
4 Alternative Offers to Evacuation: the “Safe Zone” Proposals from Franco and the International Committee of the Red Cross.....	313
5 Conclusions.....	333
Annexes to Appendix 2.....	337

## Abbreviations

---

AAN	Navarra Administrative Archive (Pamplona, Spain)
AEG-SCIU	Archives de l'Etat de Genève. Save the Children International Union Archives (Geneva, Switzerland)
AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
AFSCA	American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) Archives (Philadelphia, USA)
AGA	General Administration Archives (Alcalá, Spain)
AHNV	Historic Archive of Basque Nationalism (Sabino Arana Foundation, Artea, Spain)
AMAE	Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry Archives (Madrid, Spain)
AMAEF	Archive Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (Paris, France)
ANV	Accion Nacionalista Vasca
BCC	Basque Children's Committee
BNP	Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (Paris, France)
BoD	Board of Directors (of AFSC)
BUG	Bibliothèque Publique Universitaire de Genève (Geneva, Switzerland)
CHDF	Centre des Archives Diplomatiques (Nantes, France)
CoS	Committee on Spain (both the AFSC and the FSC had such a committee)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICRCA	International Committee of the Red Cross Archives (Geneva, Switzerland)
CNT	Confederación Nacional del Trabajo
CSS	Central Sanitaire Suisse
FAI	Federación Anarquista Ibérica
FHL	The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Archives (London, UK)
FL	Foral Library (Bilbao, Spain)
FSC	Friends Service Council
FSAE	Federación de Sociedades de Amigos de la Escuela (Federation of Societies of Friends of the School)
GMA	General Military Archive (Avila, Spain)
GRF	General Relief Fund



HCPM	High Commission for the Protection of Minors
HGM	His/Her Majesty's Government
IC	International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Spain.
IVSP	International Voluntary Service for Peace
LCF	Service Civil International Archives deposited at the Municipal Library of La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland.
MML	Marx Memorial Library (London, UK)
MRO	Modern Record Office (National Archives) (Warwick, Coventry, UK)
NJCSR	National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief
OSEO	Oeuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
PRO	National Archives (Kew, UK)
ptas	Pesetas
SA	Swiss Aid
SCF	Save the Children Fund (UK)
SCI	Service Civil International
SCIU	Save the Children International Union (Geneva, Switzerland)
SHM	Servicio Histórico Militar Archive (Madrid, Spain)
SMAC	Spanish Medical Aid Committee
STV	Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores

# Chapter 1: Introduction

---

## 1.1 Humanitarian intervention in conflict

Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there are independent humanitarian relief agencies at work at almost every scene of war or natural devastation. Yet, a hundred years ago, barely half a dozen humanitarian relief agencies existed as permanent institutions, and a hundred years before that, none existed at all. Indeed, the awakening of a trans-cultural social conscience is a relatively recent phenomenon, as the first modern humanitarian intervention in war did not occur until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

Humanitarian intervention in modern war did, however, dramatically change the way in which conflict was perceived by the population. Witnesses and testimonies of war have always existed, of course, but before humanitarian intervention — and the technological developments of the early twentieth century — these voices could not be heard.

Before the advent of humanitarian intervention and the development of the mass media, there was virtually no information concerning the plight of civilians in war. Along the roads to and from Jena or Austerlitz, how many farms were burned, homes ransacked, food stores emptied, animals driven off, young women taken as camp followers or raped, children murdered or kidnapped and their parents killed while trying to save them or simply for protesting against the destruction and pillage? Indeed, the most powerful description of this underside of the military history of the Napoleonic wars is not to be found in the dispatches, personal memoirs or newspapers, but among Goya's eighty-two etchings, *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, just as the most powerful description of the horrors of the religious wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in France is to be found in Jacques Callot's two sets of engravings, *Les Misères de la Guerre*.

With humanitarian intervention in conflicts, voluntary workers, commissioners and delegates were present, and their testimonies could be captured on film, in photographs and newspapers. The battles and horrors of war could now be photographed and filmed. Thus, a much more complex and accurate picture of the reality of war could be transmitted.

If humanitarian relief can be defined as assistance given to people in distress by individuals, organisations and governments to relieve suffering, it was probably the Christian Church, through the myriad of monasteries that spread throughout the Roman Empire after Emperor Constantine had embraced the Christian faith, the first organisation to give humanitarian aid, through the help given by monks to people suffering in the many conflicts, wars, famines and plagues of the time.

Well into the middle ages, in 1218, St. Peter Nolasco founded the “Order of the Virgin Mary of Mercy and the Redemption of Captives” in Barcelona, Spain. The aim of the order was the redeeming of Christian prisoners who had been taken hostage by the Muslims as a result of the numerous incursions, violent encounters and the many military clashes of the time, and who may have abandoned their Christian faith whilst in captivity.

Formed as a military order, its wide range of activity was focused mainly on the Iberian territories still under Muslim control and across the Mediterranean basin in the North African territories where most of the captured prisoners were taken. Over the years the order became a clerical order.

These humanitarian activities were an example of Christian humanitarianism following the parable of the Good Samaritan and the “universality” of the “neighbour” concept as “anyone in need whom you can help”.<sup>1</sup> This evolved with the Renaissance revival of the classical world and the importance of “man”, with the individual human being as the subject of rights, and blossomed with the Enlightenment. Secular humanitarianism arose and combined with Christian inspired actions: their most significant achievement was the movement that made possible the abolition of the slave trade in the second part of the XIX century. Rationalist thinkers from the XVII century onwards condemned slavery as contrary to the rights of man, while the Quakers and other Evangelical Churches condemned it as anti-Christian.

---

<sup>1</sup> Humanitarianism also existed in Islam. The Qur’an mentions, together with the obligatory charity the ‘zakat’, the ‘sadaqah’, a voluntary charity, based on help to the needy, concerning which it was advised, similarly to the Christian Gospel teaching, that “when you give ‘sadaqah’ with your right hand, your left hand should not know about it”. Abuarqub and Phillips (2009).

## 1.2 The development of independent humanitarian relief agencies

As stated in the title of my thesis, this work focuses on the agencies that fulfil the criterion of being independent and nonpartisan. By independent I mean that they were not directly promoted by or linked with any state, political party or inter-state organisation; and they were nonpartisan because their intervention in the Spanish Civil War was moved by a clear aim to relieve the need of the civil population of both conflicting parties, Republican and Nationalists, and they never refused to provide relief, if so requested, to either of them. The personal stances of some agencies' field workers are disregarded here, in so far as they did not represent a partisan position adopted by the agency as a humanitarian body.

Accordingly, as shall be argued in the following chapters, the agencies subject of my research were: The Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers) both British (FSC) and American (AFSC); the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva (Switzerland); The Save the Children Fund (SCF) in Britain; and the Save the Children Union (SCIU) and Service Civil International (SCI), both also in Geneva (Switzerland). Later in the conflict, at the end of 1937, the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Spain (IC) is also the subject of my consideration.

As an interstate organisation born from the ashes of the World War I, the policies of the League of Nations and their humanitarian organisations shall also be analysed when presenting the overview of relief and refugee problems in the context of the Spanish Civil War 1936 – 1939.

The Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers), founded in 1652 in England as a religious movement headed by George Fox, based their doctrine on “The Inner Light of Christ”, because a basic part of the message was that “Christ had come to teach his people himself. To listen to the direct and individually received voice of God, a priest, church or book is no longer necessary. By waiting on the Lord they will come to know the will of God though direct communication”.<sup>2</sup>

As the Quakers expanded internationally, and especially in Britain and the United States, the organisation split in 1827, with the separation of the American Society of Friends from the original British “orthodox” organisation.

---

<sup>2</sup> Fox (1997), p. 27.

The Quakers' peace-oriented ideas motivated them to develop actions against war, military conscription and the building of military forces, and drove them towards activities that addressed the alleviation of the situations provoked by wars and natural disasters. With the introduction of conscription during the First World War, the Friends were pioneers in their support for conscientious objection. They also helped in the protection of German and Austrian nationals in England who were employed or simply stranded when the war started. However, they also contributed to the war effort through medical work in France and the provision of ambulance services behind the lines and on the front as non-combatants.

The first major intervention, by the earliest relief organisation, the Quakers, took place during the Siege of Boston in the American Revolution of 1774. It is therefore not surprising that the next major humanitarian organisation, the Red Cross, emerged in continental Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, during a period of great power rivalry, which caused numerous wars and the forced movement of civilian populations, leading inexorably to untold suffering and death. Only after the Battle of Solferino on 24 June, 1859, where French and Sardinian armies confronted Austrian forces on Italian soil, did this situation change. Henri Dunant, a Swiss non-combatant businessman and committed Calvinist, present by chance at the battle, was shocked by the carnage, lack of care for the wounded and the inhuman treatment of prisoners on both sides. Dunant started a process that led to the establishment of a "Committee of Five" in February 1863. This in turn resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Geneva Conference being held in the Swiss city from 16 to 29 October 1863, where the Red Cross movement was founded.

The concept of some kind of 'ethical code' to govern the waging of war, is —like the notion of humanitarian relief itself— a 'modern' concept, and it first emerged from the Red Cross in Geneva, in neutral Switzerland, a country caught between the two great powers in conflict at the time, France and Prussia. The first Geneva Convention of 1864 was the first document of its kind in history, an attempt to ameliorate, in some measure, the barbarities of war, and is still, today, the most important reference code for judging war crimes and other abuses associated with army actions during war. Sadly, however, the waging of war became increasingly bloody and wasteful of lives, as 'modern', technological developments in military hardware increased. It was, indeed, during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 that the Red Cross and the Quakers were forced to re-

organise their relief efforts, in an attempt to respond to the massive scale of war, and the needs of the civilian populations affected so profoundly by this humanitarian disaster.

Less than fifty years later, the First World War of 1914-1918 revealed the true horrors of modern warfare, with millions of dead and wounded. Both the Quakers and the Red Cross responded as best they could to this unprecedented slaughter which, again, led to a process of re-thinking and re-organisation of their forces, and, for the Quakers, a more active role on the battlefield. The Red Cross, for its part, became more involved in the welfare of prisoners of war, not surprising given the enormous numbers of prisoners of war produced by the 'Great War'.<sup>3</sup>

The devastation caused by the war, and the revolutions and civil wars which followed it, led to the creation of two new relief organisations at the end of the war, Service Civil International in Switzerland by the Swiss pacifist Pierre Ceresole and Save the Children in Britain by the spiritual charity worker Eglantyne Jebb.<sup>4</sup> Though these two<sup>5</sup> organisations responded in very specific ways to the humanitarian crisis produced by war, it is clear that both were profoundly affected by the carnage of WWI, and its horrendous impact on civilian populations.<sup>6</sup> Service Civil International introduced a new concept into relief work: the idea of organizing for peace, as an alternative to war. Although all the relief organisations studied in this work have a strong pacifist element and have given relief to civilian populations in peacetime,<sup>7</sup> SCI was the first organisation to specifically mobilise volunteers for peacetime relief, such as during the period of post-war reconstruction and disaster relief in the 1920s, and their mobilisations of volunteers in the 1930s to help those most affected by the Depression. Save the Children, on the other hand, was deeply moved by the plight of women and children after the war – particularly in Austria and Germany – and was important in providing relief in the Soviet Union during the terrible famine of 1921-1923. Save the Children International Union was also the first organisation to recognise the 'Rights of

<sup>3</sup> There are no official estimates for the total number of POW's produced by WWI, but a rough estimate would be around 2.5 million. *firstworldwar.com*

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1 for the history of the agencies before the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>5</sup> Strictly speaking, three, because Save the Children Fund in Britain promoted the Save the Children International Union in Geneva as an international agency.

<sup>6</sup> Estimates for the total number of civilian deaths sustained by all countries during WWI are around 10 million. A large proportion of these were due to the terrible famine and disease that war brought in its wake. The war also led to the collapse of three empires, the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian and the Ottoman, which led to revolutions – in Russia and Hungary – and the emergence of new national states in eastern Europe: *firstworldwar.com*

<sup>7</sup> This is particularly the case with the Quakers, as we shall see.

the Child', and its declaration of these rights in 1923 was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924.

In 1921 the League of Nations established a refugee agency for Russian refugees, whose first High Commissioner was the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen,<sup>8</sup> who dominated the League's refugee work until his death in 1930. The agency's field of action extended to a wide range of activities as its brief was to help all kinds of refugees. More importantly, when Nansen created an Advisory Committee of private organisations to the High Commission in March 1922, only sixteen members joined, including ICRC and Save the Children. However, in 1936 more than forty PVO's<sup>9</sup> reported to the League of Nations Committee charged with the task of reorganising refugee assistance. Sir John Hope Simpson, in his comprehensive Refugee Survey, asserted that: "It is fair to say that the greater part of material assistance has been provided by private organisations, some of them set up *ad hoc*, but some with more general functions of which refugee work is only one".<sup>10</sup> The involvement was more or less intense depending on the conditions of the struggle or the situation, and when the Spanish conflict started on 17 July 1936, the different private bodies and organisations were present in order to evaluate what aid was required.

Michael R. Marrus refers to private organisations as institutions not only shouldering the principal burden of refugee aid, but coordinating international efforts as well, all from their headquarters in Washington D.C., New York, London, Paris, Brussels or Geneva (the Red Cross, the Quakers, Save the Children Fund and a cluster of specific organisations helping Russian émigrés after the First World War), and expresses the opinion that although the scale of relief operations was unprecedented, "involving unheard of sums of money and extraordinary private initiatives on the diplomatic front", the results were paradoxical: "Having kept so many refugees alive during the critical postwar period, the private organisations helped to maintain the pressure of the refugee crisis. In the long run, this activity helped to elicit a response from Governments and from the International Agencies set in place after the first world War."<sup>11</sup> In Marrus'

---

<sup>8</sup> Former explorer in Greenland and the Arctic, famous for his voyage on the ship "Fram" through which he proved his theory concerning "Arctic drift". Working for the Diplomatic services he was very active in humanitarian work, especially with the repatriation of prisoners of war and provision of aid to those affected by the Russian famine of 1920.

<sup>9</sup> Private Voluntary Organisations, as the agencies were called in the terminology of the epoch.

<sup>10</sup> Simpson (1939), p. 172.

<sup>11</sup> Marrus (2002), pp. 82-3.

thesis the paradox lies in the fact that a good action by the agencies —the relief provided— caused a negative result: the refugees continued to be an unresolved problem. Nevertheless, Marrus maintains that thanks to the actions of the agencies, in the long term the Governments and the international agencies (those within the League of Nations presumably, being the only existing inter-state bodies) responded to the needs.

Though all the individuals and groups who had propelled these organisations into action had been influenced by a profound religious sentiment,<sup>12</sup> each of these organisations had its own, specific organisational structure and manner of working and these bodies developed and changed over time, in large part in response to the needs thrown up by the increasing scale of modern warfare, and its devastating impact on civilian populations. This change and development was also affected by the process of secularisation that, undoubtedly, accompanied the advance of world industrialisation. Moreover, the increasing involvement of relief organisations in civil conflicts from the First World War would impact on their organisational structures, and showing their deficiencies, would force them to adapt to the new needs. This ‘organisational history’, would, of course, condition the way in which each relief body responded to the humanitarian crisis engendered by the Spanish Civil War of 1936 –1939, the subject of this research.<sup>13</sup>

### **1.3 Secondary sources**

In this section I want to present the most significant themes resulting from the survey of the relevant literature on the agencies and their involvement in humanitarian relief in conflict, together with the general or specialised scholarly material connected with that subject. I shall also place it in the context of the Spanish conflict, extracting the questions that I propose to formulate in the body of my thesis.

As the humanitarian aspect of the Spanish Civil War is the facet least explored by scholars, it is important to bear in mind that the elaboration of the arguments in some

---

<sup>12</sup> The religious ideas of the founders of the agencies under study, which can be clearly seen from their respective biographies, permeated their humanitarian ethos.

<sup>13</sup> To provide additional background on the history of these organisations before the Spanish Conflict, from the 19th century onwards, I enclose my research work “A historical approach to the independent, non-partisan humanitarian agencies”, as Appendix 1.



topics is fundamentally based on the information obtained through archival research: little or no secondary literature can be used as an element of critical elaboration.

### 1.3.1 The Quakers

To have a necessary insight into Quaker faith and principles, I studied the work of George Fox (the founder of the Quakers), *The Journal of George Fox* (Philadelphia, PA: Nickalls Edition, 1997) and T. Canby Jones's study *George Fox's attitude toward war: a documentary study* (Philadelphia, PA: American Friends' Service Committee 1984) which provides very useful information on the Quakers' beliefs and the personality of their founder. Peace Testimony was studied through the works of Horace Gundry Alexandre, *The Growth of the Peace Testimony of the Society of Friends* (London: London Friends Peace Committee, 1956); Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1600-1914* (York, UK: Sessions Books Trust, 1990) and *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999) together with Margaret E. Hirst's *The Quakers in Peace and War: An account of their Peace Principles and Practice* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923). This basis for understanding the British Quakers' perspective was complemented by two works providing the American viewpoint: Howard H. Brinton's *Sources of the Quaker Peace Testimony* (Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee, 1941) and Rufus Jones' *The Quaker Peace position* (Richmond, IN: Peace Association of Friends in America, 1915).

The main theme resulting from such analysis, both on the British and the American Society of Friends, can be summarised as "Spirituality in the service of Quaker Relief" which, in my opinion, poses an important question:

How did the spiritual dimension of Peace Testimony change over time as a motive force in the service of relief? What similarities and differences were there in relief provision by British and American Quakers?

To introduce the question in the context of the Spanish Conflict I will present the arguments of Farah Mendlesohn in her book: *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War* (London: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002). Maximising the relevance of the spiritual factor, Mendlesohn praises the British way of working in comparison with the relief provided by American Quakers, which she accuses of not being "Quaker work"

but rather “humanitarian war relief”. She maintains that AFSC’s relief was moved by “humanitarian sympathy” and not by “pacifist witness”.<sup>14</sup>

The study of this work and the analysis of Howard E. Kershner’s,<sup>15</sup> *Quaker Service in Modern War* (New York: Prentice Hall Inc., 1950), highlights two conflicting approaches to Quaker activities in Spain, representing respectively the left-wing British and the more pragmatic American attitude towards the Civil War. Mendlesohn’s and Kershner’s works differ substantially in their explanations and answers and in the present work I examine and discuss this issue.

In surveying the Quaker material, the following historical works supplied me with a good account of different interventions in humanitarian situations, revealing their patterns and the evolution of their forms of organisation: John Ormerod Greenwood’s *Quaker Encounters: Friends and Relief* (Vol. I) (York, UK: William Sessions Ltd., 1975); John Bellow’s “*The track of the war around Metz and the fund for the non-combatant sufferers*” (London: Taubner & Co., 1871); Alistair Heron’s *Quakers in Britain: A Century of Changes 1895-1997* (Kelso, Scotland: Curlaw Graphics, 1995) and Mary Hoxie Jones’ *Swords into Ploughshares: An account of the American Friends Service Committee, 1917-1937* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937)

The issues which arise from this analysis, and which are presented and discussed in the body of this Thesis, are:

1. Collaboration and coordination between the Quakers and amongst the agencies present on Spanish soil;
2. Similarities or dissimilarities, if any, in relief provision and working procedures between the FSC and the AFSC; and
3. Whether the relief provided was independent and nonpartisan.

---

<sup>14</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 181.

<sup>15</sup> Vice-President and First Director of the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Spain, (I.C.) the organisation that financed and coordinated the relief work of the agencies from 1938 onwards.

### 1.3.2 The Red Cross (ICRC)

Regarding the Red Cross I studied the material related to the history of the organisation beginning with Henri Dunant's, *Un Souvenir de Solférino* (Berne, Switzerland: Croix Rouge Suisse, 1862), which charts the origin of the organisation. The history of the Red Cross movement is well reflected in Pierre Boissier's 'official' version, *Histoire du Comité International de La Croix Rouge. De Solférino à Tsoushima* (Paris: Plon, 1963) which covers the period from the start of the movement to the beginning of First World War and André Durand's *From Sarajevo to Hiroshima: History of the International Committee of the Red Cross* (Geneva: Henri Dunant Institute, 1984) which covers the period from First World War to the end of the Second World War.

In analysing the legal aspects of ICRC's activities, I examined Jean-Philippe Lavayer's 'Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: International Humanitarian Law and the Role of the ICRC' (*International Review of the Red Cross* n° 304 (March-April 1995), 162-191, and Margaret MacMillan's *Peacemakers: the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and its attempt to end war* (London: John Murray, 2004); together with Geoffrey Best's *Humanity in Warfare. The Modern History of International Law of Armed Conflicts* (London: Methuen, 1983).

David P. Forsythe, with his book *The Humanitarians: The International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), produced the first significant work on the ICRC from somebody not working in or linked with the Red Cross. He makes a comprehensive overview of the organisation, examining the fundamental aspects of independence, impartiality and neutrality, focusing also on the policy making of the ICRC. He considers the effect of it having an all Swiss Governing body and the historical impact of the "Swiss elites" being the source of such management and policy creation. His shorter work (120 pages, as opposed to the 350 pages of the earlier book) *The International Committee, of the Red Cross. A neutral Humanitarian action* (London: Routledge, 2007), produced in collaboration with Barbara Ann J. Rieffer-Flanagan, is easier to read as an introduction to the history of the ICRC but lacks the critical considerations and arguments offered by his longer work.

Forsythe examines the effects on the development of the Red Cross movement of the "discreet and cooperative" approach adopted by the ICRC when facing conflicts, as

opposed to a “confrontational attitude” towards states, and focuses on the “Swissness” of the ICRC and its repercussion in the shaping of the Agency.

Forsythe believes that the efforts of the ICRC to humanise the Spanish Civil War were a precedent for the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to internal conflicts.

A few questions can be extracted from the themes outlined, all of them considered in the body of this Thesis:

1. Was the “discreet approach” beneficial or negative for the ICRC’s actions in Spain?
2. Did the ICRC’s “Swissness” shape the actions of its Delegates?
3. Is it correct to maintain that the Spanish Civil War set a humanitarian precedent for internal civil conflicts after World War II?

The collection published by the ICRC of the key writings of Max Huber, ICRC President from 1928 to 1946, *La pensée et l’action de la Croix Rouge* (Geneva: Editions ICRC, 1954), includes two texts which in my opinion represent the foundations of the ICRC’s humanitarian project: the lecture given at the École Polytechnique Fédéral de Zürich, entitled ‘Les tâches de Guerre du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge’<sup>16</sup>; and *Le Bon Samaritain* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1943), a work he calls ‘Considerations on the Gospel and the work of the Red Cross’, in which he elaborates on the above mentioned parable of the Good Samaritan.

Professor Huber explores the ICRC’s resources and difficulties, outlining the problems, and he addresses the fundamental subject of the “adaptation to the conflict” and various issues concerning personnel, training and finances. He goes into the additional difficulty represented by the fact that most ICRC actions are not covered by clear Conventional agreements or rules, and refers to the ICRC’s “right of initiative” as a way of overcoming that.

In his work, Professor Huber also asserts the ICRC’s role of “neutral go-between” and the conditions required for the ICRC to carry out its tasks, and specifically: caring for

---

<sup>16</sup> Huber (1954), pp. 177-197.

prisoners of war, obtaining and transmitting information, distributing relief, and aid to civilians.

When connecting Huber's arguments with the works of two of the actors in the field during the Spanish Civil War, the ICRC General Delegate Dr Marcel Junod's: *Le Troisieme Combattent* (Paris: Payot, 1963) and the Delegate Raymond Courvoisier's *Ceux qui ne devaient pas mourir* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1978), new elements for discussion appear with respect to the preparation of the delegates for their tasks, the efficiency of their work and the way in which the tasks which Max Huber considers corresponded to the ICRC were fulfilled.

The questions I present, resulting from the themes outlined and connecting with the reality of the Spanish conflict, are:

1. Was the ICRC adequately prepared, in financial and human terms, to confront a civil war like the Spanish conflict?
2. Did the lack of a ratified convention negatively affect the action of the ICRC in Spain?

I also examined the work of Pierre Marques, *La Croix Rouge pendant la guerre d'Espagne, 1936-1939: Les Missionnaires de l'Humanitaire* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2000), while his *Les enfants espagnols refugiés en France* (Paris: 1993), explores the subject of Spanish children in France. These works are very extensive surveys of the activities of the ICRC during the Spanish Conflict which, on the specific matter of prisoner exchange, are well complemented by José Giral Pereira's *Año y medio de Gestiones de Canje* (Barcelona: 1938), and Javier Rubio's *Asilos y Canjes durante la Guerra Civil Española* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1979).

For the activities of the Spanish section of the Red Cross during the Civil War, I consulted Josep Carles Clemente's, *La Cruz Roja en la Guerra Civil Española* (Madrid, 1962) and Enrique Municio Oliver's unpublished Degree Thesis, *Actividades de la Cruz Roja durante la Guerra Civil Española* (Madrid, 1986) and his essay, jointly with Juan Carlos Pereira Castañares, 'La Humanización de la Guerra Civil Española. La Labor de la Cruz Roja' in *Bulletin d'histoire contemporaine de l'Espagne* (Pau, France: Maison des Pays Ibériques, 1987)

### **1.3.3 Save the Children Fund (SCF) and Save the Children International Union (SCIU)**

Understandably, much less has been written on these two agencies than on the ICRC, given that both were founded much more recently, in 1919 and 1920 respectively. Edward Fuller in his book: *The Right of the Child* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1951) presents a history of the Save the Children movement and its work in favour of the rights of the child focused on the work of the British SCF and without references to the Spain Civil War, in which the SCIU was more heavily engaged. The works of Francesca Wilson on the Save the Children Fund's founder, *Rebel daughter of a Country House: The Life of Eglantyne Jebb, Founder of Save the Children Fund* (London: Allen & Unwin 1967), and on the author's wartime and conflict relief activities, *In the Margins of Chaos: Recollection of Relief Work in and between three wars* (London, John Murray, 1944), give a profile of the life of Eglantyne Jebb and the activities of the agency and its sister body, the Geneva based Save the Children Union (SCIU), both of which later amalgamated in the Save the Children Alliance, which is still in existence. No secondary literature exists on the SCIU.

For these two agencies —and, as we will see below, with SCI— the scarce secondary literature is insufficient for us to extract themes and relevant arguments with which to elaborate sets of questions in connection with the Spanish conflict.

My questions, arising from the analysis of the relevant archives, are as follows:

1. Did SCIU cooperate in their work with other agencies and how?;
2. Was SCIU's Spanish relief intervention different from the agency's previous actions?; and
3. Did SCIU achieve their objectives?.

Such questions are considered and argued in the body of my thesis.

### **1.3.4 Service Civil International (SCI)**

The activities of the founder of SCI, Pierre Ceresole, are well described in Daniel Anet's *Pierre Ceresole: La Passion de la Paix* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions de la

Baconnière, 1969) and Helene Monastier's *Pierre Ceresole d'après sa correspondance* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1960). The works of Leonard Kenworthy, 'Pierre Ceresole, dreamer with a shovel', in *Twelve Citizens of the world* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), and of John Harvey and Christina Yates (eds. and trans.), *For Peace and Truth: From the note-books of Pierre Ceresole* (London: Collins, 1968), complement the above works. Finally, A. Danan's *L'armée des homes sans haine* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Attinger 1978), E. Best and B. Pike's, *International Voluntary Service for Peace 1920-1946* (London: Allen and Unwin 1948), and Hélène Monastier's *Paix, Pelle et Pioche, histoire du Service Civil International de 1919 a 1954* (Lausanne, Switzerland: La Concorde, 1955), focus on the activities of SCI until the 1950s, with scarce references to the Spanish conflict.

As mentioned above, existing literature about SCI is not extensive enough to raise specific points of analysis; these have been generated mainly by a process of archival research. The themes and arguments I deal with are related to the nature of the SCI's relief and the personalities involved.

The questions raised are as follows:

1. Did the Spanish conflict mean a new approach to relief by SCI as compared with their previous history of relief?;
2. To what extent did the presence and personality of its General Secretary Rodolfo Olgiatti permeate the actions of SCI?; and
3. How did the absence of Pierre Ceresole, focused and working on a project in Bihar (India), affect the way SCI acted in Spain?<sup>17</sup>

### **1.3.5 The International Commission (IC)**

No scholarly work exists on the Commission apart from the Kershner book described above. I studied their minutes and reports.

The involvement of the Commission and the role it played in Spain is presented in this Thesis.

---

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 1.

## 1.4 Archival sources

### 1.4.1 The agencies' archives

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) archives in the Library of the London Friend's House (LFH) Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, provided me with information on the humanitarian activities in which the British Quakers were involved, before and during the Spanish Civil War. I consulted the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings and of the Friends Service Council Committee on Spain, and correspondence and documentation concerning the extent and quality of the operation in Spain, both unilaterally and in collaboration with the American Quakers, the SCIU and the other agencies.

In Philadelphia, (Pennsylvania, USA) research into the Quaker Archives at the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia PA 19102 (USA), helped me to understand the reasons for the Quakers' presence in the conflict, and how their intervention began. It also helped me to understand the previously underestimated extent and fluidity of their relations with the Nationalist side, through their delegates in Burgos, and their activity in Republican Spain, mainly through collaboration with the well established British Friends.

Access to the International Commission of the Red Cross Archives in Geneva (19, Avenue de la Paix, Geneva, Switzerland), allowed me to gain a historical perspective of the Red Cross and the development of the institution before the Spanish struggle. It was also crucial in helping me to analyse the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operation and its delegates in Spain. Information about the Red Cross in the War in the North (1936 – 1937), was the result of an investigation of ICRC archives and from the information provided by the *Archivo Histórico del Nacionalismo Vasco* (Historical Archive of Basque Nationalism) at the Sabino Arana Foundation (HABN), in Artea Bizcaia, Spain.

For the Save the Children Union (SCIU), I worked on the *Archives de L'État de Genève* where their material is kept.

In the Town Hall Library of La Chaux-de-Fons (Neuchatel, Switzerland) I studied the main material for Service Civil International (SCI) together with documentation for the



International Commission. At the Geneva University Library I could study some internal bulletins for SCI corresponding to the period of the Spanish civil war.

#### **1.4.2 Other Archives**

My investigation at IRARGI, (Basque Government Archive in Bergara, Guipúzcoa, Spain), provided me with information and documents from the Basque Government in relation to the War in the North during the Spanish Civil War. Research at the Foreign Affairs Ministry Archives (AMAE) in Madrid, Spain, allowed me to investigate the activities of SIFNE (Franco's Southern French based intelligence services) and the Basque nationalist movement in the area. The *Archive Ministère des Affaires Étrangères* (AMAEF) in Paris, France, and the *Centre des Archives Diplomatiques* (CHDF) in Nantes, France, provided information on the British and French positions. These archives also supplied information regarding the contacts between their respective ambassadors, Chilton and Herbette, the Basque Government, the Nationalists and the ICRC, in an attempt to present initiatives to reduce the suffering caused to non-combatants by the conflict.

I consulted the National Archives at Kew (Ruskin Avenue, Kew, London, UK), where British public documentation relating to the UK's involvement in the Spanish Civil War is located.

The Modern Records Centre (The University of Warwick Library, Coventry, UK) holds the minutes of both the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJCSR), and the Basque Children Committee (BCC), under references MSS-292/946/I-46, together with the personal files of Wilfred Roberts, Liberal MP, acting secretary on both committees (reference MCC 300). These provided useful information revealing the views of the participating members and the way their decisions were taken. There is still some material relating to the evacuation of the Basque children at the Marx Memorial Library (37 Clerkenwell Green, London, UK). However, the material used by Jim Fyrth in his book *The Signal Was Spain* was returned to the Basque Government in 1984 and no copies were kept.

Research at the Foral Library in Bilbao, Spain, the *Servicio Histórico Militar*, Madrid, Spain, and the General Military Archive, Avila, Spain, was very useful in complementing the necessary information about the relief activities. The research at the

*Bibliothèque Nationale de France - François Mitterrand*, Paris, France, was also important for analysing the French press for the years 1936, 1937 and 1938.

## **Chapter 2: Independent relief and a military coup that evolved into civil war: the arrival of the agencies (July 1936- Autumn 1937)**

---

*SPAIN: The Secretary reported on the various requests received by the Service Committee to consider work in Spain.... At this meeting it was felt...that Friends should be equally concerned for the victims of both sides: that the first step should be to send a representative to Spain to investigate relief needs and reconciliation possibilities...*

AFSC Minutes, Board of Directors December 2, 1936 (American Friends Service Committee Archives (AFSCA))

### **2.1 The scene**

The military uprising started on the morning of 17 July 1936 at the Melilla garrison, followed by uprisings at Tetuán, Ceuta and Larache, all in Spanish Morocco. General Franco, then Military Governor of Tenerife (Canary Islands) declared Martial Law, proclaiming the motives for the uprising. With the help of General Ordaz, Military Governor of Las Palmas (Grand Canary Island), that island was also taken by the rebels. Franco flew from Las Palmas<sup>1</sup> to Tetuán, with a night stop in Casablanca, using an aircraft chartered by Luis Bolín.<sup>2</sup>

At that time, Seville, Cádiz, Jerez, Algeciras and Córdoba, in the South, were in the hands of the rebels, as were Burgos, Zaragoza, Pamplona and Valladolid in the North of the Peninsula.

On 18 July the Prime Minister, Casares Quiroga, resigned and José Giral<sup>3</sup> formed a new Government with General Castelló, Military Governor of Badajoz, as Minister of War and General Pozas in the crucial post of Commander of the Guardia Civil.

---

<sup>1</sup> Franco had been authorised to travel to Las Palmas from Tenerife to attend the funeral of the Military Governor of Las Palmas, General Balmes, “shot dead at target practice” Thomas, H. (1990), p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Journalist representing the Monarchist Spanish newspaper *ABC* in London.

<sup>3</sup> José Giral (1879–1962), scholar and politician member of the *Acción Republicana* party.

Giral advocated arming the workers against the uprising while Casares Quiroga and Martínez Barrio<sup>4</sup> were reluctant to take this step.<sup>5</sup> The Republican Government reversed its opposition to the distribution of guns when it realised that part of the Army and the Guardia Civil, all over Spain, were backing the rebels or were reluctant to oppose them.

The anarchist trade union, *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT), the socialist *Union General de Trabajadores* (UGT), and the anarchist political organisation, the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (FAI) formed militias to oppose the coup. Accordingly, “the response to the military action was a revolutionary war”.<sup>6</sup>

In Madrid, the militias took full control on 20 July, after the Cuartel de la Montaña Military Garrison surrendered. In Barcelona, where the Guardia Civil opposed the uprising,<sup>7</sup> the city was again under the control of the Government on 19 July. In reality, in Barcelona, as in many other Spanish cities, real power was not in the hands of Government officials but of the militias. For a few months these, under the umbrella of the Anti-Fascist Militias Committee, controlled Barcelona and most of Catalonia, as did similar Committees in many other parts of Republican Spain. This was the time when most of the crimes and atrocities committed by the Republican side happened.

By the end of July, the rebels controlled the Galician provinces and their costal zone up to Asturias, which was in Republican hands. The capital of that region, Oviedo, had been taken for Franco by Colonel Aranda. The rebels controlled the Castilian territories forming a strip of land from the Portuguese border to the Western Pyrenees, which included Zaragoza and Navarra. Part of the French border was still in the hands of the Republic. The rebels also controlled the cities of Seville, Córdoba and Cádiz in the South of Spain, together with Spanish Morocco. The Canaries, with all its islands, and the island of Mallorca in the Balearic Islands, were also in the hands of the rebels.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Diego Martínez Barrio (1883–1962), President of the Spanish Parliament which was unable to make the appointment of the Republican President Azaña to present a new Government after the resignation of Premier Santiago Casares Quiroga (1884–1950), who was powerless to face the military uprising.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, H. (1990), p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> Durand, A. (1984), p. 372.

<sup>7</sup> The dismissal of the Chief of the Guardia Civil in Barcelona, Colonel Santiago Becerra Abadía, believed not to be sufficiently “pro-Republican”, on 20 April 1936, is considered by scholars a key element in the failure of the rebellion in Barcelona, the Catalan capital. See: Risques and Borrachina (2001).

<sup>8</sup> See the map annexed to Appendix 2 as Document K.

This was the state the Spanish conflict presented when the uprising was less than one month old. In this and the following chapters I will discuss how each of the agencies came to terms with the Spanish situation, their respective organisations and personnel, their relationship with the municipal and government authorities in both the Nationalist and Republican zones, and their connections and interactions with the other agencies that are the object of the present study, and with some other agencies providing relief during the Spanish struggle. I will also examine how the agencies met, resolved or overcame the difficulties and problems that confronted them.

## **2.2 Spanish relief and the agencies: settings and operations**

The presence of a significant number of foreign children spending their holidays in summer colonies in both zones, the rebel and the Republican, and the anguished requests from the diplomatic representations in Spain, moved the “International Committee of the Red Cross” (ICRC) to intervene in the Spanish conflict, by contacting both controlling authorities, the Republican Government and Franco. This removed any possible doubts regarding intervention in a civil conflict that was not yet fully regulated by conventions. The Committee, until then with its mind still on the conflict in Ethiopia,<sup>9</sup> was forced to face the Spanish situation. This it did early in August 1936, converting the “Committee on Abyssinia” — given the Italian refusal to accept the ICRC presence in Ethiopia — into the “Committee on Spain”.

After the visit of an expatriate Quaker in Spain, Russell Ecroyd, and his wife Maria to the British Quakers London Yearly Meeting in 1931, the Friends Service Council (FSC) had studied the possibility of setting up in Madrid a Quaker centre similar to the existing centres in Geneva, Berlin and Paris, taking advantage of an alleged increasing Republican tolerance towards Protestantism. Such a centre was to serve as an “embassy” or Mission House for Quaker ideology. When the rebellion started in mid-July and Madrid was about to be taken by the rebels, Barcelona was selected instead, and the religious objective gave way to a food aid operation aimed at children, a growing issue with the influx of refugees to Catalonia.

Information received from visitors to Spain such as the American Quakers, Inez Muñoz, and Lydia Ellicott Morris, and the Catalan Dr Pijoan, who was already working in

---

<sup>9</sup> Italy had invaded Ethiopia on 3 October 1935.

Madrid with the Ecroyds on relief activities, moved the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) to consider the possibility of an intervention, assuming the traditional Quaker Peace Testimony<sup>10</sup>. Already in October 1936 the AFSC addressed a letter to the FSC showing its interest in “knowing the developments”.<sup>11</sup> With this aim, they sent a prominent Quaker, Sylvester Jones, on a mission to both Republican and rebel Spain in December 1936.

On 28 and 29 August 1936 the Save the Children International Union (SCIU) received telegrams from the *Consejo Superior de Protección de Menores* (CSPM, Spanish High Council for the Protection of Minors) and the *Federación de Sociedades de Amigos de la Escuela* (FSAE, Federation of Societies of Friends of the School<sup>12</sup>), both in Republican Spain<sup>13</sup>. These telegrams —referring to the situation of 776 children scattered in summer colonies in both Nationalist and Republican territory and requesting intervention— moved the SCIU in Geneva, and subsequently the SCF in England, to focus on the Spanish Conflict. After the visits in late 1936 and early 1937 of Mme Frederique Small from the SCIU, later appointed General Delegate in Spain, SCF and SCIU were active in collecting funds, and in various humanitarian activities in both zones, on their own or in collaboration with other agencies.

Service Civil International (SCI) had a very early presence in the conflict.<sup>14</sup> A letter dated 14 September 1936 and addressed by Rodolfo Olgati, the General Secretary of SCI, to the President, Pierre Ceresole, and four other important members of the Agency, Marcel Auvert, Jean Inebnit, Henri Roser and Ernest Wolf, refers to the question of another member, Marta Shöppi from Zurich, asking whether SCI “does nothing for the Spanish refugees in France”?

Olgati’s first reaction, not seeing what role SCI could play, was that “it was not their business”, but then he understood “the great possibilities” in Spain for a constructive pacifism:

---

<sup>10</sup> Shorthand description of the action taken by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) for peace and against participation in war.

<sup>11</sup> FSC Committee on Spain, minutes, 27 October 1936; letter from AFSC, 15 October 1936, FHL.

<sup>12</sup> No relation to the Quakers.

<sup>13</sup> SCIU Executive Committee minutes, 21 September 1936; AP. 92.16.5; letter, 3 September 1936, AEG-SCIU. In 1936 the CSPM was an associated member of the SCIU.

<sup>14</sup> “Le Service Civil était prête à aider les victimes de guerre, de cote quelle furent” (“The International Civil Service was ready to help the victims of war of both sides”). Monastier 1955. This is also referred to in the Bulletin de l’Association de Service International – Berne 5 March 1937, p. 29. BUG.

“We are in agreement that whichever side ‘wins’, the sad events in Spain will have serious consequences for these poor people and the most appalling will be, not how to face the huge material losses brought about by the Civil War, but rather how to reach a true pacification of the spirit, and to carry out reconstruction with a spirit of reconciliation.”<sup>15</sup>

As the end of the conflict is far from near, he focuses on the relief of the refugees in France with the construction of provisional buildings to lodge and care for them, in a task suitable for the work of the “sisters”<sup>16</sup> of SCI.

Immediately afterwards, Olgiati goes into what he calls “considerations and cautions” where he examines the core of some important controversies, analysing key aspects of relief work.

He felt that maintaining neutrality required them to initiate relief from outside Spain before the end of the war. If not, and the war ended in a victory for the Nationalists, these would probably only accept money, and not the direct intervention which SCI would desire. Alternatively, if the Government won, SCI would be considered by public opinion to be aiding the “Bolsheviks”. By beginning their action before the end of the conflict they would be above the political parties, and it would therefore be easier to continue the work afterwards inside Spain.

In theory, Olgiati’s principles should have been put into practice by the ICRC, but the vision of ICRC founder Henri Dunant “which would have directed the activities of the ICRC towards SCI ideas”, had been lost, and the ICRC was “in the hands of the military and not prepared for this”. Therefore, Olgiati believed, SCI had to apply Dunant’s ideals and direct actions in collaboration with the League of Nations, ICRC and SCIU.

Olgiati accused the Swiss Federal Government of “weakness and, in fact, having reverence towards Fascism”. Working in Switzerland was now quite difficult, because SCI had been accused of providing a free labour force, thus harming the unemployed. Finding new fields of action such as Spain (or India, when Pierre Ceresole was working at the time) was thus very opportune.

---

<sup>15</sup> ‘Correspondence and reports’. SCI International Archives. 30362-1, LCF Bibliothèque; henceforth SCI (1936a); letter from Rodolfo Olgiati, 14 September, LCF Bibliothèque; henceforth Olgiati (1936).

<sup>16</sup> The title used by the women members of SCI.

“Helping the victims of a conflict was not a new activity”; the Quakers had done this for a long time and there was space for SCI to work in Spain, which in Olgiati’s opinion would be best done in collaboration with the Quakers. He considered the possibility of seeking support in the form of volunteers from SCI in Britain, (the International Volunteer Service for Peace, IVSP). Finally, Rodolfo Olgiati proposed gathering information about the Spanish refugees in France and travelling there to assess their needs.<sup>17</sup>

In his brief analysis, Olgiati addressed matters that were to become very relevant in the future Spanish Relief action.

His proposals were well received. Marcel Auvert replied to Olgiati’s letter on 18 September 1936, adding further reservations concerning the Red Cross: “The Red Cross is not and I do not know if it ever was, an organisation against war, quite the contrary, it helps the military to perform it.”<sup>18</sup>

Soon after the agencies’ first consideration of the Spanish Conflict, a meeting was held at the Quaker Centre in Paris on 20 September 1936. Pierre Ceresole and Rodolfo Olgiati attended for SCI, with J. Harvey and Alfred Jacob representing the British Quakers (and J Harvey also representing the IVSP) as well as M. Roser from the “Fellowship of Reconciliation”.<sup>19</sup>

Jacob and Harvey proposed the establishment of some kind of “clearing house” for the refugees and their families from different parts of Spain and outside. Pierre Ceresole informed them of the agreement reached by the ICRC with the Republican and Nationalist governments to share information and for the exchange of women and children, which made their proposal unnecessary.<sup>20</sup>

Roser informed them of the actions taken to help the refugees in France. France’s political polarisation between Left and Right, and the fact that it had a Popular Front

---

<sup>17</sup> SCI (1936a): Olgiati (1936).

<sup>18</sup> SCI (1936a); Auvert, M. (1936), letter, 18 September, LCF Bibliothèque; henceforth Auvert (1936). Both Olgiati and Auvert reflect a common popular misunderstanding concerning the Red Cross. As will become clear in the present work, the ICRC’s objectives never included opposition to war, but rather alleviating the suffering caused by it.

<sup>19</sup> This was a gathering of pacifist and other organisations committed to non-violence, established in Britain in 1914. At the creation of SCI, its founder, Pierre Ceresole, developed his ideas at a meeting of the fellowship in The Netherlands, in 1919.

<sup>20</sup> See Section 2.3



government, influenced attitudes towards the Spanish refugees, who were all considered to be from the Republican side. The Nationalist refugees, backed by the French nationalist right, were mainly wealthy and stayed in hotels. State aid to refugees was in the hands of local authorities, who provided blankets and shelter depending on their political alignment.

At the meeting, it was agreed to make contact with the Spanish Embassy and Franco's representative in Paris, together with the French Red Cross and "International Workers Relief", a left inclined agency. It was also agreed to visit Bayonne in southern France — at that time the centre for refugees and relief work — and contact important figures there as well as diplomatic representatives based in the area.<sup>21</sup>

Olgiati refers to a new meeting at the Centre on 21 September 1936 and to the contacts made in Paris, in a later report.<sup>22</sup>

The group (comprising Ceresole, Olgiati and the other representatives mentioned above) visited the French representation of the International League of Red Cross Societies<sup>23</sup> whose Secretary had no useful information. At 4pm on the same day, Pierre Ceresole and John Harvey visited Mme Flury-Herard, the Secretary of the Confederation of Red Crosses in France, who confirmed the information already obtained by Pierre Ceresole in Geneva from Mlle Suzanne Ferriere (member of both the "Commission on Spain" formed by the ICRC and the Executive Committee of the SCIU) about the agreements reached by the ICRC with Burgos and Madrid. They also contacted the French Red Cross.

Most importantly, Olgiati refers to the meeting Alfred Jacob had in the afternoon of 21 September 1936 with the Count de Molina, Sr Malo de Molina, Secretary to Quiñones de Leon, representative of the rebel party. Olgiati reported what Jacob had told him: "M. de Molina assured me that he shall do his best for Quiñones de Leon to give a letter of recommendation so as to facilitate the entrance of our English friends into rebel Spain... Nevertheless, A.J. [Alfred Jacob] has the impression that M. de M. [Malo de

---

<sup>21</sup> SCI (1936a); minutes of meeting at the Quaker Centre in Paris, 21 September 1936, LCF Bibliothèque.

<sup>22</sup> SCI (1936a); minutes of meeting at the Quaker Centre in Paris....

<sup>23</sup> The League of Red Cross Societies was founded in 1924 by the Societies of Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the US "to strengthen and unite, for healthy activities, already existing Red Cross Societies and to promote the creation of new societies" (Foundation Statement). It was based in Paris until 1939, when its headquarters were transferred to Geneva.

Molina] was not very interested in the matter, and that such assurances [from M. de Molina] fall into the domain of courtesy.”

On the same 21 September 1936, at the Quaker Centre in Paris, the group met Mr Braun, Secretary to M. Chauvet of the French Committee coordinating the Action of Relief to the Spaniards, whose most representative agency was Red Aid, founded in 1922 and connected to the Communist International.

The “impressions” conveyed by Jacob of his visit to the assistant to Franco’s representative — which as we will see were not well founded — led the group to conclude: “It looks as though we will not obtain authorisation from the Rebel side to organise any kind of activity whatsoever. The fact of not being Catholics will aggravate our position much more”.<sup>24</sup> Thus the exclusion of the rebel zone from the relief action was not due to any Francoist rejection, but rather to Jacob’s personal impressions, and assertions in the same line by sympathisers with the left. The erroneous claims to the contrary presented by existing literature on the subject shall be examined in the present work.

Following their meeting in Paris, in late September 1936, Ceresole, Olgiati, Jacob and Harvey visited Bayonne, a town in the French Basque Country, near the Spanish border and a centre for Basque refugees and activities of all kinds related to the conflict.<sup>25</sup> They came to the conclusion that it was not the time for any relief work to be undertaken in France for the Spanish refugees,<sup>26</sup> but in the following two months, through contacts with Wilfred Roberts and his NJCSR<sup>27</sup>, the Quakers and the SCIU, the urgent need for the evacuation of Madrid became central to their work. Accordingly, we will see the agencies, and Olgiati personally with SCI and Swiss Aid — another Swiss agency discussed below — involved in evacuations from the Spanish capital.

In summary, all four organisations became involved from the early days of the war at different levels of commitment but working closely and maintaining contact with many other agencies, mostly “ad hoc” and clearly sympathising with the Republic and the left. Under these conditions, they tried to maintain their neutrality.

---

<sup>24</sup> SCI (1936a); ‘Activities Report, 21 September’. LCF Bibliothèque; henceforth SCI (1936b).

<sup>25</sup> FSC Committee on Spain, 27 September 1936, FHL.

<sup>26</sup> SCI (1936a); IVSP Report, 14 December 1936.

<sup>27</sup> National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, the mostly leftist British ad-hoc relief agency to which we shall refer in section 2.4 below.

Because of its special situation as a “coordinating agency” in Spain from late 1937 and early 1938, the work of the International Commission (IC) shall be considered in Chapter 7.

### **2.3 The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): navigating uncharted waters**

The attempted coup and the resistance to it in the part of the Spanish territory that came to be called “Republican” or “Loyalist” Spain had a significant role in disrupting humanitarian work in this zone. Many hospitals, clinics, and other health institutions that formed part of the Spanish health system were then run by religious orders such as the Sisters of Charity or Brothers of St. John of God, and even centres which were not run by religious orders often had staff from these orders. The health centres were seized, not only by the Spanish Republican Government but, in many cases, by the militias, and the workers’ committees, whether anarchists (of the CNT) or socialists (of the UGT).

The killing of nuns, priests and lay Catholics working in health and welfare provision was an important factor in disrupting these services in Republican Spain during the early months of the Civil War.

The Red Cross was not spared. On 20 July 1936 both the official Doctors’ Guild and the central offices of the Spanish Red Cross were taken over by Doctors Juan Morata (from the CNT) and Francisco Haro (from Republican Left) representing the Republican Government. General Burguete, President of the Spanish Red Cross, explained how his office was invaded: “a hundred militiamen went in, placed him on his knees and forced him to sign his resignation”.<sup>28</sup> The religious and civil personnel in charge before the conflict were in many cases replaced with more inexperienced nurses who held a trade union card, following the intervention of the militias.

On 25 July 1936 the ICRC sent a telegram to the Spanish Red Cross as follows:

“Does the Spanish Red Cross require from the sister societies any aid, especially material?”<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Durand, A. (1984), p. 265.

<sup>29</sup> Doc 18, Copie du telegram 25/7/1936, in ‘Correspondance générale et rapports 1936-1950’ (24/7/1936-7/9/1936). B CR 212 GEN-01, ICRC; henceforth ICRC (1936a).

On 2 August 1936 the ICRC was notified by the Republican Red Cross that a new Central Committee of the Spanish Red Cross had been formed, by a decree issued on 31 July, adding: “we cordially greet the International Committee and offer our sincere support”<sup>30</sup>. This did not answer the ICRC’s question.<sup>31</sup>

On 5 August, the ICRC received another telegram from the Spanish Red Cross asking for help to free Dr Luis Jenis, a Republican Red Cross doctor detained by Franco’s forces. This was followed by another telegram on 8 August 1936, requesting ICRC help to evacuate the children of the San Rafael “Preventorium” and the School Colony of La Granja to Madrid. With this official request, an ICRC intervention could begin. On the same day, the ICRC contacted General Franco<sup>32</sup> in Tetuán and General Cabanellas<sup>33</sup> in Burgos, conveying the request of the Republican Red Cross.

On 12 August 1936, the ICRC again contacted both Dr Aurelio Romeo<sup>34</sup> in Madrid and General Cabanellas in Burgos, to obtain information about the Spanish Red Cross and the treatment of the wounded, and sending them a copy of Resolution XIX of the X International Conference (1921), considered to be an unofficial Convention for an internal conflict: unofficial because the Resolution had never been ratified.

Marcel Junod, “ICRC Delegate to Abyssinia”, who had just arrived in Geneva to report, was presented with the task of dealing with the Spanish Civil War. The ICRC informed both Madrid and Burgos on 22 August about the appointment of Dr Junod as a delegate to both zones. On 28 August, Dr Aurelio Romeo in Madrid agreed to Dr Junod’s visit and, on 29 August, Junod flew to Barcelona, on his way to Madrid, because direct flights to Madrid had been suspended. General Cabanellas also accepted an ICRC visit to the Nationalist Zone.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Bulletin International ICRC: Tomme LXVII – Août 1936 – n° 408, p. 695, Europe, ICRC.

<sup>31</sup> In a letter sent to the Red Cross National Societies, dated 21 August 1936, the ICRC confirms that their offer of aid has not yet been answered by the Spanish Red Cross, the Republican Government or Franco. The letter also informs recipients that Dr Junod is being sent to Spain. Finally, it is important to note that the letter refers to the “parties” to the conflict, placing the Republican Government and the Rebels on the same level, in a position maintained by the ICRC throughout the conflict. Doc. 47, in ICRC (1936a).

<sup>32</sup> Franco was only named “Generalísimo” and “Head of State” on 1 October 1936.

<sup>33</sup> Miguel Cabanellas Ferrer (1872-1938): Spanish General that rose with Franco and Mola in July 1936. From 24 July 1936 until 1 October 1936, he was the Chief of the National Defence Committee, which acted as the ruling body of the rebels.

<sup>34</sup> Dr Aurelio Romeo Lozano, new President of the Republican Red Cross, as per referred Decree of 31 July 1936 (see fn. 30).

<sup>35</sup> The ICRC was also contacted by the SCIU in respect of the children displaced in colonies in late August 1936 after they received requests from Republican Spain; see Section 4.1.2.

Once in Spain, Junod signed an agreement with the Republican Red Cross, accepting offers of help through the ICRC from other Red Cross societies, and the possibility for the ICRC to open, under the control of the ICRC's delegates, information agencies for civilian prisoners and prisoners of war. This agreement, signed on 1 September, was followed by another with the Republican Government, accepting the presence of delegates in Barcelona and Madrid, as well as delegates to be sent to Burgos and Seville. The information agency agreed with the Republican Red Cross was duly authorised and prisoner exchanges were now possible. The Republican Government formed on 4 September 1936 under Largo Caballero<sup>36</sup> confirmed this agreement.

On 15 September, Dr Junod signed a similar agreement with Fernando Suárez de Tangil, Conde (Earl) of Vallellano, President of the Nationalist Red Cross, accepting ICRC delegates in Burgos and Sevilla. Junod also visited General Cabanellas, who declared that the Junta had been informed of the agreements signed by the ICRC with “the Madrid Red Cross and the Government of that Capital”,<sup>37</sup> and:

1. Expressed gratitude to the ICRC for its intervention and noted the noble feelings that moved it;
2. Accepted the agreement with Conde of Vallellano and the offer of help from the foreign Red Cross societies;
3. Expressed its agreement to be bound by the Geneva Convention on the wounded, the sick and prisoners; and
4. Accepted the evacuation of women, children and youngsters not subject to military service, on a reciprocal basis.

Finally, the issue of hostages and their exchange was disregarded because the Nationalists claimed that it did not take hostages.<sup>38</sup>

Having obtained the agreement of both parties, a new Executive Office was established in Geneva (the “Committee on Spain”). Its members were ICRC officers who were already members of the “Abyssinia Committee”: Colonel Favre, Miss Odier, Mr

---

<sup>36</sup> Francisco Largo Caballero (1869-1946): Trade-Unionist and Socialist Spanish politician.

<sup>37</sup> Doc. 163, in ‘Correspondance générale et rapports 1936–1950’ (8/9/1936–28/9/1936), B CR 212 GEN-02, ICRC; henceforth ICRC (1936b).

<sup>38</sup> Doc. 163, in ICRC (1936b).

Jacques Cheveniere and Dr Audemond, together with Mlle Ferriere. By December 1936 the presence of ICRC Neutral Delegates in Spain was as follows: <sup>39</sup>

<b>Republican Spain</b>	<b>Nationalist Spain</b>
Madrid: Dr Georges Henny <sup>40</sup>	Burgos: Horace de Pourtales (substituted by Raymond Broccard in late November 1936)
Barcelona: Dr Horace Barbey	Seville: Dr Werner Schumacher
Valencia: Dr Roland Marti	Zaragoza: Paul de Rham
Alicante: Enric Arbenz	
Bilbao: George Graz	
Santander: Pierre Weber	

Delegates changed during the conflict in accordance with the circumstances of the war, territorial variations and authorities' requests, as well as for budgetary reasons.<sup>41</sup>

The Spanish conflict, due to its own nature and the strength of the social forces in combat, became a civil war with opposing forces that were bitter enemies and thus doomed to clash with incredible violence. Marcel Junod's words explain the situation in full:

“At the start of the conflict, we saw the quick execution of prisoners of the two categories (political and war prisoners). Only some political prisoners were spared and imprisoned, because they were less known, or because they were lucky or because they were protected by friends. In respect of the war prisoners, they were executed, until November 1936, by both parties. Afterwards, little by little, the number of prisoners increased because, once the military operations escalated, an increasing number of soldiers surrendered and mass execution was impossible. This was also due to our intervention in asking for news and requesting information about the prisoners, together with our presence in the field”.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Doc. 1487, in ‘Correspondance générale et rapports 1936–1950’ (27/1/1937-16/2/1937), B CR 212 GEN-09, ICRC; henceforth ICRC (1937a).

<sup>40</sup> Wounded on 8 December 1936 when his plane from Madrid to Toulouse was attacked by unknown planes. Enric Arbenz took his place on 11 January 1937. (See Section 3.2.1)

<sup>41</sup> See the chronological list of ICRC Neutral Delegates in the Spanish Civil War annexed to Appendix 1 as Document L.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Rapports et correspondance du Dr Marcel Junod, délégué générale pour l’Espagne’ (1/9/1936-1/12/1937). Handwritten note by Marcel Junod, Delegate for Spain, for a General Report, ICRC. B CR 212 GEN-60.

## 2.4 The British Quakers (FSC): independent relief with conflicting souls

As mentioned above, Russell and Maria Ecroyd had presented their plan for a Quaker International Centre in Spain to the London Yearly Meeting in 1931. Their Quaker Group in Madrid, including an ex-Catholic priest, Juan Ortiz González, and the Catalan, Dr Pijoan, had by 1936 a regular meeting place and Maria and Dr Pijoan were involved in educational and child-feeding projects, respectively.

When in 1936 the FSC decided to proceed with the project and asked for volunteers, a British Quaker couple, Alfred and Norma Jacob (Alfred was American born but educated in England), both fluent in Spanish having travelled in Spain and South America, decided to live in Spain for a year to launch the Quaker Centre under the new favourable conditions of the Republic with the objective of presenting the Quaker faith to the Spaniards.

The military uprising changed everything. In September 1936, the first meeting of the FSC's new "Committee on Spain" was held in London, and in October 1936, Alfred Jacob travelled to Spain with, John W Harvey. The Civil War, by now a full-scale conflict, made it clear to Jacob and Harvey that this was not the time for a Quaker Centre and that aid was required. The Ecroyds and their existing group immediately began a relief operation in Madrid, as a private project.

In England at that time, many aid initiatives had been inspired by the "Aid to Spain Movement"<sup>43</sup>. Two coordinating bodies were established. The General Relief Fund for Distressed Women and Children of Spain (GRF), backed by the Churches, presented itself as not linked to any political ideology.<sup>44</sup> The National Joint Committee of Spanish Relief (NJCSR) was created, following a visit to Spain by an all-party parliamentary delegation, to bring together other organisations, such as the FSC and the SCF. From the start, the NJCSR was driven by the left and led by the Duchess of Atholl, the "red duchess".

---

<sup>43</sup> The wave of support for the Spanish Republic that the British left had led since the early days of the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>44</sup> All documents related to this agency are lost. References to their activities come indirectly through mentions in other agencies' archives.

The FSC and the SCF were members of both the bodies, but differences arose between them and the NJCSR, mainly after the bombing of Guernica on 26 April 1937, over the proposal to evacuate Basque children to England.<sup>45</sup>

Farah Mendlesohn maintains that the Quakers focused their work on Republican Spain for religious motives:

“The Evangelical and Protestant nature of the proposed Quaker presence ensured that the Friends would not be welcomed in Burgos, the Nationalist capital, although inquiries were made. Instead, Jacob and Harvey turned their attention to Catalonia, an area not at the forefront of the fighting and therefore relatively safe, but which was taking a major role in the housing and maintenance of refugees.”<sup>46</sup>

Catalonia was clearly a suitable place for relief work, but the evidence does not sustain the religious motive quoted by Mendlesohn nor does it show any “inquiries”.

As we have seen, the Quakers had abandoned the proposal for an evangelical mission in favour of a relief operation, and we have, furthermore, clear evidence from the Quakers themselves that religious differences were not an obstacle, as we shall see in section 2.8.2 below. Sylvester Jones, on his mission to Spain on behalf of the AFSC, was well received in Burgos, the Nationalist capital. In his diary, there is not a single word of rejection by the Burgos authorities of Quaker aid. In fact, the extensive relief activities that the American Quakers carried out in Nationalist Spain disproved the idea of a negative stance by the Francoist authorities. On the contrary, these collaborated fully with the American Quakers.<sup>47</sup> Neither the FSC’s minutes, nor those of the Meeting for Sufferings, show any specific refusal by Franco’s authorities to Quaker relief work in Nationalist Spain.

Franco’s alleged rejection of Quaker aid is based only on the “impression” which Jacob took of his lone visit, described in section 2.2 above, to the assistant of Franco’s representative in France.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> On this episode, see Appendix 2.

<sup>46</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>48</sup> Documents in the SCI International Archives show that this organisation also acted on the basis of the same “impression”. See also Best & Pike (Eds.) 1948, p. 60: “it was only Franco’s refusal to accept this aid which led to almost all Service Civil relief being given on the government side.”



The exclusion of the Nationalist Zone as an initial target of the British Quakers' relief work was arguably related to the political feelings of those involved in the early days of the Quaker action, who despite their formal commitment to neutrality, favoured the Republicans. Charles Chatfield, a historian of pacifism in the USA, refers to the "socialist overtone evident" in the British Quakers.<sup>49</sup> Even Farah Mendlesohn shows this, with quotes from Francesca Wilson, an experienced Quaker relief worker, though not a Quaker herself. Mendlesohn says: "Like Jacob, Francesca Wilson was not the strict neutral the FSC claimed to prefer, nor did she travel to Spain with an open mind about what she was to see."<sup>50</sup> The choice of Barcelona reflected the inclination of individuals who, while they wanted to be non-partisan in the provision of aid, preferred to be based in a zone which represented values and stances closer to theirs, and with the advantage of there already being an active YMCA Centre, where Alfred Jacob was residing by late October 1936.<sup>51</sup>

Neither the religious barrier nor the inquiries and refusal to which Farah Mendlesohn refers, existed.

It was only when Wilfred Jones, the son of Sylvester Jones, the Quaker sent by the AFSC to investigate in December 1936, arrived in Spain in early 1937 and without much difficulty made his way to the Nationalist Zone and concluded an agreement with the Nationalist authorities to allow the AFSC to operate on its territory that the Quaker operation reached the Nationalist Zone. The American Friends, without the political sympathies of the British Quakers, were able to establish and develop a very effective relief operation in the territory controlled by Franco.

## **2.5 Service Civil International (SCI) and Save the Children International Union (SCIU): the Swiss connection**

The presence of Service Civil International (SCI) and Save the Children Union (SCIU) in the Spanish Civil War is closely related to the history of Swiss aid during the Spanish struggle.

---

<sup>49</sup> Chatfield (1971), pp. 158-9.

<sup>50</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), pp. 47-8. See also Wilson (1944), p. 200, p. 171.

<sup>51</sup> Young Men's Christian Association: Christian movement founded in London in 1844 by George Williams which today represents more than 45 million members in over 120 associations worldwide. The YMCA always had a good relationship with the Quakers.

The Swiss left promoted two associations: “Oeuvre Suisse d’Entraide Ouvrière” (OSEO, Swiss Labour Assistance), which was socialist-inspired and already in existence in May 1936, two months before the Spanish coup, in principle to coordinate humanitarian activities already undertaken by the trade unions, and “Central Sanitaire Swiss” (CSS)<sup>52</sup>, formed in 1937 and communist-inspired, with its origin in the International Red Aid.

The OSEO started with fairly successful requests for donations and collections aimed at supplying food and clothing to Republican Spain, mainly Madrid. However, this initial humanitarian activity was in practice mostly unnecessary because at the beginning of the conflict, despite the shortages suffered in the capital, the greatest need for supplies was not here but in other zones, such as the Northern Front, that were less accessible and often forgotten. Some in the OSEO suggested establishing and funding an orphanage in the South of France, in collaboration with other humanitarian organisations.<sup>53</sup>

When the bombing of Madrid began in November 1936, evacuating the children to France and Switzerland appeared to be the most sensible and potentially effective solution.<sup>54</sup>

In August 1936 the Swiss Government (Federal Council) issued very strict regulations aimed at maintaining Swiss neutrality, forbidding its citizens from fighting in Spain as volunteers and restricting and regulating financial appeals for either side in the conflict, making them subject to Federal authorisation. The Bern authorities refused to authorise the OSEO due to its partisan (i.e., left) orientation: they requested that any action be assumed by a non-political body, and made their authorisation subject to this condition being met. To that end, the OSEO proposed a union of the bodies already active in children relief. As Regina Kägi-Fuchsmann, OSEO’s Secretary, explained, “The Federal authorities were in agreement, with the plan being subject to the condition that the OSEO did not act alone, but tried to create an all encompassing Swiss action, to guarantee the initiative with an absolute neutral character”.<sup>55</sup> Thus OSEO had to contact right wing organisations in Switzerland in order to create a new joint venture for the

---

<sup>52</sup> Swiss Sanitary Central (CSS).

<sup>53</sup> S.S.: Zurich: Proce Verbal (PV), Minutes of the Directing Committee, 3/11/1936, OSEOA.

<sup>54</sup> S.S.: Zurich: Proce Verbal (PV), Minutes of the Directing Committee, 4/1/1937, OSEOA.

<sup>55</sup> Kägi-Fuchsmann (1944), p. 123.

work of appealing for, obtaining and using funds in Switzerland for the Spanish conflict. Negotiations were difficult. From 4 January to 12 February 1937, the OSEO, represented by its Secretary, worked hard to bring into its project other Swiss institutions not associated with the left, and took on board religious and centre-right (“bourgeois” in the Swiss terminology of the epoch) organisations.

The new Committee included Caritas, the Swiss Quakers, among other entities, together with individual such as Alfred Siegfried of *Pro Juventute* (a Swiss Charity working with children and young people) and JM de Morsier, from Save the Children International Union (SCIU). These two organisations refused to join as bodies, as they were not fully satisfied of the new Committee’s neutrality. The ICRC and the Swiss Red Cross gave the same reason for not participating, while other associations, such as the leftist *Rote Hilfe*, were prevented from joining.

The first problem arose when the new conservative partners proposed that neutrality implied formally offering help to the Nationalists. The OSEO rejected this proposal, arguing that their supporters would never accept such an offer: by neutrality they understood working in the Republican Zone without participating in military operations.

A solution to this dispute came from outside. Before authorising the evacuation of Spanish children to Switzerland, the Swiss federal authorities had obtained a guarantee from the French government that after a stay in Switzerland they would repatriate all the children back to Spain.<sup>56</sup> The only children crossing the border from Spain into France and thence to Switzerland would be from the Republican Zone, so the question of helping children from the Nationalist side did not arise.<sup>57</sup>

Between 12 and 23 February 1937, the Swiss Committee to Aid Spanish Children<sup>58</sup> was formally created under the presidency of Alfred Siegfried, with Susanne Blun as secretary. At that time, Rodolfo Olgiati, secretary of SCI, back from Spain on a research trip to explore the possibilities of helping the evacuation of Madrid, offered his services to the new committee and took on the direction of the fieldwork. The committee was then renamed “Swiss Aid” (SA).

---

<sup>56</sup> SS.: Zurich: letter to the members of the Committee 2/2/1937, SSA 20.203, OSEOA.

<sup>57</sup> SS: Zurich: Process Verbal (PV) Minutes of the Directing Committee 5/2/1937, SSA 20.203, OSEOA.

<sup>58</sup> “Neutral Action Committee for the Spanish Children”, in its literal translation from the French.

While the evacuation was being prepared in Switzerland, and many families were prepared to receive Spanish children, a key question had been ignored: the attitude of the Republican Government to the proposed evacuation.<sup>59</sup>

“The Spanish Government after past experiences, is afraid that the children, upset by all the ‘events’, will have great difficulty in adapting to the different conditions that they will experience in Switzerland, and does not want the children, who are already badly shocked by the ‘*mal du pais*’ (due to their evacuation from Madrid to the provinces), to spend a lot of time without speaking Spanish”.<sup>60</sup>

The Republican Government insisted that children go to centres run by Spanish personnel. This proved so expensive that in October 1937 the committee abandoned the plan to evacuate children to Switzerland.<sup>61</sup>

It is most important to note here that the conditions that the Spanish Republican Government placed on this proposed evacuation, in February – October 1937, were not applied to the evacuation of about 4,000 Basque children, carried out by the Basque Government in May 1937. That evacuation, strongly supported by the Republican Government, did not assure the “Spanishness” of the evacuee children, who did suffer the effects of losing their roots in their homeland.<sup>62</sup>

The Swiss authorities, despite the failure of the evacuation project, were very happy that the Committee had promoted this joint initiative. The fact that it was related directly to children helped to overcome the debates about neutrality.<sup>63</sup>

When questions arose about why the action was not extended to children in the Nationalist zone, it was argued that the authorities in the rebel zone were not interested

---

<sup>59</sup> SS: Zurich: Process Verbal (PV) Minutes of the Directing Committee 19/1/1937. SSA 20.203, OSEOA.

<sup>60</sup> SS: Zurich: Rapport annuel 1936, pp. 11-12.

<sup>61</sup> SS: Zurich: Process Verbal (PV). Minutes of the Directing committee, 8/10/1937, SSA 20.203, OSEOA.

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>63</sup> “The Spanish problem caused tensions in Swiss public opinion. Some, prorepublicans, were afraid of the Fascists, the others, supporters of Franco’s troops, feared the Bolsheviks. Today I learn with pleasure that a group of Swiss organisations... gathered together to aid the Spanish children... I am extremely happy. After the political passion, the old Swiss spirit awoke, the humanitarian spirit that goes beyond political parties and borders.” Hans Frölicher [Chief of the Federal Police Division] ‘Beginning of Work in Spain: 3c- Reports and Correspondence, October-December 1937’ S.C.I. International Archives 20.362. 3, LCF Bibliothèque. Interview with Ralph and Ida Hegnauer, 8/4/1937, LCF Bibliothèque.

in aid and that there was greater need in the Republican zone. As we know,<sup>64</sup> the assertion “not interested” was a falsehood. Furthermore, even if the need was greater in the Republican zone than in rebel territory (150,000 against 30,000 children in need as established by Sylvester Jones in his visit to both zones); humanitarian good sense should have led them to explore the possibility of working in Nationalist Spain... as Sylvester Jones, representing the AFSC, in fact did. The clear socialist and leftist sympathies of the OSEO created discomfort among the Committee’s other members, which was resolved by a division of labour between the two tendencies. The Committee — basically the bourgeois organisations — ran the collections and public relations (more than 85% of the funds came from them) while the OSEO was able to distribute the aid without many restrictions. The “entente cordiale” in the Committee allowed Regina Kägi-Fuchsmann to declare happily in June 1938: “This arrangement means the Swiss bourgeoisie is working for Republican Spain.”<sup>65</sup>

Following the visits to Spain by Rodolfo Olgiati, SCI commenced to support the evacuation of children from Madrid to Valencia, with the help of its Swiss members.<sup>66</sup> This activity was absorbed by SA in May 1937, using the six trucks bought in Switzerland with finance from OSEO, SCI and the Swiss United Syndicate.<sup>67</sup>

This evacuation process also involved the ICRC, which had been involved in the evacuation from Madrid to Valencia since November 1936, when the Nationalists attacked the capital.

The ICRC was not used to merging its activities with private organisations, but worked with the Swiss volunteers of Swiss Aid and SCI, in a smoothly run operation.<sup>68</sup> The Swiss Government gave financial support, as did the Swiss Red Cross, which later supplied 15 additional trucks.

---

<sup>64</sup> See Section 2.8.2

<sup>65</sup> SS: Zurich: Process Verbal (PV). Minutes of the Directing Committee 10/6/1938, SSA.20.203, nt, OSEOA.

<sup>66</sup> Kägi-Fuchsmann (1944), p. 140.

<sup>67</sup> This operation is considered in detail in Section 3.3.

<sup>68</sup> In its Bulletin No. 10, 27 November 1937, SCI refers to the request from the ICRC in respect of the evacuation of about 5,000 children, some of whom with Nationalist connections who, separated from their parents by the front, could move from Valencia to the other side. The SCI remarks that this is “a good chance to prove their neutrality and their aim to bring relief to all the suffering innocents, without distinction”. BUG: Bulletin No. 10, 27 November 1937.

Swiss Aid was humanitarian, in that it did not help the Republic's military effort. The Swiss authorities accepted it as neutral, because it was aimed at children, and one child is like another. However, although it was not partisan in its objectives, Swiss Aid was "partisan de facto". The location of their activity meant that most of the aid that was eventually sent to Spain by Switzerland went to the Republican zone: only 0.8 tons were sent to the Nationalists. Thus it can not be considered, for the subject of this thesis, at the same level as the other Swiss agencies: the ICRC, the SCIU and SCI.

## **2.6 Service Civil International (SCI): forgetting pick and shovel**

Following the visit to the South of France by Rodolfo Olgiati and Pierre Ceresole together with the Quaker representatives, which had led to them abandoning the idea of a relief base in French territory, Olgiati visited England in December 1936. He contacted the British "Aid to Spain" movement, meeting Wilfrid Roberts — the Liberal MP and General Secretary of the NJCSR — the IVSP and the British Quakers.

On 31 December 1936, the SCI Committee met in Basel. The general opinion was that "SCI would have difficulties in carrying out the evacuation of Madrid without risking the SCI movement and jeopardising the anticipated work of clearing the ruins after the war", and that "it would be impossible to make an appeal for volunteers in Switzerland due to the opposition of the Swiss Government".<sup>69</sup>

After receiving telegrams from Edith Pye and Alfred Tritton<sup>70</sup>, who wanted to propose "a new service" to Olgiati,<sup>71</sup> it was agreed to send him to Barcelona to collaborate with them. Olgiati met the SCIU in Geneva and decided to travel to Spain "as a private individual and not as a representative of SCI".<sup>72</sup> On 7 January 1937 Rodolfo Olgiati departed for Paris and Barcelona.

---

<sup>69</sup> 'Correspondence and reports, January-March 1937'. SCI International Archives. 30362-2. LCF Bibliothèque; henceforth SCI (1937); Minutes of the Meeting 31 December 1936, LCF Bibliothèque.

<sup>70</sup> Both British Quakers. Edith Pye (1876-1965) was a midwife and international child relief organizer, and a very good lobbyist. She would be the key element in the formation of the International Commission (IC)

<sup>71</sup> SCI (1937); Olgiati's Report sur les investigations faites a Paris, 2 January 1937.

<sup>72</sup> The member of the SCI Committee Jean Inebnit asserted, reacting to Olgiati's report: "we decided to send Rudi (Rodolfo Olgiati) not as a private individual as he proposed, but in his capacity as SCI officer. We have given Rudi the power to call some SCI friends to help him as he felt necessary". SCI (1937); Letter from Jean Inebnit, 12 January 1937.

Once in Spain, Rodolfo Olgiati made contact with David T. Luscombe of the British IVSP, and also with the NJCSR's representative, Geoffrey T. Garratt, who worked in connection with Dr Pictet of the SCIU, all of them active in the territory between Valencia and Barcelona. Still in January, Olgiati made his first trip from Valencia to Madrid in one of the buses used for the evacuation and the resupply of the capital.<sup>73</sup>

Olgiati envisaged that SCI had to be focused on the evacuation of Madrid ("not pick and shovel, but Madrid evacuation") and that any relief bound for Spain must be neutral and "we must work possibly on the two fronts."<sup>74</sup> Even the possibility of collaboration with the Quakers by supplying volunteers to them was considered. In fact, the intention of active impartiality clearly shown in the early SCI documentation was somewhat undermined by their focus on the Republican zone, though not to the same extent as occurred with Swiss Aid, as explained above.

Olgiati estimated the total number of evacuees for Republican Spain at about one and half million: three quarters of them children and most of the rest women. Half a million of these were in Catalonia, and about 350,000 women and children were waiting to be evacuated from Madrid. By that time, Olgiati — who introduced himself as a representative of the "Swiss Committee" — had established a group of contacts focused on feeding and evacuating children and mothers from Madrid to Valencia.

Four buses were purchased in Switzerland, with the support of the Swiss SCI and its British branch, the IVSP. Without Swiss Federal Government opposition, an advertisement was published asking for volunteer bus drivers experienced in the transport of children.<sup>75</sup> These drivers were the first SCI volunteers to go to Spain, and also the first in the history of SCI to go and serve in a country with an ongoing military conflict. The "pick and shovel" — until then the symbol of SCI's work in post war relief — had become the steering wheel of a bus.

---

<sup>73</sup> SCI (1937); R. Olgiati letter, 17 January 1937 (Copies to: Elden Lawrence (NJCSR), Esther Farquahr (AFSC), Alfred Jacob (FSC), Patrick Malin (AFSC), Kendell Park (GRF) Miss Petter and D. Pictet (SCIU) Sunding (Swedish Committee) and Elise Thomson (Danish Quakers).)

<sup>74</sup> Bulletin SCI No. 7/8: 5 Mars 1937, p. 1, BUG.

<sup>75</sup> "N'étant en considération comme volontaires qu'un petit nombre de chauffeurs d'autobus bien qualifiés pour le transport d'enfants (pas nécessaire de savoir Espagnole)" ("needing only as volunteers a small number of bus drivers, well qualified for the transportation of children; Spanish not necessary."). Bulletin SCI n° 7/8, 36, BUG.

The four buses left Bern on 24 April 1937, full of food, clothing and other material.<sup>76</sup> They arrived in Spain four days later and established their base at Burjassot (Valencia). Every day two buses left Madrid with children for Valencia, crossing mid-way with the other two that left Valencia with supplies. Sister Inma Schneider, from the Swiss SCI, was based in Madrid to procure and organise the necessary feeding of the travelling children. Later, two new buses joined the relief operation.<sup>77</sup>

## **2.7 The Save the Children International Union (SCIU): the Union and the appeal from the Spanish (Republican) Schools**

As mentioned above in Section 2.2, the SCIU in Geneva was alerted by their Administrative Commission as result of two telegrams received from Madrid in August 1936. These called for help in the evacuation of children who found themselves in summer camps in one zone while their families were in the other, as well as of foreign children who had been trapped by the conflict while spending their summer holidays in Spain.

The SCIU answered both telegrams on 29 August, requesting more information especially about the number of children to be evacuated. Meanwhile, they contacted the Swiss authorities (the political department in Berne, under M. de Rham), the Save the Children Fund in Britain — an agency which would be very useful if British ships were involved in an evacuation — together with the ICRC (Dr Junod was in Spain at that time).<sup>78</sup> The Spanish Consulate in Geneva, the Spanish Red Cross (Republican) and the Social Section of the League of Nations were also contacted over the matter. Finally, the SCIU addressed all its member organisations through an informative leaflet, preparing them for a possible request for cooperation in Spain.

On 7 September 1936 the SCIU received a letter from the Federation of Societies of Friends of the School, dated 3 September. It stated that all foreign children at La Granja had already been evacuated, and provided a list of 15 groups, 804 children in all, who

---

<sup>76</sup> The buses were named “Pestalozzi”, after the Swiss educational reformer and benefactor of the Swiss orphans whom he had helped during the French invasion of Switzerland in 1798; “Dunant”, for the founder of the Red Cross; “Wilson”, the US President who promoted the League of Nations; and “Nansen”, the polar explorer and later Commissioner of refugees for the League of Nations.

<sup>77</sup> Named “Dufour”, after a Swiss Army General who was one of the founders of the Red Cross, and “Zwingli”, after the Swiss Canton whose school children financed it.

<sup>78</sup> Executive Committee minutes, session 225, 21 September 1936, No. 9 – “Intervention en Espagne, p. 2, AEG-SCIU.



had been located in three different regions under the control of the Nationalists, and a list of 754 children in the North of Spain (Santander and Asturias), still under control of the Republican Government but cut off from Madrid and from their home town, Toledo. The letter did not mention the children in the Republican zone whose families were on the Nationalist side.<sup>79</sup>

As Dr Junod was to return from Spain the same day, 7 September, and would be travelling immediately to Santander and Burgos, the SCIU met him. It was agreed that he would raise matters with both Governments to obtain their corresponding authorisation, and would also inform the SCIU about the conditions in the Santander summer camps. Dr Junod hoped to be able to report back from St Jean-de-Luz not later than 14 September.

The Executive Committee of the SCIU noted that the League of Nations was not able to intervene before the next General Assembly reached some agreement on the issue. As this thesis shows, this intervention never came about, revealing the lack of effectiveness of this international organisation with respect to an important European conflict. The SCIU, underlining its desire to remain neutral, formally declared that “...our intervention status appears very appropriate under the circumstances, since organising the exchange of children should not provoke any accusations of partisanship.”<sup>80</sup>

The SCIU now began its relief work for children in Spain, organised through its Executive Committee, and administered through delegates sent to the country to assess, organise and implement as necessary. They focused first on those displaced in summer camps. In October 1936, 475 children from the Santander summer camps were transferred by ship to France and thence to their parents in Madrid and Toledo.<sup>81</sup> The other challenge was the thousands of evacuees from Madrid, the south and the north of Spain, who required relief, such as food, clothing and other essential needs. In this task we shall see the permanent collaboration and interaction of the SCIU representatives in Spain with the ICRC delegates in the diverse Spanish regions.

---

<sup>79</sup> AP 92.16. Guerre Civil Espagnole: demande d'aide a L'UISE (SCIU) de la Fédération des Sociétés des Amis de l'Ecole pour l'évacuation des colonies des enfants. (“Aid request to the UISE (SCIU) from the Federation of Friends of the Schools for the evacuation of children from summer camps”), AEG-SCIU.

<sup>80</sup> Executive Committee minutes, session 225, 21 September 1936 – No. 9 – “Intervention en Espagne”, p. 2, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>81</sup> Executive Committee minutes, session 226, 16 December 1936, p. 210, AEG-SCIU.

Once the Executive Committee decided to intervene in Spain, one of its members, Mme Frédérique Small, was put in charge of investigating and assessing the needs, and the actions and resources that their intervention would require. Mme Small travelled to the area on six occasions, from October 1936 to December 1937, visiting both Republican and Nationalist Spain, as well as the French border region. The relief service was structured and new delegates were engaged in accordance with the assessments and reports of Mme Small, who in 1937 was named SCIU's General Delegate for Spain.

## **2.8 Quakers working in opposing camps**

### **2.8.1 The American Friends become involved in the Spanish conflict**

The AFSC monitored the Spanish conflict from the beginning but approached the matter cautiously, relying on the information, actions and advice of the British Quakers, the FSC in London.

Minutes of the AFSC and of its Foreign Service Section refer to Spain from late 1936. On 24 September there is a reference to the failure of the American Quaker Emma Cadbury<sup>82</sup> in her endeavour to visit Spain to “investigate the possibilities of Service” due to hostilities, as well as to the appointment of Norma and Alfred Jacob: “to take up a Centre work in Spain [sic] and are ready to go as soon as way opens”.<sup>83</sup> The minutes also refer to the presence of the Californian Quaker, Inez Muñoz, and her request for help to be sent to Spain. The minutes record that: “the Friends are not at this time planning to do anything in Spain, that the Foreign Service Section as a Committee is watching the situation and that the time may come when it will be called upon to cooperate with English Friends in their work in Spain”.<sup>84</sup> On 22 October 1936, the Foreign Service Section noted reports from the FSC in London of the visit to Barcelona by John Harvey and Alfred Jacob to assess the problem of the children evacuees from Madrid and Valencia. There is also mention in a cable received on 20 October 1936 from Lydia Ellicott Morris, an American Quaker (already mentioned in Section 2.2) who lived in Philadelphia but often visited France, and occasionally Barcelona. She reported on FSC plans for collaborating in food relief in a joint operation with Save the

---

<sup>82</sup> Emma Cadbury (1875-1965), American Quaker committed to international aspects of Friends' work, serving the Quaker Centre in Vienna after World War I and visiting Spain during the Civil War.

<sup>83</sup> This reference is also made in the abovementioned AFSC Minutes of 24 September 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>84</sup> AFSC Foreign Service minutes, 24 September 1936, pp. 2 and 4, AFSCA.

Children under the leadership of Alfred Jacob. Lydia Morris asked for financial help and a worker to rent and manage the upkeep of a care house for 30 children. She also proposed that relief be channelled through the British Friends. The American Friends resisted sending any money to Spain until they had made their own investigation of the situation. Their answer was, accordingly, negative.<sup>85</sup>

In its meeting of 31 October 1936, the AFSC's Foreign Service Section paid most attention to Palestine and China. With respect to Spain, the Chairman, William Eves III, pointed out that "all of the work that is done in this Section is carried out in cooperation with the Friends Service Council of London and Dublin Yearly Meetings, together with the national groups of Friends on the continent of Europe". There was also mention of Alfred Jacob's investigation in Barcelona "as to whether there should be relief work done in Spain". They noted that no one was there representing the AFSC, but that Lydia Ellicott Morris was in Barcelona, cooperating with Alfred Jacob.<sup>86</sup>

However, the AFSC was still unsure about what action to take in Spain. While their British counterparts were motivated to act by a pro-Republican atmosphere as well as by their own sentiments, stimulated by the Ecroyds and the Jacobs, the AFSC felt that: "there was not sufficient information concerning the actual need, etc., to make any definite plans; that Friends shall be equally concerned for the victims of both sides; and their first step should be to send a representative to Spain to investigate relief needs and reconciliation possibilities."<sup>87</sup>

The Board of Directors spoke about the offer of the Ethical Culture Society in New York to pay 50% of the expenses involved in sending an administrator, and the Mennonites' offer to cooperate in any work the Friends might undertake in Spain.<sup>88</sup> The Board agreed to send an investigator and selected Sylvester Jones, a Quaker from Chicago who spoke Spanish. They accepted both offers of financial help.

A note was made of a private party of Friends at the International Restaurant of Philadelphia on Tuesday 24 November 1936, where relief for Spain was considered.

---

<sup>85</sup> AFSC Foreign Service minutes, 22 October 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>86</sup> AFSC meeting minutes, 31 October 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>87</sup> AFSC Board of Directors minutes, 2 December 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>88</sup> Board of Directors minutes, 2 December 1936, p. 2, AFSCA. The Ethical Culture Society was a nontheistic religion established by Felix Adler, a Jewish rationalist intellectual, in 1876. The Mennonites were a group of Christian denominations named after Menno Simons (1496-1561), committed to non violent resistance and pacifism. They were very close to the Friends.

They agreed to gather as much information as possible about the Spanish situation, from Salvador de Madariaga,<sup>89</sup> A. Kuckhorn, correspondent in Spain for the *New York Times*, and other informed persons. It was felt essential to send an American Friend to Spain to make a report.<sup>90</sup>

Also at about the time of the restaurant meeting, Clarence E. Picket, in typical Quaker fashion, “unofficially” brought together a group of Friends to promote the process through the AFSC, the Foreign Service Section and the Board of Directors. Contact was made with the Spanish Ambassador, Mr Fernando de los Ríos. Through a Catholic Priest, the Jesuit Francis Talbot S.J., editor of the national Catholic weekly magazine *America*, contact was also made with Sr Juan de Cardenas<sup>91</sup>, Franco’s representative. Letters of introduction were obtained, and the way was prepared for Sylvester Jones’ mission to Spain.

Picket wrote to Jones in Chicago, explaining the contacts made as well as the activities of the “most active organisation in USA for Spain: ‘American Friends of Spanish Democracy’ (who were already sending food clothing and money, but helping only the Republican side)”. Mention was also made of the letters about the Spanish situation received from Dr Josep Pijoan, then working in Chicago.<sup>92</sup>

On 3 December 1936, Picket sent a telegram to Sylvester Jones, requesting him to carry out the mission.<sup>93</sup> Jones answered positively on 5 December 1936, also mentioning Pijoan’s offer to accompany him and notifying Picket that he would be at the Foreign Service Section meeting on 17 December 1936.<sup>94</sup> At this meeting, attended by Sylvester Jones, Dr Pijoan and representatives from the Mennonites (Orie O. Miller, unofficially), Sylvester Jones explained Dr Pijoan’s offer of help. It was agreed, on the proposal of Rufus Jones,<sup>95</sup> AFSC President, to start collections immediately, so as to be ready to help as soon as Jones returned from Spain. It was also agreed that for the moment all aid

---

<sup>89</sup> Salvador de Madariaga (1886-1978), Spanish diplomat, writer and historian who went to England in 1936 to escape the Civil War. He had been ambassador in the USA, Delegate to the League of Nations and Minister of Education 1932-34.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Note concerning proposed steps with regard to Spain, growing out of a discussion meeting held at the International Restaurant, Tuesday, November 24, 1936’, Committee on Spain, Minutes, 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>91</sup> Letter to Mr Juan de Cárdenas, 18 November 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>92</sup> Letter from Sylvester Jones to May M. Jones, 30 November 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>93</sup> Telegram from Clarence E. Picket to Sylvester Jones, 3 December 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Sylvester Jones to Clarence E. Picket, 5 December 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>95</sup> Rufus Mathew Jones (1863-1948), American Quaker. A writer and college professor of Theology, he helped to found the AFSC and became its President.

would be channelled through the British Friends (FSC). A “Special Committee on Spain” was appointed to organise the care and forwarding of funds through the FSC, to prepare for the receipt of gifts in kind and to make plans to solicit funds from Friends and various other interested groups. Finally, it was agreed not to decide on the question of maintaining American personnel in Spain and establishing their own channels of distribution until receiving the recommendations of Sylvester Jones.<sup>96</sup>

The AFSC, at its meeting of 18 December 1936, confirmed all the decisions made the previous day by the Foreign Service Section and formally adopted the following agreement, initiating the involvement of the American Friends in the Spanish Civil War:

“FOREIGN SERVICE SECTION: William Eves III, Chairman.

Spain: As previously reported, the Foreign Service Section has been following the situation in Spain with a view to discovering ways of rendering assistance if the way should open. In view of the increasing need and of the number of individuals and organisations interested in the Service Committee’s undertaking a mission of relief in Spain, an unofficial group of Friends met on November 24 to discuss the situation, following which this group reported to the Board of Directors on December 2 and to the Foreign Service Section on December 17 to which meeting were invited members of the Board of Directors and representatives of various organisations (Association to Save the Children of Spain, the Ethical Culture Society, the Central Committee of the Mennonite Church) interested in learning more of the situation and the possibility of working out some form of cooperation for work in Spain.”<sup>97</sup>

At each of the meetings mentioned above, a great deal of information was presented concerning the tragic situation and the enormous need for relief in the form of food and clothing. Their conclusions focused on the need to make their own investigation as to what that service for Friends should be. They asked Sylvester Jones of Chicago, who had spent many years in Cuba and had “a remarkable command of the Spanish language”, and the ability to seek out the particular relief needs, to undertake this mission of investigation.

In view of the appalling and widespread need and the fact that only a small portion of this need could be met by funds raised in America, they agreed that emphasis should be placed on the relief of children and nursing and expectant mothers, and the paramount

<sup>96</sup> Foreign Service Section minutes, 17 December 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>97</sup> AFSC minutes, 18 December 1936, AFSCA.

aim that any relief undertaken should be entirely non-partisan and administered according to need.

The Foreign Service Section recommended to the Service Committee the appointment of a nucleus committee on Spain with power to act and add to its number, referring important questions of policy to the Board of Directors for a decision.

Finally, they decided that the question of maintaining American personnel in Spain and of establishing their own channels of distribution be left open until the recommendations of Sylvester Jones had been received; in the meantime, utilising the channels established by British Friends.<sup>98</sup>

Concerning neutrality, the minutes state: “Considerable discussion followed on the difficulty of maintaining a neutral attitude in this present situation in Spain; that it was only human to be sympathetic with the party which was felt to be right”.<sup>99</sup> While this feeling seemed to be general, it was strongly emphasised that the Friends had to maintain their policy of rendering assistance according to need, regardless of political affiliation; going into a situation quietly and rendering their mission in the spirit of love and goodwill.<sup>100</sup>

On 23 December 1936 the newly formed Committee on Spain held its first meeting. The nucleus of the Committee was composed of Patrick Murphy Malin, William Eves III, Richard R. Wood, Esther Thomas, Harold Evans, Douglas V. Steere, Grade E. Rhoads Jr., Hertha Kraus and Albert L. Scott Jr. They also sought representatives from the Mennonites and the Dunkerds<sup>101</sup>, and wanted to involve other groups interested in doing relief work with the Friends. Thus members were made responsible for contacting the Methodists and the Council of Churches.<sup>102</sup> They decided to ask the AFSC Director, John Reich, to dedicate his available time to the clerical work of the new Committee and to find stenographic assistance. They allocated \$1,000 to cover expenses.

At this first meeting, Dr Pijoan reported on contacts in New York with individuals and associations such as the “Association to Save the Children of Spain”, a title which could

---

<sup>98</sup> AFSC minutes, 18 December 1936, pp. 2-3, AFSCA.

<sup>99</sup> AFSC minutes, 18 December 1936, p. 2, AFSCA.

<sup>100</sup> Their unstated objective was that the latter would convey the Quaker spiritual message, without them carrying out explicitly religious activity. AFSCA: AFSC Minutes 18 December 1936, 3 (Sylvester Jones).

<sup>101</sup> Christian Churches closely linked to the Friends.

<sup>102</sup> Protestant gathering of Churches

easily be confused with the Save the Children Fund and Save the Children Union. In fact, the association was so openly pro-Republican that even Dr Pijoan, sympathetic to that cause, advised proceeding “cautiously” until evaluating their “fundamental aim and ideals”.

It is interesting that Pijoan refers to contacts made with groups interested in raising relief for the rebel side—he took it for granted that the Friends would try to help the Republicans—stating that: “he gathered that this group would accept money and gifts in kind to be administered through their own channels but that it would probably not be possible for Friends to administer that relief in [rebel] Spain”.<sup>103</sup> We see again the idea presented by the Jacobs and their Madrid group, which in turn influenced other British Friends: no relief could be given to the Nationalist side, either because they did not want it or because it would be subject to unacceptable rules. As shown in this thesis, this was not so.<sup>104</sup>

Finally, it must be mentioned that it was agreed not to make any public appeal for funds until the recommendations of Sylvester Jones had been received.

## **2.8.2 Through Loyalist and Insurgent Spain: the journey of Sylvester Jones**

Sylvester Jones sailed from New York on 20 December 1936 to London, where he arrived on Sunday 28 December 1936. There he met the Spanish Republican Ambassador, Sr Pablo de Azcarate y Florez, and the Catalan Government representative, Mr Jerome Darling, who provided him with letters of presentation for both the Spanish Central Government and for Catalan officials. Both were very receptive to the American Quakers’ presence and relief activity.

After meeting the British Friends, Paul Sturge and Fred Tritton, both involved in the Spanish operation, he also had the opportunity to meet the Chairman of the Friends Service Council (FSC), Cuthbert Wighan, and Moser Anderson, a member of both the Friends’ Committee on Spain and of the Save the Children Fund. He also met Peggy Smith, working for the NJCSR, who proposed the creation of a Committee of all

---

<sup>103</sup> AFSC “Committee on Spain” minutes, 23 December 1936, AFSCA.

<sup>104</sup> See above and Chapter 4.

American nations to administer the relief operation in Spain. Jones wrote of her: “Her enthusiasm carries her away. Being young she has the right to be visionary”.<sup>105</sup>

From London, Sylvester Jones travelled to Paris, where he spoke by telephone with Dr Junod, the ICRC’s delegate. Junod, then in St Jean de Luz, on the French-Spanish border in the Basque country, asked him to go to Geneva and make contact with the ICRC there.

After meeting in Geneva with Mlle Suzane Ferriere, he was in touch with both the ICRC and the SCIU and obtained information and contacts that he would require if he “should later go to the Rebel side”.<sup>106</sup> Why was Sylvester Jones unsure that he would be visiting Nationalist Spain, given that the American Friends had clearly requested a full investigation on both sides? He gives no explanation, and we can only presume that he was swayed by the British Friends assertions about the Nationalists’ supposed hostility to relief work by the Friends.

Sylvester Jones left Geneva for Barcelona, arriving on 3 January 1937 and meeting Alfred Jacob, Edith Pye and Miss Pictet.<sup>107</sup> The following day he visited some of the children’s camps and saw the feeding operation at the Barcelona railway station for the refugees arriving from Madrid. He also met Pijoan’s brother Joseph, who was working in Valencia with the Republican Government.

On 6 January 1937 Sylvester Jones visited Castelló, on his way to Valencia, where he met the Ecroyds and could see the refugee problem personally; the small province accommodated more than 6,000 refugees. After visiting Valencia and Alicante, he finally arrived in Madrid, where he met with the authorities and did a needs assessment. On 14 January 1937, Jones sent Clarence F. Pickett the following cable:

Great scarcity of essential foods STOP war conditions and falling peseta make commercial purchases abroad increasingly difficult and domestic supplies nearly exhausted. STOP send food not money STOP recommend sending cargo as generous as possible of flour, sugar, tinned milk and meat STOP for use exclusively of children and mothers STOP distribution be made by non military government authorities jointly with Friends Committee STOP challenging opportunity for service of love STOP

---

<sup>105</sup> Jones, S. (1937), p. 9.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> Dr Miette Pictet, based in Republican territory, represented the SCIU in Spain; see Chapter 4.



Government here guarantees that food sent will be used exclusively for purposes designated by donor STOP just returned from Madrid front STOP city prepared for siege STOP complete evacuation of civilians ordered STOP two hundred thousand will evacuate in next thirty days STOP help in feeding increasingly needed.<sup>108</sup>

Once back in Barcelona on 17 January 1937, Jones met Jacob and Rodolfo Olgiati. Leaving the city and travelling via France, he arrived at St Jean de Luz on the Spanish-French border in the Basque country. As Jones explains, the American Ambassador in Spain, Claude G. Bowers, made arrangements for him to travel to Burgos, obtaining the corresponding permit. As we can see, Sylvester Jones had not been dissuaded from visiting Franco's Spain by the British Friends' opinions.<sup>109</sup>

On 22 January 1937, Sylvester Jones travelled to Burgos by car.<sup>110</sup> Now in "insurgent territory" as he called the Francoist zone, he went to his appointment with the Count of Vallellano, the President of the Nationalist Red Cross. As Vallellano was visiting hospitals, he was met by the General Secretary, the Count of Torrellano, Marquis of Buniel. Jones wrote:

"He greeted me cordially from behind a desk piled high with work. When I told him who I was and why I had come, he was enthusiastic. I hastened to caution him that we were not wealthy people and that donations, if any, might be quite small. He replied, as others had, that the important thing is that a group of people in far-off North America have thought enough about Spain to send someone to inquire with a view to lending a hand".<sup>111</sup>

Torrellano estimated that there were about 30,000 war orphans, "cared for mostly by the Religious Orders." According to Torrellano, food was "in sufficient amount for the present" [sic], but he did not know much about the specific needs of the war orphans.<sup>112</sup> He presented Sylvester Jones with a list of Red Cross requirements: "ambulances, operating tables, stretchers, surgical instruments in general, steam pressure sterilisers, portable x-ray machines, and other x-ray material, clinical thermometers, quartz lamps, anti-gangrene and anti-tetanus serum, gauze and cotton". In brief, there was a

---

<sup>108</sup> Jones, S. (1937), p. 16.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> There were many coordination problems in welfare matters in Nationalist Spain immediately after the military coup. See Chapter 5.

“desperate need of medicines and hospital equipment”.<sup>113</sup> At the end of the meeting, reports Jones, the Marquis “walked arm in arm with me to the outer entrance where he asked the chauffeur to take me to the hotel”.<sup>114</sup> The expected Nationalist refusal was nowhere to be seen.

From Burgos, Jones returned to Barcelona via France, and then sailed to the United States on 5 February 1937. He reported: “There were 150,000 refugee children without sufficient food in Loyalist Spain. Another 30,000 war orphans in the care of Nationalists were in urgent need of clothing and medical supplies”.<sup>115</sup> He estimated the needs on both sides and confirmed that he was warmly welcomed both by Nationalist and Republican officials. There is no evidence that the fact that it was “Quaker aid” was an obstacle to its being accepted.

## **2.9 A first assessment**

The Spanish conflict, with its highly political overtones, inspired humanitarian initiatives almost immediately. In general, these supported one or other faction, mostly the Republicans. In the lead was Britain, where the “Aid to Spain” movement created a groundswell of support for the Spanish Republic.

This upsurge contributed to moving the consciences of the British Quakers and of Save the Children. These organisations helped to found some of the emerging initiatives, the NJCSR and GRF, as well as mobilising their own resources. From early on in the conflict, they focused on help for refugee children in Catalonia and other parts of Spain.

Once the idea of helping children within France had been abandoned, Rodolfo Olgiati of SCI went to Madrid to work for the evacuation and the care of the needy in the besieged Republican capital, and in Valencia, coordinating with the efforts of Swiss Aid. SCI had previously limited its work to helping once a conflict had finished: the trips organised by SCI to evacuate children from Madrid to Valencia were its first action in the midst of an armed conflict.

As explained above, by late 1936 the British Quakers and SCI were active in Spain. While the FSC and SCI were non-partisan in their founding principles, they went to

---

<sup>113</sup> Jones, S. (1937), p. 27.

<sup>114</sup> Jones, S. (1937), p. 28.

<sup>115</sup> Jones, S. (1937), p. 1.

Spain moved by the suffering of the population on the Republican side and worked in the Republican zone. Nonetheless, they did cooperate with AFSC in the management of supplies and in other actions related to relief operations on both sides.

The American Quakers were influenced by the “aid to Spain” movement and the British Quakers’ experiences and information. However, they took a very “Quaker” approach and, on the basis of Sylvester Jones’ findings, planned an effective non partisan relief operation. They worked in Republican territory with and through the British Friends and went on their own to Nationalist territory.

The intensive work of Mme Small, travelling through both Republican and Nationalist Spain, made possible the work in both zones of Save the Children, through the Union (SCIU), which was present in the conflict from late 1936.

The ICRC dealt with the Spanish conflict from the beginning. It accepted and dealt with both Red Cross organisations and both Governments, working through its delegates in both zones. The ICRC focused on the alleviation of suffering in accordance with its principles and helped in the evacuation from Madrid, in coordination with SCI and SA.

The detailed study of how the agencies performed their humanitarian tasks is the subject of the following chapters.

## **Chapter 3: The work of the agencies (1) (1936-1937)**

---

### **3.1 The British Quakers**

#### **3.1.1 Initial plans for relief work in Republican Spain**

The FSC in Barcelona focused on the problem presented by the refugees, mainly children from Madrid and Valencia, of whom normally around 600 arrived each day, and some days up to 2,500. Local authority and charity resources were scarce and, disrupted by the conflict, were unable to cover all the needs.

By October 1936 the supply of milk was irregular and close to total failure, not only due to the exceptional situation, but also because most dairy factories were located in Nationalist Spain.<sup>1</sup>

The Spanish situation was considered by the Meeting for Sufferings in London on 4 November 1936, taking into account a report from Alfred Jacob and Paul D. Sykes from the FSC, and the idea of a joint appeal with Save the Children Fund was contemplated.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee on Spain agreed on a joint FSC/SCF appeal, with the collaboration of the British Red Cross. They agreed to joint action and distribution, including collaboration with the SCIU in Geneva, which would be in charge of purchasing and technical direction. Mr Bertrand Pictet, a Geneva Friend, was named “Agent de Liaison” between the Quakers and SCIU.<sup>3</sup>

#### **3.1.2 Official relief in Catalonia: the nightmare of the conflicting powers**

The Civil War saw clashes between the Catalan government —the Generalitat— and the Spanish central government.<sup>4</sup> The relief responsibilities of municipal authorities in Barcelona and other Catalan cities were a further source of conflict.

---

<sup>1</sup> FHL CoS, minutes, 27 October 1936; circular letter dated 21 October 1936 and attached to the minutes, FHL.

<sup>2</sup> Meeting for Sufferings, minutes, 4 November 1936, FHL.

<sup>3</sup> FHL CoS, minutes, 5 November 1936, FHL.

<sup>4</sup> Catalonia was an Autonomous Region under the Autonomy Statute of 1932.

In reality, between the defeat of the military uprising in Catalonia in July and late October 1936, power was in the hands of the revolutionary Comitè Central de Milícies Antifeixistes, led principally by the anarchists<sup>5</sup>, and both governments were mere spectators. Mme Small talks of “incontrollable organisation” saying that the central government “does not count for anything” in Barcelona.<sup>6</sup> At this time, care of refugees in Barcelona was nominally assured by local refugee committees (with representatives from unions, parties, government bodies...), and funded by the Republican and Catalan Governments.

Between September 1936, when the Catalan Government was restructured with the entry of the anarchists, and August 1937, action became more disciplined. The Central Committee for Refugee Aid was created and regulated, with the Ministry of Public Health Affairs and Social Assistance and the Council of Public Health at War. There was growing interest in coming to terms with the increasingly serious matter of refugees.

When the central government transferred to Barcelona on 31 October 1937, the confrontation between the Catalan and central authorities sharpened and continued so until the end of the conflict. The Republican Government began to absorb, under its Public Health and Social Assistance Ministry, many activities that had been officially transferred or “de facto” taken on by the Catalan Government, such as refugee relief and supplies to the civil population.

Nonetheless, responsibilities continued to be divided and contradictory. For example, Marcel Junod refers to the difficulties of dealing with Catalan and Basque Red Crosses, together with the Republicans, on prisoner and hostage matters, as well as the relationship with three different Public Social assistance organisations and Ministries of Public Health (Republican, Basque and Catalan).<sup>7</sup>

With masses of refugees arriving, and food becoming scarcer day by day, the humanitarian relief brought by foreign agencies was in huge demand. Government disorganisation meant that this relief was not subject to control, with the exception of

---

<sup>5</sup> Anti-Fascist Militias Committee, formed 21 July 1936. Thomas, H. (1990), p. 295.

<sup>6</sup> Mme Small, ‘Voyage October-November 1936’, p. 12, AP.92.16.5, AFG.

<sup>7</sup> Junod (1963), p. 65.

the strict collection of import duties on goods imported. The agencies in the Republican territory tried with little success to reduce or eliminate these duties for relief goods.

Nonetheless, even if in theory their activities were subject to many different regulations, the multiplicity of political power in Republican Spain gave agencies greater freedom of movement than they would have under a single authority, as we will see in the case of Nationalist Spain. On the other hand, the communication problems and the vacuum of power made the agencies' work more hazardous.

### **3.1.3 The Friends begin relief work in Barcelona**

The way the Friends started their activity in Barcelona is a clear example of the combination of freedom and bureaucracy.

In December 1936, supplies of dried milk failed. Jacob reported to Mme Small on 12 December that the production of tinned milk had fallen by 40%. The municipal maternity centre could only supply two tins a week to 400 mothers with children under 18 months. Jacob proposed to the local relief committee selecting 200 of the more needy children. The committee's officer refused, saying "to select a group of children for special treatment... amounts to creating a little hierarchy", and "the Syndicate which organised most of the rationing was unlikely to approve and might even appropriate the milk for those children they personally identified as needy".<sup>8</sup>

The Friends then discovered an uncovered need. New child refugees arriving at Barcelona Sants railway station were first transferred to the Casa de Misericordia. Here they were fed if it was lunch time, but otherwise they had to wait until being placed in their corresponding colonies or foster homes.<sup>9</sup> As nobody was yet involved, the Quakers could establish a feeding station at the Casa de Misericordia without any problem. They began a joint operation with SCIU, with the Friends assuming the direct distribution of food, avoiding the possibility that the authorities try to feed the children themselves. Jacob did not want "to report to London and Geneva: '200 cases of milk turned over to the authorities in Barcelona'." He argued that the Friends wanted to know the children and "regard them as our special charges".<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Letter from A Jacob to Mme Small, 12 December 1936, FHL.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from A Jacob to Mr Mackenzie (ESC) and Mme Small (SCIU), 7 and 12 December 1936, FHL.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from A Jacob to Mme Small. 12 December 1936, FHL.

The work started on 25 December 1936 and a few days later the feeding operation was extended to the zone of the railway station, because some children arrived and departed without making a stop at the Casa de Misericordia. The operation at the station was run by Quakers, and as in the Casa de Misericordia, children were given a hot drink. This was to be milk but, as result of a cocoa donation from the well known British chocolate firm, Cadbury, the drink that was going to become popular in Republican Barcelona was “hot cocoa” (hot water with some milk and cocoa powder) that, with the sugar it contained, was a very nourishing drink.

From the donations received and some supplies from the authorities, the Quakers maintained canteens in Gracia and Sants, able to feed 1,000 children under six years old with half a litre of milk a day and occasionally food such as biscuits. A quarter of a kilogram of sugar was also provided per week. Valuable donations from MacFarlane’s and McVitie’s in Britain permitted a steady supply of biscuits.

### **3.1.4 Alfred Jacob’s personal activities**

From the start of the Quakers’ work in Spain, Jacob ran a relief activity coordinated with the Ecroyd group in Madrid. Financed by himself and others, this was separate from the joint FSC/SCIU operation, with its own budget.

Jacob’s republican sympathies were not a barrier to him seeing the terrible conditions under which many right wing supporters were living in Republican Spain. Jacob proposed that a hotel be set up under government protection and control while he took care of refugee support. This proposal did not take into account Barcelona’s political atmosphere, where rightists were denied official support; a pattern which was repeated in the Basque Country.<sup>11</sup> Where Jacob did succeed was in an “unofficial” programme of food parcel supplies to the right wing refugees living “undercover” and also to some needy British expatriates in Barcelona. This programme received money from Britain.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.1.5 The break with the Save the Children International Union**

The British Quakers’ relationship with the SCIU, governed by a contractual agreement, was very effective in obtaining funds through joint appeals. However, it broke down

---

<sup>11</sup> See section 4.1.5.

<sup>12</sup> FSC, Meeting for Sufferings, 4/11/1936, FHL.

due to differences in working methods and personalities. Both Mme Small and Mlle (Dr) Pictet, the experienced and professional SCIU workers organising relief in Barcelona, reacted negatively from the beginning to Alfred Jacob's lack of experience in humanitarian tasks and his individualistic working methods.<sup>13</sup>

Jacob's wife, Norma, very involved in the service, referred as follows to a visit to Barcelona by Mme Small:

“in a spirit of fault-finding and after just a mere glimpse began giving orders and turning everything upside down without consulting us”.<sup>14</sup>

Jacob avoided meeting Mme Small; there are many references to him missing appointments and disappearing. This situation brought collaboration between the FSC and the SCIU to an end, and their agreement terminated at the end of 1937.

The problem was considered by some of the Friends. In a letter to Paul Sturgess and Fred Tritton of the FSC Committee on Spain, the American Friend Patrick Malin proposed without success a series of measures to resolve the dispute, basically based on the elimination of the negative postures of Norma Jacob and the separation of Alfred Jacob from direct relief activities.<sup>15</sup>

### **3.1.6 Difficult times in Catalonia**

In November 1938, it was estimated that there were more than 700,000 refugees from the rest of Spain in Catalonia, excluding the internally displaced Catalan population. Given the estimated population for Catalonia at that time of 2,800,000 inhabitants, this was an increase of 25%. The magnitude of the problem speaks for itself.

Reporting on his visit to Catalonia in January 1938, Dan West<sup>16</sup> advised that the region was “the neediest in Spain”. Thousands of refugees came over the border at Puigcerdà,

---

<sup>13</sup> “A Jacob has not any kind of experience in this kind of work” (25 Nov. 1936); “He cannot be considered as very capable” (Mme Small in meeting with Pictet and Miss Pye, who were in full agreement, 22 December 1936); “Jacob is not a loyal collaborator” (13 Feb. 1937), AEG-SCIU. AP.92.16: Guerre Civil Espagnole: Notes, rapports et voyages en Europe Nationaliste et Gouvernemental de Mme Frédérique Small et de Mlle Miette Pictet... Octobre 1936 – Décembre 1937.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Norma Jacob to Fred Tritton, 29 October 1937, FHL.

<sup>15</sup> Committee on Spain – Correspondence AFSC – FSC 6 July 1937, FHL. See section 4.1.4 for the SCIU's view of the rupture.

<sup>16</sup> A FSC worker in Nationalist Spain whose activities are studied in Section 5.1.4.



the nearest point of entrance to any Atlantic port.<sup>17</sup> Domingo Ricart, Jacob's close assistant, advised: "Out of the crowd of poor people, came a mass of humanity consisting of old women and young women, women with babies in their arms, children, a few tottering old men, wounded militiamen... They stand in this queue (for a card entitling them to a hot meal of potatoes or rice, and a place to sleep) sometimes for hours. Their clothes are ragged, they look worn out. They look cold. Finally they get their meal. But there isn't enough milk for the babies..."<sup>18</sup>

The Republic's loss of the north at the end of 1937 produced an exodus towards Barcelona of such proportions that the agencies were unable to cope and the authorities in Barcelona (the central and the Catalan governments), not always in coordination, struggled to meet the challenge. The Catalan government established five canteens feeding 16,000 children of up to 14 years of age with a midday meal at the price of one peseta. Additional space was added by converting cinemas into feeding stations.<sup>19</sup>

The Quakers' milk distribution policy changed after the rupture with the SCIU and instead of maintaining a fixed level of food supply for a fixed number of recipients, their aim became to feed as many children as possible; a slightly smaller portion allowed them to reach more children.<sup>20</sup> With this policy, the FSC in Barcelona was feeding approximately 19,000 children. Funding came from their own resources, as well as from the General Relief Fund and the Swiss Committee that ran the Swiss Aid (SA). Jacob's own operation in Catalonia could not expand, because no more funds were available. In fact, the Quaker effort expanded, as we shall see in Section 5.1.1., through the action of the American Friends (AFSC).

Conditions worsened day by day, and in January 1938, Dan West gives a sober vision of his visit to a refuge in what used to be the Barcelona Seminary:

"Here 2,500 people live a miserable existence. The 250 children get an orange and a piece of bread for breakfast, the others nothing. At lunch time, we saw the soup being made in the kitchen – 220 pounds of chick peas, 165 pounds of rice, water – this with less than 2 ounces of bread each is all the 2,500 get. At supper they have beans; and there is little variation from day to day. On one of the beautiful arched porches I saw a

---

<sup>17</sup> West (1938), p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Committee on Spain (1938) (Emily Parker report), AFSCA.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Elise Thomson to Fred Tritton, 29 November 1937, FHL.

pile of small bones – clean ones. And I asked the guide if someone has had chicken, “No”, he replied, “Cat. Every cat which can be caught is eaten”.

The situation was also appalling at the Valls refuge: all the Asturian children who arrived were anaemic and most had contagious skin troubles: the special meal at Christmas was a piece of bread and a cup of milk.

No planning could be made, because funds were limited, the needy increasing in number and the government services, *Asistencia Social* and others, lost in the need.

According to Alfred Jacob, the products required were: milk, codfish, beans, chicken, pears, rice, sugar and flour. But Domingo Ricart insisted: “we must repeat and keep on repeating: Milk, milk, plenty of milk, at least milk for the children! This is the unanimous appeal of all the mothers, and of all those responsible for the refugees: only give us milk.”<sup>21</sup>

### **3.1.7 Relief work in Barcelona and new alliances**

From mid 1937, the FSC looked for new alliances with smaller organisations, believing that the size and highly organised character of the SCIU had led to the rupture. In November 1937, when the agreement with the SCIU terminated, there was a reorganisation, and understandings were reached with Norwegian and Danish Friends and the General Relief Fund (GRF). Elise Thomson, a Danish Friend already working in Barcelona, was taken under the direct support of Danish Friends, who also agreed to sponsor part of the relief expenses.

In mid August 1937, the Barcelona operation had moved to the Hogar Luis Vives, in the upper part of Barcelona, which became the office and the residence for all FSC workers. The Gracia canteen, run by FSC, was to be funded solely by the GRF, while those in Sants and in calle Carmen were to be run and funded by both FSC and GRF. The Norwegian Friends would fund the San Andrés canteen but the FSC would run it for them. Elise Thompson was in charge of the technical direction of the Carmen and Sants canteens.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> West (1938), p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> FSC Committee on Spain, ‘Barcelona Milk Canteens Suggest Scheme for Joint Management by General Relief fund and Society of Friends’, November 1937, FHL.

Without the “interference and control” of the “Swiss envoys”, new policies of milk distribution were established, and Jacob felt relieved: “The impression is one of endless activity in which everyone knows his part and gets on with it, maintaining the most cordial relationship with the others”.<sup>23</sup>

### **3.2 The activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross**

The ICRC learned in the Spanish Civil War that they could not act as they would in a “normal” war between armies of different countries. Here, they had to extend their action to the civilian victims of the war. Also, in the first months the brutality of the conflict meant that there were practically no prisoners: as Dr Junod explained, they were executed.<sup>24</sup>

The delegates addressed: 1) the conditions and treatment of inmates; 2) their relief while in captivity; 3) their possible exchange with prisoners of the other side; 4) information about the captives; and 5) the establishment of postal communication.

In Spain prisoners’ names and details were for the first time in history transmitted by the ICRC using a radio service.

#### **3.2.1 The treatment of prisoners**

The leading authorities of both parties promised to treat prisoners in accordance with the Geneva Convention, but lower down this commitment was often ignored. In the Republican Zone, the ICRC delegates faced the added complication of the existence of autonomous governments in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Furthermore, some of the fighting units on the Republican side had their own autonomy and at times rejected the orders of the higher authorities.

The Nationalist militias (the Falange and the Carlists) were more controlled by their upper ranks. Here there was another difficulty: since Franco did not accept the existence of the Catalan and Basque governments, the ICRC’s work was stopped or severely delayed when these bodies were involved.

---

<sup>23</sup> Correspondence, 26 April 1938; Committee on Spain 1938 – Barcelona B-7, FHL.

<sup>24</sup> See Section 2.3.

As it was a civil war, prisoners were not only combatants but included civilians who were possibly to be used as hostages.

During the first months of the war, Marcel Junod and all the ICRC delegates aimed to secure prisoners' safety, improve their living conditions and, if possible, organise prisoner exchanges between the parties. With this objective, the ICRC was in permanent contact and collaboration with the Diplomatic Corps representatives in Spanish territory. At this time, there were prisoners on both sides, but on the Republican side, with big industrial cities such as Madrid, Bilbao and Barcelona, there were many prisoners in prisons and, in the maritime cities, prison-ships. In general, in Barcelona the militias committee, led by anarchists, held the real power at the beginning of the conflict. In Madrid the authorities had more influence, but here too the militias were powerful. Finally in the Basque country, the civil authorities disappeared with the military uprising, except in Vizcaya. Of the three Defence Committees (*Juntas de Defensa*) that assumed all power, only that in Azpeitia was under nationalist control (PNV): the San Sebastian junta was controlled by the anarchists and that in Eibar by the socialists.<sup>25</sup> During the first days of the war the workers' militias were predominant, but gradually the Basque nationalists' own militias became a substantial force to impose some kind of order and control in the matter of the prisoners and their safety.

The ICRC's task was complicated by the advance of Franco's forces, usually accompanied by increasing air raids on the towns. Prisoners were at risk of becoming the only available target of reprisals for these bombings.

Dr Junod was in Bilbao on 24 September 1936, together with Jean Herbette, the French Ambassador to Spain, to negotiate with the Civil Governor, then the leading authority in the city.<sup>26</sup> One of the objectives of his visit was the exchange of the Carlist MP, Esteban Bilbao Egia, a well known Nationalist, for the Bilbao Mayor, Ernesto Ercoreca.<sup>27</sup>

As the Nationalists had announced an offensive against Vizcaya the next day, Burgos Radio was constantly calling Dr Junod to "leave Bilbao, because otherwise the Burgos

---

<sup>25</sup> See Garmendia & González Portilla (1988), pp. 19-24; Meer (1992), pp. 100-105.

<sup>26</sup> A Basque Government would later be created under the Autonomy Statute introduced on 1 October 1936.

<sup>27</sup> Bilbao Egia would become one of the key political figures in Francoist Spain. Ercoreca, a member of the Republican Left Party, had been in Madrid at the time of the uprising and was taken prisoner by Franco's forces while trying to return to Bilbao.

Government can not guarantee his life...”<sup>28</sup> The planned offensive and bombardment affected the meeting. Dr Junod explains: “José Antonio Aguirre approached and told me that really it was not a good time to discuss the exchange of hostages, because if Bilbao was bombarded, the reaction of the masses in respect of the hostages would be terrible. He advised me to return to San Sebastian, as soon as possible, to dissuade the Francoists from bombing the capital of the Basque Country. He even authorised me to take with me Don Esteban, because the exchange had been agreed, and ‘word given, word kept’. We waited until dark and placed Don Esteban in a taxi, well hidden between the Ambassador (Herbette) and myself. The man was more dead than alive, and despite his belief that it was his final hour I needed to keep him going. He very readily gave me his word that he would remain in France until Ercorea had been liberated”.<sup>29</sup>

On going to the Nationalist side, Dr Junod obtained from the authorities a verbal guarantee that if prisoners’ lives were respected they would do the same for the prison guards in Bilbao when, as forecasted, they took Bilbao.<sup>30</sup> He hoped that this would serve as protection for the prisoners. Junod went to Vitoria and, after complicated negotiations with the military commander, took Ercorea to St Jean-de Luz, where Esteban Bilbao already was. They met in a hotel, where the hostages and “enemies” hugged one another and “swore to use their best efforts to stop the massacres, and to be allies”.<sup>31</sup>

On 25 September the Nationalist General Solchaga began the offensive, including aerial bombing. Junod, Herbette and his wife Marta, against the advice of the French consul in Bilbao, who said that the city was “in the bloody hands of the anarchists and without any authority”, decided to return there. On arriving, Junod witnessed what “a dozen 250 kilo bombs felt like, with disembowelled houses and causing terrible destruction”.<sup>32</sup> He noted that the population abandoned their houses and referred to a total lack of authority.

---

<sup>28</sup> Junod (1963), p. 73.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 72-73. Junod is mistaken in naming José Antonio Aguirre; he must refer to the civil governor José Echevarría, since he and the Basque nationalist leader Julio Jauregui were those present at the meeting, as confirmed by Jean Herbette. Aguirre — the future Basque President — was at that time in Madrid preparing the Spanish Parliament session scheduled for 1 October, in which the Basque Autonomy Statute was to be approved.

<sup>30</sup> The Basque authorities and those guilty of crimes subject to court action were excluded from the guarantee.

<sup>31</sup> Junod (1963), p. 74.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

With the bombardment there were reprisals against prisoners. In the morning, the guards of the Altuna Mendi prison-ship, with 600 prisoners on board, selected and shot twenty nine prisoners, including one priest, and two more were shot at 12.30. On the Cabo Quilates, another prison-ship with 500 prisoners aboard, the guards shot thirty five prisoners.<sup>33</sup> The threat of reprisals at the convent of the Custodian Angels, where the women prisoners were kept, was averted by Jean Laffontain, chief of the French colony in Bilbao. He contacted a Basque Nationalist MP who ensured the intervention of soldiers to save the women.

All this complicated Junod's task of organising new exchanges. However, as the Nationalists confirmed their guarantee concerning prison guards, Junod was able to use this promise to protect the surviving prisoners.

In Madrid at the end of October 1936, the Republican authorities became very concerned with the presence in the capital of opponents of the Republic. More than 8,000 were imprisoned, about 8,000 were refugees in diplomatic premises and there was an unknown number free and working for the "Fifth Column".<sup>34</sup>

News arriving from the front about Francoist atrocities in captured villages, with killings of trade unionists and left activists, increased the risk of reprisals against prisoners. More people were being detained and some politicians started to ask what was happening to them. Largo Caballero asked the Interior Minister, Angel Galarza Gago, to deal with the matter, but any concrete action, such as the transfers of the prisoners to safer places, was postponed. The beginning of October saw the start of what would become known as "sacas", the illegal removal of prisoners to be executed without trial, supposedly by uncontrolled persons. According to the Soviet journalist Mijail Koltsov, then present in Madrid: "In the Madrid prisons there are 8,000 detainees and amongst them 3,000 academy officers, on active or reserve. If the enemy comes into the city or if a mutiny happens, the enemy shall find an excellent army officers' column ready. It is necessary to evacuate them from the city, walking and in stages. But

---

<sup>33</sup> Meer (1992), p. 164. Other sources refer to the "killing of prisoners from the prison-ships Cabo Quilates and Altuna Mendi with 500 hostages on each and Arantzazu Mendi with 600, without any details.

<sup>34</sup> From a phrase attributed to the Nationalist General Mola when, asked about the forces attacking Madrid, with four columns approaching from different points, he asserted that "another Fifth Column of Nationalists partisans was already in Madrid".

no one addresses this problem.” He raised the question with the Minister of State, Julio Alvarez del Vayo, who responded that all would be taken care of “in good time”.<sup>35</sup>

And, from that date until the nomination on 4 December 1936 of the anarchist Melchor Rodríguez as General Director of Prisons, one of the darkest episodes in the history of the Spanish 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic took place.<sup>36</sup>

During that period, the communist Santiago Carrillo Solares was head of public order in the Defence Junta, formed on 6 November 1936 to replace the Republican Government which moved to Valencia. His deputy was José Cazorla Maure.

The ICRC delegate in Madrid, George Henny, present in the capital from November until 4 December, reported:

“On 6, 7 and 8 November, 974 prisoners (you will find a list attached) left the Modelo Cellular Prison; 175 from the San Anton prison and about 150 from Las Ventas prison. This last figure is less exact because we do not have the list of names from this prison. Of these prisoners, only 196 arrived at the Alcalá de Henares workhouse: 11 from the Modelo prison, 120 from San Anton prison and 65 from the Ventas prison. We received the latter information from the director of the Alcalá workhouse, whom Sr Schlayer and I visited to find out what had happened to the prisoners that had left Madrid, since the prisoners’ parents, worried by the rumours, had come to our delegation looking for reassuring information.”<sup>37</sup>

When they realized that only 196 of the 1,275 prisoners that had left Madrid were accounted for, they began investigating in the different prisons to which they could have been transferred (Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante...). In Madrid there were many rumours about the prisoners’ fate. Henny, Schlayer and the Argentinian *chargé d’affaires*, Perez Quesada, travelled to Torrejon de Ardoz, near Madrid. They gathered information about executions and met witnesses who took them to the site of a suspected mass grave, of around 200 metres in length. Henny does not establish the number of dead, but refers to

---

<sup>35</sup> Koltsov (1963), pp. 168-169.

<sup>36</sup> Melchor Rodríguez, appointed by the new Minister of Justice, García Oliver, another anarchist, was opposed to the practices mentioned. He had been Director of Prisons before, and had resigned very soon due to this attitude, according to Gibson (1983).

<sup>37</sup> Henny, George (1937) ‘Rapports et Correspondance de Madrid 18/9/1936-2/1/1937’. B CR 212 GEN-58. ICRC; henceforth Henny (1937). Felix Schlayer, a German engineer who had lived in Madrid since 1935, was *Chargé d’affaires* of the Norwegian Legation in Madrid. He worked with Henny on prisoner matters.

a report by Shlayer who had seen many similar sites with Perez Quesada.<sup>38</sup> He annexed Shlayer's findings, drafted in Spanish for the Norwegian Government and the Diplomatic Corps, to his own report.

Shlayer refers to about 120 rebel officers "transferred" to Valencia who never arrived. He visited Santiago Carrillo, who said he "knew nothing". However, Shlayer affirms: "But also that night and the following day, the deportations continued from the prisons, without any action by Miaja or Carrillo, who then did not have the excuse of a lack of knowledge, because they had been informed by us."<sup>39</sup> From the Modelo prison he obtained information about 970 prisoners sent to Valencia by order of the General Director of Security and executed by members of the "Investigation Brigade García Atadell" (known in Madrid as the Sunrise Brigade, because their detentions and executions were usually performed at dawn).<sup>40</sup> On the afternoon of Sunday, 8 November, Schlayer went to Paracuellos del Jarama, where he found two graves of about 200 metres each, covering more than 600 bodies. During the following days Schlayer visited Aldovea Castle, where a recent grave uncovered about 500/600 dead; Henny obtained copies of prisoner lists.

But it did not end there. During that time, the killing of prisoners, and the visits to private homes to take and execute civilians, continued. On 25 November "popular courts" were set up at San Anton prison where, day after day, prisoners were either condemned to death or "liberated" to be illegally executed.

The Junta de Defensa of Madrid denied what was already appearing in the international press, but Schlayer, Henny and Quesada gave detailed information about the executions. These were mainly carried out by Government assault Guards, and not "incontrolados", an expression used by Republican sources to refer to the anarchist militias. It will never be possible to establish the precise number killed, but the information about prison transfers indicates that the figure cannot be less than 2,000.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Henny (1937).

<sup>39</sup> Schlayer (2008), p. 140.

<sup>40</sup> Schlayer saw the document signed by Vicente Girauta Linares, Deputy Director, under the oral instruction of Manuel Muñoz Martínez, Director, before his escape to Valencia, giving the order to transfer the 970 prisoners. Schlayer (2008), p. 148.

<sup>41</sup> Henny (1937).



On Thursday, 8 December Dr Henny left Madrid on a French plane. The flight was attacked by “unknown” planes and forced to make an emergency landing.<sup>42</sup> There was much debate both within the Republican and Nationalist governments, in the international press and elsewhere, concerning the culprits and whether the target of the attack had been Henny, or Delapréé, the special envoy to Madrid of the French newspaper *France Soir*. Many writers attribute the attack to the Republican Air Force.<sup>43</sup> Henny survived but Delapréé died, and his widow presented the Republican Government with a request for compensation. ICRC also presented a formal note to the Valencia Government. Captain Eric Arbenz, the ICRC delegate in Barcelona, went to Madrid, while after a long trip, Henny arrived in Geneva on 21 December 1936.

There was fierce fighting in Andalusia in early 1937. Nationalist conquests of cities that had seen heavy fighting and repression in July 1936 were followed by ferocious reprisals. Málaga, where the uprising had been initially defeated after a fierce fight, was taken by the Nationalists on 8 February 1937. *Auxilio Social*, the Nationalist relief agency, counted 17,000 orphans in the town as a result of Republican repression: other sources put the figure at 2,000.<sup>44</sup> According to an eye-witness: “4,000 people were killed in the first week after the fall of the city”.<sup>45</sup> Queipo de Llano, the Nationalist South Commander, in an interview with Pourtales, the ICRC delegate at St Jean-de-Luz sent to Málaga, admitted that 9,000 prisoners had been taken and three Military Courts set up. Pourtales sent a full and concise report to Geneva through the Swiss Consul.<sup>46</sup> Another ICRC delegate, Raymond Courvoisier, arrived in Málaga on 9 April 1937, and he also reported on the capture of the city by the Foreign Legion, Moroccans, Phalangists and Italian Black Arrows:

---

<sup>42</sup> Schlayer refers to the description of the attack by M. Boyer, the pilot of the French plane (Schlayer (2008), p. 190).

<sup>43</sup> According to Hugh Thomas the plane was “probably attacked by republican aircraft”. Thomas, H. (1990), p. 486. Sefton Delmer of the *Daily Express* claims the attack was carried out by the Soviet police, NKVD, operating in Spain, to avoid Henny delivering his sensitive information to Geneva and it being used in the upcoming session of the League of Nations. Delmer (1961), pp. 322-3. Henny himself stated that he believed the attacking planes were of the “Legal Government”. Henny (1937).

<sup>44</sup> Marqués (2000), p. 170.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas, H. (1990), p. 386.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas, H. (1990), pp. 378-9.

“In the process of an unmerciful repression, four thousand people were executed. There is talk about rape, torture and mutilation. German and Italian planes chased thousands of people leaving Málaga for Almería.”<sup>47</sup>

All over Spain, the situation was more or less similar and the conduct of one side provoked reactions by the other.

### **3.2.2 Relief aid**

The ICRC neutrality principle was tested from the first days of the war by Red Cross Societies’ offers of aid addressed to only one of the parties, usually the Republicans. This raised the question as to whether it was appropriate that aid from a donor be distributed selectively. In its Bulletin N° 329, dated 21 August 1936, the ICRC asserted that aid received would not be directed to only one party, in keeping with the ICRC tradition of impartiality.<sup>48</sup>

To facilitate their relief action, the ICRC involved the League of Red Cross Societies.<sup>49</sup> The League was to convey ICRC appeals to the Red Cross Societies in the various countries, informing them about relief operations and the needs. The ICRC also cooperated with the League in dealing with the different authorities and in the purchase of supplies and their delivery to the ICRC delegates in Spain. The League coordinated the efforts of 41 Red Cross Societies in the Spanish conflict.

It was agreed that the distribution shall be equal for both fighting zones. The ICRC member Jean J. Pictet states that the organisation referred in its Bulletin 330 to the possible distribution of aid offers which were partisan or carried special conditions, but decided to avoid this matter.<sup>50</sup> It was felt that people expected the ICRC to exercise relief on a strictly equal basis for both sides in the war and mentioning any other possibility could be considered as partisan. Nonetheless, Pictet explains that “the ICRC would distribute aid in accordance with individual needs and urgency, which meant that

---

<sup>47</sup> ‘Rapport de Raymon Courvoisier pieces n° 1-24, San Sebastian, 18/12/1936-27/12/1937’. B CR 212 – GEN-53, ICRC.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Circulaire n° 329’, 21 August 1936, ICRC.

<sup>49</sup> See footnote in Section 2.2.

<sup>50</sup> Pictet (1955), Chapter III.

the only aspect the Red Cross had to maintain as equal between the two countries (or two parties in a Civil War), was its vocation to serve”.<sup>51</sup>

The relief appeal was very successful. The different Red Crosses reacted with donations that in November 1936 amounted to 441,000 Swiss Francs of the time<sup>52</sup>. However the world economic crisis reduced the stream of funds. Other conflicts, such as that between China and Japan in 1937, forced the ICRC to consider other ways of responding to the growing needs in Spain. They requested support from Governments and this, together with donations, allowed the ICRC to maintain an acceptable minimum level of relief. In fact, we shall see that the ICRC suffered the same problem as other agencies in Spain, like the Save the Children Fund and Union and the British Quakers: the near exhaustion of funds for their charitable work.<sup>53</sup>

ICRC relief aid was basically medical — clinical material, first aid kits, hospital equipment, beds and laboratories — sent through the French border to both sides and delivered to delegates who conveyed it to the corresponding Red Cross (Republican or Nationalist). The Republican zone received more supplies because its needs were greater, but ICRC strived for equilibrium. From 1938, due to the need in the Republican zone, the ICRC food packs distributed all over Spain.<sup>54</sup>

### **3.2.3 The “asilados” (asylum seekers)**

The Spanish conflict presented the ICRC with a novel situation: following the failure of the military uprising in Madrid, thousands of civilian Francoists sought asylum in the capital’s foreign embassies — the most widely accepted figure is around 8,000.<sup>55</sup> The embassies, with their “extraterritorial rights”, became refugee camps: in the Chilean embassy alone there were 622 refugees.

While these “asilados” in embassies were protected by the countries represented, the ICRC, which had relations with the authorities of the conflicting parties, tried to mediate and bring about the evacuation of the refugees. The ICRC obtained information about the “asilados” in October 1936 and was able to produce a list of names which was

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> About £22,300 in 1936 (or £1,180,000 at 2010 prices, according to [www.measuringworth.com](http://www.measuringworth.com)).

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>54</sup> As we shall see, this was done in collaboration with Swiss Aid (SA) and SCIU.

<sup>55</sup> The ICRC had dealt before with cases of refugees in embassies, but never in such numbers.

kept secret for reasons of security. The ICRC's attempts to organise exchanges were not acceptable to the parties involved. However some countries, like France, Turkey, The Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and Cuba, achieved understandings with the Republican Government and many "asilados" were evacuated.

### **3.2.4 Relief in captivity**

The warring parties initially rejected ICRC visits to detention camps and prisons, but on 10 October 1936 delegates could visit the prison ships in Bilbao and in November the Montjuïc and Modelo prisons in Barcelona. They criticised health conditions in Montjuïc, finding the Modelo acceptable. This seemed to be a pattern in both zones; in some camps prisoners had reasonable conditions while in others food was scarce, the buildings were in a terrible state and/or there was overcrowding.

In both zones, the ICRC delegates obtained uneven results, suffering from the problem that what was authorised one day was forbidden another. Through careful diplomatic work, they were able to organise the distribution of food parcels and correspondence to inmates.

### **3.2.5 Exchanges**

In general, all the ICRC's negotiations to improve prisoners' condition and avoid reprisals — mistreatment and illegal executions — were subject to difficulties. Above all, even if the higher authorities agreed improvements, the lower levels of prison directors and guards, under pressure from different political forces on the ground, delayed or contradicted their orders. The only real way to guarantee prisoners' lives was to remove them from detention through exchanges.

Focusing on the prisoners at most risk because of their political affiliations, family connections, or military unit, ICRC delegates became heavily involved in arranging exchanges. From the start of the war this required diplomacy and patience, strength and dedication, in the face of often unreasonable demands by the fighting parties. The ICRC's efforts to exchange prisoners at risk without distinction of name and condition proved difficult, because the status and importance of each prisoner strongly influenced whether the authorities were prepared to exchange them.

Once the exchange of a list of prisoners had been agreed, the operation itself was time consuming. The ICRC delegate in St Jean de Luz, once informed by Geneva, visited the military command in Irun who notified the Burgos authorities. The nationalist authorities notified the prison or camp director about the prisoners to be exchanged. The prisoners were delivered to the ICRC delegate once Geneva had confirmed that the prisoners from the Republican prison had crossed Catalonia's French border or had embarked on a neutral ship.

The ICRC fought to obtain a general agreement for the exchanges but, ultimately abandoned the idea as the parties could not agree and, instead, left it to the personal work of the delegates, with the feedback from Geneva. When the "equality principle" was abandoned by the ICRC and the delegates just dealt with the interests of both parties, the process was more fluid.

From the first exchange negotiated by Dr Junod on 24 September 1936<sup>56</sup> until the end of 1937 only the following operations took place:

- 150 women detained in Bilbao were liberated in exchange for Basque women and children in the Basque territory occupied by the Nationalists.
- The order by Franco's Government General to liberate all women and men older than 60 or younger than 18, detained in the Basque territory under Franco's control.
- Exchange in October 1937 of 20 Soviet sailors — from the *Komsomol* and the *Snidovitch*, ships captured by the Nationalists — for Spanish, German and Italian aviators.

These were unconnected operations, organised by the ICRC using the negotiating skills and the contacts of their delegates in "both Spains". The scarcity of the results shows the difficulty of the task the ICRC had taken on.

### **3.2.6 Information and communications**

The ICRC was in close contact with the SCIU and their delegates during the entire conflict, to trace displaced children, one of the main activities of the SCIU in Spain.

---

<sup>56</sup> See Section 3.2.1.

As we have mentioned in Sections 2.2 and 2.7, the SCIU action in Spain was inspired by an appeal from the Republican Government (through Sra Matilde Huici, from the CCPM) and the Federation of Societies of Friends of the School in August 1936. But we have also seen that the SCIU, before starting work, consulted the ICRC and met with Dr Junod who had investigated on his visits to Spain.<sup>57</sup> This collaboration was the pattern during the conflict.

The ICRC agreed with both Governments to open “Information agencies for civilians and released prisoners”. This was to be a conduit for information about prisoners and people reported missing. In addition, it could help pass information for families who were unable to communicate as a result of being separated by the war. The ICRC was able to assist in this, as it was in contact with both sides. As early as 31 July 1936, it received requests from the Republican Zone through the French Red Cross and on 5 September the General Secretary of the Republican Spanish Red Cross asked the ICRC to obtain news about people living in the Nationalist zone. When it received a request from one of the parties, the ICRC acted as intermediary to receive and transmit family mail. “Local Information Offices” were set up in both territories under the supervision of delegates. At the end of September 1936, Madrid, Barcelona and Burgos had these “Information Offices”, and in early 1937 they were established in Santander, Bilbao, San Sebastian and Palma de Mallorca.

The tasks of the offices were as follows: receive information requests from people living in their territory in respect of family members who may be hostages, prisoners of war, living in the other territory or refugees outside Spain; receive requests from Geneva and to investigate accordingly; answer the people requesting information; inform the central agency of the ICRC; and convey mail. The Spanish personnel in the offices received and classified the mail, registered it and sent it to the Spanish services of the ICRC, who then conveyed it to the addressees, depending on the functioning of the postal services. The ICRC became well known among the Spanish population that used its services for correspondence and to search for family members.

The service was a great success. By December 1936, the ICRC had received 21,800 requests in Madrid and was forced to set up separate offices. The “News Service” was located at the delegation in Calle Abascal, where it received between 3,500 and 4,000

---

<sup>57</sup> See Section 2.7.

visits each day, with requests for family searches that they passed on to Geneva. The “News Service” processing the requests received from the Nationalist zone, sited at the office in Calle del Pilar, received about 2,000 visits per day.<sup>58</sup> Together with the evacuation service at Calle Oquendo, the ICRC employed about 100 Spaniards.

ICRC was aware that letters may include information or comments that could be perceived as dangerous and an objective of the censors acting in both zones. There was a system of extracting strictly the family information and transcribing it onto special forms, but the increasing number of letters made this task impossible. The ICRC created an “official basic form” in two parts: one for the sender’s text and other to be written by the addressee, with a 25 word text limit for both. The Republican and Nationalist Governments both approved the system and granted free postage. The forms were distributed by the ICRC delegations and even to prisoners during the occasional visits to the prisons and detentions camps. This form, inspired by the forms used at the end of World War I to permit mail between the USA and the Central Powers, was to become the “Civil Message” that was used with great success in World War II.

The stream of information obtained through the service made it possible for the ICRC to keep accurate registers and increase the effectiveness of its humanitarian task: “When a person under threat — whether a prisoner of war, a detainee, a hostage or a civilian — had been identified, or even if inquiries were made of the authorities with regard to that person, in other words, once that person ceased to be anonymous, then there was a better chance of escaping arbitrary judgements.”<sup>59</sup>

### **3.3 Service Civil International: action in Spain**

The SCI’s principal activity in late 1936 and early 1937 had been the transport of refugees from Madrid to Valencia. By the end of November 1937, the SCI’s buses had evacuated about 5,500 people, half of them children and the rest women and some old people. Towards the end of 1937, this activity reduced in intensity, and SCI redirected its efforts.

The problem for the Swiss SCI was that while it could find volunteers, it did not have enough funds to finance its activities in Spain. This problem was resolved with the aid

---

<sup>58</sup> Durand, A. (2002) p. 298.

<sup>59</sup> Durand, A. (1984), p. 355.

of their British branch, the International Voluntary Service for Peace (IVSP), together with the collaboration of the Quakers (FSC) and the SCIU.

The IVSP directly rented a farm near Puigcerdà (Catalonia) to produce goods for the children's colonies established there. The farm, run by British, Swiss and Danish volunteers, also provided an activity and a farming education for the young boys living in the colonies.

In Spain Olgiati foresaw the need for a coordinated work effort, in which SCI would "sustain and develop" the action started by the Quakers (FSC) and the SCIU in the distribution of food and clothing in both zones, and establishing milk distribution points. He believed the SCI's sisters could collect and organise the clothing and help in the evacuation of children and mothers. He also referred to the possibility of organising the transfer of ill or wounded Spanish children to Swiss hospitals. Olgiati considered the Neutral Committee, then being established, to be a fundamental body for organising future relief work.

The Madrid canteen, located at the maternity hospital ("Maternidad"), opened on 17 October 1937. It started serving two meals a day to 70 women and 50 children; it had space for 250 people at full capacity. However, Mr Dubois of SCI reported that at the end of November 1937 nearly 1,600 meals were served daily.

Soap was very much in need, and SCI, with good reserves, was able to regularly supply the main Madrid children's hospital, "Hospital del Niño Jesús" with 5 kg per day, the normal daily soap consumption had been 25 kg. Soap was also distributed in the canteen.

Clothing was distributed in Burjassot, Valencia, where the operational base for the evacuation was established, using a warehouse donated by the Municipality. Baby clothes were also given to two Madrid maternity hospitals.

Some clothing from SCI was also sent to Murcia. At the Sierra de Espuña, 50 km from the coast, there was a colony of 200 refugee children from Málaga. This colony was the result of the efforts of Sister Leonor Imbelli, an SCI member experienced in relief work, who was working in Murcia under contract with the SCIU. In July 1937 she was able to send 100 refugees children to the hotel and some barracks in Espuña. With tents



obtained from local authorities and the help of SCI, in August 1937 the number of child refugees reached 200. In an endeavour to obtain the best for the children, she was able to organise, by October, tours of visiting families, to provide the children with family support, that always was necessary.

Finally, the Puigcerdà farm was running smoothly with four volunteers: F. Funk, F. Girling, a Dane and Sister J Moorhouse. This supplied chicken and pork, as well as firewood for cooking and heating, to the nearby colonies.

Having examined the work of the British Quakers, the ICRC and SCI during this first part of the war, we will now consider the activities of the SCIU and the American Quakers (AFSC).

## **Chapter 4: The work of the agencies (2)**

---

### **4.1 The Save the Children International Union**

#### **4.1.1 The Save the Children International Union organises its work in Spain**

In accordance with the assessments and reports of Mme Small (appointed General Delegate for Spain later in 1937) resulting from her trips all over Spain (see section 2.7) the relief service was structured and new delegates were engaged.

Mr Auguste Reynald Werner, a Doctor in Law by the Geneva University who volunteered to work for the SCIU,<sup>1</sup> was sent on a mission to Santander and Bilbao, the Republican north, with instructions on the care of displaced children and a brief to provide information about them. He remained there from April until June 1937, working on the distribution of food, clothing and the like.

Martha Müller volunteered in April 1937, and was sent to Nationalist Spain in May 1937.

In its relief service in Spain, the SCIU used also relief workers for specific purposes and places. For example, Sister Leonore Imbelli, an experienced member of SCI, was sent to south-eastern Spain, where she worked to create and develop the children's colony of España, at the Sierra de España, Murcia, (see Section 2.3).

A detailed study of the work of Mme Small will give a clear picture of the SCIU's work in Spain, as well as clarifying some aspects of the work of other agencies and their workers, that have been ignored or distorted by historians.

Mme Small made her first visit to Spain, from 16 October to 27 November 1936, in order to consider the initial situation faced by the SCIU in the Spanish struggle. The main issue was the displaced children.

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Auguste Reynald Werner to J M de Morsier, 2/4/1937. AP. 92.16.7-1, AEG-SCIU.

In this task the SCIU worked closely with the ICRC, as noted above.<sup>2</sup> Mme Small was in touch with the leading ICRC delegate, Dr Junod, and with Dr Raymond Broccard, the delegate ICRC based in Burgos. She visited children's colonies in the North, including Galicia, Segovia and Zaragoza. In permanent contact with Dr Broccard, she was party to the negotiations to evacuate the children located at a Vitoria colony to Bilbao. Also, in close contact with the Comte of Vallellano, the Marquis de Valdeiglesias and other Nationalist Red Cross officials, Broccard and Mme Small faced up to General Mola's refusal to authorise the children's evacuation. After intense negotiations, on 1 November 1936, the Comte of Vallellano informed the SCIU and ICRC that General Mola was ready to authorise the departure of Republican children from the Colonies. The next day, Monday, 2 November, Dr Broccard sent the Vitoria Children to Bilbao.

In St Jean de Luz, Mme Small tried to negotiate the return of San Sebastian children evacuated to France and kept at Hygabia at Hendaye. She faced the opposition of the Spanish Consul, a Republican, who requested individual letters from the parents to hand over the children to the Red Cross.

She returned to Spain with money provided by the Swiss Consulate (1,000 Spanish pesetas received from Berne; illegal under Nationalist regulations), where she investigated and provided for clothing needs.

In Irun, the Mayor had received some clothing from Mme Small. It had been distributed, covering the needs for the time being. In Burgos she was able to purchase 50 sets of underwear and 85 pullovers for the children. After a lot of effort, she obtained agreement to evacuate the 131 children at the Abadia de Labanza to Republican territory. She also contacted Mercedes Milá, who provided Mme Small with useful information about Red Cross officers and their relationship with Franco's Government.<sup>3</sup>

On 16 and 17 November, Mme Small travelled to Valladolid, Talavera, Toledo and then to see the Comte of Argillo in Leganés, near Madrid. She asked him three questions. Firstly, what were the needs of the children in Nationalist territory and how could the SCIU be of use? Second, were there reconstruction plans for after the war and would

---

<sup>2</sup> See Section 2.2.

<sup>3</sup> With family political connections to the Franco side, Milá had been deposed as President of the Spanish Juvenile Red Cross in Madrid after the Nationalist rising. She was described as "Nurse in Chief of the Nationalist Red Cross". 'Mission en Espagne - Suite de journal', 27 November 1936. AP.92.16.6. AEG-SCIU; henceforth SCIU (1936), no. 3.

the SCIU be welcome, in a technical advisory capacity? Finally, was it possible to establish a neutral, combat-free zone, that would be respected by the Nationalist Government?

The Comte Argillo answered the first two questions. Food was not required but about 10,000 children needed warm clothing. He welcomed the idea of technical advice from SCI. On the third question, he referred Mme Small to the diplomatic service of the Nationalist government and advised her to go to Salamanca. We must now make a brief digression to consider this neutral zone proposal.

#### **4.1.2 The neutral zone proposed by the Save the Children International Union**

The fact that a neutral zone for children, and their mothers and carers, was proposed as early as November 1936 is very important. It represents a clear precedent for the neutral zone presented by Franco and the ICRC as an alternative to the evacuation of Basque children in April-May 1937, an episode practically forgotten by historians which merits a thesis in itself, and cannot properly be covered in the present work.

Late in the evening of 17 November, Mme Small travelled in Nationalist army cars from Toledo to Talavera, and thence to Avila. On the morning of Wednesday 18 November she arrived at Salamanca and met José Antonio Sangroniz, the head of the Nationalist diplomatic service. Mme Small presented him with her proposal for a neutral zone. He thought that in principle it would be acceptable to the Nationalist government, but this would be subject to the approval of General Franco. However, he feared the Republican government would oppose it.

Sangroniz, working on Mme Small's proposal, considered the South American countries as the best guaranteeing powers for the proposed neutral zone and suggested contacting the Argentina Ambassador, based at St Jean de Luz.

At that time, Mme Small asked Sangroniz if he thought it would be useful for her to present the project to Doña Carmen Polo, Franco's wife. Sangroniz agreed and arranged an appointment that afternoon. Mme Small was received cordially by Doña Carmen,

who was very interested in the idea of the neutral zone. She promised to speak to her husband about the proposal, “personally she believed it was fully acceptable”.<sup>4</sup>

On her way to Republican Spain, Mme Small visited the Argentinian Ambassador, Sr Daniel García Mansilla, in St Jean de Luz on 20 November, to explain the idea of a neutral zone. He thought it “feasible” and asked for a written proposal. Sr García Mansilla recalled his personal efforts for the “humanisation” of the war and his contacts with the ICRC. He was not able to give an immediate answer, but believed his Government would look favourably on the proposal and would become a guarantor for the zone. Mme Small finally noted in her report: “Argentina had a warship in the Mediterranean Sea”.<sup>5</sup>

A few days later, on 25 November, Mme Small was in Valencia, where she met the Republican Minister of State (Foreign Minister), Sr Julio Álvarez del Vayo, introduced and accompanied by Sra Matilde Huici, the President of the Spanish High Council for the Protection of Minors (CSPM). Del Vayo was in principle opposed to the zone, referring to the recent rejection of a zone proposed in Madrid by the ICRC and the Swiss Government.

His main reasons were that it meant discrimination among the population, with the acceptance of the bombardments in other parts of the city, and that he believed the zone proposals were made to ease the consciences of the foreign Governments that had treated the Spanish Government so unfairly.<sup>6</sup>

Mme Small argued that the zone proposal was not for a city, but for an area to be selected, to the benefit of children with no distinctions. Also that the SCIU was not a Government and did not represent the bad conscience of any country, but rather wanted to save children who were under the care of a Government of which Sr Del Vayo was a member.

Del Vayo accepted that the new proposal was different, since children were involved. He requested a formal proposal that he could show to his Cabinet, which would reply in 24 hours.

---

<sup>4</sup> SCIU (1936), no. 7.

<sup>5</sup> SCIU (1936), no. 10.

<sup>6</sup> SCIU (1936), no. 16.

The zone was never established. The main reason was that the Republican Government would not negotiate with the Nationalists, maintaining the fiction they were “officially non existent”. Thus, the Republican Government’s political agenda eliminated a possibility of avoiding, or at least reducing, the damaging effects of evacuation and displacement for thousands of children across Republican territory. The same occurred with the Neutral Zone, referred to above, which Franco and the ICRC offered for the women, children and the aged in the Basque Country.

#### **4.1.3 The rest of Mme Small’s visit**

We will now return to where we left off with Mme Small’s work in the Nationalist zone. On the night of 18 November 1936, she met Vallellano and organised for the first canteen to be opened in Orduña, with the funds provided by the SCIU (1,000 Spanish pesetas). This would include the distribution of the remaining third of the clothing purchased; two thirds had already been distributed in Segovia and La Coruña.

On 19 November in San Sebastian, and with Dr Broccard in St Jean de Luz, Mme Small faced the matter of the children in France to be returned to the Nationalists and the distribution of clothing in the villages surrounding San Sebastian. The children at Hygabia were in the middle of a nightmare. The Bilbao Savings Bank that financed their stay in France and the local people in charge were refusing to allow the children to be transferred to San Sebastian, as their parents requested under the documents provided by Mme Small.

Before leaving Nationalist territory for Barcelona, Mme Small worked frantically with Dr Broccard to avoid the Nationalist children being transported surreptitiously, on a British ship, to Bilbao, thus disregarding their parents’ desire to repatriate them to San Sebastian.

On Friday 20 November, Mme Small left St Jean de Luz for Toulouse. She left Toulouse by plane at 6am, but at 8am the plane made an emergency landing at Perpignan and was destroyed. Mme Small survived unscathed, but could only reach Barcelona by train the following day, because the Revolutionary Committee in Perpignan refused her the use of a car to go to Cerbere to catch a train to Barcelona.

In Barcelona she met the ICRC delegate, Dr Barbey, who worked on the exchange of information for family members living in the two zones. With 22 volunteers, he dealt with no less than 1,500 people a day. Barbey was negotiating with the Catalan Government an agreement to guarantee the free evacuation of children, women and the aged in exchange for those in the Nationalist zone, with agreements also to be signed with the Burgos and Valencia Governments.

On Sunday 22 November 1936, the popular anarchist leader, Buenaventura Durruti, was buried after his death at the Madrid front and 30,000 people demonstrated in Barcelona. Mme Small assessed the situation in the Catalan capital, overcrowded by refugees: “The atmosphere gives an impression of terror. You can feel the population is afraid not only of Franco’s announced bombardment but also of the different organisations that, right or wrong, have power. The Valencian Government that accounts for nothing and the Catalan Government (the Generalitat) are the legal powers. There is also the FAI, the CNT and the UGT, which are legal and a very important factor. There are as well a certain number of organisations out of control and unregistered, which are the ones to fear the most”.<sup>7</sup>

She remarks on the deficient organisation of food rationing and hopes to see A Jacob of the FSC, already established in Barcelona; it would be several days before she could locate him.

Mme Small met the chief of the refugee office in Barcelona, Sr Alcalá. He begged for milk, as the item most in need, and proposed that the best solution for children was their evacuation abroad. In Valencia she discussed with Sra Matilde Huici, of the CSPM, the evacuation of the children to their respective zones as well as the possible use of French hospitals to take care of the Spanish children. As explained above, Mme Small also met Sr del Vayo to propose the neutral zone.

In Castelló, the Ecroyds presented her with a proposal for a kindergarten and a project for refugees in the city. She considered that Castelló did not yet have a refugee problem and felt that the Ecroyds were not practical; she also doubted their impartiality.

Mme Small finally found Jacob in Castelló, late on Wednesday 25 November. They talked into the night about the possibilities for relief work. Given Jacob’s lack of

---

<sup>7</sup> SCIU (1936), no. 12.

experience, they decided to focus on distributing milk to the children designated by the refugee office. They would check their physical needs through a Doctor linked to the centre. To avoid mistakes it was agreed to start at a low level of activity, with a distribution centre for between 100 and 200 children, with a quarter litre of milk a day for a month. Locations outside Barcelona and Valencia were foreseen. The following day, Thursday 26 November 1936, the foundations of the service were agreed in Barcelona, with Sr Alcalá.

That same evening, as the Air France flights were full up with Government personnel, Mme Small took the overnight train from Barcelona, arriving in Geneva on Friday, 27 November.

#### **4.1.4 Problems in coordinating relief work**

Early in November 1936 the FSC and the SCIU had made their joint appeal, and the Agreement for the joint relief action in Spain was signed.

As we have seen, A. Jacob had already started his own relief action, together with the Ecroyds in Valencia, not financed by the FSC; the Friends were unwilling to collaborate with the Ecroyds.<sup>8</sup> In early December, Jacob complained in a letter to the FSC: “My only work here is to wait”; “Felt terribly left at it”.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Mme Small’s visit, Jacob continued his work with the Ecroyds and did not put into action what he had agreed with her. It seems that from the start he disliked cooperating with an agency like the SCIU, which the signed agreement put in charge of supplies and the technical direction of the relief.

Between 19 and 23 December 1936, Mme Small returned to Barcelona, accompanied by Miette Pictet, a Doctor of Medicine that the SCIU had engaged to take over the technical support and organisation of Spanish relief. As soon as they arrived, they faced a problem: a shipment of condensed milk, sent by the SCIU, was overdue. Mme Small was angry, because: “He [Jacob] had sent many people to investigate the whereabouts of the lost milk, instead of going himself to the French border, as we had requested. It

---

<sup>8</sup> FSC Committee on Spain, minutes, 16 November 1936, no. 46, FHL.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from A. Jacob to Fred Tritton, 4 December 1936, FHL.



looks as though we can not count on him for even the most simple and practical work which doesn't even require any special experience".<sup>10</sup>

On Monday 21 December, Mme Small and Mlle Pictet travelled to Port Bou and after a laborious investigation, being passed from one border officer to another or to an employee representing the revolutionary committee, the milk wagon was found and its shipment for Barcelona organised. At Port Bou, they also met Edith Pye, the British Quaker activist and Janet Perry, a Quaker worker. Pye complained that in the joint appeal the Quakers collected more money than the SCIU, and she expressed her opposition to the agreement between the two agencies. After a long discussion all three agreed on the need to develop their joint relief work as quickly as possible, starting with the basic practical tasks.

They returned together from Port Bou and visited Sr Puig de Fabregas and Sr Alcalá of the refugee committee in Barcelona. They rejected the committee's demand to deposit the milk shipment in its own warehouse, instead of at the agencies' premises. They were also informed that the Catalan and the Valencia Governments continued to oppose the transfer of sick or wounded children to foreign hospitals. Alcalá welcomed Dr Pictet and her expertise; it seemed he preferred to deal with her rather than with Jacob.

By now, after a bad start, relations between Pye and Mme Small were cordial. Pye proposed a private meeting between the two, in which they agreed that Jacob was not very effective. Pye wanted Dr Pictet to accompany her on her travels around Spain to assess needs and make joint decisions about the implementation of the different services. Finally, the milk arrived in Barcelona and the joint service would be able to start.

Thus, at the end of 1936, six months into the Spanish conflict, the FSC and SCIU were ready to begin cooperating in child relief in Barcelona, but a problem was looming. Alfred Jacob, the person in charge for the FSC, was found wanting for this task by the representatives of both agencies. He may have been a very spiritual Quaker, but he was not an effective leader capable of developing joint work with an active relief organisation like SCIU. The seeds of the failure of the collaboration in Barcelona had been sown even before the work really began. Had attention been paid to those who

---

<sup>10</sup> Report on the voyage of Mlle Pictet and Mme Small to Barcelona (19-23 December 1936). AP.92.16.6, AEG-SCIU.

raised the issue, such as the American Quaker, Patrick Malin (see Section 3.1.5), the problem could have been resolved. But this did not happen, and the operation was doomed.

Mme Small was in London from 19 to 26 January 1937, where she discussed the work in Spain with the SCF, the FSC, the General Relief Fund (GRF) and the NJCSR. She then visited the French Committee for Children's Aid (CFSE) and the French Under Secretary for National Education, Mme Bruswieg, in Paris<sup>11</sup>. She returned to Spain in mid February 1937 and gave a clear report of the findings of her trip.

The proposal to transfer children abroad to receive medical attention had been rejected by the Catalan and Valencia governments: "our Government and our organisation [the High Council for the Protection of Minors] are afraid of sending the children far away and for them to experience the consequences of new living conditions, which may be better, but too different from their own environment."<sup>12</sup> Less than three months later, a different standard would be applied to the Basque children, when the Republican Ambassador to London, Mr Azcarate, supported the Basque Government and the NJCSR's evacuation plan.<sup>13</sup>

Sra Matilde Huici wrote that: "We believe it is more effective for you to send us food, as you do now, and clothing, aiding us here... As you said this morning, establishing colonies in selected places where we could send our children, in small groups, with one or two Spanish teachers. This latest proposal [Dr Pictet had just suggested it] I feel would be ideal, if you have the means to provide us with the food we do not have".<sup>14</sup>

Pictet's suggestion gave rise to the program of colonies. At a forecast cost of 3 ptas per child per day, children would be placed in partially furnished houses, provided with some support from the High Council for the Protection of Minors, which would also select the children and choose the teachers.

Concerning Barcelona, Mme Small noted that milk distribution at the railway station was working irregularly, due to train delays and the lack of professionalism among

---

<sup>11</sup> SCIU Executive Committee, minutes, 10 March 1937, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Sra Matilde Huici to Dr Pictet, 10 February 1937, mentioned in Mme Small's report of the trip, 2 February 1937. AP.92.16.6, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 2.

volunteers. A responsible person was needed. It was agreed to employ boy scouts, originally from Zaragoza but in Barcelona as refugees, at 150 ptas. per month per head. About 6,000 milk rations had been distributed up until the middle of February 1937. The operation included two “canteens”, Carmen and Sants, and another at the International Hospital, distributing milk sent from the FSC/SCIU and biscuits and sugar from the GRF, which had a collaboration agreement with the FSC. In total about 725 litres per day were distributed. Clothing for adults that FSC/SCIU had in stock was exchanged for children’s clothing from the Refugee Committee, which was distributed in Barcelona. Mme Small referred also to the rapid deterioration of rail transport, the lack of road transportation and the scarcity of fuel.

At Alcazar de San Juan, there is a very important rail junction where trains carrying refugees from Madrid made a stop. A milk distribution unit was established there, at which Young Communists washed the child evacuees, gave them new clothing and fed them, with supplies provided by SCIU.

Using some very unreliable cars provided by the NJCSR and commanded by Mr Garratt, its representative, it had been possible to transport half a train wagon of condensed milk to Almería.

A SCIU bus had just started to help evacuate children from Madrid. The joint operation with Swiss Aid was directed by Rudolph Olgiati.

These being the agency’s basic activities at the time, the following expansion was planned:

1. Milk distribution at the ‘Gotas de leche’<sup>15</sup> (including canteens) in Barcelona, Valencia, Madrid, Tortosa and Tarragona.
2. A canteen in Madrid to feed parents and children prior to evacuation
3. Lodging for the bus drivers working on the evacuation, because “living conditions in Madrid are horrible”.
4. The child colonies mentioned above.

---

<sup>15</sup> “Gota de leche”, or “Drop of milk”, was a project to feed and care for babies and mothers. It took its name from a similar operation in France, where in 1892 D. Leon Dufour set up an institution offering artificial feeding to babies. The name originated from a poem by the French poet, Musset.

5. Improvement of the information service for children whose parents were on the other side.

While organising this in Republican Spain, in Nationalist Spain the SCIU continued to fund selected canteens on the Basque front — with special consideration given to that at Villarcayo — and to distribute clothing at different points. The SCIU, by request of the GRF, supplied food to three child centres in Málaga, and milk to three others with the sole financing of the SCIU. This action had been planned by Mme Small at her meeting in London with various agencies, as explained below.<sup>16</sup>

In March 1937, the Executive Committee noted, on the basis of the information received from the field, that: “Our intervention is well received in both camps. Every facility is given to our representatives for the accomplishment of our work.”<sup>17</sup> Once again the evidence contradicts the idea that Franco rejected foreign relief.

In April 1937, the SCIU focused on relief action on the Northern front. Two delegates were appointed: the Swiss lawyer, August Raynald Werner, to be sent to the Republican North, mainly Bilbao and Santander, and Martha Müller, a Swiss woman from Zürich, to cover Nationalist territory: mainly in the North, but including the rest of the territory under Franco’s control.

#### **4.1.5 The Republican North: politics and humanitarian relief**

Werner, who volunteered for the post, was a nephew of George Thélin, a member of the SCIU. He only worked until late June 1937. Before entering Spain, Werner wrote to Mme Small from St Jean de Luz on 15 April, raising two points. He stated that his first impression of the work was of uncertainty, and he asked about the possibility of him contacting “L’Espagne National” in France: this was never formally authorised.

His first task was to trace some supplies sent by the NJCSR to the SCIU. They had arrived at a small port near Bilbao and had been seized by the Basque Authorities. From Bilbao he went to Santander where he met a representative of the FSC, Miss Caton, and on 28 April 1937, Werner signed an agreement with the Basque Government for the management of food supplies and concerning the ship which was to arrive from

---

<sup>16</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, 10 March 1937. “Intervention de l’UISE (SCIU) en Espagne”. AEG-SCIU.

<sup>17</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, 10 March 1937.

England for the SCIU. The food would be distributed on a non partisan basis by the Basque *Asistencia Social*. The ship was to embark displaced children that the SCIU wished to return to their parents, mainly in Nationalist territory.<sup>18</sup>

Werner makes several interesting points in his report of 7 May 1937. He notes that the official institution of *Asistencia Social* of the Basque Government is perfectly equipped and has plenty of supplies, but these go to the militiamen and their families. The Bilbao population has not had meat supplies for months, lacks potatoes, vegetables, fruit, sometimes bread, and everything else is rationed, while militiamen's orphans receive all this with no difficulty. The official institutions also have very spacious, well furnished buildings, gardens, special dairy factories and their own efficient medical services.

The arrival of refugees from other parts of the Basque country led to a large increase in the population: that of Bilbao increased by 60% —from 150,000 to 250,000— and that of the whole Vizcaya province by 67%, from 500,000 to 750,000. This meant it was impossible for the official *Asistencia Social* to attend to all the demand. But, in addition, Werner stated: “The activity of *Asistencia Social* is characterized by the principle of an absolute partiality, an ostracism without piety in respect of all those suspicious of sympathy for the insurgents. I saw at the Red Cross office a mother with many children constantly refused every possible aid because of the real or supposed pro-Nationalist stances of her family.”<sup>19</sup>

Werner refers to various Basque Government projects for mass evacuations, notably to France and England. He questions the humanitarian nature of the proposal because: “on the one hand, it is characterised also by a systematic partiality, keeping the hostages [the pro-Francoist children] and saving the partisans, whereas on the other, it is not an evacuation but a migration of people that do not want to accept the Burgos Government and prepare themselves to settle for a long time in France.”<sup>20</sup>

In the evacuation, the Basque Government, led by the Basque Nationalist Party, the PNV, never maintained the supposed neutrality and equal distribution of places between children from the two sides. Furthermore, many reports from foreign representatives

---

<sup>18</sup> Werner, August Raynald (1937) ‘Report on the Mission and Activity’ (7 May 1937). AP: 92.16.17. AEG-SCIU; henceforth Werner (1937); draft agreement with *Asistencia Social*, 28 April 1937.

<sup>19</sup> Werner (1937).

<sup>20</sup> Werner (1937).

refer to ships which carried no nationalist supporters, with in some cases adult PNV members making up the majority of the passengers.<sup>21</sup>

Werner explained the precarious state of food supplies for the civil population: plenty of rice; local rationed eggs were very expensive at 18 Ptas the dozen; fish, depending on local fishing results; beans; lentils; black bread, from time to time; and some milk mixed with water. Werner ends his report with two proposals.

His first suggestion was that canteens be set up for the children of the civilian population, not only those of militiamen and party leaders. He knew this would face several serious difficulties. There was no organisation ready to run it; he did not judge *Asistencia Social* to be suitable. The number of children was high and constantly increasing, thus requiring selection, but this would be arbitrary and based on politics; he again showed that he did not believe the authorities would be impartial. All schools were closed and their buildings taken over as barracks. A final problem was Basque Nationalist Government, which could feel its authority and effectiveness were put in question by such a service being required from outside.

Secondly, he proposed that the relief service in France be organised to care for child evacuees. He knew that Mme Small was opposed to this.

In his report, Werner clearly shows the partisanship of the Basque Authorities with respect to the civil population and the political objectives of the massive emigrations, something which practically no scholarly work on the Civil War in the North has dealt with so openly. It is important to bear in mind that he was no Fascist or anti-Republican, but a young doctor in law from Geneva University who had attended the Free School of Political Sciences in Paris.<sup>22</sup>

From Bilbao, he went on a similar mission to Santander, from 14 May to 15 June 1937. Here, Werner was better received by the authorities and he met up with Weber, the ICRC delegate, who was fully committed to the evacuation of children. Werner decided to leave the evacuations to Weber and to concentrate on food distribution. The problems he faced, and the fact that the supplies lost in Bilbao were never recovered, left him

---

<sup>21</sup> For more information, see Cable (1979); Appendix 2; and Pretus 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Werner (1937).

with a feeling of failure about his service in Spain. In June 1937, when his engagement with SCIU terminated, Werner returned to Geneva.

#### 4.1.6 Nationalist Spain

Martha Müller's brief for the SCIU was to cover relief activity in the Nationalist controlled provinces of Burgos, Salamanca, Valladolid, Madrid, Sevilla and Málaga. Her responsibilities included the evacuation of displaced children, Republican and Nationalist; the distribution of food and clothing already in process; ensuring that donations received from abroad arrived at their desired destination. Some Belgian goods were for Navarra, baby feeding bottles for Seville, Swiss goods for Burgos and there were even 1,000 items of bed clothing sent from Germany for the Feminine Section of the Falange, and addressed to Pilar Primo de Rivera.<sup>23</sup>

At the end of June 1937, children were to be evacuated from Santander by boat, the *Marion Möller*, which would arrive with supplies. Müller went to the port of La Pallice, en La Rochelle, France, to coordinate the different aspects of the evacuation to France. Miss Caton, from FSC, accompanied her. After some delays, the ship arrived on 24 June 1937, with 1,700 passengers, both children and adults, and not just children as both sides had agreed. Werner who had been sent to Santander to organise this, had already left in despair. The French Prefect organised the reception of the children in accordance with what had been planned.<sup>24</sup>

Between July and August, Müller, who had already made an exploratory trip through Nationalist Spain, made proposals to the SCIU for strengthening relief work:

1. The need for a car, with driver if possible.
2. The most urgent problem was food for children. Canteens for children would also be very useful.
3. Canteens:
  - a) To be located in villages near the front, where the suffering was worst.

---

<sup>23</sup> Pilar Primo de Rivera (1907 - 1991) sister of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange.

<sup>24</sup> Martha Muller, 'Journal and Report of the voyage to la Pellice 23-25 June 1937'. AP.92.16.7: 21, AEG-AP.

b) Food could be purchased locally: 0.80 Ptas was enough for 2 good meals a day. The canteens should be run for not more than 3 months, because a Spanish organisation could take them over (she was thinking of *Auxilio Social*, which at that time was the only one doing such relief services).

4. Milk: condensed milk was impossible to find. It was mostly needed by the populations recently taken over by the Nationalists: “In Santander [taken by the Nationalists on 26 August 1937] I found great misery and clearly the desire of the refugee is to have condensed milk.”<sup>25</sup>

For Málaga, where more than 20,000 people needed to be feed in canteens, milk for children was essential. If half a litre per child per day was acceptable, 200 Swiss Francs would cover 100 children for a month.

5. In Seville, supplements were needed for rachitic children as was baby milk powder.

6. Clothing was needed, mainly underwear and all kinds of winter clothing, to be prepared for the coming cold season.

7. Nurseries were needed in Amorebieta and Gernika, to give children there a normal life after a long time on the streets or hidden in caves. There should be local voluntary workers and the cost should be similar to the canteens (0.50 ptas) and 500 to 1.000 ptas for the installation.

8. Packs of clothing for new born babies, to be procured from Switzerland and to be completed locally. Very useful for young mothers.

9. Orphans and weak children: Special care was needed for 250 children who were in a very bad condition in Santander. They could be attended in homes, with voluntary workers at a cost of 3.50 Ptas per day, per child. Different countries could cover the costs, and each house could be named after the country that financed it.

Müller met Wilfred Jones and Patrick Malin, from the AFSC, just before Jones left for America. This joint meeting, together with the Count of Torrellano, the Secretary of the Nationalist Red Cross, initiated what would soon become an effective collaboration with the American Quakers.

---

<sup>25</sup> Martha Müller, ‘Work proposal (August 1937)’. AP.92.16.7-2, AEG-SCIU.



Mme Small wrote to Müller on 18 August 1937, accepting her proposals and attitude: “As you know, our norm is to collaborate with the national organisations, keeping strictly apart from all politics. Of course, where you have the occasion to collaborate with the Falange, if you believe their principles for relief work are in agreement with ours, we do not have any objection to this. As we have told you, the main bodies we must collaborate with are the official *Beneficencia* [the previously existing state charity organisation, in the Nationalist zone now under Francoite control] and the Spanish Red Cross. Naturally, if it is possible to collaborate with a local, municipal, regional or provincial authority or even a competent personality, it is advisable to do so.”<sup>26</sup>

Müller clearly took this line. She met Pilar Primo de Rivera, the General Delegate of the “Sección Femenina”, the Women’s Falange. They talked about a project for social schools for women, and Müller explained similar schools in Switzerland. The SCIU agreed to supply cutlery and baby feeding bottles to *Auxilio Social* canteens. Primo de Rivera directed Müller to Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, National Delegate of *Auxilio Social*; the meeting would consolidate their collaboration.

Müller travelled to the Nationalist South, visiting a large number of canteens, sanatoria and other assistance programs run by *Auxilio Social*. In Málaga, for instance, they fed more than 20,000 people every day. Müller ensured the milk supply to the maternity hospital and the tuberculosis dispensary, as well as calcium for children, donated by the Swiss pharmaceutical company, Sandoz. Müller wrote: “With Miss Werner, the head of the Women’s Falange [*Auxilio Social*] in Málaga, the relationship is very good... I want to underline that this is the organisation with which we can really do something”.<sup>27</sup>

While travelling through Nationalist Spain Miss Müller tracked down many children on the SCIU list, contacting the institutions (mainly the ICRC) and informing them of their whereabouts.

On 4 September 1937 Miss Müller was at San Sebastian, where she contacted the ICRC concerning displaced children, and *Auxilio Social*. She visited the SCIU canteen at Trespademe, which was working well, and went on to Palencia to visit the Sanguesa orphans and to push for a nursery. She continued to Valladolid, where she met

---

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Mme Small to Martha Müller, 18 August 1937. AP.92.16.7, AEG.

<sup>27</sup> Martha Müller ‘Rapport sur le voyage dans le Sud, du 6 au 20 Août 1937’, Burgos, 23 August 1937. AP.92.16.7, AEG-SCIU.

Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, who greatly impressed Müller: “She is a young widow, very simple, nice, of a bright intelligence and good heart.”<sup>28</sup> They talked about many relief subjects, including the introduction of medical advice for baby feeding and clothing baskets for the new born. Müller accepted an invitation to a gathering of *Auxilio Social* delegates representing the different provinces of Nationalist Spain, due to take place shortly in Valladolid.

She wrote: “As General Franco recently gave all powers related to social relief to Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, I believe we can without doubt work with this institution [*Auxilio Social*], without worrying about breaking our neutrality.”<sup>29</sup>

At the end of September, Miss Müller contacted the two AFSC representatives, Mr Smith and Mr West. Together they studied the relief situation and went to the Corrales and Cilleruelo canteens with clothing that was distributed to local children with the *Auxilio Social* delegate. The basis for collaboration had been established.

Miss Müller continued her work in villages scattered all over Nationalist territory and continued tracing displaced children.

In mid October, her contract with SCIU ended and she returned to Zurich. Mme Small considered that “Müller had done good work and was much liked by the Spanish bodies she had contacted in her work. She had established good relations with Mr Smith and West, the two representatives of the American Friends Service Council.”<sup>30</sup>

On 14 November 1937, Mr Thelin and Mme Small, representing the SCIU, met with the FSC in Paris, and, as mentioned above, their collaboration agreement was terminated on 1 December 1937, due to “the personal difficulties in the field”,<sup>31</sup> and each organisation recovered their freedom of action in Spain. At that meeting, the FSC stated they were not prepared to make any new appeal for Spain, on their own or with any other Agency.

The fact is that at the end of 1937, relief work in Spain underwent a setback: all the Agencies working in Spain suffered a drastic reduction of funds. The war in China and

---

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Martha Müller to Mme Small, 10 September 1937, Burgos. AP.92.16.7, AEG-SCIU. Chapter 5 deals with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Martha Müller to Mme Small, 10 September 1937, Burgos. AP.92.16.7, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>30</sup> Executive Committee minutes, Session 232, 6 December 1937. AEG-SCIU.

<sup>31</sup> The difficult relations with Jacob and his team, and the imbalance between FSC’s appeal collections and those from SCIU sources. See Executive Committee, minutes, 6 December 1937. AEG-SCIU.

the refugee crisis caused by rise of the Nazis in Germany also required aid. The International Commission would only later be a key element in re-launching appeals for Spain, after it had finally been established in Geneva in December 1937.

Without a SCIU representative in Nationalist Spain, the two canteens at Corrales and Cilleruelo were maintained by the *Auxilio Social*. Müller had considered that the relief work, with the supplies provided, could be done without a permanent representative of the SCIU on the spot.

A final note on the canteens in Barcelona, which had been administered by Mrs Petter, a SCIU volunteer, until August 1937, and on her departure by the Danish Quaker, Miss Thomson. When she left in October, Jacob and Park of the GRF took over: “and they administered the canteens in a way we [the SCIU] could not approve.”<sup>32</sup>

Dr Pictet left Spain in October 1937, due to tiredness after ten months of continuous work. At the end of 1937, the SCIU had no permanent representative in Spain, only some volunteers in the Republican zone.

## **4.2 Efforts at coordination**

All the agencies acting on the ground in Republican Spain worked on the Barcelona – Valencia – Murcia axis. Valencia was in the middle, and hosted the head offices of most of them (as well as the Republican Government from November 1936). Thus the “First Conference of Committees carrying out Relief and Social Work in Spain”, on 10-11 July 1937, was held in Burjassot (Valencia)<sup>33</sup> at the premises of Swiss Aid–SCI, under the leadership of Rodolfo Olgiati. Patrick Malin, an American Friend resident in Paris, acted as chairman. On opening the conference, he declared that its objectives were to hear about each others’ work, to make joint arrangements with the Spanish Government and to improve personal relations between foreign delegates in Spain.

The agencies and representatives attending were as follows:

- Sir George Young (British Universities Medical Unit)

---

<sup>32</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, 6 December 1937

<sup>33</sup> Minutes of meeting of 10-11 July 1937, in ‘Conferences of Representatives of Foreign Relief Agencies in Spain, June 1937-February 1938’. SCI International Archives, 20364, LCF Bibliothèque; henceforth Swiss Aid & SCI (1938).

- Mr Garratt (NJCSR)
- Dr Pictet (SCIU – FSC)
- Miss (“Sister”) Imbelli (SCIU)<sup>34</sup>
- Mrs Wood (British Friend, representing the FSC in Valencia)
- Mrs Petter (SCIU – FSC)
- Mr Jacob (FSC and on behalf of the General Relief Fund – GRF)
- Mr Malin (AFSC)
- Miss Farquhar (AFSC)
- Miss Thomson (Danish Spanish Help Committee)
- Mr Sundning (Swedish Committee for help to Spanish Children)
- Mr Olgiati (SCI – Swiss Aid)
- David T. Luscombe (AFSC worker in France)

The representatives gave interesting information about relief conditions in Republican Spain at that time, in mid 1937.

Garratt of the NJCSR reported they were ending the Madrid – Valencia evacuation and would use their vehicles to help other organisations. Following the Republican victory in Guadalajara: “the desire to leave Madrid has gradually grown less and now propaganda is needed to persuade parents to allow their children to leave”.<sup>35</sup> Olgiati confirmed that “at the present time, owing to hopes for the success of the offensive, very few people are coming to be evacuated”.<sup>36</sup>

The Conference decided that one person should collect all available information about the movements and work of the agencies’ delegates, so as to be able to inform the agencies; they appointed Mrs Wood.

<sup>34</sup> “Sister” of SCI employed by the SCIU.

<sup>35</sup> Swiss Aid & SCI (1938), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Olgiati refers here to the Battle of Brunete, on the Madrid Front, that started on 5 July 1937, breaking Franco’s lines. By 14 July, the Republican offensive had been stopped.

They also considered appointing a person “to do propaganda work” for all the agencies, going into the field to write and take photographs.

Finally, they discussed their difficult relationship with the different Ministries and government bodies in charge of customs, and their problems in obtaining exemptions and other facilities they required, such as transport and permits. An arrangement reached with Dr Negrín in April 1937 to centralise and facilitate this work had had little effect. They decided to write to Prime Minister Negrín, on the lines of a draft prepared by Dr Pictet, explaining the problem. They also agreed that those who had reached the existing agreement should approach Dr Negrín unofficially a few days later. If this did not work, they would have to ask the agencies’ respective Foreign Offices to request tax exemption for humanitarian relief shipments.

The letter described the problems caused by the multiplicity of authorities intervening in the import and transport of goods. In theory this was controlled by the High Council for the Protection of Minors, as Negrín himself had suggested in April 1937. They proposed the creation of a coordinating committee for all government bodies dealing with agencies: “We should always know whom we need to address and the coordinating committee would undertake the receipt of our supplies and convey them to their final destinations, having given us a total guarantee that the goods would not be sold.”<sup>37</sup>

The second conference, held at Burjassot, Valencia, on 15 August, heard that the Government, through Sr Granados of the High Council for the Protection of Minors (CSPM), had “intimated” to Mrs Wood that “it would welcome the formation of a coordinating committee of relief work on which the Government would be represented”. Its objectives would include avoiding the entry of undesirable elements into the country disguised as relief workers, and organising the distribution of the work in agreement with the government.<sup>38</sup> In effect, the Government responded to the agencies’ request for a simplification of the bureaucracy with an interventionist body to catch spies and organise the agencies’ work.

This reveals that while the Republican Government accepted the agencies, because it needed their help, it did not really trust them. There is a clear contrast with the

---

<sup>37</sup> Draft letter in French to Dr Negrín, in *Swiss Aid & SCI* (1938).

<sup>38</sup> Minute of Conference on 15 August 1937, p. 3, in *Swiss Aid & SCI* (1938).

impression given by Miss Müller and other SCIU and AFSC delegates when referring to their good relationship with the Nationalist *Auxilio Social*.

It was agreed to send a delegation with Wood, Garratt, Olgiati and Jacob to discuss the matter with Granados and put the following points before the government:

- 1 – The right of tax free entry for food supplies and goods for distribution.
- 2 – Permission to bring foreign currency into the country, to be changed into Pesetas.
- 3 – The right to cross the French border at Puigcerdà (Catalonia).
- 4 – To have strict control of and restrictions on volunteers in return for more confidence on the part of the Government.

A third conference was called for 17 September 1937, at the Quaker premises in Barcelona (Angli 39).<sup>39</sup> Sra Matilde Huici, of the CSPM, was invited to attend in the afternoon, and she appeared in the company of Mr Granados. They responded to the requests that had been presented to the government. The import of foreign currency was rejected as being a source of “black market” operations. Concerning transport, the shipping company, Mac Andrews, was discontinuing its Barcelona line, showing the increasing effectiveness of Franco’s blockade. Ground transportation was considered as an alternative. For this, Granados requested foreign vehicles, because Spanish vehicles were needed for military transport. Customs exemptions were refused as “Sr Granados explained the Government’s objection to making exceptions to the rule that all goods entering the country should be subject to duty”. For publicity, David Luscombe was appointed to facilitate and promote the agencies’ appeals in their respective countries.

Two matters arose at the end. Jacob highlighted the “alarming delay in getting supplies through” combined with the influx of 30,000 refugees from the North into Catalonia, where “already the food situation was not too good”. He announced that “if steps were not taken soon to cope with this difficulty, serious results must inevitably ensue”. Finally, considering the heating needs in the forthcoming winter, and the foreseen lack of coal, the Conference asked Sra Matilde Huici to obtain permission for duty free coal imports. She “undertook to approach the government on this point and bring a reply to the next Conference.”

---

<sup>39</sup> Minute of 3rd Conference on 17 September 1937, p. 3, in Swiss Aid & SCI (1938).

At the fourth conference, held at Burjassot on 24 October 1937,<sup>40</sup> again with the presence of Huici, the matters pending remained so she felt the problem of import duties had been resolved by *Asistencia Social* paying them on agencies' behalf. But Jacob explained that since *Asistencia Social* took time to make the payments, customs did not release the goods, leading to delays. She promised to take this matter up again with the Authorities, but "she thought this must be a temporary difficulty, easily resolved when the government was established in Barcelona". In fact, the problem was the unnecessary bureaucratic system, making payments from one pocket to another of the same Republican government. The government's arrival in Barcelona on 31 November 1937 would only add new problems, with conflicts between the Catalan government, the Generalitat, and the central authorities. The import of foreign currency and tax exemption for coal import were also rejected.

At the fifth and sixth conferences, held in December 1937 and February 1938 respectively, the same problems were still on the agenda, awaiting solution.

In 1938, living conditions would worsen more and more, while the Republic would become weaker. All this affected the attitude of officials. For example, Huici responded to the problems faced by Esther Farquhar in obtaining permits to build a 'Gota de Leche' in Murcia, suggesting "that it would be advisable to start the 'Gota de Leche' and leave the discussions as to permits etc to be settled later with Sanidad."<sup>41</sup> This was the principle: not to change the regulations to facilitate relief work, but to act "illegally" and hope that the matter would be resolved later.

Meanwhile, the evolving conditions of the war and the financial problems within the agencies would make it impossible to organise further conferences.

---

<sup>40</sup> Minute of 4th Conference, on 24 October 1937, in Swiss Aid & SCI (1938).

<sup>41</sup> Minute of 4th Conference, on 24 October 1937, in Swiss Aid & SCI (1938).

## **Chapter 5: The work of the agencies (3): the American Quakers**

---

### **5.1 The American Quakers go to Spain**

Sylvester Jones returned to the USA from Spain on 5 February 1937, and a joint meeting of both the Board of Directors and the Committee on Spain was held on 8 February 1937. Jones reported on his trip to Spain, making the following points.

1. He was deeply concerned that the Friends should give the required assistance to the Spanish people, particularly woman and children.
2. Wherever he went, he was assured that the Spanish people would welcome non-partisan relief in the spirit of fellowship and goodwill in which it was offered.
3. Statistics were unreliable but according to his information there were approximately 150,000 refugee children in the care of the Loyalist Government, and 30,000 war orphans in the care of the Nationalist Government.
4. The Loyalist side was in urgent need of meat, milk, sugar and flour. He proposed its distribution through existing channels in Spain, separate from military structures.
5. Physical conditions on the Nationalist side were not so distressing, because the Franco forces had occupied the rural and food producing areas of Spain. The major needs of women and children in this territory were for clothing and medical supplies.

On the basis of this report, the joint meeting agreed that non-partisan relief work should be undertaken as soon as funds could be acquired. The also agreed to draw up a statement explaining the decision to the rest of the members of the Board of Directors, giving them until 10 February to raise objections.

Thus 8 February 1937 is the date on which the American Quakers decided to go to Spain to carry out humanitarian relief work. Once again we must note that they did not distinguish between the two sides: both had received Sylvester Jones warmly and had explained their needs.



The collaboration offered from the beginning of the Spanish conflict by other religious groups close to the Friends was considered and formally accepted.

And, finally, it is important to note the proposal that until other means could be found non partisan relief should be provided through existing refugee agencies (without specifying whether private or public). This meant that AFSC did not want to use their own organisation to provide relief. It also implied, though no specific mention was made here, that they did not want to tie their work to the British Friends. In October 1936 the Foreign Service Section of the AFSC had “expressed the feeling that any service rendered in Spain shall be in cooperation with English Friends”.<sup>1</sup> But this “feeling” was of the Section, not the Board of Directors, and was not an “agreement” as implied by Mendlesohn.<sup>2</sup> While the Board mentioned using the channels established by the British Friends until AFSC organized their own network, this did not imply close, still less exclusive, collaboration.

The joint meeting left all possibilities open, including that of *Auxilio Social*, the key welfare agency in Franco’s zone, considered below.

## 5.2 American Friends in Republican Spain

According to Mendlesohn, “the expansion of Quaker work in Spain came not through the expansion of the FSC unit, but with the arrival of the American Friends Service Committee in Eastern Spain in April 1937”.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the first two AFSC workers, Esther Farquhar and Wilfred Jones, would not leave for Spain until 4 May 1937.<sup>4</sup>

A Board of Directors meeting on 7 April 1937 mentions the preparation of a cargo of food and clothing to be shipped to Spain so as to have it ready for distribution when their representatives arrived. At that time the first general appeal for funds was going out.<sup>5</sup> The General Assembly accepted the Committee on Spain’s proposal to send Esther E. Farquhar, of Wilmington, Ohio, and Sylvester Jones’ son, Wilfred U. Jones, as relief workers to Spain, to be joined by Emma Cadbury in Paris.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> AFSC Foreign Service Section meeting, minutes, 22 October 1930, AFSCA.

<sup>2</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Joint meeting of the AFSC BoD and CoS, minutes, 3 May 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>5</sup> AFSC BoD, minutes, 7 April 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>6</sup> Esther Farquhar was a social worker who had served as a Friends’ missionary in Cuba where she gained her knowledge of Spanish and also separated from the Friends’ religious commitment. She volunteered to

By 3 May 1937, the day before Farquhar and Jones' departure, preliminary plans had been made for the AFSC representatives in Spain. Farquhar and Jones would meet with English Friends for a few days and then meet Emma Cadbury in Paris. From Paris, Esther Farquhar would proceed to Barcelona to join Jacob, while Cadbury and Jones would go to Salamanca to meet Nationalist Officials. Patrick Malin would sail on 9 June, visiting the Friends in England, the Quaker Centre in Paris and officials in Geneva, before entering Spain through Barcelona. After a week in Barcelona with Emma Cadbury, studying relief methods, he would tour loyalist Spain before going into Nationalist territory to "determine conditions there". Dan West, representing the Church of the Brethren, would go to Spain in September to replace W. Jones.<sup>7</sup>

By this time the planned shipment of clothing for Spain was ready and 27 bales of new and used garments were shipped to Spain, 16 to Wilfred Jones for distribution in Nationalist Spain and 11 for distribution by Esther Farquhar; about 20,000 garments with a total value of \$ 6,770.<sup>8</sup>

Farquhar did not see a place for her in Barcelona, under Jacob, so she went to Murcia, Valencia and Madrid on a study trip with Mme Small from the SCIU. In Murcia she joined Francesca Wilson of FSC, who as mentioned before, was in charge of the canteens in that eastern section of Spain. Her solid expertise in the field of social work gave Farquhar a command in developing the relief activities in the territory of about 200 miles along the coast from Alicante to Almería and inland 45 miles.<sup>9</sup>

Canteens used some supplies from the Government, as well as milk obtained "through Quaker channels": donations and shipments were arriving steadily. Hospital activity was also increasing, and focused on TB (tuberculosis) in children.

Friends already supported the España Hospital together with the SCIU, and they took over the administration of Sir George Young's hospital in Almería and hospitals in Alicante and Murcia at the end of 1937. All the activities that could not be financed by the Government were covered by money and personnel from the AFSC.<sup>10</sup>

---

go to Spain in 1937 and was accepted by the AFSC. AFSC General meeting, minutes, 23 April 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>7</sup> Joint meeting of the AFSC BoD and CoS, minutes, 3 May 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>8</sup> Joint meeting of the AFSC BoD and CoS, minutes, 3 May 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>9</sup> West, Dan 'Report to Committee on Spain', 1 February 1938, AFSCA; henceforth Dan West Report, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Letters from Esther Farquhar to John Reich; CoS 6 October and 4 November 1937. AFSCA

The “American Quaker Sector”, as the Friends called it, covered about 200 miles of coast from Alicante to Murcia and went about 45 miles inland. Reports showed the area urgently required children’s relief. The Government food allowance of 2 pesetas per person per day was insufficient, implying generalised hunger. Most relief work focused on the eastern part of the territory, where many displaced persons lived on support from the Government, the Councils and partisan agencies such as International Red Relief and International Antifascist Solidarity, aided by other groups, including the British Committee for the Relief of Victims of Fascism, led by the well known communist, Isobel Brown.

By early 1938, AFSC was administering three children’s hospitals, in Alicante, Murcia and Almería; children’s colonies and workshops in Murcia, Alicante, Orihuela, Crevillente, Lorca, Caravaca and Cieza; canteens for breakfast distribution (cocoa-milk) in Murcia and Caravaca; afternoon lunches in Murcia, Lorca and Almería and infant welfare stations in Murcia, Lorca and Almería. Clothing and soap distribution was operational in Murcia and in Almería (here mainly soap). The main food item was milk, followed by cocoa and soap. Clothing was not a priority and was never purchased, though donated clothing was distributed.

Distribution norms for soap were established at a 100 gram cake per person per week, with a preference for babies. For food, babies under 2 years of age would receive 6 feeds a day of 125 grams each, through the Gota de Leche program. Children up to 14 years old, pregnant women, nursing mothers and old people would have a cup of cocoa with bread as breakfast.

Relationships with Government bodies and councils were good. Given the massive refugee problem and the lack of food supplies, the weakness of official structures forced them to rely upon the agencies. Nevertheless, the conflicting bureaucracy that, as explained in Chapter 3, affected the work of the agencies, continued to delay and obstruct relief work.

Despite the increasing difficulties they faced, relief workers’ spirits were high. According to Barbara Wood, the AFSC worker who controlled the reception and dispatches of supplies in Valencia: “Because of the bitter political feeling, much of the

help is partial; the help we give has its source in kindness, attempting to bridge over that bitterness".<sup>11</sup>

The situation was grave. In Almería, for example, a city of about 65,000 inhabitants plus around 10,000 refugees, government agencies had no milk to distribute and bread was increasingly difficult to obtain. The city's only source of milk was the Quakers' "Gota de Leche". Hospitals faced enormous difficulties in obtaining supplies of medicines and medical materials.<sup>12</sup>

Conditions in the Murcia region were not much better. By January 1938 there were more than 7,000 refugees under 12, as follows:

Murcia (capital)	2700
Nearby towns	800
Caravaca	400
Cieza	650
Jumilla	800
Yecla	950
Lorca	1000
Mula	400

Smaller towns in the Murcia Province had at least 12,000 more refugee children, making a total of 20,000 children, of whom around 10% received Quaker relief.<sup>13</sup>

As the Government supply of milk and chocolate was exhausted, Esther Farquhar requested more supplies of milk and children's food, and an itinerant nurse to liaise with villages for the Gota de Leche program.<sup>14</sup>

The American Friends assessed the situation, and established priorities, such as improving occupational workshops; obtaining more volunteers; means of transport (a new truck was expected from America); and urgent relief to the stream of refugees to Catalonia, fleeing from the new territories taken by the Nationalist. In this region, for

---

<sup>11</sup> Dan West Report, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Dan West to Levi C. Hatzler, AFSCA; Dan West report, p. 10, AFSCA.

<sup>13</sup> Figures from the Republican *Asistencia Social* given to AFSC envoys in January 1938 (Dan West report, p. 11, AFSCA).

<sup>14</sup> Dan West Report, p. 11.

the first time in the conflict, the AFSC prepared direct relief,<sup>15</sup> organising the feeding of porridge for breakfast and cocoa in the afternoon to 3,000 refugee children in six cities within a 55 mile radius of Barcelona: Vic, Manresa, Terrassa, Granollers, Sabadell and Cervera.

### 5.3 American Friends in Nationalist Spain

#### 5.3.1 The Nationalist humanitarian service: *Auxilio Social* (Social Relief)

The history of Quaker relief work in Nationalist Spain is linked to that of *Auxilio Social* (“Social Relief”). While it became part of the Nationalist state structure, *Auxilio Social* was not established by those who led the military uprising, but was rather the personal project of Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, the young widow of a Castilian fascist leader. A middle class “lady” from Valladolid, Sanz Bachiller was well educated and a devout catholic who at nineteen had married Onésimo Redondo.<sup>16</sup> Redondo was a leader of the small fascist-syndicalist JONS (Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista, Unions of the National-Syndicalist Offensive) which in 1934 merged with the Falange of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, to create the Falange Española y de las JONS. Without being personally involved, she followed the Spanish political storms of 1931-1936, focusing on women’s position in social life, child care and welfare.

Onésimo Redondo was killed on his way to Guadarrama in the first few days of the conflict, 24 Julio 1936. His widow was of course shocked by the news but, inspired by the atmosphere of a crusade against the “Enemies of Spain” that permeated the Nationalist side at the time, felt the need to work for the cause, in the area of assistance. A few days after her husband’s death, Sanz Bachiller began working at the Military Cavalry Academy in Valladolid, preparing and sorting warm clothing for the combatants, because in the “Sierras” of Madrid (Guadarrama) the nights were cold even in summer, and it was already becoming clear that the war would not end soon.

The vision of her knitting for the combatants, together with the fact that her brother-in-law, Andres Redondo, was using his contacts to try to get her the concession of a

---

<sup>15</sup> Some relief work was done already at Figueres.

<sup>16</sup> Onésimo Redondo Ortega (1905-1936): from a family of rural land owners, lawyer, journalist and trade-unionist leader.

tobacco shop (“Estanco”) which would provide an income for her and her children,<sup>17</sup> gives us the image of the “old fashioned” Nationalist widow. These two typical activities for a middle class Spanish widow of the thirties (and much later) — knitting and, for those who had good connections, selling tobacco — were not at all what Sanz Bachiller had in mind, not even temporarily. Her vision of women’s place in society collided with that of the Falange, reflected in its female branch, the *Sección Femenina*. She became the delegate of the *Sección* in Valladolid, because the former leader remained trapped by the war in the Republican zone, but she was against their idea that women should have a secondary role and be subject to men.<sup>18</sup>

She had noticed that the streets of Valladolid were full of destitute children, most of them children of leftist supporters killed during the repression that followed the military uprising or that had fled the city to avoid being captured. From the first moment, Mercedes faced this humanitarian problem with the principle of avoiding any political or social discrimination. She became increasingly conscious that the official social services that existed before the conflict had been disrupted and were unable to cope with the problem.

Another key person in *Auxilio Social* would be Javier Martínez de Bedoya. Both an intellectual and a man of action, he had worked with Onesimo Redondo from the creation of JONS in April 1931 but had broken from him after the merger with Falange Española in 1934. Martínez de Bedoya defended trade union freedom, rejecting state controlled unions that promoted Fascist ideology, which produced in him “a disillusionment faced with all that political bureaucracy which suffocated him.”<sup>19</sup>

In September 1936, Martínez de Bedoya visited Mercedes in Valladolid. He expressed his condolences for the death of her late husband, and she explained her ideas for her future which, as we have noted, were not those expected of a woman in her situation. Martínez de Bedoya was very affected by their meeting: “At that very moment, hearing her, I understood Mercedes was the great instrument God had placed in my path for the realisation of my ideas about the urgent need to combat the hunger and misery that were appearing as the result of a war, even more so given that it was a Civil War”.<sup>20</sup> They

---

<sup>17</sup> Bedoya (1996), p. 155.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

spent a long time discussing the problem and formulating their ideas to resolve it. Sanz Bachiller said: “Javier, we must be fast: these mothers need to feel they are human beings, to feel we understand them. I am going to borrow money to start”.

Immediately, she phoned a wealthy landowner friend, Teodoro Gimeno, requesting a 5,000 peseta loan for three months, which was conceded. She then explained to Javier — who noted everything down — what he had to do start up their humanitarian activities.

From that moment on, Mercedes Sanz Bachiller stopped signing as “the widow of Onesimo Redondo” and returned to her own name.

They named the project *Auxilio de Invierno* (Winter Relief), following the name of the German agency, so as to make the project more acceptable to Falangists. The reference to winter, making the project seem temporary and limited to the cold weather, had the same effect. The aim of the project was to assist the children of those had died in the repression or the war.

In October 1936, General Mola accepted the project and asked Mercedes to prepare for the Northern Campaign and to be ready to cope with the humanitarian work when Bilbao was taken: in fact, Bilbao wouldn't fall until much later, on 19 June 1937.

The first appeal for public funds was made in Valladolid on 28 October 1936: the result was 48,000 pesetas. That sum, enormous for the time, marked the start of the work and on Friday, 30 October 1936, the first canteen for 100 orphans opened in Valladolid. Thereafter there was a rapid expansion into towns and provinces under Nationalist control. On 24 December 1936, Sevilla got its first *Auxilio de Invierno* canteen.

The process was fast and unstoppable. Donations, volunteers, new activities, all increased and developed, in December 1936 *Auxilio de Invierno* became part of the structure of the Falange as the “National Delegation of Winter Relief” and the Assembly of the Women's Section named Mercedes as its National Delegate. Javier was the General Secretary and in February 1938 was also designated President of Beneficiencia, thus controlling *de facto* all relief work, excluding the Red Cross, in Nationalist Spain.

### 5.3.2 Relief work in Nationalist Spain. The hidden truth of the American Quakers and the Nationalists

The presence and activities of the first Quaker mission in Nationalist Spain, which followed the fact finding journey of Sylvester Jones in late 1936 and early 1937, have been ignored or underestimated by the scarce literature on the subject.

The trip of Wilfred Jones (Sylvester's son) to Nationalist Spain — accompanied until 12 June 1937 by Emma Cadbury — presenting the AFSC's "Spanish Child Feeding Mission", established a solid basis for the American Quakers' cooperation with the Nationalist relief operation, and opened the way for the subsequent work of the International Commission, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

We will examine this mission as well as the subsequent volunteer work, generally ignored by the literature.

Farah Mendlesohn, in a work of 243 pages fully dedicated to Quaker relief work in the Spanish Civil War, refers only three times to Wilfred Jones, and repeatedly commits factual errors. Firstly, Mendlesohn describes Jones' entire mission to Spain as follows: "Wilfred Jones made his way quickly to the Nationalist sector and established an agreement with the Nationalists that would enable the AFSC to operate in a culturally hostile environment [??]. However he stayed only six months, [in fact he left New York on 4 May 1937 and was back on 28 August, so less than four months] setting a pattern which was to plague the AFSC unit in Burgos. In part because of this rapid turnover of staff, there are no overwhelming personalities or individuals who conspicuously shape the mission".<sup>21</sup> As we shall see, this account does not give an accurate image of the mission.

A little later, Mendlesohn comments that Jones (a Quaker) was replaced by Earl Smith (a Methodist missionary from Paraguay) and Dan West (of the Church of the Brethren) in June 1937. This is not true; as mentioned above, he left in August 1938.<sup>22</sup> Then she notes that "until the end of the war and the appointment of Howard Kershner as overall Director of the joint mission, only three Quakers – Clyde Roberts, Wilfred Jones and Charlie Ewald – were sent to the Nationalist zone"<sup>23</sup>. Here she underestimates American

---

<sup>21</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 71.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 84.



Quaker relief work because some of their workers were Christians of other confessions, such as the Mennonites and Church of the Brethren, while magnifying the British Quaker actions in Spain.

Monica Orduña Prada<sup>24</sup> and Angela Cenarro<sup>25</sup>, while they make some references, are not very descriptive of the mission, but then their works are not centred on relief work during the Civil War. In Spanish literature, only Martínez de Bedoya refers to Wilfred Jones' activities in Nationalist Spain; he doesn't mention names or details, but is generally accurate in what he says<sup>26</sup>. His book is an autobiography, covering a long life, and the Quaker experience was only a small part of a life full of events.

This scarcity of literature is surprising because, as we will see below, not only can the activity be followed in the minutes of the AFSC Board of Directors, Committee on Spain and General Assembly, but Wilfred Jones himself wrote a diary, included in the AFSC archives, which records his activities in Nationalist Spain, partly typed and partly handwritten. It should be noted that none of the research works published on the subject even mentions this important document.

### **5.3.3 Wilfred Jones's journey**

Emma Cadbury and Wilfred Jones, as we have seen, were ready to enter Nationalist Spain on 1 June 1937.<sup>27</sup> Apart from plans to meet the Red Cross, Wilfred Jones wanted to make contact with all Nationalist authorities, because, as he explains in his diary: "Since leaving St Jean de Luz it had been more and more my concern that we should contact someone even closer to the actual Government than the Red Cross, not only to inform them of the purposes for which we had been sent, but that our mission should be undertaken with the clear knowledge of Governmental Authorities."<sup>28</sup> He was

---

<sup>24</sup> Orduña Prada (1996), p. 235.

<sup>25</sup> Cenarro (2006), p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Bedoya (1996), p. 114.

<sup>27</sup> John. F. Reich, Secretary of the CoS wrote to M. Juan de Cardenas, the "unofficial representative of Franco's Government", to present the Friend's representatives, W. Jones and E. Cadbury, and asking for letters of introduction in their favour (letter from Reich to Cardenas, 4 April 1937, AFSCA). It should be noted, as Jones describes in his diary, that when going through the Spanish border he asked the "young falangist for the name of his Commander. He looked around cautiously, then leaned over and whispered: 'General Troncoso is the Commander'." Wilfred Jones' Journal (1937), AFSCA; henceforth Jones, W. (1937), p 28. In fact, the safe-conducts were not well drafted, but Troncoso let them in: it was Troncoso that controlled the border.

<sup>28</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 31; E. Cadbury - W. Jones: Delegation to Spain.

recommended to see Luis A. Bolin, at that time in Franco's press department.<sup>29</sup> An American representative of the Associated Press, Charles Foltz Jr., informed him that Bolin was absent from Salamanca on a mission to England, and that Paul Merry del Val was now in his place. On 8 June, Emma Cadbury and Wilfred Jones visited Merry del Val, who was well informed about the Friends, having Quaker relatives in New York.

Wilfred Jones had two objectives in meeting Mr Merry del Val. Firstly, to confirm that Franco's Government "was adequately informed that we were there and on hand to start the Spanish Child Feeding Mission in Nationalist Territory".<sup>30</sup> Secondly, to secure a document of safe-conduct which would "permit him to travel at liberty anywhere".<sup>31</sup>

They spent considerable time explaining the purposes of their mission and the wishes of the donors, and Merry del Val, after considering their presentation, suggested they ask Count of Vallellano, President of the Nationalist Red Cross, for a safe-conduct.

The following day, 9 June 1937, Cadbury and Jones visited Vallellano in Salamanca, who "impressed us very favourably", according to Jones' diary. He explained to them the three cooperating agencies caring for children in Nationalist Spain: *Beneficencia* run by the Government, under the direction of the Count of Argillo; the Red Cross; and *Auxilio de Invierno*. Cadbury and Jones accepted at that time that the Red Cross was the best channel for distributing the food and clothing coming from the United States to "those who most need it". As the distribution centre was in Burgos, not Salamanca, they were going to take the invoice for the first delivery there and "then we shall feel that the work is really starting".<sup>32</sup>

Vallellano asked Jones to organise relief for the Basque children in the Bilbao area, as the Nationalist forces were close to conquering that city, as indeed happened on 19 June 1937. The President of the Red Cross offered free transportation of all goods through Nationalist Territory.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Luis A. Bolin was a Spanish journalist representing the Spanish monarchist newspaper *ABC* in London. He chartered the British plane used by Franco to fly from Las Palmas to Spanish Morocco in 17 July 1936, and accompanied him on the flight.

<sup>30</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 35.

<sup>33</sup> Hoxie Jones (1937), pp. 298-9.

Vallellano had prepared himself for the American visitors, having contacted the Count of Argillo, asking him to indicate institutions at which child refugees needed clothing. A children's colony in Villaviciosa de Odon (Madrid) was designated; the material had to be sent to Leganés (Madrid). Vallellano asked Cadbury and Jones to proceed to Burgos and deliver the shipment invoice, for clothing that had arrived a few days before at Lisbon (Portugal), to the Count of Torrellano, the Red Cross General Secretary.

On the same day, Manuel Arias Paz, of the Nationalist press department, invited them to attend a dinner at the Grand Hotel in the honour of Webb Miller, European Director of United Press. Here they met about fifteen people, including Count of Vallellano, Merry del Val and Webb Miller, together with other press correspondents and Miguel Arias Paz, an "intimate" friend of Franco's Government. Emma was the only woman at the dinner and she and Jones felt "we were undertaking our work with the knowledge of the National Authorities in this territory".<sup>34</sup> Jones added: "At the same time, Emma Cadbury and I were conscious of the spirit in which our work should be undertaken".<sup>35</sup>

In Salamanca they also visited two groups of refugee children in homes run by the Catholic Church with help from the Red Cross. These children, whose parents were in Madrid, were kept in Summer colonies. As explained above, one of the first actions of the ICRC in the Spanish Civil War was to intervene in respect of such displaced children (see Section 2.3).

On the morning of 11 June 1937 they left Salamanca for Burgos, where they met the Count of Torrellano, who received them "enthusiastically". He explained the needs of the children at the Bilbao, Santander, Madrid and southern fronts. He added that "should Bilbao fall soon, the need will be desperate and overawing."<sup>36</sup>

Torellano urged them to supply canned milk, olive oil for cooking, cod liver oil, all kinds of clothing and promised the American Quakers a "detailed survey of the needs of the children, which was in the process of being prepared". Torellano asked for the goods to be shipped to Count of Vallellano, at the Red Cross in Burgos, and stated that free customs and freight permits were granted for all shipments. Emma Cadbury and Wilfred Jones then gave Torellano the invoices for the Lisbon shipment, as requested by

---

<sup>34</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 39.

Vallellano. Finally, Torellano made them aware of the possible delay of a week for the arrival of the goods at Burgos, due to the railways being affected by the conflict but promised to distribute them according to “the advice of the Spanish Child Feeding Mission representative and that a detailed account of the distribution would be kept”.<sup>37</sup>

On 12 June 1937, Emma and Wilfred Jones travelled to the Spanish-French border, via Vitoria, San Sebastian and Irun, and “no difficulty was encountered in crossing the frontier and delivering E. Cadbury safely to St Jean de Luz”.<sup>38</sup>

Wilfred Jones returned to Nationalist Spain, meeting Miss Herbert, representative of the Bishop’s Committee<sup>39</sup> of England, in Vitoria. She introduced him to the Duke and Duchess of Lecera, who worked with her in a military hospital. They recommended Jones to contact *Auxilio de Invierno*, which had by now changed its name to *Auxilio Social* (Social Relief); as we know, this was already in Jones’ plans. He visited the *Auxilio Social* dining room in Vitoria, which had space for about fifty children. One of the volunteers commented to him that “twice the number of children should be fed but the funds available could not be stretched that far”.<sup>40</sup> That night, Wilfred Jones cabled the AFSC: “Can you allocate money, food and clothing immediate and future desperate need in and around Bilbao?”

On 24 June Wilfred Jones and the Duke of Lecera arrived at Burgos, visiting General López Puente, Commander of the Northern Armies, and establishing contact with Conde, the Falangist leader. In the afternoon, Jones visited Gerardo de Mateo y Merino, Provincial Delegate of *Auxilio Social* for Burgos, who was in charge of the dining rooms for the children and had just returned from Bilbao.

Since the start, *Auxilio Social* had fed about 150,000 children in Nationalist Territory; more than 30,000 per month since March 1937.

---

<sup>37</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 40.

<sup>38</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 40.

<sup>39</sup> General Relief Fund for Distressed Women and Children in Spain, also called “Bishop’s committee” or “General Relief Fund” (GRF). Presided by Beatriz, cousin of King Alphonse XIII of Spain, and formed and backed by Catholics, it supported relief mainly in Nationalist Spain. In Barcelona it worked through British expatriates, in collaboration with the Friends, running some canteens.

<sup>40</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 45.

Gerardo de Mateo commented that if the food situation in Bilbao was desperate, the condition in Santander would be worse, because 50,000 to 80,000 refugees had fled with the retreating armies to Santander, adding to its already pitiful plight”.<sup>41</sup>

That evening, the Count of Torellano delivered to Wilfred Jones a letter from the Count of Vallellano, giving thanks for the clothing shipment received and giving, as requested, guarantees concerning the distribution of the shipments received; they would only be given to the mothers and children selected by the Quakers and would never be used for military purposes.<sup>42</sup>

On 25 June Jones spent the whole day, from 10am to 5pm, touring the *Auxilio Social* dining rooms between Burgos and Miranda de Ebro with Gerardo Mateo. Jones was highly impressed by the operation. He was informed about the cost of approximately “10 cents per day per child, or 5 cents per meal; which includes all costs less equipment (similar to the work done by Quakers in the Welsh coal mines)”. He commented: “*Auxilio Social* is doing its best to meet the desperate situation by giving these warm meals to the children who are victims of the war. It is a labour which will have to be carried on probably for years. The thing that warms the heart is the spirit of genuineness, of helpfulness, cheer and brotherhood which it is carried out, regardless of the sympathies of the parents of the children”.<sup>43</sup> This admiration for the non partisan nature of the work of *Auxilio Social*, reflected how the American Quakers understood humanitarian relief. Mercedes Sanz Bachiller’s objective was being maintained. The same day, Wilfred Jones cabled the AFSC: “If funds guaranteed can open immediately dining room similar to the ones opened [by the AFSC] in [American] coal fields for children cost ten cents child daily recommend purchase food here need widespread”.

He also recommended that, to guarantee free customs and transportation for the shipments to *Auxilio Social*, they should be consigned to the Child Feeding Mission in Burgos, which would then pass the goods to the *Auxilio Social*, Red Cross or another organisation, as necessary. (This was a change to the procedure suggested in his letter of 9 June to Clarence Pickett, of direct shipment to the Red Cross).

---

<sup>41</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 48.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 49.

<sup>43</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 50.

On 26 June 1937, Wilfred Jones sent the first part of his diary to John Reich, Director of the Committee on Spain, accompanied by a letter in which he stated: “I hope we shall be able to help with donations to the organisation, *Auxilio de Invierno*, which is doing such magnificent charitable work for children”.<sup>44</sup>

On 1 July 1937, Jones and Mateo went to the *Auxilio Social* headquarters in Valladolid. As “the National Delegate, a young lady [Mercedes Sanz Bachiller] has been away in Germany and will return after some weeks”, Jones met Javier Martínez de Bedoya: “A young man with great enthusiasm, who had been responsible to a greater extent for the actual organisation of the work.” Jones explained the Spanish Child Feeding Mission; Martínez de Bedoya reacted with enthusiasm and fully agreed to the project. Back in Burgos, Wilfred Jones experienced an air raid by Republican planes.<sup>45</sup>

On 3 July 1937, Jones received a cable from John Reich: “Cabling London four hundred dollar immediate Bilbao child feeding. Stop. Start three hundred children ten cents each daily stop. Additional four hundred dollar available London. Stop. Will ship two hundred cases Holland milk as soon as possible. Stop. Cable what additional supplies needed. Reich”.

The *Auxilio Social* people had already left for Bilbao, with four young women from Valladolid who were well experienced in feeding work. The purpose was to start dining rooms for children. The general impression was that, as Bilbao was a rich town, the feeding needs would be limited to a few months.

Wilfred Jones and representatives of *Auxilio Social* entered Bilbao and promptly set up two public kitchens to feed children at AFSC expense. The project was to cover, in principle, the needs of 350 to 375 children, twice daily, for a period of three and a half weeks.<sup>46</sup>

The city was also supplied with sixteen bales of children’s clothing, valued at \$5,000, and 500 cases of Dutch milk, worth \$ 1,550, that were delivered to representatives of *Auxilio Social* in Bilbao to feed children.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 40. The letter, included in the AFSC archives, was drafted in Spanish.

<sup>45</sup> Jones, W. (1937), p. 55.

<sup>46</sup> Joint meeting of the AFSC’s BoD and CoS, minutes, 29 August 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>47</sup> Joint meeting of the AFSC’s BoD and CoS, minutes, 29 August 1937, AFSCA.

At this time, Clarence E. Picket asked Jones to extend his stay in Spain until December, but this would be impossible. Jones had to begin a new job on 1 September, and his attempt to delay the start date was unsuccessful.

On 6 July 1937, Wilfred Jones, still in Bilbao, wrote to John Reich about the situation in the newly Nationalist town. The *Auxilio de Invierno* team which Jones had accompanied to the city was now in control of all the feeding operations that had previously been in Basque nationalist hands. Jones confirmed the widespread feeling that “there will not be a need for our help and resources here in the town of Bilbao for more than a month. By that time, there should be more than enough resources in a rich town like Bilbao to take care of all children’s dining rooms that are opened. There will probably be well over a thousand children in need for some time until industry in general picks up and heads of family are employed.” But then the action will need to be focused on the small towns near Bilbao (Portugalete, Desierto Las Arenas, Algorta, Durango...) where there will be much need”.<sup>48</sup>.

In the same quoted letter, Wilfred Jones stated:

“Various small organisations are collecting clothing and food to ship to Santander. When it is sent... if the Service Committee would like to take food into Santander at that time, I can arrange for *Auxilio de Invierno* to take it in for us. This, however may be something you may not consider. Conditions were serious enough when food was first brought to Bilbao by *Auxilio de Invierno*, with queues of 1,500 to 2,000 people for a piece of white bread, something they hadn’t seen for months. Santander will be in a worse plight due to the influx of those who fled from other locations. Santander is not a rich industrial city like Bilbao”.<sup>49</sup>

Here is a clear reference to the future relief problem in Santander, more than a month before the city fell to the Nationalists, alerting the AFSC of the problem. As we shall see, the Quakers would respond promptly with a ship full of supplies.

Jones finished his note with a justification of his using a cable, more expensive than a letter, but required by the urgency of the situation: “if you have funds available at this time, this would be the place for them. A lot of children have been cared for and fed with that money [the money already sent by AFSC] but I guess that is part of the

---

<sup>48</sup> Letter from Wilfred Jones to John Reich, 6 July 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from Wilfred Jones to John Reich, 6 July 1937, AFSCA.

business. I often feel like throwing money of my own that I brought along into the pot when I see these hungry children eating.”<sup>50</sup>

The end of the note refers to the forecasted arrival of Patrick Malin and the next cable to be sent to Reich concerning the small towns around Bilbao.

In this letter Jones refers clearly to the relief work that would be necessary once Franco’s troops took Santander and its population of hundreds of thousands; here he makes the first proposal of help by the American Quakers.

On 20 July 1937, Wilfred Jones wrote again to John Reich, alerting him of the need for canned milk, since the cattle had been slaughtered during the siege. He added:

“Everything has gone so wonderfully here that we can be very pleased. Two dining rooms are operating and it is a sight for our eyes to see them. The challenge of the work is here, with all the difficulties, heat and inconveniences of the first month in Nationalist Bilbao, the sight of seeing the children eat in the dining room with many of their mothers watching from the street through the windows is quite a picture.... Everyone has worked like Trojans, the young ladies of *Auxilio de Invierno* particularly, sewing personally curtains for the dining rooms, and arranging everything necessary to cook the simple meals.”<sup>51</sup>

Wilfred Jones also refers in this letter to the expected early visit of Patrick Malin and to his own plan to leave for New York on 18 August 1937.

At the end of July, Malin<sup>52</sup> and T. Dudley Perkins<sup>53</sup> spent a week visiting Burgos, Salamanca, Valladolid and Bilbao, meeting with the Red Cross, *Auxilio Social* and *Beneficencia* representatives, together with foreign relief agencies.<sup>54</sup> The dining rooms for children had already been discontinued as no longer necessary.<sup>55</sup> Wilfred Jones explained that things had normalised following the Nationalist takeover, and that the

---

<sup>50</sup> Letter from Wilfred Jones to John Reich, 6 July 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Wilfred Jones to John Reich, 6 July 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>52</sup> AFSC representative in France.

<sup>53</sup> On 8 June 1937, a Joint Meeting of the BoD and the CoS noted that Patrick Malin accompanied by T. Dudley Perkins Jr. “will sail for Spain on 9 June. P. Malin goes as an observer to both sides of the Spanish war. On his return, about September 1, Patrick Malin will give about three months to lecturing on conditions on Spain and what we are doing there”. Minutes, 8 June 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>54</sup> The SCIU and the Bishops’ Committee.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from Wilfred Jones to John Reich, 3 August, 1937; Jones, W. (1937).



needs of Bilbao were covered by the new administration, with no need for child feeding programs.

Before Jones' departure, Malin and Parker visited Spain again and all three met Count of Torellano and Martha Müller, SCIU delegate, whose activities in Nationalist Spain are examined in Chapter 6.

At that time, a clothing shipment from Philadelphia arrived at Bilbao. The Red Cross provided storage space. The goods were sorted and classified for distribution. Wilfred Jones expected that *Auxilio Social* "will make some arrangements for repairing and making usable the shoes which needed it and for the mothers of children to repair the garments that need it"<sup>56</sup> The shipment was substantial and of good quality: "They were exactly what was needed: baby things, garments, and shoes for children from four to about fifteen".

Just before leaving Spain, Wilfred Jones went with Patrick Malin to see the Conde de Argillo, Head of *Beneficencia*, who informed them about the creation of hostels for the growing number of refugees, many of them destitute, who were returning to Nationalist Spain across the Irun Frontier. Jones spent half a day in Fuenterrabía on his way back to USA, visiting the former "Casino del Miramar" that had been turned into a hostel. Refugees could remain there for twenty days, exceptionally thirty; if they had no resources, free of charge. It was run by nuns, who informed him that they needed equipment, but mainly clothing for the coming winter. Jones estimated that 15,000 to 16,000 people had entered Nationalist territory through the Irun frontier since December 1936.

The joint meeting of the Committee of Spain and the Board of Directors held on 29 August 1937 was very important for two reasons. Firstly, Wilfred Jones had arrived the previous day and was present to report on his service in Spain; Patrick M. Malin, whose ship docked that very day, arrived while the meeting was in session. Secondly, Earl M. Smith of Richfield, California and Dan West of Newville, Pennsylvania, were appointed to take over Jones's work in Nationalist territory.

Jones reported on the conditions in Nationalist territory and the work until their departure. The reality was that Friends were present at the key points of need, such as

---

<sup>56</sup> Jones, W. (1937).

Bilbao after the Nationalist takeover, in nearby villages and in Castile. Work was done in collaboration with *Beneficencia*, the Nationalist Red Cross but mainly *Auxilio Social*, and this cooperation was considered excellent.

Jones asserted: “Since the Franco Forces have taken the offensive, refugees continue to flow towards the loyalist side, away from the advancing battle lines. There are no large refugee problems in Nationalist Spain except in captured territory”. He estimated there to be 70,000 war orphans, as well as the needy people in captured territory. “There is no scarcity of essential foods. The fascist state is well organised. One phase of it is the Social Service Department, which specialises in the care of children. No discrimination is made between children of loyalists and Nationalists.”<sup>57</sup> He stressed the need for clothing, special children’s food and medical supplies for children. He considered that no project should be continued indefinitely, since the Nationalist government would wish to manage it, and was capable of doing so. He advised that just two people would be necessary in Nationalist territory “to represent the Service Committee and administer emergency supplies”. Malin left his report for a future occasion.

Here we have a clear picture of American Quaker activities from Jones’s arrival in early June 1937 until his departure in mid August. Most importantly, he depicts a well organised and effective Nationalist administration, only requiring help on gaining new territory, and taking control of relief once installed. This relief work by the American Friends and their cooperation with *Auxilio Social* has been either ignored or minimised in the existing literature.

The scene was set for the arrival in Nationalist Spain of two non-Quaker AFSC representatives: Earl M. Smith, a Methodist, and Dan West, of the Church of Brethren.

## **5.4 The new team: Earl M. Smith and Dan West**

### **5.4.1 Arrival in Nationalist Spain**

On August 23 1937, the AFSC’s Committee on Spain issued a press release announcing that on 3 September 1937, “the Rev. Earl M. Smith of Richfield California, on furlough from mission work in Uruguay, will sail for Spain where he will oversee the work of feeding Spanish war victims... he will succeed Wilfred Jones. Mr Smith, a member of

---

<sup>57</sup> Joint Meeting of the BoD and the CoS, minutes, 29 August 2008, AFSCA.

the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, will be accompanied to Spain by Dan West, of Nexville, Pa, who will represent the Church of Brethren.”<sup>58</sup>

The AFSC’s joint meeting of 29 August 1937, already mentioned, with both the new workers going to Spain and Wilfred Jones who had left on 18 August 1937, reveals the continuity in their relief work in Nationalist Spain, although for a month there was no AFSC worker in that territory, since Smith and West only arrived at Burgos on 22 September 1937.<sup>59</sup> This detail is important, since the only work on the subject<sup>60</sup> states that they arrived in June 1937, the source quoted are the Committee on Spain Minutes of 14 September 1937 but these do not give that date. Smith and West were in London from 12 to 15 September, “getting our bearings and meeting with the Committee [on Spain] of the FSC.” From 16 to 19 September they were in Paris, getting the papers to leave France and enter Spain; the Spanish safe conducts agreed to by Jordana. On 20 and 21 September, they made arrangements at St Jean de Luz and Biarritz, crossing the border on 21 September and arriving in Burgos the following day.<sup>61</sup>

#### **5.4.2 Relief activities: Miss Müller and the early collaboration with the Save the Children International Union**

Smith and West (“the service team”) chose to carry out relief activity in the territory stretching 250 miles along the North coast and 50 miles inland, covering the provinces of Asturias, Leon, Palencia, Burgos, Santander, Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa. While they recognised that there was need in large cities, such as Oviedo, they focused on the villages where less help had arrived, mainly due to transportation difficulties.<sup>62</sup>

Martha Müller had arrived in Nationalist Spain in June 1937, to take charge of the Save the Children International Union (Geneva) (SCIU) relief effort there. As we have seen, she had already contacted Wilfred Jones. Müller had a precious asset, a small Opel truck which she used, in collaboration with the service team, on humanitarian relief journeys across Nationalist territory.

The service team activity was based on collaboration with:

---

<sup>58</sup> Press Releases, AFSCA.

<sup>59</sup> West (1938), p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 71.

<sup>61</sup> West (1938), p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

- a) Nationalist Red Cross and its branches in Palencia, Burgos and Vizcaya.
- b) *Auxilio Social* in all seven provinces.<sup>63</sup>
- c) Mayors, school teachers and village priests, who organised the distribution of relief goods.
- d) Other agencies that helped to distribute the goods provided by the Service Team in the capitals of the seven provinces, such as SCIU and the GRF.

Besides *Beneficencia*, the main other collaboration was with Müller of SCIU, who as we presented in Section 4.1.6 accompanied the Service Team on many occasions, travelling to Bilbao, and between Bilbao and Burgos for administrative work, distributing clothes in Cilleruelo and trips to start the dining room at Los Corrales. Miss Müller made four relief trips with Smith: to mining villages, mountain villages in Vizcaya, one through Santander to Burgos and another out through Asturias, Leon, Palencia and back to Burgos.

By October 1937, Miss Müller left and lack of funds meant that there was no SCIU delegate in the Nationalist zone. Thus the canteens were run by *Auxilio Social* with supplies from SCIU. The new SCIU delegate, Annemarie Byloff, arrived in Spain in early June 1938. She was met at the border by Smith, together with a new AFSC worker, David Blickenstaff; like Dan West, a member of the Church of the Brethren. They travelled together to Burgos. The three of them, along with the new AFSC workers that would arrive in the following months, travelled and worked together, as described in Section 6.3.2. West would write: “Our relation with the SCIU has been a happy one and we are very much indebted to them for the use of their touring car.”<sup>64</sup>

The relief consisted of food and clothing. As there was no starvation, to the knowledge of the service team, the food consisted of cocoa, milk (condensed and dried) and cod-liver oil, much in demand by doctors. When West wrote his report, the purchase for the winter was 12 barrels, of 26 gallons each.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Smith and West emphasised their satisfaction with *Auxilio Social's* work. Joint Meeting of the BoD and the CoS, minutes, 19 October 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>64</sup> West (1938), p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

The service team judged that clothing was more strategic than food. Of the first \$3,500 allocated to the team, about \$3,000 was spent on underwear, blankets, shoes and socks. Other outer clothing was also distributed, obtained from American donations and purchases made in England.

The Service Team established the following distribution norm for clothing per child: 1 set of underwear; 1 pair of warm socks; 1 pair of good shoes; 1 set of warm outer garments (dress, shirt, coat or overcoat). The SCIU also distributed clothing, with a more generous norm than the service team, giving two sets of underwear and socks per child. As West explains, the team “judged it better to have more children warm and dirtier than fewer warm and cleaner”.<sup>66</sup>

At the AFSC joint meeting of 19 October 1937 a report from West advised that, in the last shipment, the clothes were too old and worn out to be any use. It was agreed to investigate the matter, since the shipment consisted principally of new clothing; it was suspected that the goods had been substituted.

Dan West, reporting for the team, estimated that 1,300 children were warmer because of their distribution of the first shipment “in the six weeks before 1 January 1938”<sup>67</sup>: distribution had not been possible before 15 November 1937. It was impossible to estimate how many children were fed by the service team.

Transportation was a key problem; a truck was urgently needed. The Committee on Spain agreed at its meeting of 3 December 1937 to purchase a truck, to be shipped to Nationalist Spain. The cost of the truck would not “affect the \$ 1,500 monthly relief commitment”, established for the activities in Nationalist Spain.<sup>68</sup> A 1½ ton Ford truck was scheduled to be shipped on January 8 1938.<sup>69</sup>

At the end of January 1938 it was clear that the initial assessment of some Red Cross officials, that there was little need on the Nationalist side, was not correct. In rural areas and orphanages West and Smith saw “needy children, skin diseases and cold faces in

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> CoS, minutes, 3 December 1937, AFSCA.

<sup>69</sup> CoS, minutes, 31 December 1937, AFSCA.

November winds... bare feet in rainy December... and we had likely not been in the neediest places yet".<sup>70</sup>

By September 1937, there were 40,000 women and children evacuees from France to Nationalist territory, most of them totally destitute, pro-Francoist woman and children that left Spain and returned to their homes when the Nationalists advanced into Republican Territory. Many had been in Republican prisons, a factor which had not been taken into account in the Nationalist Red Cross provisions<sup>71</sup>.

When winter came, *Auxilio Social* was fighting desperately to cope with the increasing number of children in need of food and clothing. In the Leon province, many villages were burnt by the retreating Republican forces and all the cattle had gone. Asturias was the neediest of the seven provinces covered by relief action.<sup>72</sup>

West reported: "At present clothing heads the list, but as the weather gets warmer, milk will come first, soap next, then staples such as rice, fish and others".<sup>73</sup>

We have dealt in this chapter with the period in which the American Quakers established themselves in Spain, developed their relief work, and then responded to the challenge of public attention being diverted from the Spanish struggle, as new conflicts arose elsewhere in the world.

In the next two chapters, we shall deal with the arrival of a new agency, the International Commission (IC), and we will follow the process of disengagement of the agencies from the conflict and the way in which each of them reacted to Franco's victory.

---

<sup>70</sup> West (1938), pp. 8-9.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

## **Chapter 6: Full scale war (1). The work of the agencies and the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Spain: relief in years of misery**

---

### **6.1 The International Commission: refilling empty bags**

At the end of 1937, with northern Spain already in Nationalists hands and Málaga lost by the Republicans the new Republican Government under Juan Negrín struggled to strengthen the state and to build the Popular Army, with Soviet support, to fight what was already a full scale war. Franco's blockade of Republican trade was increasingly effective. Food, coal and fuel shortages were dramatic, and the work of the agencies needed to be increased.

The Nationalists had started the war with sufficient food supplies because they controlled most of agricultural Spain, but their advances and the growing population under their control meant they also needed supplies of all kinds.

The ICRC continued its work along the lines detailed above, coping with the changing situation and the increasing number of war and political prisoners and displaced civilians and receiving increased and varied demands for help.

Save the Children (SCIU), after ending its agreement with the British Friends (FSC), continued its activities in both zones and linked up with Service Civil International, collaborating in Olgiati's Swiss operation (Swiss Aid – SA), and with the American Friends in Nationalist territory.

A significant change occurred in Quaker relief work. While maintaining FSC's work in Barcelona, activity spread to other Republican locations and into Nationalist Spain through the active presence of the American Quakers, the AFSC, who arrived in South Eastern Spain in 1937 and later went into Nationalist territory.

The international situation was also worsening and the multiple crises — not only war, such as in China, but also the German refugee crisis and the Great Depression —

stretched the agencies. In late 1937, FSC and SCIU organised a joint Christmas Appeal in Europe,<sup>1</sup> while in the USA the Protestant Federal Council of Churches made a similar appeal for Chinese, Spanish and German refugees.<sup>2</sup> In America, the Chinese struggle diverted attention from the Spanish conflict, since the Japanese aggression was seen as a threat by public opinion.

Given the scale of need, Edith Pye,<sup>3</sup> a British Quaker activist and an expert in fund raising, took the initiative. She attempted lobbying the League of Nations in Geneva without success; they created the office of “International Commissioner”, with no real powers or budget. Her consultations with the British Government were more fruitful, obtaining a commitment to contribute to aid in the same proportion as other nations.<sup>4</sup> She also successfully negotiated with the British Foreign Office the creation of a new body to serve as a charitable organisation to channel funds obtained from Governments, private institutions and individual donations to the main agencies, coordinating their work, as well as having a direct presence in relief in Spain.

The Quakers Edith Pye, Hilda Clark and T. Edmond Harvey, took a leading role in organising the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees, which in December 1937 became the “International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Spain” (IC).<sup>5</sup> The aim of the IC was “to relieve the suffering brought by war”, with the emphasis always “on children, but work was also done for adults, specially mothers, old people and disabled veterans”.<sup>6</sup>

Twenty four Governments were involved in the project: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Great Britain, Germany, The Netherlands, India, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Puerto Rico, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, the USA and Yemen, with contributions from \$1,000 to \$50,000.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> CoS, minutes, 28 October 1937, FHL.

<sup>2</sup> BoD, minutes, 6 October 1931, AFSCA.

<sup>3</sup> Pye first visited Spain in January 1937, with Olgiati (CoS, minutes, 15 January 1937, FHL) and in 21 December 1936 she met Mme Small of the SCIU and travelled throughout with Dr Pictet of the SCIU.

<sup>4</sup> MoSC, minutes, 13 October 1937, FHL.

<sup>5</sup> And again renamed “International Commission for the Assistance of Spanish Child Refugees” when the exodus to France of more than 500,000 Spaniards by 1939 made relief necessary across the border.

<sup>6</sup> Kershner (1950), p. xviii.

<sup>7</sup> Kershner (1950), p. xvi.



The British and American Quakers, together with Save the Children International Union (SCIU) and Service Civil International (SCI) were important participants, channelling IC aid to Spanish children through their existing operations in both the Republican and Nationalist areas of Spain, and also setting up new feeding stations and other relief efforts representing the IC.

From the beginning of 1938, when the IC started to release funds to the participating agencies — FSC/AFSC, together with the ICRC and the SCIU in Nationalist and Republican Spain — it became possible to feed more children on both sides of the conflict.

But by March 1938 Nationalist advances provoked a new exodus of refugees to Alicante, Murcia and Almería, disrupting communications and relief supplies, while the start of bombing in Barcelona, on 16 March 1938, added more strain.

## **6.2 Work by the British Quakers and the IC**

“Although relief in Nationalist Spain was proceeding smoothly under the AFSC, there were serious discussions in progress as to whether FSC workers would be allowed to continue relief under a Nationalist Government. Following the advice of the Foreign Office, the FSC decided to send a representative to talk to Nationalist officials in Burgos.”<sup>8</sup> It is surprising that after nearly two years of conflict, the FSC was going to look to Franco’s side. The FSC issued “certificates to their Spanish employees in the hope that these would offer some protection in the case of political recrimination”.<sup>9</sup> We must assume that the FSC realised that their close connection in relief work with local government and state authorities in Republican Spain could lead to problems on the Nationalists taking power.

The start of the Battle of the Ebro on the night of 24-25 July 1938, when the Republican armies crossed the Ebro River front line, gave new hopes to Republican supporters. The crisis in Czechoslovakia, faced with German demands for Sudetenland, led the Republican Government to believe that the Spanish war would become part of a European conflict, to the benefit of the Republic. It also calmed any unrest among relief

---

<sup>8</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 93, referring to the minutes of a meeting of the FSC CoS of 28 April 1938.

<sup>9</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 93, referring to the minutes of a meeting of the BoD of the AFSC of 16 April 1938 and also to the minutes of a meeting of the FSC CoS dated 5 April 1938.

workers. Supplies from the IC permitted the expansion of the relief program, increasing the number of children fed by the Friends by 2,000 in Nationalist Spain and by 5,000 in South-East Spain.<sup>10</sup> The IC presence was now the driving force for the expansion of Quaker relief work.

### **6.2.1 South-Eastern Spain**

In August 1938 the following projects were operating:

- 3 hospitals: two in Murcia and one in Alicante. The Almería hospital had closed.
- 2 milk canteens for babies (Lorca and Almería).
- Lunch for refugees in Murcia
- A warehouse for food and clothing in Murcia.
- Breakfast for school children and old people in Murcia together with a project of food for refugees in transit.
- A dining room for local children in Almería.

Smaller projects were also running:

- “Goodwill suitcases” from American children to Spanish children
- A workshop and evening schools in Murcia.

“International Commission Canteens” were opened in Almería and Crevillente (Alicante) with a capacity of 400 and 500 children respectively.

There the problem was not food but transportation, and many times they were forced to limit the orders to staples, because a more varied food supply would significantly increase costs.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> CoS, minutes, 29 April 1938 and 2 June 1938, FHL.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Clyde E. Roberts to John Reich, 3 August 1938, AFSCA.

## 6.2.2 Catalonia

The situation was much worse in Catalonia<sup>12</sup>. Already in April 1938, Alfred Jacob stated: “The hopelessness of the search for food affects everybody. Nothing is available in the shops, not even the omelette powders, soup cubes and sugar beets there used to be.”<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Thomson wrote to John Reich on 25 April 1938: “The process of the relief work by the Quakers in Catalonia has been a sustained action with progressive expansion of the activities, either directly by the FSC, or in collaboration with other local charities or direct foreign support.”<sup>14</sup> At the end of 1938, the relief canteens with Quaker support were: <sup>15</sup>

Canteens	Supported by	Children attended
<b>BARCELONA:</b>		<b>3.500</b>
Sants	FSC	
Carmen	FSC	
Lluís Companys refuge	FSC	
S. Andrés	Norway Friends	
<b>CATALONIA</b>		<b>3.500</b>
Caldes de Malavella	FSC	
Sabadell	AFSC	
Terrasa	AFSC	
Manresa	AFSC	
Vic	AFSC	
Granollers	AFSC	

<sup>12</sup> Catalonia had been divided from the rest of the Republican zone when Franco’s troops took the Mediterranean port of Vinaròs on 15 April 1938.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Alfred Jacob to Fred Tritton, 26 April 1938, AFSCA.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Dorothy Thompson to John Reich, 25 April 1938, AFSCA.

<sup>15</sup> Details from CoS minutes and correspondence of Committee members and Friends in the field.

Igualada	AFSC	
Girona	AFSC	
<b>COLONIES</b>		<b>500</b>
Rubí	European cities with Asistencia Infantil	
Caldes de Malavella	Birmingham/Asistencia Infantil	
La Noguera (Manresa)	Denmark/ <i>Pro Infancia Obrera</i>	
Soler botey	FSC/ <i>Ayuda Infantil</i>	

According to these figures, the Quaker canteens in Catalonia covered about 7,500 children. Adding the approximately 3,000 children helped by food supplied through Barcelona Social Services,<sup>16</sup> more than 10,000 children were being helped in this Republican territory at this moment. Taking into account the continuous flow of children, with new children arriving while others left, perhaps 30,000 to 35,000 different children received Quaker relief in Catalonia.

As we have seen, in many cases other organisations were involved: *Ayuda Infantil*, *Asistencia Infantil*, and *Pro Infancia Obrera* were Spanish agencies created by unions, parties and organisations that had experience in such work, bringing a valuable link with local authorities.

### 6.3 The Save the Children International Union (SCIU)

#### 6.3.1 A renewed relief effort

At its Executive Committee meeting on 2 March 1938, Mme Small pointed out that SCIU had no delegate in Spain. She stated that they had two qualified candidates, but financial problems meant only one could be employed. She proposed sending first just one to Nationalist Territory, and later another to Republican Spain.

In Nationalist Spain, the relief organised by Miss Müller was continuing, with *Auxilio Social* in charge of the Los Corrales canteen. This was operating satisfactorily and the

<sup>16</sup> FSC CoS; correspondence Barcelona-Jacobs; letter from Dorothy Thompson to John Reich, 25 April 1938; FHL.

SCIU, which financed it, extended its grant for three months. Cod-liver oil, clothing and shoes were being supplied by the SCIU and sent to Nationalist territory where they were received directly by *Auxilio Social* or else distributed by the American Quakers, Smith, West and Blickenstaff.

No change was expected for the moment in relief work in Catalonia and the rest of the Republican zone, as the distribution of supplies through other persons and agencies worked acceptably.<sup>17</sup>

In April 1938, Annemarie Byloff became the new SCIU delegate in Nationalist Spain, being paid SF300 per month plus expenses, and with the standard personal insurance for SCIU delegates. Her contract does not mention the International Commission, which was already functioning.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from its delegates in Spain, SCIU was also represented on the Commission itself, by Mlle Ferriere of its Executive Committee, while SCIU provided the IC's office support in Geneva.<sup>19</sup>

### **6.3.2 Work in Nationalist Spain: coordinated relief by the AFSC, Save the Children International Union (SCIU) and the IC**

Before entering Spain, Byloff met the Nationalist Red Cross delegate, the Count of La Granja, and the French Ambassador, Herbette, at St Jean-de-Luz, on the French side of the border, where she also dealt with the transport of new milk supplies arriving for Nationalist Spain. From there, she travelled to Burgos with the Quaker workers, Smith and Blicherstaff, arriving at the city on 15 April 1938. Thus began a close relationship in Nationalist Spain between Byloff and the Americans, forming in fact a new SCIU-Quaker team. They were so active that they spent little time in Burgos, their base.

From April 24 to April 28, 1938, Byloff travelled with Smith and Blickenstaff to the Aragon Front, visiting Zaragoza, Huesca, Lleida, (the first Catalan city to surrender to Franco, on 3 April 1938), Fraga, and villages such as Valdemud and Heruez, near Huesca. They contacted the *Auxilio Social* delegates and visited canteens and

<sup>17</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, Session 233, 2 March 1938 (and related explanatory note), AEG-SCIU.

<sup>18</sup> Annemarie Byloff, AP:92.16.7:4, AEG-SCIU; letter from M A MacKenzie (SCIU member) to A Byloff, 9 April 1938, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>19</sup> The IC headquarters were located in Geneva in 1938, being moved to Paris in 1939 by Howard E. Kershner (Vice-President and Director-Commissioner) and returning to Geneva in 1940.

distributed food and clothing. She noted that there were no abandoned children, since families took care of them and new orphanages were being established. There was a great need for clothing. They also visited Belchite and Median, virtually destroyed by the battles.

On this first trip, Byloff realised that new canteens were needed, and presented two options to Geneva. One was to establish them directly through the SCIU/IC. The other, in her opinion the most feasible option, was to work through *Auxilio Social*, by that time the predominant organisation, *Beneficencia* having been put under the control of Javier M. de Bedoya, *Auxilio Social* Secretary.<sup>20</sup> Mme Small accepted this second option. She proposed to only finance new canteens in locations selected by A. Byloff, and established and managed by *Auxilio Social*. It was also agreed to include the children in the existing colonies as “Children to relieve” under the rules of the Commission.<sup>21</sup>

From 1 to 7 May 1938, the three agency workers travelled in a Quaker truck to Huesca, Tardienta, Huerries, Zaragoza, Morella, Alcañiz and back to Zaragoza. The Red Cross in Zaragoza helped them overcome the military’s reluctance to permit their trip, and the three of them travelled to Caspe and Vinarós, on the Mediterranean, which the Francoist troops had only reached a few days before, on 15 April 1937, dividing the Republican zone in two.

They studied the menus of the *Auxilio Social* canteens, and visited places where the creation of new canteens was convenient.<sup>22</sup>

From 14 to 17 May 1938, the three took clothing and condensed milk from the Quakers to Teruel and the villages of Argente, Perales and Alfambra; they also distributed food in these places.

They organised cooperation with the Nationalist Red Cross, supplying some of their canteens. It was agreed with the Count of Vallellano to visit Leon, Segovia, Málaga and Cádiz, where he thought the IC could cover children’s needs.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Annemarie Byloff, ‘Report on the journey to the Aragon Front with the American Quakers Smith and Blicherstaff’, AP: 92.16.7:4, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid; letter from Mme Small to A. Byloff, 5 May 1938, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>22</sup> Annemarie Byloff, ‘Report on voyage to the Aragon Front from 1 to 7 May, 1938’, 11 May 1938, AP: 92.16.7:4, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>23</sup> Annemarie Byloff, ‘Report’, 19 May 1938, AP: 92.16.7:4, AEG-SCIU.

On 20-21 and 24-25 May the SCIU-Quaker team travelled to Zaragoza and Huesca to visit existing canteens, such as that of *Auxilio Social* at Barbastro, and explore villages thought to be most in need of new canteens. During this journey Byloff learnt that Smith would return to America, to be replaced by a Quaker, Clyde Roberts. Also Judge Hannson, President of the Commission, informed Byloff that they would be able to feed more children and the proposed Red Cross canteen at Tardienta was authorised.<sup>24</sup>

The SCIU Executive Committee on 25 May 1938 agreed that: “Dr Byloff’s letters show she is working well. At the moment, she is mainly working, together with the American Quakers, to set up International Commission Canteens”.<sup>25</sup> The meeting also noted that the Commission had received, until then, SF 385,000 and was waiting to receive another SF 17,000 in donations. The IC was providing breakfasts for 15,000 children in Republican Spain and full meals to 2–3,000 children in Nationalist Spain. The difference in the figures was due to the worse food situation in the Republican zone and also to the higher price of a full meal compared to a breakfast. We should note here that the SCIU, providing the administrative support for the Commission Headquarters and its Director, was very well connected and informed about IC activities.

The Commission was gradually enhancing its role, and channelling more funds to agencies. By early 1938, the agencies were close to collapse, except for the ICRC and perhaps the American Quakers. The British Quakers and the SCIU had almost no funds, and independent agencies’ relief in Spain was seriously affected. The agencies’ own contribution to relief spending in Spain diminished as the donations they received decreased. In fact, during 1938, agencies’ activities consisted increasingly of providing personnel to do relief work financed by the IC. The central role of the IC in child relief in Spain at this time has been almost ignored by the scarce literature on relief in the Spanish Civil war.

On 10 June 1938, Byloff reported to the SCIU and the Commission, explaining the humanitarian problems while awaiting a canteen in Huesca: “The worst is the adults arguing between them and the Berruelo children are hungry. I ask if it should be possible, while a final decision is taken, for either the Union or the Commission to give the money to purchase food for these children until the matter of the canteens is

---

<sup>24</sup> Annemarie Byloff, ‘Report’, 27 May 1938, AP: 92.16.7:4, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>25</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, session 235, 25 May 1938, AEG-SCIU.

resolved. The children in need are about 900, and *Auxilio Social* has a dining room for 250 children, serving them alternately”.<sup>26</sup>

On 28 July 1938, Byloff met Charles Ewald, the new American Quaker replacing Clyde Robert, who in turn had replaced Earl Smith in early June 1938. Ewald was fluent in Spanish, something very useful for their work. They continued visiting, with trips to Teruel, Daroca, Monreal, and a well run orphanage in Carrion de los Condes.

In late August, Malcolm de Lilliehöök, the IC Commissioner, arrived in Nationalist Spain accompanied by David Blickenstoff. Together with Byloff, they went from Valladolid to Burgos, where they visited Pilar Primo de Rivera, as well as Merry del Val and Llorente, undersecretary of the Falange. They were to visit Martínez de Bedoya and Mercedes Sanz de Bachiller before Lilliehöök’s trip to Bilbao, San Sebastian, and Jaca. Lilliehöök’s departure was planned for 9 September.

### **6.3.3 Shrinking Republican Spain. Linking with SCI.**

As we have seen, the SCIU had prioritised placing a delegate in Nationalist Spain, Annemarie Byloff. The SCIU maintained its activity in the Republican zone, represented by volunteers such as Mrs Petter and Sister Imbelli. In May 1938, Rudolf Olgiati accepted SCIU’s request that he represent them in the Valencia - Murcia - Almería zone (“triangle” as they called it).<sup>27</sup>

On 19 October 1938, Mrs GM Petter, who as mentioned previously had worked as an SCIU volunteer in Barcelona, was employed as “representative of the SCIU in the Commission for a specific [Republican] Spanish zone”. She had been the other candidate that Mme Small had in mind at the Executive Meeting of 2 March 1938.

Mrs Petter had abandoned the SCIU joint operation with the Quakers in Barcelona due to her discrepancies with Jacob, but had continued doing relief work in Spain. She had focused on the care of displaced children in the different regions that then made up Republican Spain, travelling constantly to trace lost children and check conditions in orphanages, colonies, houses and suchlike. In this she was in permanent contact with other organisations, such as Swiss Aid, the Red Cross, de SCI of Rodolfo Olgiati and all

<sup>26</sup> Annemarie Byloff, ‘Report to the International Union (SCIU) and the Commission’, 10 July 1938, AP: 92.16.7:4, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>27</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, session 232, 2 March 1938, AEG-SCIU.



kinds of authorities. She also managed the distribution of supplies across that sector of Republican Spain.

On employing her, the SCIU valued her recent voluntary work for the agency and agreed to pay her 150 sterling per year, but only contracted her for three months, with subsequent monthly extensions, due to their financial fragility. It was clearly established that she would work mainly with relief and funding from the IC.<sup>28</sup>

#### **6.4 Service Civil International (SCI): the effectiveness of the Swiss Connection**

In 1938, SCI, through its General Secretary, Rodolfo Olgiati, had a unique role in humanitarian relief in Spain. Olgiati — who as we have seen had been in Spain from the beginning of the war, mostly on the Madrid-Valencia axis — had also been appointed director of Swiss Aid (SA) in February 1937. In May 1938 the SCIU appointed him as its representative for the Valencia-Murcia-Almería triangle; and when the IC became active, they selected him as Delegate for their canteens and relief across Republican Spain, excluding Catalonia.<sup>29</sup> In fact, all the relief provided in Spain by the “Swiss Connection” was in his hands, excluding the ICRC, with which Olgiati liaised. In his multiple roles he was permanently active and travelling.

By June 1938, thirty two SCI volunteers (including seven sisters) had worked in Spain, with thirteen volunteers remaining, four of them sisters.

The IC’s request to Olgiati to recruit volunteers and distribute supplies required negotiations with Swiss Aid (SA).<sup>30</sup> It was agreed that SA would remain independent, while SCI would take responsibility for field work in Spain for SA and the IC.<sup>31</sup> Only Swiss workers could be employed for SA work, while other nationalities could

---

<sup>28</sup> Letter from George Thelin, Vice President of SCIU to Mrs G.M. Petter, 19 October 1938, AP: 92.16.7:3, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>29</sup> LCF Bibliothèque: SCI International Archives – 20365 International Commission 1 - letter of presentation to the Republican Authorities of R. Olgiati as Delegate: 30 June 1938; Declaration dated 4 July 1938, signed by Dr Juan Negrín, Republican prime minister and, from April 1938, also Minister of Defence); authorizing Rodolfo Olgiati to travel throughout all Republican territory and asking to the Authorities to provide him with all kind of help, mainly transportation.

<sup>30</sup> See Section 2.5

<sup>31</sup> On the LGF Bibliothèque: SCI International Archives: 20365 – International Comisión – 1 Correspondence/Reports/Minutes May – December 1938 – A draft agreement, both in English and French, to be signed by the I.C. Commissioner M. Lilliehöök and SCI President, Pierre Ceresole, is kept.

participate in SCI work for the IC. Thus one of Pierre Ceresole's ideas was fulfilled: "International collaboration with international financing".<sup>32</sup>

Thus the number of volunteers increased to more than twenty, including Karl Ketterer, Willi Begert and Ralph Hegnover, all well known CSI workers. Luckily: "During two years, no one has been wounded, no serious accident has affected the daily evacuation convoys. It can be considered a miracle".<sup>33</sup>

Under this new scheme, SCI was in charge of 130 IC canteens, serving more than 100,000 people.<sup>34</sup> SCI, and Olgiati personally, were in regular contact with other members of the IC, mainly SCIU, with their delegate Mrs Petter, and the Quaker operation in Barcelona and in the South-East.

## **6.5 The International Commission (IC)**

### **6.5.1 The IC under Captain Malcolm de Lilliehöök**

While the IC was based at Geneva, until January 1939, the Swedish officer, Captain Malcolm de Lilliehöök, was IC Commissioner with the administrative backing of the SCIU, in whose offices the IC was then located.

On 18 May 1938, Lilliehöök issued a document drafted in Spanish entitled: "Suggestions about the purpose and organisation of the work of the International Commission for the help of the evacuee children of Spain".<sup>35</sup>

The first point of the document refers to assisting "evacuee children", defined as "those who by reason of the war had been forced to leave their homes, including whose... house had been destroyed." The purpose was to provide them with a hot meal or its equivalent, every day. Other points include the membership of the Commission; the help requested from the Spanish authorities; suggestions from local Mayors about the

---

<sup>32</sup> BUG: Bulletin du SCI n° 13, Willi Begert Report: p. 63

<sup>33</sup> Monastier (1955), p. 48.

<sup>34</sup> Monastier (1955), p. 50

<sup>35</sup> Document drafted in Spanish with the IC letterhead, entitled: 'Sugestiones sobre la finalidad y organización del trabajo de la Comisión Internacional de Ayuda a los Niños evacuados de España', 18/5/38, in 'Correspondence/Reports/Minutes, May-December 1938'. SCI International Archives. 20365-1. LCF Bibliothèque; henceforth SCI (1938).

location of canteens; a list of evacuee (refugee) children under 14 years of age and the promise to provide the premises and facilities for the canteens.

In June-July 1938, Lilliehöök travelled to Republican Spain, visiting Barcelona and other parts of Catalonia, Valencia, Alicante, Murcia, Lorca, Almería, Ubeda, Bailén, Jaén, Pozo Blanco, Cabeza de Buey, Villanueva de la Serena, Almadena, Ciudad Real, Villa Rubio, Tampleque, Madrid, Cuenca and back to Valencia; “some 3,000 kms.”<sup>36</sup>

Following his visit, he made a wide ranging and important report.

Lilliehöök spoke of the overall situation: “From a purely military point of view, the situation is unstable and does not offer any prospects of developing in a manner that would facilitate our work”. “Politically... added difficulties result from unsatisfactory collaboration between the various branches of administration. This makes for very slow progress with regard to all activities that touch more than one Ministry, as often the ‘competent’ authorities stubbornly resist any propositions that have not originated in their own department”. Here he confirms a problem which we have already seen with the Republican bureaucracy. Lilliehöök continues: “This lack of coordination is especially regrettable with regard to child welfare work, as the children depend not on one, but on several Ministries. Thus ‘*Asistencia Social*’, although the most important of the social departments, has no control over children under a certain age or belonging to certain special categories, who may — or may not — depend on ‘Instrucción Pública y Sanidad’ or the Ministry of Justice’.”

Lilliehöök notes that the lack of coordination mentioned above means that “no reliable statistics regarding the number of refugee and evacuated children are available.” Using private sources —the official sources were demonstrably inaccurate— he calculated that in Madrid there were nearly 200,000 refugees of different ages up to 15 years. For the entire Republican zone, he estimated around 400,000 child refugees, of whom 25%, or 100,000, suffered malnutrition, 50% under-nourishment, while the remaining 25% were in a state of pre-starvation.<sup>37</sup> Concerning children in need as a whole in Catalonia, Lilliehöök disagreed with Edith Pye’s estimate of 40,000; he was convinced that the real figure was 100,000.

---

<sup>36</sup> ‘Memorandum regarding the proposed relief work of the International Commission in Republican Spain’, 7 July 1938, signed by Malcolm de Lilliehöök, Commissioner, in SCI (1938); henceforth Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 7 July 1938.

<sup>37</sup> Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 7 July 1938.

In Catalonia, there were 62 canteens, serving 14,000 children. He found that they worked well and should be expanded as quickly as possible. He proposed new canteens as follows: 50 (of not more than 300 children each) within two months (by 15 September 1938); another 100 canteens two months later (by 15 November 1938); and a further 100 canteens by 15 December. Including those already existing, there would be around 300 canteens, serving 90,000 children.

Soap was “practically not to be had anywhere, at least of a quality suitable for personal use”. Lilliehöök argued that soap was essential, and should be included in IC’s distributions to children, until then restricted to food. He argued “The present situation is simply intolerable for moral as well as sanitary reasons. The IC can not go on feeding the children just as if they were pigs. One must attempt to combine material help with a determined effort to raise the moral of these poor children. It is thus both necessary and feasible to insist on the children being at least fairly clean when they arrive for meals at the I.C. Canteens, but his reasonable demand becomes a bad joke if no soap can be found”.<sup>38</sup> Clothes, shoes and fuel were also urgently needed.

Lilliehöök found that importation and transportation were increasingly difficult. Barcelona port was excluded due to the risks and delays involved, but shipments for Catalonia could be sent to Marseille or Bordeaux and from there by road. He recommended opening a shipping centre at Marseille, jointly with the FSC. For the rest of Republican Spain all imports had to be by sea. All ports with the exception of Valencia were too small or unusable due to daily bombings. He wrote that the “importation of goods by the sea... will eventually require diplomatic action in order to have one or more ports declared neutral”. This problem would later be resolved. (See Section 6.5.4) There were also serious problems for inland transport. For the IC to supply “300 grams of solid food per day to 400,000 children, a total of some 1,200 tons will have to be transported”,<sup>39</sup> but all the lorries available were needed for evacuations or military movements.

Of the IC’s resources in Republican Spain —essentially the representatives of the IC’s constituent organisations— Lilliehöök states: “These foreign collaborators —15 at present— constitute the basis of the relief work, and generally speaking, nothing much

---

<sup>38</sup> Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 7 July 1938, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 7 July 1938, p. 10.

can be achieved anywhere without their assistance in regard to both preliminary investigation, starting of the work and constant supervision. To a very great extent, therefore, the possibility of expanding the relief work depends on the number and quality of the foreign collaborators".<sup>40</sup> He added that the great diversity of refugee need meant that these collaborators would need the maximum freedom of action to work effectively.

Concerning organisation, as Republican territory was divided, two centres would be necessary to organise IC's work, one for Catalonia and one for the rest, with overall supervision from outside Spain. The IC representative in each part of Republican Spain, should remain in office as long as the work continued, so as to avoid the negative effect of a change. The representatives would have medical advisers and cars. He proposed inviting the AFSC in the South of Spain to collaborate with the IC representative in Madrid. Lilliehöök was clearly worried by the IC's responsibilities and limited resources, and proposed making an urgent appeal to a body with much greater resources.

His memorandum ends with some practical proposals and arrangements for the sending of supplies to both parts of Republican Spain. Part of these would be supervised by Olgiati who, Lilliehöök stated, "is not limited to the opening up of new canteens, but is free to use the goods as required also for other relief work amongst the refugee and evacuated children in this part of Spain."<sup>41</sup> Lilliehöök's trust in Olgiati is evident. He, and not the FSC, is the representative in Catalonia with free hands to act in accordance with the needs assessed by him.

Lilliehöök aimed to reach 400,000 daily rations at a cost of 2 British shillings per month. This would mean an annual cost of £480,000: adding 10% for administration and distribution expenses (£48,000) and 6% for miscellaneous (£28,800) the total cost would be £46,400 per month or £550,800 per year. The proposed 3 month arrangement would cost £139,200.

In late August and early September 1938, Lilliehöök travelled to Nationalist Spain, visiting various authorities and observing relief work. After returning to Geneva, Lilliehöök produced a second memorandum on 24 September 1938, in which for the

---

<sup>40</sup> Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 7 July 1938, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 7 July 1938, p. 17.

first time he assesses the welfare situation in Nationalist Spain. He states clearly: “The Commissioner, after... is happy to be able to state that he has found no evidence of either starvation or even under nourishment amongst the children.” Lilliehöök reports: “The governmental organisation and specially *Auxilio Social* are attending to the needs of the whole civilian population in a *very efficient manner*, bringing supplies of standard foodstuffs: bread, meat, sugar, vegetables, dried fish, to special depots in the various provinces to be further distributed to all towns and villages” (my emphasis).

Nonetheless, there were specific problems: “It is only natural that the smaller children can not be supplied everywhere with the special kind of food which they require, such as milk and fats such as cod liver oil.” It was agreed with the corresponding Nationalist authorities to concentrate on supplying these two items. They would be distributed either as breakfast or as “*merienda*” (afternoon tea) to children up to five years of age, with the details to be agreed by local Authorities and Commission representatives. The aim was to reach about 20,000 children at a cost of 4 British pence per child and week; a total of £4,000 for three months.<sup>42</sup>

In this second memorandum, Lilliehöök updates his earlier evaluation of the situation in Republican Spain on the basis of field reports. While his estimate of 400,000 child refugees is confirmed, the situation of civilians had worsened: “supplies of basic foods such as bread, sugar, fats, are absolutely inadequate and the distribution is extremely irregular”. Lilliehöök describes the Republican authorities’ efforts as “tremendous”, but seriously affected by disorganisation. He notes that 80 IC canteens were already working and 40,000 children been fed. Following new appeals governments or organisations had given or promised £37,000 and the American Red Cross had donated 5,500 tons of wheat flour (worth £50,000). The IC would also receive “an adequate supply of motor lorries for the inland distribution that will also be put at the disposal of the Commission”.

Lilliehöök believed the IC could increase the number of canteens from 80 to 500 and the children fed from 40,000 to 150,000 before the end of September 1938. He also proposed improving the supply of dried and condensed milk, dried fruits, preserves,

---

<sup>42</sup> Malcolm de Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 26 October 1938, pp. 1-2, in SCI (1938).

dried fish (cod), salted herring, fats (butter, margarine, and cod liver), oil, sugar and cocoa).<sup>43</sup>

Lilliehöök underlined “the frightful need of clothing and shoes which unfortunately exists on both sides”; a serious problem due to the incoming winter. In the name of the IC, he appealed for donations of all these products, to be distributed by the Commission to the children of both sides. In fact, in both zones agencies were providing clothing, shoes, milk and necessary fats, but there was not enough to cover the need.

Lilliehöök submitted a third memorandum on 25 October 1938. He deals with administrative difficulties in the Geneva bureau, and returns to the relief problems in Republican Spain. The AFSC managed the shipping of American wheat to Spain; the IC would have to plan the distribution within Spain. He proposed distribution through the canteens and colonies of the different foreign agencies (IC, FSC, AFSC and SCI-SA), as well as through “Spanish agencies” (in reality, different levels of Republican authorities), such as schools, *comedores infantiles*, children’s hospitals, *Gotas de Leche* and children’s colonies. Lilliehöök explained, “through the Schools and *Comedores Infantiles* it will be possible to reach rapidly a great number of children below school age. This will be helpful in regard to bettering the present unspeakable condition of the 2–4 year olds”. This age group, which seems to have been forgotten by the authorities, was in urgent need of milk. Lilliehöök suggested a worldwide campaign, proposing the slogan: “America is giving wheat, you must give milk”. And once again, he insisted on the urgent need for clothing, shoes, fuel and soap, suggesting that a new “efficient machinery organised to deal with this matter” be set up because “the present arrangements are hopelessly inadequate”.

Meanwhile, Lilliehöök stated that in Nationalist Spain, “certain matters have changed so considerably as to affect the very basis of the intended work”.<sup>44</sup> The Nationalist government had accepted a shipment of American Wheat (some 15,000 barrels). They did not wish to receive any milk or cod liver oil, but urgently needed clothes, shoes and blankets.

Finally, Lilliehöök points out that during more than two years of war the League of Nations had taken no action, being unable even to cooperate with Edith Pye’s initiative

---

<sup>43</sup> Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 26 October 1938, p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Lilliehöök, Memorandum, 26 October 1938, p. 5.

which led to the birth of the IC. Now the League was now taking some steps, too late, and without real effects.

### **6.5.2 Howard E. Kershner and American aid**

In April 1938 the IC had proposed to the Quakers that their workers in Spain distribute relief supplies from the Commission.<sup>45</sup> On 27 May 1938, the Committee accepted Edith Pye's proposal that the FSC coordinate the feeding of 15,000 children in the Barcelona area, and the AFSC that of 5,000 children in the Valencia and Murcia areas and 7,000 in Nationalist Spain. Distribution would be of cocoa with milk and Swedish bread, which the IC considered the "most nourishing and the easiest to dispense".<sup>46</sup>

On 2 December 1938, the AFSC asked Howard E. Kershner, a successful American ex-businessman turned humanitarian, to go urgently to Spain to coordinate relief distribution. His original plan had been to go to a Friends' centre in Shanghai.<sup>47</sup> The American Government, through the American Red Cross, had agreed to donate 3 million bushels of wheat each month for the AFSC to distribute to children in Spain, with the promise to support AFSC during the winter. The Committee agreed to "ask Howard E. Kershner to go to Spain as soon as possible to act as relief administrator for whatever supplies we can secure".<sup>48</sup>

On 10 December 1938, part of the Committee on Spain, including Clarence E Picket and John F Rich, met Kershner to respond urgently to problems concerning the milling of the wheat; the American Red Cross had rejected a Spanish Republican government offer to cover the cost. The Committee presented two possibilities to the Red Cross: to receive raw wheat, whose processing the AFSC would negotiate in Spain, France or even the USA; or for the Red Cross to ask the millers to retain as payment part of the flour produced.

The meeting also considered in detail Kershner's work and responsibilities should he go to Spain. A memo presented by Kershner was approved in principle, but it was understood that conditions on the ground would determine his relationship with other

---

<sup>45</sup> CoS, minutes, 22 April 1938, AFSCA.

<sup>46</sup> CoS, minutes, 27 May 1931, AFSCA.

<sup>47</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> CoS, minutes, 2 December 1938, AFSCA.



representatives and organisations. He would depend on the voluntary cooperation of those in the field.

The final matter was to establish a minimum relief programme that could justify the presence of H. E. Kershner in Spain.<sup>49</sup>

A further meeting of the Committee on Spain, on 16 December 1938, agreed that Kershner and his wife Gertrude should leave as soon as possible. At least 10,000 barrels of flour were due to leave in January and the Committee wanted to be ready to administer a large increase in relief supplies, should the efforts of the President's Committee<sup>50</sup> and the IC be successful. The Kershners would sail on 4 January.<sup>51</sup>

On 3 January 1939 the Committee finalised a statement to both Spanish governments, Nationalist and Republican, concerning the American government's offer to ship flour to France, provided the respective Governments assumed the cost of its onward transport to Spanish territories. Immediately after that meeting, a joint meeting with the Board of Directors prepared the trip to Spain for the Kershners together with a new AFSC worker for Spain, Emmet Gulley, who would set up IC canteens in Almería. Rufus Jones, the AFSC President, presented the IC's request that Kershner become a member of the Commission. The AFSC rejected this proposal, "on account of the sensitiveness of the American people and the American Government". The Committee also suggested that Howard Kerschner travel to Nationalist Spain before visiting the Republican zone, to resolve all trans-shipping matters.<sup>52</sup>

Farah Mendlesohn implies that Kershner visited Nationalist Spain first, due to "anti-Republican prejudice and ignorance".<sup>53</sup> she is wrong on several grounds. Firstly, this order was decided by the AFSC leadership, not Kershner. Secondly, Republican territory was by now increasingly reduced.<sup>54</sup> Thirdly, the outcome of the war with Franco's victory looked quite real, there was some logic in prioritising the Nationalist zone. And it is not true that Kershner had any "anti-Republican prejudice". In fact,

---

<sup>49</sup> CoS, minutes, 10 December 1938, AFSCA.

<sup>50</sup> Private Committee promoted by President Roosevelt and formed by prominent businessmen to raise funds for the AFSC to be used for the processing of surplus wheat, all this in connection with the American Red Cross. See CoS, minutes, 16 December 1938, AFSCA.

<sup>51</sup> CoS, minutes, 16 December 1938.

<sup>52</sup> CoS and BoD, minutes, 3 January 1939, AFSCA.

<sup>53</sup> Mendlesohn (2002), p. 145.

<sup>54</sup> See the map of the progression of the battle fronts in Catalonia, Document B in Annex to the Thesis.

before entering any part of Spain, he contacted the Republican authorities, by then in France. He discussed with Marcelino Pascua, the Republican Ambassador in Paris, the possibility of using Girona as a supplies depot,<sup>55</sup> and struggled to supply Madrid and cities in the south before these fell to Franco.<sup>56</sup> He criticised the fact that “the non-intervention agreement, promoted chiefly by England and the United States, had succeeded in keeping supplies of war materials from going to the Republican side but had not in the slightest degree interfered with Franco’s reinforcements of men, bomber planes, guns and munitions sent in steady stream by Germany and Italy.”<sup>57</sup> Kershner’s position is debatable, but in no way shows pronationalist bias.

However, neither did Kershner have the special sympathies for the Republic shown by some relief workers, and insisted on working with the Nationalist authorities so as to provide relief as effectively and to the largest number of children possible. He was not a political activist but an administrator for the Quakers and also later for the IC, without forgetting the peace testimony and his Christian beliefs, as we shall see.

In the event, after his arrival in France in early January 1939, Kershner did first visit Republican territory and not the Franco is Zone. Contrary to some accounts, Kershner was well aware of the situation in the Republic and, especially, in Catalonia. He was in permanent contact with Edith Pye in London, Lilliehöök in Geneva and the Quaker workers in Catalonia. The key issue was the refugees leaving Barcelona and other towns and cities. There were “hundreds of thousands... on the roads of Spain”, whose “only hope of safety was to escape from Spain”; they headed for France.<sup>58</sup>

Both Pye and Lilliehöök proposed to Kershner the possibility of establishing a neutral zone in Catalonia near the border, where children might be fed and refugees could receive general care.<sup>59</sup> Kershner had also contacted the French Foreign Ministry to ask whether French authorities would admit the refugees and provide food, but they “did not believe immediate action would be necessary and the situation might not become critical for days, possible not for weeks”. The proposed neutral zone was accepted by the Republican Ambassador to France, Marcelino Pascua but Quiñones de Leon,

---

<sup>55</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid p. 72.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid pp. 18-19.

Franco's representative, "was not able to conclude an agreement". Evidently, Franco, whose armies were approaching the border without significant opposition, did not want to create a "neutral" territory inside his future state.

Barcelona fell into Nationalist hands, without any real fight, on 26 January 1939, but Quaker and IC workers in the Catalan capital "continued their work unmolested." This was partly a result of prior diplomacy by the AFSC. Already in April 1938, Clarence Picket reported a conversation with Juan de Cardenas, Nationalist representative in USA, who encouraged the AFSC to plan to continue working in Spain following a Nationalist victory. Paul Merry del Val, head of the Press Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior for Nationalist Spain had written to Earl Smith: "I do not know if the good news we are having [of Nationalist advances] will mean that you will be leaving soon. I hope not and I truly believe that such a thing should not happen. I personally think that your real work is about to start". This was interpreted by the Committee on Spain to mean that AFSC workers would be "welcome to continue in Spain, should the Nationalist army be victorious".<sup>60</sup> They agreed that: "Recognising the financial limitations of the Committee and the possible difficulty of securing funds after a Nationalist victory, they would continue the plan of relief work in Spain for at least a year".<sup>61</sup> Clarence Picket met de Cardenas shortly before the fall of Barcelona, with the latter admitting that "for the first time the Nationalist Government has a serious refugee problem on their hands" and asking "whether it should be possible to increase the allotment of flour to Nationalist Spain in view of the capture of parts of Catalonia which were in great need". Picket had accepted on the condition that FSC could continue its activities in Barcelona.<sup>62</sup>

On 28 January an IC meeting in Barcelona agreed to expand relief work, adapting it to the new circumstances: relief workers were notified in both Nationalist and the remains of Republican Spain.

On the afternoon of 30 January 1939, after receiving an urgent call informing him that refugees were already entering France, Kershner took the night train to Perpignan, near the French-Spanish border, where some of the Barcelona staff had established a temporary headquarters at the Regina Hotel. He arrived early, and at 11am Kershner

---

<sup>60</sup> CoS, minutes, 22 April 1938, AFSCA.

<sup>61</sup> CoS, minutes, 22 April 1938.

<sup>62</sup> CoS, minutes, 27 January 1939, AFSCA.

went, with four other workers and a Catalan driver, into Spain “among throngs of refugees and scenes of ‘ineffable tragedy’, fugitives covered the roads, but in the countryside peasants were working on their farms and goats were grazing, life seemed to be moving in normal fashion”<sup>63</sup>. After the inspection visit and back on the French side of the border, Kershner visited a new canteen established at Pont-a-Malines.

In the event, there was greater need for relief on the Republican side: in the existing Nationalist territory, the food situation had changed little. In Catalonia, which had just been taken, relief continued to arrive. The British and American Quakers maintained their work, with the addition of the *Auxilio Social* services. IC’s main worries were not in Nationalist Spain, but for the population in the Republican zone, suffering a prolonged lack of food, care and general welfare.

### **6.5.3 New flags: arduous times**

As the war ended, foreign agencies in Republican Spain were operating children’s hospitals, colonies and dining rooms, infant milk stations and women’s workshops. One day, a relief worker saw people putting up one flag after another. Those who had no flag hung out scarves or even sheets. Cathedral bells started ringing. “Well, it has happened” wrote the worker. There was no longer any Loyalist side. She was working on the other side now.<sup>64</sup>

The magic had gone. The sentiment that had moved the “Aid to Spain” movement was, in most cases, “aid to the Spanish Republic”. The need continued and even more children were hungry, but with the Republic gone and a new regime, many workers left.

Kershner explains: “the experience of those who were unable to make the adjustment had been entirely in the Republican zone”. In contrast: “My executive work had necessitated dealings with both sides. I had formed friendships with individuals, among the Nationalists as well as the Republicans. The adjustment was not difficult for me”. He also maintains that some of the workers that left returned to their countries, mainly USA and Britain, to promote a pro-Republican campaign, accusing Franco’s

---

<sup>63</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> Kershner, Howard E., untitled, undated report, AFSCA, p. 1.

government of failure to cooperate with the IC and forcing the workers to leave. This was not only false, but was also very negative for relief work.<sup>65</sup>

Kershner fought against this, and when, once the war finished and the IC left Spain, he presented the real motives for the IC's departure, as shown by the minutes of different IC and AFSC committees. The Nationalist relief structure was mostly ready to take on relief operations, despite the many difficulties, above all, the lack of financial support. Only the relief of refugees outside Spain — in France, North Africa and Latin America — still partially attracted public opinion, as we shall see in Sections 7.2.3 and 7.2.4.

The AFSCA and IC's longstanding idea of a controlled process of disengagement was very important for the future of the IC and Quaker operations.<sup>66</sup> As Kershner said: "If therefore we had not succeeded in June 1939 in restoring the good standing of the Quakers in the estimation of the Spanish authorities, the important relief work done in France from June 1940 to the end of 1942, would have been impossible, as Quaker workers and Quaker supplies would not have been allowed to pass through Spain on their way to France".<sup>67</sup>

#### **6.5.4 The work of Howard E. Kershner: the International Commission and the Quakers**

When Kershner and his wife sailed for Europe, on 4 January 1939, Nationalist forces were advancing rapidly. Barcelona fell on 26 January and by 10 February 1939, Franco controlled the whole frontier with France.<sup>68</sup> Madrid surrendered on 27 March and General Aranda took Valencia on 30 March. On 31 March, Almería, Murcia and Cartagena were occupied and Franco controlled all of Spain.<sup>69</sup>

By the time Kershner took office as the AFSC's Director of Relief, the Spanish Civil War was effectively over, and he already considered Spain as a single territory in which to organise relief.

---

<sup>65</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 100.

<sup>66</sup> "A telegram from Hans Gramm emphasized the importance of closing the work in Spain gradually and with the good will of the Spanish officials... The Committee was united in this opinion, with the desire to keep channels for future usefulness in Spain". CoS, minutes, 28 April 1939, AFSCA.

<sup>67</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 114.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas, H. (1990), p. 881.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid* p. 915.

Kershner visited Nationalist Spain in early February 1939, together with Judge Hanson, International Commission (IC) President<sup>70</sup>, David Blickentaff, Chief of the AFSC Mission in Nationalist Spain, and assisted by Samuel Ybargoyen, the Uruguay Consul in Lyon (France), who due to his knowledge of English, French and Spanish, had been attached to Kershner. Kershner by now also represented the IC and was its Vice-President and Director, a situation reluctantly accepted by the AFSC.

The main purpose of the visit was to clarify the position of the IC once the Nationalists had finally won the war. Kershner states “The International Commission wished to continue sending food and other help to them [the Nationalists] but in order to do so, certain points must be granted to us by the Nationalist Government”.<sup>71</sup>

The IC delegation met General Espinosa de los Monteros,<sup>72</sup> who agreed the following terms:

1. The lives and property of IC workers would be respected and they could continue to aid children.
2. Shipments to Republican Spain would be exempt from blockade and not bombed, fired upon or interfered with in any way.
3. The Nationalists would not re-export any grain from Spain during the period of IC’s operations.
4. All Customs regulation would be waived, so supplies could be delivered promptly to IC workers.
5. AFSC, FSC and IC would have complete supervision of all supplies they sent to Spain as well as the right to allocate them, control their distribution and inspect operations.
6. The origin of these goods would be publicised.

Javier Martínez de Bedoya, General Secretary of *Auxilio Social* and head of *Beneficencia*, also agreed to these points. Finally, the Nationalist Government gave its

---

<sup>70</sup> See Document A in the Annex to the Thesis for the membership of the IC Board of Directors.

<sup>71</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 37.

<sup>72</sup> H. Kershner refers to him as “similar to an Under-Secretary of State in our Government”, *ibid* p. 43. He was in fact Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

consent on 24 February 1939, with a telephone call from the Nationalist government representative in France, Quiñones de Leon. Though Franco's government never confirmed it in writing, what was known as "the Burgos Agreement" was observed by both parties. Kershner explains: "Just after the agreement had been put into operation, Mr Pollock of the British Foreign Office (FO) informed me that the British Consul at Palma, Headquarters of the Spanish Fleet, had wired him that the Spanish Admiralty had received orders not to molest our ships. Every ship that I listed [in the meeting with the Nationalists in Burgos] was mentioned by name in the order... During and after the war I had occasion to negotiate many matters with the Nationalist government and with individual officers. I gladly bear witness to the fact that though agreement was sometimes difficult to reach, once reached it was meticulously kept. It is a fact that all our ships went under Franco's airplanes, over his submarines and past his battleships, and came safely to port in Republican Spain".<sup>73</sup>

Let us now summarise the state of relief work at this time. As we shall see, Kershner was an executive, interested in providing effective relief, but also a Quaker, who wanted this work to transmit a spiritual message.

#### **6.5.4.1 Spain**

At the close of the war, the IC was operating with a staff of 31 foreign workers (largely Quaker personnel) in Spain and a large number of native helpers. From the end of the conflict, *Auxilio Social* distributed all relief in Spain and, accordingly, the Quaker staff was reduced to 10, who with credentials and safe-conducts from the National Delegation of *Auxilio Social* were able to travel freely anywhere in Spain.

They visited *Auxilio Social* dining rooms, talked to officials and private individuals present, and observed the operations, as well as, in the words of Kershner, "carrying a message of love and friendship from the Governments and the people of the 24 nations who have contributed to the resources of this Commission. These devoted workers are carrying on a work of prime importance for the promotion of good-will and the people".<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid pp. 45-46.

<sup>74</sup> Kershner, Howard E. (no date) 'Among the Spanish war victims', AFSCA, p. 4.

In some places there were difficulties. Some relief workers, such as Alfred Jacob's team, were not willing to work in the new situation. On occasions, IC goods were confiscated, though mainly subsequently recovered. Overall however, Kershner felt that the relief succeeded "in leaving the impression to the Spanish people that our profession of love and impartiality is entirely genuine, and that this principle is a deep and abiding motivation for our activities".<sup>75</sup>

#### **6.5.4.2 France**

After the massive evacuation from Catalonia in February 1939, with more than 500,000 Spanish refugees, the work of the IC turned to the 200,000 women and children scattered across France in refugee camps. With eight people, two cars and two vans they organised an operation to supply clothing and bedding. They initially assigned 1,300,000 French Francs (FF), and additional contributions were expected.

At that time, about 65,000 refugees had either returned to Spain or gone to other countries, mainly in Latin America. The IC cared for about 2,000 refugees in Mexico and negotiated with Chile and other countries to find new homes for refugees. An allocation of FF 2,000,000 was used for this purpose.

The IC also cared for men in concentration camps in southern France, supplying clothing for the sick and wounded in hospitals, items such as paper, pencils and books, medical products or vitamin concentrates as well as laboratories for early diagnosis of tuberculosis and other diseases. They planned the construction of an extension to an existing hospital in the south of France, to care for tuberculosis cases, at a cost of about FF 4,000,000. The Pax Colony,<sup>76</sup> as it was called, with about 50 orphan children, would be maintained for at least 1 more year.

They dealt with the problem of the mutilated Republican soldier refugees in the French camp. As Kershner stated: "It is not likely that these victims can go to any other country or return to Spain. France does not want them and they will become a perpetual charge upon charity".<sup>77</sup> In Africa, Spanish refugees were permitted ashore at Oran, Algeria, by the French colonial authorities, because the British Government promised the IC would

---

<sup>75</sup> Kershner, Howard E., untitled, undated report, AFSCA, p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> A children's colony established in France, in a Seine castle, funded by a donation of FF 269,800 from two Loyalist officers who visited Kershner in Paris in March 1939. Kershner (1950), p. 56.

<sup>77</sup> Kershner, 'Among the Spanish war victims', p. 6.



care for them. Kershner forced the French position. After six days packed on the “Stanbrook”, an unseaworthy vessel anchored in the harbour of Oran, the thousands of refugees were disembarked and placed in camps. Britain promised the French Government to “fumigate and reclothe them and... that as soon as arrangements could be made, they would be removed to Mexico, the removal financed by the British Government.”<sup>78</sup> This plan was complicated by the impending World War and in the end, the refugees went different ways, going into Algerian industry or agriculture, to work on the Tran-Siberian Railway or joining the armies of the diverse countries.<sup>79</sup>

## 6.6 Howard E. Kershner and Peace Testimony

At the AFSC Committee on Spain of 24 February 1939: “The Secretary reported that he had communicated with the State Department concerning Howard Kershner’s desire to urge Burgos to offer amnesty to Republican Spain as a basis of a peace. The State Department and the Committee as well felt that he should not attempt these negotiations, but the Committee asked he should be urged to do what he saw fit as an unofficial representative”.<sup>80</sup>

While Kershner focused on effective relief work, he also tried, despite the unfavourable circumstances, to promote the reconciliation that was at the heart of Quaker thought. Then based in Paris, he spoke with Dr Negrín, exiled in the French capital, who asked Kershner to speak on his behalf with the new Spanish administration. In exchange for an amnesty for the Republicans, Negrín offered to surrender himself, as well as to hand over the substantial amounts of money, gold and jewels the Republican government had deposited in Mexico. Kershner replied that while he personally supported such an amnesty, he was not authorised “to be a party to political negotiations”. Kershner would soon be received as IC representative by General Franco. Negrín asked him: “would it not be possible to present my offer unofficially?”<sup>81</sup>

Kershner received several visits by Republican officials in Paris, all backing Negrín’s proposal. Finally he accepted it, although he was not convinced that Negrín’s sacrifice would “satisfy the Nationalist desire for reprisals”, after the bitterness created by the

---

<sup>78</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 80

<sup>79</sup> Ibid p. 81.

<sup>80</sup> CoS, minutes, 24 February 1939, p. 2, AFSCA.

<sup>81</sup> Kershner (1950), p. 167.

war.<sup>82</sup> Kershner submitted the proposal to all the Committee members he could find, and all agreed.

Kershner departed for Spain on 1 November 1939. After stopping at some refugee camps in France, he crossed the border through St Jean-de-Luz. Accompanied by the Argentinean ambassador, Mr Ibarгойen, he arrived at Madrid where the IC was closing down its operations, and all but three of its workers were leaving Spain. Kershner spent most of his time drafting the Letter and Memorandum to be presented to Franco. He consulted Ibarгойen as well as Alfred Jacob, then in Madrid. He also spoke with Mercedes Sanz Bachiller, of *Auxilio Social*, and one of her officers, Luis Burgos.

In his letter to Franco, Kershner states that “If Your Excellency would consider it advisable to declare a general amnesty, I believe nearly all of these people [the Spanish refugees in France] would return to Spain promptly.” Kershner affirms that “most of the Spanish people in France are very worthy citizens and would of course prove of great value to your country.” In addition, he points out, the very significant aid the IC was sending to refugees in France would henceforth go to Spain, which “would represent importations of foodstuffs and supplies”. Finally, the declaration of an amnesty “on the part of Your Excellency would not only be extremely popular in America, but equally popular in France, England, the Dominions, Scandinavia and many other countries.”

The letter was accompanied by a private memorandum. Here, Kershner underlines the IC’s relief work in all parts of Spain, during and after the war, and the good relations established with many Spaniards. He makes the following appeal to Franco on the basis of religion: “In the name of Him whom you and I both honour as our Saviour and strive to serve, I make bold to plead with Your Excellency to extend to the Spanish refugees in France and other lands the hand of forgiveness and love, even as our Lord has taught us to love our enemies.” He explains the suffering of more than 170,000 Spanish refugees in France, exiles in a country that had just entered a war. He suggests: “I sincerely believe that there lies before Your Excellency the unique opportunity to be the greatest man in the history of Spain. By receiving the refugees home from foreign lands, forgiving political offenders, and thus ushering in a new era of love and prosperity and winning forever the loyalty of a united Spanish people, Your Excellency will not only be a happy ruler in Spain, enshrined securely in the hearts of your countrymen, but you

---

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

will also be loved and respected abroad. You will be setting an example which sooner or later other nations must follow if our Christian civilisation is not to disappear.”

Both documents were written on an IC letterhead<sup>83</sup> and Kershner always spoke in the name of the Commission, not the Quakers.<sup>84</sup>

Kershner was summoned to meet the “*Generalísimo*” on Tuesday, 7 November 1939, at 4.30pm. He arrived at 4pm as instructed, but at 4.15pm he was informed that urgent matters had forced Franco to cancel the appointment.

Back from the failed appointment, Kershner visited Mercedes Sanz Bachiller who, fully agreeing with the plea, offered to present it to Franco. Kershner never received any answer, nor was he given any explanation for the cancelled meeting. Very possibly, Franco’s officials, knowing of the plea for amnesty, had decided that it was better never to receive it, so as not to be seen to reject it.

While this refusal reflected Franco’s attitude, Kershner’s presentation of the plea was in line with his Christian vision, trying to find a way to help the thousands and thousands of prisoners and refugees. Kershner believed that most Quakers also agreed with the attempt. He replied as follows to those who opposed it:

“What harm ever comes from a plea for kindness and generosity toward one’s fellow men? In the early history of the Society of Friends, there were many individuals who travelled widely to express their concerns to kings, princes and other leaders of people. Something of that bold, outspoken presentation of concerns and convictions has been lost by the Quakers. The sooner it is restored, the better.”<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> See Annex to Thesis, Documents C and D.

<sup>84</sup> “I am sure that the Quakers would be in harmony with the Spirit of my memorandum but not all of them, perhaps, would have agreed about the wisdom of presenting it”. Kershner (1950), p. 173.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid p. 174

## **Chapter 7: Full scale war (2). The work of the agencies**

---

### **7.1 The Red Cross and the vanishing Spanish Republic**

#### **7.1.1 Prisoner exchanges**

During 1938, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continued with its relief effort in the Spanish conflict. There was a serious setback in the care of prisoners when on 30 July 1938 the Burgos government suspended all visits to condemned prisoners and access was forbidden to the San Pedro de Cardeña camp, where the International Brigade prisoners were held. A warning from Colonel Patry<sup>1</sup> of the ICRC to General Espinosa de los Monteros, Under Secretary of State for Foreign affairs of the Burgos Government, about the possible repercussions of this decision on pro-Franco prisoners in Republican territory, mainly in Barcelona, had no effect; the war finished without a formal end to this suspension. By then, ICRC delegates had visited 75 places of detention, with a total of 78,655 prisoners.<sup>2</sup>

New prisoner exchanges were made successfully:

- In January 1938, 40 Basque officers with death penalties or long prison terms were exchanged for 41 Nationalist officers of the same rank held by the Republicans.
- In July 1938, 4 Russian and 2 Spanish aviators for 4 German and 2 Spanish pilots.
- On 28 July 1938, 14 Republican pilots were exchanged for 14 nationalist aviators. All imprisoned members of the Spanish Parliament (Cortes) were freed on both sides.
- In August, 8 German civilians were exchanged for 8 Soviet sailors.

---

<sup>1</sup> George Patry had been Vice-President of the ICRC since 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Junod (1963), p. 101.

- Also in 13 August 1938, 159 Basque fighters (Gudaris) and 130 other prisoners in Nationalist prisons were exchanged for 191 “asylum seekers” in the French, Cuban and Uruguayan embassies in Madrid, 58 Nationalist officers and 40 civilians under death sentence.
- On 22 September 1938, 4 German civilians, a nationalist pilot and two pro-Franco families were exchanged for the equivalent number of prisoners in Nationalist Spain.
- On 7 October 1938, 14 Italian Legionnaires were exchanged for 14 North American militiamen.
- In January 1939, 5 German aviators, a woman and her daughter were exchanged for 6 Republican pilots.

With the war nearly over:

- On 29 March 1939, 175 Italian Legionnaires were exchanged for 175 International Brigaders from the San Pedro de Cardeña Prison; and
- 110 members of the Soviet merchant marine, prisoners in Palma de Mallorca, and 7 “Komsomol” crew prisoners in Puerto de Santamaría (Cádiz) were freed and repatriated under the control of the ICRC.<sup>3</sup>

### **7.1.2 The fall of Catalonia**

The retreat following the end of the Battle of the Ebro, on 16 November 1938, sealed the fate of the Republic, bringing closer the fall of Catalonia. The retreat dramatically increased the existing refugee problem. Also, the ICRC became seriously concerned about the fate of the political prisoners in Republican hands in Catalonia.

At the end of 1938, the ICRC was working on the evacuation to France and other destinations of about 300 wounded International Brigaders at the request of the Commission for the withdrawal of foreign volunteers.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Durand, A. (1984), p. 346.

<sup>4</sup> Commission of 15 army officers of various nationalities established by the League of Nations to control the withdrawal of the International Brigades after the proposal made to the League by the Republican Government in September 1938. The Commission was led by the Finnish General Jalander, the British Brigadier Molesworth and the French Colonel Homo. Thomas, H. (1990), p. 853.

The Negrín Government decided to transfer the State bureaucracy from Barcelona to Figueres, in the province of Girona. Both the Catalan Government and the Basque Government in Exile were based at Barcelona, and also abandoned the city in an exodus of thousands of civilians, using all kinds of transport.

The Red Cross considered that their priority was to protect the lives of the prisoners held by the Republicans until the arrival of Franco's troops, also focusing on the care of the new prisoners created by Franco's occupation of Catalonia.

### **7.1.3 Saving the Nationalist prisoners**

Marcel Junod and Ronald Marti of ICRC (the latter had been ICRC Delegate in Barcelona until April 1937), went from Perpignan to Girona, and after visiting El Collell, an old convent which was now an SIM<sup>5</sup> prison holding 232 prisoners, they arrived at Barcelona on 17 January. They intended to visit all the prisons in Barcelona, without exception.<sup>6</sup> Many families of prisoners visited the ICRC delegation to Barcelona to plea for their safety.

Junod met the British representative, John Leche, and the French Ambassador, Jules Henry. Uncomfortable with the estimated 5,000 prisoners being held in Barcelona prisons, Junod consulted Negrín about their fate. On 23 January, the Republican Government decided to transfer all prisoners following its move to Girona. However, as Junod pointed out, the covering orders were either implemented too late or were disregarded by the prison directors or their guards.

On 26 January, the female director of the "Las Corts" women's prison telephoned the ICRC delegation, asking for instructions concerning the inmates. After some difficulties at an army control post, Junod and Martin arrived at the prison, where inmates received them with: "¡Viva La Cruz Roja!" ("Long live the Red Cross!"). The Director told them that she was prepared to open the cells and free the prisoners, but wanted Red Cross protection for herself and her guards. A truck miraculously appeared, in which Junod transported the old and sick inmates. The younger ones left the prison alone or with their families waiting outside.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> SIM: *Servicio de Información Militar* (Military Information Service): Republican security body, mostly controlled by the Communist Party.

<sup>6</sup> Junod (1963), pp. 149-53.

<sup>7</sup> Junod (1963), pp. 97-8.

Montjuïc Castle, an old fort above the Barcelona harbour, was under heavy fire from Nationalist warships. The fortress was also a prison, as the Nationalist High Command knew. Mme Perdomo, a Belgian nurse in the ICRC Delegation, responded to the bombardment by going with the ICRC driver, Pedro Clotet, to Montjuïc, where the attack was causing deaths and injuries. Perdomo contacted Junod and Martin and, after negotiations with the authorities, the ICRC gave protection to the prisoners and did everything possible to avoid their transfer to Girona. The white flags flown on the fortress survived attempts to remove them by some Republican army officers, and remained there to try to avoid further naval fire. When Nationalist troops entered the city on 26 January 1939, the Red Cross flag was flying over Montjuïc, and about 1,000 prisoners were freed from its prison.<sup>8</sup>

The prisoners at the Modelo prison, about 600 in number, were transferred by train to Girona, guarded by soldiers of the communist Lister Division. It was a hazardous journey, through mountains and snow. On 6 February 1939, while they were resting, a group of retreating soldiers arrived and the prisoners feared they would be killed. In fact, the guards decided to set them free. Some went into France and were interned at the Amelis-Les-Bains castle. The French authorities retained the Nationalist prisoners, hoping to exchange them for French prisoners in Nationalist hands.

News arrived from International Brigaders that nearly 50 Nationalist political prisoners held at El Collell had been killed the day Barcelona fell to the Nationalists.

The ICRC representatives Colonel Patry and Marcel Junod arrived at Perpignan on 12 February, contacting the “Prefect”, or Governor, of that French region and the Nationalist Red Cross representative, Count of La Granja. In Prats de Molló they discovered totally destitute Republican militiamen and Nationalist prisoners. Patry and Junod had a small truck full of bananas and condensed milk which they distributed between the Francoists and Republicans. Distributions were also made to the 300 military and civilian prisoners in the Amelie-Les-Bains castle. They used a number of cars abandoned by escaping Republicans to organise the transport of 630 military prisoners from Prats de Molló to Le Perthus.

---

<sup>8</sup> On 10 February 1939, Julia La Haye Johnkheer, declaring herself (without proof) a volunteer ICRC nurse in Barcelona, wrote an open letter to the Director of *La Vanguardia*, the main Barcelona newspaper, giving a very similar version that of Marcel Junod, but asserting that it was she, and not Perdomo, who had gone to Montjuïc, ‘Rapports et correspondance du Marcel Junod, Délégué General pour l’Espagne. Rapport’. B CR 212 GEN 61. ICRC.

Junod confirmed at this time that Nationalist prisoners from the battle of Teruel, including the officer that had surrendered Teruel to the Republic, Colonel Rey d'Harcourt, and the Bishop of Teruel, Anselmo Polanco Fontecha, had been killed by Republicans in Can Tretze, a rural property near Figueres.

#### **7.1.4 Art and the Red Cross**

On its successive movements, the Republican Government took with it the national art collection; including the most valuable part, from El Prado Museum, and important pieces from the Liria Palace, the Alba family and the Academia of San Fernando.

In November 1936, the collection left Madrid for Valencia, with the Government. With the transfer to Barcelona in 1937, the art followed, and when, on 23 January 1939, Negrín established the Republican Government at Figueres 30km from the French border, the national treasure again followed.<sup>9</sup> President Azaña was at the Perelada Castle; the Government and Parliament at Figueres Castle and Prime Minister Negrín at a nearby country property, the “Masía del Torero”. In the end, they did what some had proposed at the start of the conflict — to safeguard the invaluable art collection by removing it from the scene of the civil war — and the Republican Government asked for the help of the League of Nations’ International Museums Office, under Salvador de Madariaga. The request was refused by the League’s General Secretary, Joseph d’Avenol, citing the non-intervention principle. The French Government took the same position.

An independent and private committee was needed for the task, and the ICRC was asked to fulfil this role. The proposal was accepted by Azaña and the Republican Government and the agreement was signed on the night of 2 February 1939.

Between 4 and 11 February, the art collection crossed the French border and was taken to Château Aubiry, near the village of Ceret, property of Mme Bardoux Job, the local Red Cross President. The treasure then was transported in 22 wagons by French railways to Geneva, in 1,668 crates weighing 140 tons. It was stored at the League of Nations building, near the ICRC offices. After the end of the war and following negotiations with the new Spanish government, the art was returned to Spain on 10 May 1939. The ICRC had undertaken a “humanitarian art safety operation”.

---

<sup>9</sup> Books, tapestry and silver objects were placed underground at the Carmelite Convent.



### **7.1.5 The forgotten asylum seekers**

At the end of 1938, when most of the diplomatic representations abandoned Madrid — due either to the supply problems in the city or because they had recognised Franco's Government — the ICRC was left protecting the refugees. They were successful, because when Madrid fell to the Nationalists, on 27 March 1939, after 30 months of isolation, all the refugees were safe. The ICRC had reached an agreement with the Madrid authorities, and episodes such as the invasion of the Finnish Embassy in 1936, where all the refugees were taken by the Republicans, were not repeated. The ICRC also negotiated with the new authorities the evacuation of 17 high ranking Republicans that had been offered asylum by the Chilean Embassy.

### **7.1.6 The victors and the defeated**

Captain George Graz and Captain Jean d'Amman, ICRC delegates at Bilbao and San Sebastian respectively, were fully committed from February 1939 onwards to regularising the supply of aid to Catalonia and also to caring for the new inmates in Catalan prisons. Arrests increased and the military courts proceeded, in public sessions fully reported in the newspapers.<sup>10</sup> The Nationalist prisoners interned in France who returned to Spain through Irun in the north or La Jonquera in Catalonia were held in camps and only released after obtaining the guarantee of two people with a Nationalist background.

The Republican military and civilians that opted to return to Spain were only accepted through the Irun crossing. They arrived in a very bad condition, complaining about the treatment they had received in France. They went through a classification process similar to that faced by the Nationalist prisoners, About 55,000 people, mostly men, crossed the border. D'Amman was at the border crossing and witnessed the process.

On 27 February 1939, France and Britain formally recognised the Nationalist authorities as the only Spanish Government; President Azaña resigned on the same day. Madrid, still under Republican control, was in a terrible state. Between 400 and 500 people were dying weekly of hunger; shops were empty; heating did not work and health conditions in general were deteriorating. There was political tension between Negrín's supporters

---

<sup>10</sup> Amman, 'Report, 22/5/1937-12/8/1939', p. 8, in D'Amman, Jean, (1939) 'Rapports de Jean d'Amman', B CR 212 GEN-46, ICRC; henceforth D'Amman (1939).

and those in favour of surrender. Socialists, Republicans and anarchists confronted the communists, who favoured continuing the fight, and formed a Junta presided by Colonel Casado on 13 March 1939. After the surrender of Madrid on 28 March, Alicante and Valencia were taken by Franco's troops on 29 and 30 March respectively.

Meanwhile, the ICRC had been working on the final prisoner exchanges, of General Miaja, the defender of Madrid, for Miguel Primo de Rivera, brother of the Falange founder, and of 168 Italian prisoners for the Brigaders at San Pedro de Cardeña.

Delegate Hahn was party to both operations. The Italian exchange became difficult when the captain of the British ship refused to embark more than 51 Italians, which was the number of Brigaders ready to be exchanged. Nevertheless Hahn obtained the approval of the Admiralty, through the British consul, to embark all the Italians.

With the war over, Geneva consulted with Hahn concerning the ICRC's future in Spain and the possible protection of political prisoners, Hahn felt that no intervention was possible because it was an internal Spanish matter and had nothing to do with a foreign organisation: "we must finish between now and 15 August, notify the authorities and return home. We must allow the new state to establish its will." Even intervention in favour of foreign prisoners of war was not considered because this matter corresponded to their respective countries.<sup>11</sup>

### **7.1.7 The ICRC's last days in Spain**

D'Amman was with the Nationalist Red Cross convoy that entered Madrid from the North, following its occupation by Nationalist troops, to take control of the Republican Red Cross organisation. He was able to meet Arbenz, the ICRC Delegate in Madrid, "and his employees, miraculously free all from the crossfire of the communist week".<sup>12</sup> The Count of Vallellano, Nationalist Red Cross President, asked the ICRC to keep the Madrid and Barcelona delegations open and to maintain the information service. There were now supplies in Madrid's shops, arrived from Nationalist warehouses, but the population had no money. Most of the workers and employees had been dismissed and

---

<sup>11</sup> An exception was made for the Russians, since the USSR had no diplomatic relations with Franco's Spain. Ibid; D'Amman, 'Report (16 March – 15 April 1939)' ; both in D'Amman (1939).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. The reference is to the internal conflict in Madrid between pro and anti-Casadistas.

had to be “cleared” by the new authorities before they could work. Barcelona, on the contrary, with less supplies, was in great misery.

Again, the ICRC at Geneva analysed the situation, considering whether the ICRC should maintain its presence in Spain, with the Civil War over and the two zones merged into the “New Spain”.

D’Amman reported that:

1. The prisoners of war were subject to the mercy of the victors. Some would be tried and sentenced, others interned in camps for an indefinite period. The ICRC had no competence in this matter.
2. The foreign prisoners, in his opinion, would be deported sooner or later. The only ones who could benefit from the presence of an ICRC delegate were those without a passport or a nationality.
3. The political prisoners were of no concern to the ICRC.
4. With respect to the questions of children abroad, information service, hospital visits and the distribution of food and clothing, d’Amman felt that things were normalising.
5. He proposed closing the delegations, starting with San Sebastian and St Jean de Luz, but maintaining Madrid, where the Count of Vallellano was interested the ICRC’s presence to back up the new Red Cross.<sup>13</sup>

D’Amman’s view was considered in Geneva, but it was decided not to abandon the matter of the prisoners. The Scandinavian and Swiss Red Crosses pressed to improve the lot of their nationals imprisoned in Spain. D’Amman visited prisons and received complaints that the Spanish prisoners were being liberated at the rate of 2,000 or 3,000 a day, but foreigners were still being held in Valdenoceda, near Burgos and in a new camp at Aranda de Duero.

On 20 May 1939, the ICRC delegation at St Jean de Luz was closed and that at San Sebastian was reduced.

---

<sup>13</sup> D’Amman, ‘Report, 22/5/1937-12/8/1939’; D’Amman ‘Report, 16 April 1939’ ; both in D’Amman (1939).

## 7.2 The departure of SCI

By February 1939 the official position of SCI was clear: “Service Civil International is keen to continue its relief work to the Spanish Civil population as long as the misery, hunger and the distress of the people continues or, at least, as long as are allowed to provide such relief”.<sup>14</sup>

In Catalonia, two drivers and one sister, using the two buses “Dunant” and “Dufour”, worked ceaselessly on the evacuation to France of children from the colonies and collaborated with the ICRC in distributing supplies.

In the central Republican territory around Madrid, SCI continued distributing the food supplied by the IC and worked in collaboration with Swiss Aid. Also in Madrid, the SCI’s canteen for expectant mothers, their canteen for the aged, and the dining room for weak and sick children which they opened in mid January, continued at full activity. Eleanor Imbelli, the SCI sister that had arrived in Spain in 1937, employed by the SCIU, summarised in July 1939 some of the SCI actions in Spain during the first half of that year:

“In the whole central region around Madrid, and the provinces of Cuenca, Albacete and Valencia, a region bigger than all Switzerland, in six months SCI organised 137 canteens, fed about 60,000 children a day, with an average of 400-500 children per canteen, some of them with nearly 1,000 and others much less, with infant care services by qualified MDs.”<sup>15</sup>

Sister Imbelli refers also to the American wheat supplied by the American Government:

“with the tons of flour received from America, we organised bread distribution to the schools in Valencia, Cuenca, Albacete, Almansa and Hellin, without accounting for the distribution we did to other organisations. With our schools distribution about 50,000 children received a small piece of bread of 100 grams a day”.<sup>16</sup>

Everything changed in February 1939, when the Burgos Agreement between the IC and Franco’s government affected the regions of Spain where the Nationalist *Auxilio Social* had never been present.

---

<sup>14</sup> *Bulletin du SCI* 14, 25 February 1939, p. 70, BUG.

<sup>15</sup> *Bulletin du SCI* 15, 30 June 1939, p. 75, BUG.

<sup>16</sup> *Bulletin du SCI* 15, 30 June 1939, p. 75.

The SCI, having worked throughout the war in Republican territory, and given their workers' pro-Republican sympathies, was unable to accept working through *Auxilio Social*, even if this was justified in the interests of increasing the effectiveness of the relief work. This was what AFSC and SCIU had been doing, with good results, from the start of the war, confirmed subsequently by the IC's experience.

The SCI's reaction is summarised in the words attributed to Rodolfo Olgiati: "If the Civil Service cannot work in Spain, we can still work for the Spaniards,"<sup>17</sup> They were not prohibited from working; rather the agency and their staff were reluctant to work with the Nationalists.

The SCI established the centre for their refugee relief activities in the South of France at Chateau du Lac in Sigean (Aude department). This became the distribution centre from which trucks delivered food and clothing to nearby Departments, where the abandoned children were cared for. A provisional maternity hospital was established at Brouilla (Pyrénées-Orientales) where sister Betty worked, organised and managed by SCI, serving refugee women. At Martyrs, also in Aude, a farming colony for boys was established<sup>18</sup> and by the summer of 1939, the IC, the Quakers and the French branch of SCI jointly rented the large Chateau-sur-Seine that lodged and cared for 50 Spanish child refugees.<sup>19</sup>

The Swiss Neutral Committee (Swiss Aid) closed their Secretariat at Zurich, and the SCI at Berne took over its activities by June 1939. In January 1940 the Committee prepared to close down, leaving a reduced Committee to deal with ongoing relief action until the funds had been exhausted.

The SCI, on 14 January 1940, became founder member of the "Cartel Suisse de Secours aux enfants victimes de la Guerre" ("Swiss cartel for the assistance of child war victims"), a non-denominational and politically neutral body that, accepting Switzerland's charitable duty, sought to implement all kinds of relief work for child refugees or war victims.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Monastier (1955), p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> *Bulletin du SCI* 15, 30 June 1939, p. 76, BUG.

<sup>19</sup> Monastier 1955, p. 53.

<sup>20</sup> *Bulletin du SCI* 17, 1 February 1940, p. 88, BUG.

The SCI was forced to close the maternity hospital and the boys' colony at Brouilla, and the boys' colony at Martys, because all the male volunteers, French nationals, were called up for World War II. The Sigean centre, with an average of 150 Spanish child refugees, could be maintained.

At that moment, the arrival of French evacuees from the war zone worsened the conditions of the Spanish refugees in France. The SCI announced that, as the misery was general in France, no collections were possible there, and the project would be maintained until the exhaustion of the remaining funds.<sup>21</sup>

The effects of the Spanish Civil War and relief in World War II overlapped, and SCI would also be present in the latter conflict, but that is another story.

### **7.3 The Save the Children International Union: coping with the new Spain**

At the Executive Committee meeting of 9 December 1938, Mlle de Morsier, the SCIU Under Secretary, noted that the agency's own activities in Spain were very limited, due to the lack of funds, and most work was in collaboration with the International Commission. Regarding this collaboration, she suggested it might be better to stop all intervention than to maintain such a low level of activity. The Committee's opinion was to continue their presence, at least during the winter, and to do what they could. This is significant in connection with what was presented to the Committee:

“On general lines, collaboration with the Commission, very close at the start, has become very difficult. Mr Lilliehöök, the Commissar tries as far as possible to separate the Commission from the Union (SCIU). Since November he has organised the Secretariat on different premises and would like to withdraw the SCIU from the work in governmental Spain. The difficulties reached such a high degree that Miss Pye, the Commission's promoter, came to Geneva a fortnight ago. She understood perfectly that the SCIU, by virtue of its neutrality principle and due to the need in governmental territory, wants to collaborate on both sides.”<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> *Bulletin du SCI* 16, 8 October 1939, p. 83, BUG.

<sup>22</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, 9 December 1938, AEG-SCIU.

They make two accusations against the IC and Lilliehöök. Firstly, the SCIU questions the IC's proposal to create its own secretariat; until then the SCIU had handled the administration. However, on 16 September 1938, Captain Gracey had proposed in an SCIU Executive meeting to ask the Commission to contribute for the work done for it by the SCIU Secretariat.<sup>23</sup> Given that the IC was rapidly increasing its size and activity, it was logical for it to have its own administrative staff and organisation, instead of paying SCIU.

The second accusation, that the IC wanted to push the SCIU out of Republican Spain, makes no sense; on the contrary, the Commission was increasing its efforts in that territory. Most of the SCIU's work in Spain, in both zones, was only possible with IC resources. The IC was clearly committed to neutrality, working in both zones; the differing resources they allocated to the two zones at any given moment reflected the changing needs in those zones.

Nonetheless an SCIU member, Thelin, argued that: "the whole Spanish question shows that the SCIU must henceforth establish better, in advance, the conditions of collaboration with any other organisation if we want to avoid the difficulties experienced, first with the Friends and then with the Commission".<sup>24</sup> If we consider Thelin's arguments, the issue becomes clear: the disagreement concerns the Quakers. The IC was a Quaker project, a product of Edith Pye's tenacity and the British Foreign Office's receptivity, and the Friends were the predominant organisation in the IC (in early 1939, six of the Commission's twenty members were Quakers). As we have seen, the SCIU could not undertake any substantial relief action except on behalf of the Commission. We can surmise that the weakening of its connection with the IC, on ceasing to provide secretarial services, had left the SCIU feeling isolated concerning relief work.

But, most important, in the minutes of the same Executive Committee of 9 December 1938 the following point on the agenda was "Action in Czechoslovakia". New relief scenarios were arising and diverting from the Spanish struggle, whose end already seemed close with Franco's victory.

---

<sup>23</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, 16 September 1938, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>24</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, 9 December 1938, AEG-SCIU

By mid June 1939, as the funds for Spain were practically exhausted, the Administrative Commission proposed informing Anne-Marie Byloff of the termination of her engagement as of 31 July 1939, but Mme Small and Mlle Ferriere proposed a delay, since Byloff could act in Spain in a way that would be difficult for any future new personnel, should the SCIU subsequently have to increase its role in the war.

The World War started in September 1939, and the Commission considered the extension of its relief to French and British evacuee children in France. Thelin argued that the care of Spanish children needed to be guaranteed first.<sup>25</sup>

In France it was possible to act for more than 2,800 refugees at the Arandon camp, with funds from the Save the Children Fund in Britain. Mlle Imbelli, the SCI sister working for the SCIU, was put in charge of reorganising the camp, benefiting from the goodwill of the new Departmental Prefect.<sup>26</sup>

With the action in Spain terminated, the activities for the Spanish refugees in France were also diluted with the involvement of this country in the war effort.

#### **7.4 The International Commission and the Quakers: closing down activities in Spain**

At the end of April 1939, Clarence E. Picket reported in the American Quakers' Committee on Spain that it was expected that "Quaker relief work will be closing soon, because the Spanish government is taking over all relief work". The Committee agreed on the importance of "closing the work in Spain gradually and with the good will of Spanish officials", so as to keep channels open for possible future work in Spain.<sup>27</sup> The Committee on Spain thus took the same attitude as Kershner, who maintained good relations with the new Spanish government, helping the AFSC's work in France during World War II.

Howard E Kershner and John F Reich travelled to Spain between 9 and 30 June 1939, to study the situation across the territory and meet the relevant authorities. Their resulting report included the following points:<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Executive Committee, minutes, 28 September 1939, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>26</sup> Directive Commission n° 75, minutes, 31 October 1939, AEG-SCIU.

<sup>27</sup> CoS, minutes, 28 April 1939, AFSCA.

<sup>28</sup> H E Kershner and J Rich, 'Confidential Report', July 1939, AFSCA:



1. The food situation would improve with the good harvest in Spain. Nevertheless, the transportation and distribution problems meant that the existence of supplies did not mean that all places would be covered.

2. “*Auxilio Social*” was doing all it could: “this institution seems to be well conducted and to be making a great effort to feed the needy people... It is feeding about 800,000 people per day, mostly children, but the need is far beyond their capacity. They asked for the IC to remain *in situ* far beyond August to carry on their program.”

3. “We are very pleased to report that our staff has been able to influence the movement and distribution of food... they have always been able to carry a friendly message from the Governments, organisations and individuals... that have made our work in Spain possible.”

4. Future activities: “Although we do not see the possibility, on account of the lack of resources, of being able to send food to Spain beyond 1 September 1939,” a very important service of re-uniting families could be established. Such an office was created in Madrid (with branches in Bilbao, Valencia and Barcelona) in order to facilitate the repatriation from France of the children sent there, upon the request of their parents. The IC office in Paris worked on locating the children and organising their return to Spain. About FF 1,000,000 was budgeted for this operation.

5. Activities outside Spain: To continue in France and North Africa, attending the Spanish refugees once they were there.

The Committee on Spain considered the report on 1 August 1939.<sup>29</sup> They also received a telegram from Kershner, explaining that the Spanish Government had obtained about 200,000 tons of wheat from Argentina, payable in pesetas; enough to cover the needs until the coming harvest. Kershner’s opinion, accepted by the Committee, was that the emergency within Spain had passed, and efforts should focus on the refugees in France and North Africa. Especially, they should look for places to resettle those who did not want to return to Spain or those whose politics made a return impossible or very

---

<sup>29</sup> CoS, minutes, 1 August 1939; Kershner and Reich ‘Confidential Report’; both at AFSCA.

hazardous.<sup>30</sup> The Quakers contacted the Paris Committee formed by the former Spanish Republican Ambassador Azcárate with the purpose of facilitating migration to Mexico.

By September 1939 the AFSC was working on a resettlement project for German refugees in Mexico, and prepared to explore a possible colony in France for Spanish child refugees. To emphasise the widening in its scope, while not changing its name, the Committee on Spain became a refugee section to act as an “Executive Committee on Spanish Refugee Problems” within the structure of the AFSCA.<sup>31</sup>

In January 1940, the AFSC was helping to locate and settle Spanish refugees in Santo Domingo and Mexico. Daniel and Elizabeth Jensen, a couple **who** already worked in Mexico, were appointed for a six-month period, to be extended to one year, to work on the resettlement of Spanish refugees and for a Conference concerning this problem in Mexico City on 14-17 February.<sup>32</sup>

Organised by groups from Latin America and the USA 1940, this “Continental Conference for Spanish Refugee Aid” was affected by the factional conflict within the former Loyalist Government (for and against Negrín). Reich had contacted both factions and was sent to Mexico to meet them two days before the Conference.<sup>33</sup>

Back in Philadelphia in March 1940, Reich brought good news about refugees in Mexico. Of around 8.000 refugees, only 517 were in need of relief. Most of the others were doing well, having established a number of industries, including a large foundry employing 250 men, a furniture factory and other businesses, such as bakeries, grocery shops... Kershner and the IC played an important role in this; in cooperation with SERE (the Republican body supporting the refugees) they had provided refugees with clothing, equipment and loans. In contrast, the refugees in Santo Domingo suffered “appalling conditions”.

---

<sup>30</sup> The American Quakers’ Committee on Spain had already raised this matter with the Board of Directors in early April 1939. “The Committee on Spain requests the Board of Directors to approve its exploring the possibilities of transporting Spanish refugees from France for permanent establishment in other countries: specially, in Central and South America, with the understanding that the funds for such a project would be raised by other organisations and administered by the Committee on Spain”. CoS, minutes, 5 April 1939, AFSCA.

<sup>31</sup> CoS, minutes, 28 September 1939, AFSCA.

<sup>32</sup> CoS, minutes, 11 January 1940, AFSCA.

<sup>33</sup> CoS, minutes, 9 February 1940, AFSCA.

Rich reported that the war in France was interfering very seriously in the handling of the Spanish refugee problem in that country, with a much stricter attitude by the French Government.<sup>34</sup>

## **7.5 The International Committee of the Red Cross: the other side of the border**

At the end of January 1939, there were no more than 45,000 Spanish refugees in France (about 25% of them children).<sup>35</sup> The real exodus happened in February and early March of 1939. According to the ICRC's calculations, more than 230,000 refugees ended up scattered across nearly 800 locations in 75 French districts.<sup>36</sup>

At the request of Marcel Junod and Ronald Marti, Georges Patry, vice-president of the ICRC, led a visit to Spanish refugee camps on French soil. After contacting the French authorities and the French and Nationalist Red Crosses, the ICRC mission focused on what they considered to be the greatest priority, the conditions of the military prisoners from both sides. Their camps were really concentration camps, the best known being Argelés, Saint-Cyprien, Le Boulou and Port Vendres. Patry summarised the ICRC mission's impression: "You know there are 120,000 refugees contained by iron fences, on a beach where the cold mistral blows: how can this be? Of course, after two years, the militia men are used to a hard life... and so, some are well and some are exhausted. Why didn't they prepare for the arrival of such a large number of refugees"?"<sup>37</sup>

From then on, the ICRC pressed the French Red Cross, in their Departmental sections, to increase their efforts for the refugees. At Le Boulou, Port Vendres and Marseilles, hospital ships, with military and Red Cross crews, doctors and nurses, cared for around 1,200 wounded refugees, mainly republican militiamen.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> CoS, minutes, 6 March 1940, AFSCA.

<sup>35</sup> Report of George Bonnet, French Foreign Affairs Minister, to the French Parliament, 26 January 1939, AMAEF.

<sup>36</sup> XVIIe Conference International de la Croix-Rouge, 'Rapport complémentaire sur l'activité du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge relative a la Guerre Civil en Espagne (du 1 Juin ou 31 Aout 1939) et a ses suites', N° 6 Geneve, Mai 1949. The French "Rapport Valière" gave a figure of about 215,000 civilian refugees. Vichy Europe – Espagne (275), AMAEF.

<sup>37</sup> *Revue Internationale de la Croix Rouge* 242, February 1939, pp. 87-97, ICRC.

<sup>38</sup> Durand, A. (1984), p. 368.

With Junod kept in bed by flu, the ICRC member Mme Frick-Cranen, assisted by Mme Bucher, was in charge of assessing the number of refugees in the camps. In early March they counted 250,000 militiamen and 230,000 civilians.

Mme Frick Cranen proposed that relief tasks be directed by the ICRC and carried out by different agencies. The French Red Cross, in addition to using their nurses, should activate their local Committees in conjunction with two existing French *ad hoc* agencies: the “Spanish Children’s Aid Committee” and the Catholic “Spanish Refugee Aid Committee” both of which were well informed concerning the refugees. The Red Cross Societies League should continue to cooperate in relief work.

The work was to be concentrated in the camps existing at the end of March, as follows:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Camp</b>
Pyrénées Orientales	Argelès-sur-Mer, Saint Cyprien and Le Barcarès
Hérault	Agde
Tarne-et-Garonne	Septfonas
Ariège	Le Vernet, Mazère
Basses-Pyrénées	Gurs

“When war broke out, 145,000 (refugees) remained. Many joined the French army or were enrolled compulsorily in labour detachments”.<sup>39</sup>

By the end of 1939, the humanitarian agencies covered by my study were no longer present in Spain, and by 1940 the relief action in France had been much affected by that country’s fall to Germany. The Quakers (Americans until 1942 and thereafter with personnel from neutral countries, such as Ireland) were involved in relief work in France for quite a bit longer – though obviously in increasingly difficult circumstances. The AFSC archive in Philadelphia has reports on their work in 1942-3 and in 1944-5.

In the following chapter we shall proceed to extract conclusions from the findings in the body of this thesis.

---

<sup>39</sup> Durand, A. (1984), p. 369.

## Chapter 8: Conclusions

---

The preceding chapters present a historical account of the humanitarian work of the selected agencies during the Spanish Civil War. Here we will consider the main conclusions which can be extracted from this research, concerning the issues outlined at the beginning of the thesis, and already broached within the text.

### 8.1 Independence and non-partisanship

The selected agencies were clearly independent of governments: though the International Commission (IC) was supported by many Governments, the agencies had a significant majority on its governing body.<sup>1</sup> However, the subject of non-partisanship is more complex. The Spanish conflict was clearly ideological, as were many relief and solidarity operations, notably the pro Republican “Aid to Spain” movement in Britain. This solidarity helped motivate the intervention in Spain of both the British Quakers and Save the Children, but also raises questions about their impartiality, especially in the case of the Quakers. Similar questions can be raised about SCI, whose workers had clear pro Republican sympathies. Thus by autumn 1936, both the British Quakers and SCI were acting in Spain, but only in Republican territory, having taken no real steps to establish themselves in the Nationalist zone. While being non-partisan in their founding principles — and in the case of SCI, in their documented declarations at the time (see section 2.2) — they went to Spain moved by the suffering of the population on the Republican side and feelings of hostility towards the military uprising.

As we have seen, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) collaborated with the authorities of both sides and carried out relief work in both zones. However, the actions of some of their Delegates, such as George Graz’s treatment of the neutral zone in the North (see section 4.1.5), could raise doubts concerning ICRC’s neutrality. This was more than outweighed, however, by the ICRC’s proven record in working with both sides in the conflict. An anecdote illustrates this. When Marcel Junod left Spain at the end of the war, Franco’s police chief, Colonel Ungría, showed him the file the Republican police had kept on him. Under the name of the ICRC delegate, the Republicans had written ¡Ojo! (doubly underlined), meaning “Keep an eye on him!”

---

<sup>1</sup> See the membership of the IC’s Board of Directors, Annex to Thesis, Document A.

Meanwhile, the Nationalists “kept an eye” on Junod as a “renegade and miserable idiot”.<sup>2</sup> The fact that both sides were wary of him shows he had maintained his neutrality.<sup>3</sup>

In the strictest sense, the only completely non partisan agencies acting in the Spanish conflict were the American Quakers, the ICRC, Save the Children International Union (Geneva) (SCIU) and the International Commission (IC); these were the only agencies which worked on both sides of the political division. However, while the British Friends and the Service Civil International were influenced by their workers’ pro-Republican feelings, my research has not shown that in practice they refused aid to the Nationalists on political grounds. Rather both the British Quakers and SCI accepted the “impression” given them by Alfred Jacob, who convinced them that Franco rejected foreign aid. And even Jacob’s Republican sympathies did not prevent him from acting in favour of the right wing supporters trapped in Barcelona, as we have seen in Section 3.1.4. Furthermore, while the British Quakers never themselves worked in Nationalist territory, they cooperated with AFSC in the management of relief activities covering both sides.

We can thus consider that the British Quakers and SCI were *de facto* independent and non partisan, whatever their workers’ sympathies.

## **8.2 The failure of the League of Nations and the role of the International Commission (IC)**

One important overall point in the Spanish Civil War, and specifically concerning humanitarian relief work during that conflict, is the complete failure of the League of Nations to play any significant role at all. This failure had to be made up for by the ICRC and above all the International Commission (IC).

It is a typical error to believe that the ICRC had powers that, in fact, they were never given. The ICRC in theory should have limited itself to the military aspects arising from the Geneva Conventions, but was forced to take on much wider responsibilities. Delegates faced these as well as they could, in accordance with the instructions from the

---

<sup>2</sup> Junod 1963, p100.

<sup>3</sup> In Madrid, it was widely believed that Junod was a freemason. This contributed to the suspicions of him held by the Nationalist police. Ibid, p70.

Committee on Spain, with which they maintained contact by daily telephone calls and with frequent trips to Geneva.

The organisation that, in theory, should have addressed the humanitarian situation created by the war, the League of Nations, did nothing to resolve the conflict nor to offer relief.

It must be remembered, for instance, that when Edith Pye was struggling in 1937 to create an instrument to deal with the increasing needs of the population in Spain, the League of Nations' answer was to create the post of "International Commissioner", with neither powers nor finances and who, once named, did nothing (See Section 6.1). With the support of the British Foreign Office, Pye created what became the IC. As we have seen, it was this body that coordinated the collection of donations from abroad, and which facilitated and coordinated the work of the agencies on the ground.

The International Commission (IC) appeared at the time when it was most needed, in 1938, during the advance of Franco's armies. On the one hand, this caused a flood of refugees into the shrinking Republican zone. On the other, the Nationalists governed an increasing population, and needed more supplies to feed and dress them and keep them warm. Meanwhile, the deteriorating international situation, and simply the passing of time, drew international public attention away from the Spanish conflict, and reduced the flow of donations to the independent relief agencies in Spain.

The IC's arrival meant the SCIU could renew their relief work in Spain; it substantially complemented the British and American Quakers' efforts —already drained by the appeals for the Sino-Japanese war— and it made possible the SCI volunteers' work and the ICRC's food relief. Howard E. Kershner's appointment in December 1938, and the American wheat surplus which arrived through him and the IC, made it possible to respond to the humanitarian disaster of the last months of the war and the situation created by the Spanish refugees in France.

Kershner and the American Quakers ensured an orderly disengagement from Spain, working with *Auxilio Social* and transferring activities to them as required, in the interests of relief work continuing and leaving aside ideological positions. Kershner later insisted on the importance of the good relations established with the new regime in Spain: "If... we had not succeeded in June 1939, in restoring the good standing of the

Quakers in the estimation of the Spanish authorities, the important relief work done in France from June 1940 until the end of World War 2 would have been impossible, as Quaker workers and Quaker supplies would not have been allowed to pass through Spain on their way to France. During these years we were wholly dependent upon the good will of the Spanish authorities in the prosecution of our operations in France and Switzerland.”<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the conflict, the League launched an initiative which was supposed to create a powerful humanitarian body which would help the many thousands of Spanish refugees, but it came to nothing (See Section 6.5.1).

Ten years and a World War had to pass before a new organisation, the United Nations, gave birth in 1949 to the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Work Agency). During the Spanish Civil War, there was a grave lack of such a recognised and authoritative international body.

### **8.3 Humanitarian aid and religious belief**

The agencies considered in this thesis were established by committed Christians: think of George Fox and the Quakers; Henry Dunant and the Red Cross; Pierre Ceresole and the Jebb sisters<sup>5</sup>, among others. It was clear that the agencies worked in the spirit of the biblical story of the Good Samaritan.<sup>6</sup> Where others passed by, ignoring the wounded man on the road, this figure offered help, and did so moved not by any shared origin, culture or religion — in theory, Samaritans and Jews were hostile — but by a religious “love for the other”. This poses the question of whether religious or spiritual belief is a necessary element of this type of independent, non partisan charitable work. However, any attempt at an answer would take us beyond the field of this thesis and into theology, so we must leave this question on the table.

There is another aspect of the issue that does concern us directly, which is how some of the agencies themselves understood the relationship between their relief work and the promotion of their religious ideas.

---

<sup>4</sup> Kershner 1950, p115.

<sup>5</sup> Eglantyne and Dorothy.

<sup>6</sup> The Bible, Gospel of Luke, chapter 10, verses 25-37.



In the Quaker vision, their help for others in itself helped to spread their “Peace Testimony”, without it being necessary explicitly to promote Quaker religious ideas. However, as we have shown in this thesis, the British Quakers’ work in the Spanish war showed clear favouritism towards the Republic, and many of their workers appeared motivated by political, not religious, ideas. This puts into question Farah Mendlesohn’s argument that the Quakers’ Spanish workers, “whatever their private opinion, were publicly involved in relief that was provided as part of a witness to peace. As such, they and the work they performed within that context were automatically expressions of that witness.”<sup>7</sup> She seems to argue that these workers’ relief activities could somehow automatically promote religious beliefs which they themselves did not share.

However, she adopts the opposite view when considering the American Quakers (AFSC). They also wished to transmit their Peace Testimony and their hope for reconciliation through their relief work. Mendlesohn argues that since some of the AFSC’s workers were Mennonites, Methodists or from the Church of the Brethren, their activities were not “Quaker work”, but she does not substantiate her argument. From the moment in 1936 when the proposed religious Quaker Centre in Madrid was abandoned for a child-feeding operation in Barcelona, any specific religious activity took a second place. Like the British Quakers, the AFSC wanted to give Peace testimony through their non partisan relief work, but Mendlesohn seems to criticise this as merely humanitarian activity.<sup>8</sup> She draws a contrast between “the secular professionals whom the AFSC workers often seemed anxious to emulate, and the religious missionaries within whose paradigm the FSC Unit appeared to operate”. She continues: “In contrast to professional social workers of the period, the Friends emphasised that their role was to facilitate and empower, to work with people not for them – an approach with spiritual benefits for both Spanish and foreign personnel.” In a situation in which the daily problem was supplying food to the canteens, material to the hospitals or itinerant nurses for the mothers of the “Gota de Leche”, prioritising “spiritual benefits” in this way seems questionable. Milk was milk, and food was food in both territories, independently of the degree of spirituality of those caring for the children, and whether these belonged to *Auxilio Social* or were workers or volunteers of the Republican *Asistencia Social*.

---

<sup>7</sup> Mendlesohn 2002, p171.

<sup>8</sup> “The Burgos unit was involved very much in distributing humanitarian war relief: a short term expression of sympathy to the ‘innocent’ victims of war”. Mendlesohn 2002, p181.

In any case, whatever the differences between them, both the American and the British Quakers were moved by traditional Quaker pacifism and beliefs to help Spanish children and acted in accordance with these principles, adapting themselves to the situation in either territories. All AFSC workers in Spain were Christians, whatever their denomination, and effectively Quaker workers, because they went to Spain under the Quaker banner. And whatever the reservations about the political sympathies among the British Quakers, theirs was also a clearly Quaker operation. I am prepared to accept, with a few reservations, Farah Mendlesohn's conclusion:

“From 1936 to 1942 British and American Quaker relief workers were active in feeding and clothing over 150,000 children of Republican and Nationalist Spain. From their initial beginning as a Quaker mission centre in Barcelona<sup>9</sup> the Friends developed their work along the East Coast of Republican Spain and in the villages around Burgos<sup>10</sup>. In order to remain active they had to recognise the often secularised or hostile context in which they worked and during this period came to sublimate their religious witness within an apparently wholly practical project. Yet within this context the Friends actively witnessed to the testimonies to peace and social justice which lie at the heart of Quaker belief: for the Friends in Spain, feeding the children was a sacred, not a secular activity”.<sup>11</sup>

#### **8.4 Rodolfo Olgiati and the Swiss connection**

The Spanish relief work of Service Civil International (SCI) had a name: Rodolfo Olgiati, its General Secretary. This young Swiss-Italian went to Madrid in late 1936; shocked by the situation, he decided to work for the care of the needy in the besieged Republican capital and their evacuation. The evacuation of children from Madrid to València, in collaboration with “Swiss Aid” (AS) and the ICRC, was the SCI's first ever action during an armed conflict.

Olgiati worked as director of Swiss Aid's work in Spain; he cooperated with the ICRC in the Madrid evacuations and, after being in charge of the activities of the SCIU in the

---

<sup>9</sup> It would be better to speak of the proposal for a Quaker mission centre in Madrid, because when Barcelona was selected, the war had already started and the action had become a child feeding operation.

<sup>10</sup> Here she again attempts to minimise the Quaker presence in Nationalist territory, which as we have seen was not limited to “the villages around Burgos”, but by the end of the conflict extended to the whole of Spain.

<sup>11</sup> Mendlesohn 2002, p184.

Valencia-Murcia-Madrid triangle he became the International Commission's representative for all the work in Madrid and Valencia. Meanwhile he continued to lead SCI in its first experience in a country in war, mobilising volunteers for the work.

Olgiati himself and most SCI workers were pro-Republican, and only worked in Republican territory, but he personally was able to continue and adapt to the "change of flags", transferring the SCI's Spanish refugee work to France, while keeping the more than 130 IC canteens operating in Madrid, until their full transfer to *Auxilio Social* in late 1939.

Olgiati was, in my opinion, the most remarkable personality in independent relief during the Spanish conflict and its aftermath in France.

How SCI's work was affected by Pierre Ceresole's absence from Spain from the early days of the conflict is an unresolved question. It is very possible that the more spiritual personality of the SCI's founder would have been less able than Olgiati to adopt the practical solutions presented by the latter.

## **8.5 Lessons of Spain for subsequent humanitarian relief work**

Marcel Junod, ICRC delegate to Spain in the Civil War, returned to the agency on the start of the Second World War (WW2). He considered that: "What happened in the Spanish War should have been lesson enough. The blind destruction, the summary executions, the firing squads, the wholesale shooting, the persecution of classes, the persecution of religion, the mass arrests of political prisoners, were all a warning of what horrors were to come. I remembered the bodies of the little children in Barcelona. I remember Bilbao with its destroyed houses and the howling mobs who had tried to sink the prison boats in the harbour and drown the hostages..."<sup>12</sup>

However, while the humanitarian disaster of the Spanish Civil War did not deter future conflicts, it did help the relief actors in WW2 to better prepare themselves to provide aid.

For the SCIU, their three years carrying out very varied relief work in Spain gave them invaluable experience in the follow up and care of displaced children that the SCIU was

---

<sup>12</sup> Junod 1963, p104.

going to put to the test in future conflicts. But, according to Mr Thulin, a member of its Executive Committee: “The Spanish affair shows that in the future we [the SCIU] should specify, well in advance, the conditions for our collaboration with other organisations if we are to avoid the difficulties experienced, first with the Friends, then with the Commission”.<sup>13</sup>

The Quakers also learnt a lot. The American and British Friends had between them a total of 62 relief workers in the Spanish conflict — either within Spain or based in France — 37 representing the AFSC and 26 the FSC. Of course, these numbers are small compared with the 1,193 Quakers serving abroad during the First World War or 1,232 in WW2.<sup>14</sup> The important point was that the Spanish conflict brought new challenges: mass air bombardments of cities; refugees from all sides and political hues; conflicting ideologies; and foreign intervention. Quaker workers learnt to rapidly assess relief needs in a given city or region. They also gained experience in dealing with authorities of all kinds, which would be especially useful in France in WW2, where the Quakers’ Spanish refugee work with the International Commission morphed into aid for the child refugees of all origins then flooding continental Europe. In almost every aspect of relief work, Quaker workers benefited from their experience in the Spanish Civil War.

The experiences in Spain would mark the ICRC’s subsequent work. For example, the experience of the News Service would underlie the work of the “Central Agency of War Prisoners” during WW2.

In WW2, the ICRC never had more than 150 delegates in the field at any time, and only 12 in the European territories occupied by Germany. As in Spain, in the words of Junod: “we were a handful of Swiss to whom millions of men asked for the alleviation to their misfortune, a letter from a loved friend, news from their family, a touch of humanity from their jailers, a presence at the bottom of a dungeon giving them the smell of a lost free world, the food to relief their hunger saving them from a dreadful death”.<sup>15</sup> And as in Spain, the results were often frustrating. Three longstanding Swiss residents in Tokyo agreed to represent the ICRC during WW2: “only three times in three years were they

---

<sup>13</sup> SCIU Executive Committee minutes, session 237, 9 December 1938: “Action en Espagne”, AEG:AP.

<sup>14</sup> Ormerod Greenwood (1975), p. 194. In WW1, there were 640 in the Friends’ Ambulance and the Anglo-Italian Ambulance Units and 473 in the War Victims Committee.

<sup>15</sup> Junod 1963, p238.

authorised to pay a short visit to the Korea camps, twice to Formosa [Taiwan] and only after a year of absolute silence could they go to Manchuria and visit just one camp in Moukdem. No visits to Burma, Malaysia, Borneo... or the island of Corregidor in the Philippines.”<sup>16</sup>

On 24 January 1944, still during WW2, the ICRC President Max Huber gave a lecture at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich entitled: “The tasks of the International Committee of the Red Cross during the War”. He described the need to expand ICRC’s very reduced peace time structures<sup>17</sup> so as to have the financial and human resources necessary to respond to a conflict, in which the ICRC was called to “improvise constantly”<sup>18</sup> in order to face unforeseen tasks. After mentioning the predictable activities — war prisoners, the news service and the distribution of aid — he mentioned a new task, “that can seem very distant from the original objective of the Red Cross”:<sup>19</sup> aiding the civilian population. In fact, this was contemplated by Henry Dunant after the First Geneva Convention, asking for the Red Cross to be able to aid the civil population affected by natural disasters.<sup>20</sup> Huber asked himself why the ICRC had assumed this new responsibility, of such undefined limits and very difficult in political and legal terms. His response: “because in most cases, the ICRC is the only one that can fulfil well this humanitarian task”.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, when analysing the ICRC’s action in the Spanish Civil War, taking into account the mistakes committed by its delegates and the other limitations in its work, we must recognise that the ICRC showed itself to be an agency dedicated to helping people in need. Going beyond the opinions of some of its delegates, who were sometimes perhaps too tied to a nonexistent rulebook, the ICRC attempted to provide humanitarian relief in a non-partisan way.

And this can be the closing consideration that includes all the agencies being studied.

---

<sup>16</sup> Junod 1963, p192.

<sup>17</sup> On the eve of Spanish Conflict, the ICRC head office in Geneva had very few employees and a budget of little more than 100,000 Swiss Francs.

<sup>18</sup> Huber 1954, p178.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p193.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p194.

The humanitarian disasters of the Spanish Civil War did not deter future conflicts, but did help the relief actors in the coming conflict, the Second World War, to be more prepared to face up to situations and to provide assistance.

In the present study, we have focused on humanitarian relief during the Spanish Civil War which was *not* specifically directed to “friends”, but was rather aimed at alleviating the suffering of *all* the parties in the conflict. This relief had the peculiarity of being provided by foreign agencies whose delegates and key workers were nationals of countries not involved in the conflict.

The “foreigner” status of those who provided relief accentuated the charitable, selfless nature of their work. The Spanish people welcomed these foreigners who voluntarily went to Spain to deliver humanitarian aid, acting as “good Samaritans”. Unlike those passersby who ignored the injured person in the road, the Samaritan helped, as a foreigner moved not by friendship or relationship of race or culture, but by “love for the other”.

# Sources

---

## Archives

American Friends Service Committee Archives (AFSCA) – Philadelphia, PA, USA

Archive Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (AMAEF) – Paris, France

Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (BNP) – Paris, France

Bibliothèque Publique Universitaire de Genève, Switzerland (GBP) – Geneva, Switzerland

Centre des Archives Diplomatiques (CHDF) – Nantes, France

Foral Library (FL) – Bilbao- Spain

General Archive of the Administration (AGA) – Alcalá, Spain

General Military Archive (GMA) – Avila, Spain

Historic Archive of the Basque Nationalism – Sabino Arana Foundation (AHNV) – Artea, Spain

Historic Military Service Archive (SHM) – Madrid, Spain

IRARGI Basque Government Archive (IRARGI) – Bergara, Spain

Marx Memorial Library (MML) – London, England

Modern Record Office (MRO) – Warwick University, Coventry, England

National Archives (Public Record Office) (PRO) – Kew, England

Navarra Administrative Archive (AAN) – Pamplona, Spain

Oeuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière Archives (OSEOA) – Zurich (Switzerland)

Save the Children Union Archives (AEG) (Archives de l'Etat de Genève) – Geneva, Switzerland

Service Civil International Archives (LCF Library) – La Chaux de Fonds (Switzerland)

Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry Archives (AMAE) – Madrid, Spain

The International Committee of the Red Cross Archives (ICRCA) – Geneva, Switzerland

The Religious Society of Friends Archives (Quakers) (FHL) – London, England

## **Press**

*Amistad* (San Sebastian)

*Annual Monitor* (London) 1920

*Daily News*: October to December 1870

*Diario Vasco* (San Sebastian, Spain)

*El Liberal* (Bilbao, Spain)

Euzkadi (Bilbao, Spain)

Euzkadi Rojo (Bilbao, Spain)

Euzko Langille (Bilbao, Spain)

L'Action Française (Paris)

L'Echo de Paris (Paris)

L'Express de Midi (Toulouse, France)

L'Humanité (Paris)

La Dépeche (Toulouse, France)

La Gazeta del Norte (Bilbao, Spain)

La Petit Gironde (Bordeaux, France)

La Populaire (Paris)

La Voz de España (San Sebastian, Spain)

The British Friend 1870 -1875

The Friend 1870-1875; 1905

The Times (London)

Unidad (San Sebastian, Spain)



## Books and journal articles

- Abplanalp, Philippe (1995) 'Les Conférences Internationaux de la Croix Rouge, facteur de développement du droit international humanitaire et de cohésion du Mouvement International de la Croix Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge' *CICR*, Sep.–Oct.
- Abramovitch, Raphael R. (1962) *The Soviet Revolution 1917–1939*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Abuarqub, Mamom & Phillips, Isabel, 2009 'A Brief History of Humanitarianism in the Muslim World', accessed 10 July 2011, <<http://www.islamic-relief.com/InDepth/2-20-brief-history-of-humanitarianism-in-the-muslim-world.aspx>>
- Ackelsberg, Martha A. (1991) *Free Women of Spain. Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*. Chicago: Indiana University Press.
- Aguirre, José Antonio (1976) *Entre la Libertad y la Revolución 1930–1935*. Bilbao: Geu.
- Aguirre, José Antonio (1976) *Veinte años de gestión del Gobierno Vasco (1936–1956)*. Madrid: Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda.
- Aguirre, José Antonio (1978) *El Informe del Presidente Aguirre al Gobierno de la República (sobre los hechos que determinaron el derrumbamiento del frente del Norte)*. Bilbao: Editorial La Gran Enciclopedia Vasca.
- Aguirre, José Antonio (1998) *Diario de Aguirre*. Navarre: Txalaparta.
- Aguirre, José Antonio (2004) *De Guernica a Nueva York pasando por Berlín*. Axular: St Jean de Luz.
- Alcalá, Cesar (2008) *Els nens de l'Exili (1936–1939)*. Barcelona: Columna.
- Alcaraz, R. (1987) *La Unió Socialista de Catalunya 1923–1936*. Barcelona: La Magrana.
- Aldgate, Anthony (1979) *British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War*. London: Scolar Press.
- Alexander, Bill (1982) *British Volunteers for Liberty: Spain 1936–39*. London: Laurence & Wishart.
- Alexander, Horace Gundry (1956) *The Growth of the Peace Testimony of the Society of Friends*. London: Friends Peace Committee.
- Alexander, Martin & Graham, Helen (Eds.) (1989) *The French and the Spanish Popular Front: comparative perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allen, William (1846) *Life of William Allen*. Vol. I and II. London: H. Longstreth (Reprint 2010. Memphis (Ten): General Books).
- Alonso Carballés, Jesús (1992) 'La prensa franquista de Guipúzcoa frente a las evacuaciones por mar de refugiados vascos (mayo-junio, 1937)' en VV.AA. (1992) *Primer Encuentro de Investigadores del Franquismo*, Barcelona: CONC & Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, pp. 171-174.
- Alpert, Michel (1975) *Los Niños Vascos en Inglaterra*. Madrid: Sábado Gráfico.

- Alpert, Michel (1977) *El Ejército Republicano en la Guerra Civil*. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico.
- Alpert, Michel (1984) 'Humanitarianism and Politics in the British Response to the Spanish Civil War 1936–1939'. *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 423–440.
- Alpert, Michel (1994) *A New International History of the Spanish Civil War*. London: Macmillan.
- Alquezar, Ramón, (2001) *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya: 70 anys d'història (1931–2000)*. Barcelona: Columna.
- Álvarez Junco, J. (1990) *El Emperador del Paralelo. Lerroux y la demagogia populista*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Álvarez, S. (1996) *Historia política y militar de las Brigadas Internacionales*. Madrid: Compañía Literaria.
- Ambou, J. (1978) *Los comunistas en la resistencia nacional republicana. La guerra en Asturias, el País Vasco y Santander*. Madrid: Editorial Hispanoamericana.
- Anet, Daniel (1969) *Pierre Ceresole: la passion de la paix*. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions de la Baconnière.
- Anet, Daniel (1974) *Pierre Ceresole. Passionate Peacemaker*. Madras, India: MacMillan.
- Anton, Julio de (2001) *Policía y Guardia Civil en la España Republicana*. Madrid: Ed. J. de Antón López.
- Arasa, Daniel (2008) *Entre la Cruz y la República – Vida y muerte del General Escobar*. Barcelona: Styria.
- Ardiaca, Pere (1986) *La Fundació del PSU de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Edicions Avant.
- Arias Velasco, J. (1977) *La Hacienda de la Generalitat 1931–1938*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Arostegui, Julio (1991) *Los Combatientes Carlistas en la Guerra Civil Española 1936–1939*. (2 Vols.) Madrid: Aportes XIX, S.A.
- Arrien, Gregorio (1983) *La Generación del Exilio – Génesis de las Escuelas Vascas y Colonias Escolares 1932–1940*. Bilbao: Ed. Autor-Editor.
- Arrien, Gregorio (1986) El Gobierno Vasco y la evacuación de niños (1936–1937). *Muga*, No. 56, July-August, 62–73.
- Arrien, Gregorio (1988) *Album Niños Vascos Evacuados en 1937*. Bilbao: Ed. Asociación de Niños Vascos Evacuados el 37.
- Arrien, Gregorio (1991) *Niños vascos evacuados a Gran Bretaña 1937-1940*. Bilbao: Ed. Asociación de Niños Vascos Evacuados el 37.
- Atholl, Duchesse d' (1938) *Projecteurs sur l'Espagne*. Paris: Les Editions Denoel.
- Aulet, Jaume (1988) *La Catalunya i la Guerra Civil (1936-1939)*. Cicle de Conferències fet al CIC de Terrassa, Curs 1986–1987. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat.
- Azcarate, Pablo de (1976) *Mi Embajada en Londres durante la Guerra Civil Española*. Barcelona: Ariel.

- Azurmendi, Mikel (2000) *Y se limpie aquella tierra. Limpieza étnica y de sangre en el País Vasco, Siglos XVI-XVIII*. Bogotá: Taurus.
- Bahamonde Magro, A. & Cervera Gil, J. (1999) *Así terminó la guerra de España*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
- Balcells, A. (1971) *Crisis económica y agitación social en Cataluña de 1930 a 1936*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Balcells, Albert (1974) *Trabajo industrial y organización obrera en la Cataluña contemporánea 1900–1936*. Barcelona: Ed. Laia.
- Balcells, Albert (1988) 'El socialismo en Cataluña hasta la guerra civil', in *El Socialismo en las nacionalidades y regiones* (pp. 7-39). *Anales de Historia*, Vol. 3. Madrid: Fundación Pablo Iglesias.
- Balcells, Albert (1995) *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*. London: Macmillan.
- Balfour, Sebastian (1989) *Dictatorship, Workers and the City: Labour in Greater Barcelona since 1939*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Balfour, Sebastian (1995) 'The loss of empire, Regenerationism and the forging of a myth of national identity', in H. Graham & J. Labanyi (Eds.) (1995), *Spanish Cultural Studies* (pp.25-31). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Balfour, Sebastian (1997) *The End of the Spanish Empire 1898–1923*. New York: Clarendon Press.
- Ballbé, Manuel (1983) *Orden Público y Militarismo en la España Constitucional (1812–1983)*. Madrid: Alianza Universidad.
- Barés, Pablo Barruso (2006) *La Guerra Civil en Guipúzcoa, julio-septiembre 1936*. San Sebastián: Niria.
- Barksdale, Brent E. (1961) *Pacifism and Democracy in Colonial Pennsylvania*. Stanford, CA: The Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University.
- Baudendistel, Raines (2006) *Between Bombs and Good intentions. The Red Cross and the Italo–Ethiopian war, 1935–1936*. New York: Bergham Books.
- Bayo, Alberto (1987) *Mi Desembarco en Mallorca (de la Guerra Civil Española)*. Palma de Mallorca: Miquel Font.
- Beevor, Antony (2001) *The Spanish Civil War*. London: Cassell & Co.
- Bell, Adrian (1996) *Only for three months: the Basque Children in Exile*. Norwich: Mousehold Press.
- Bellows, John (1871) *The track of the war around Metz and the fund for the non-combatant sufferers*. London: Täubner & Co.
- Bellows, John (1904). *Letters and Memoirs*. London: Täubner & Co.
- Ben-Ami, Shlomo (1978) *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ben-Ami, Shlomo (1983) *Fascism From Above. The Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in Spain 1923–1930*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Ben-Ami, Shlomo (1990) 'The Crisis of the Dynastic Elite in the Transition from Monarchy to Republic, 1929–1931', in Lannon, F. & Preston, P. (Eds.) (1990), *Elites and Power in Twentieth Century Spain* (pp.71-90). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Benet, Josep M. (1990) *Exili i Mort del President Companys*. Barcelona: Empuréis.
- Benet, Josep M. (1998) *La Mort del President Companys*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.
- Beramendi, Justo G. & Maiz, Ramón R. (Eds.) (1991) *Los nacionalismos en la España de la II República*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Bernecker, W. (1982) *Colectividades y revolución social. El anarquismo en la guerra civil española 1936–1939*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- Best, Bernard & Pike, Ethelwin (Eds.) (1948) *International Voluntary Service for Peace 1920–1946*. London: Allan & Unwin.
- Best, Geoffrey (1983) *Humanity in Warfare. The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts*. London: Methuen.
- Best, Geoffrey (1991) *Law and War since 1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Binns, Niall (2004) *La llamada de España. Escritores Extranjeros en la Guerra Civil*. Barcelona: Montesinos.
- Birn, Donald S. (1981) *The League of Nations Union 1918-1945*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Blinkhorn, Martin (1975) *Carlism and Crisis in Spain 1931–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blinkhorn, Martin (1986) *Spain in Conflict 1931–1939. Democracy and its Enemies*. London: Sage.
- Blinkhorn, Martin (1988) *Democracy and Civil War in Spain 1931–1939*. London: London: Routledge.
- Boissier, Pierre (1963) *Histoire du Comité International de la Croix Rouge. De Solférino à Tsoushima*. Paris: Plon.
- Boissier, Pierre (1991) *Henri Dunant*. Geneva: Henry-Dunant Institute.
- Bolin, Luis (1967) *Spain, the Vital Years*. London: Cassell.
- Bolloten, Burnett (1961) *The grand camoufflage. The communist conspiracy in the Spanish Civil War*. London: Hollis & Carter.
- Bolloten, Burnett (1991) *The Spanish Civil War, Revolution and Counter Revolution*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Caroline Press.
- Borkenau, Franz (1980) *The Spanish cockpit: an eyewitness account of the political and social conflicts of the Spanish Civil War*. London: Pluto.
- Borras, Jose M. (1985) *Relaciones Franco-Españolas al comienzo de la guerra civil. La Embajada de Jean Herbette, 1936–1937, en la Guerra Civil Española*. Madrid: Arbor.
- Borrow, George (1899) *The Bible in Spain*. London: John Murray.
- Boyd, Carolyn (1979a) *Historia Patria: Politics, History and National Identity in Spain 1875-1975*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Boyd, Carolyn (1979b) *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.
- Brademar, John (1974) *Anarcosindicalismo y Revolución en España (1930–1937)*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Braithwaite Thomas, Anna (1912) ‘The Beaconite controversy’, in *Bulletin of Friends’ Historical Society*, Vol. IV, no. 2, March 1912. Philadelphia. pp. 70-81.
- Bremmer, Robert H. (1990) *American Philanthropy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brenan, E. F. Gerald (1990) *The Spanish Labyrinth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brendel, Cajo, (1999) *Expectativas Fallidas (España 1934–1939). El Movimiento Consejista ante la Guerra y Revolución Españolas: Artículos y Reseñas*. Barcelona: Adrede.
- Bricall, José María (1978) *Política económica de la Generalitat (1936–1939)*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.
- Brinton, Howard H. (1941) *Sources of the Quaker Peace Testimony*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee.
- Brittain, Vera (1980) *Testament of Experience*. London: Fontana.
- Brock, Peter (1990) *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1600–1914*. York, UK: Sessions Book Trust.
- Brock, Peter (with Young, Nigel) (1999) *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Broggi, Moises (2001) *Memòries d’un Cirurgià*. Barcelona: Ed. 62 S.A.
- Brothers, Caroline (1996) *War and photography. A cultural history*. London: Routledge.
- Broué, P. & Temime, E. (1972) *The revolution and the Civil War in Spain*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.
- Brown, Laurence (2002) ‘The great betrayal? European socialists and humanitarian relief during the Spanish Civil War’. *Labour History Review*, Vol. 67, No. 1, April, 83–89.
- Buchanan, Tom (1988) ‘The Role of the British labour movement in the origin and work of the Basque Children Committee, 1937–1939’. *European History Quarterly*, vol. 14, 155–174.
- Buchanan, Tom (1991) *The Spanish Civil War and the British labour movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buchanan, Tom (1993) ‘A far away country of which we know nothing? Perceptions of Spain and its Civil War in Britain, 1931–1939’. *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 4, 1, pp. 1-24.
- Buchanan, Tom (1997) *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bugnion, François (1977) *L’emblème de la Croix Rouge, Aperçue Historique*. Geneva: CICR.

- Bugnion, François (1994) *Le Comité International de la Croix Rouge et la protection des victimes de la Guerre*. Geneva: CICR.
- Bugnion, François (2004) “The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Development of International Humanitarian Law”: *Chicago Journal of International Law* 5 n° 1 (Summer 2004).
- Bugnion, François (2001) ‘Droit de Genève et droit de La Haye’, *International Review of the Red Cross*, (December 2001), 901 - 22
- Cable, James (1979) *The Royal Navy and the Siege of Bilbao*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cabrera, M. (1983) ‘La patronal ante la II República. Organizaciones y estrategia 1931–1936’. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Cadbury, Henry J. (1943) ‘Quaker Relief during the siege of Boston’ in *Friends Intelligencer*. Pendle Hill: Colonial Society of Massachusetts.
- Caminal, M. (1984) *Joan Comorera. Catalanisme i socialisme, 1913–1936*. Vol. 1. Barcelona: Empúries.
- Caminal, M. (1987) *Joan Comorera, Antologia* (Edició a cura de Miquel Caminal). Barcelona: La Magrana.
- Candano, Xuan (2006) *El Pacto de Santoña (1937). La rendición del Nacionalismo Vasco al Fascismo*. Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros.
- Cantalupo, Roberto (1951) *Embajada en España*. Barcelona: Caralt.
- Canton, William (1904) *The Story of the Bible Society*. London: John Murray.
- Capper, Samuel J. (1871) *Wanderings in War Time: being notes of two journeys taken in France and Germany, in the autumn of 1870 and the spring of 1871*. London: Richard Bentley and Son.
- Cardona, G. (1983) *El poder militar en la España contemporánea hasta la guerra civil*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, S.A.
- Cardozo, H. (1937) *The March of a Nation. My years of Spanish Civil War*. London: Right Book Club.
- Carr, E. H. (1982) *The Twilight of the Comintern*. London: MacMillan.
- Carr, E. H. (1984) *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War*. London: MacMillan.
- Carr, Raymond (1977) *The Spanish Tragedy*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Carr, Raymond (1980) *Modern Spain 1875–1980*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carr, Raymond (1986) *Images of the Spanish Civil War*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Carr, William (1974), *A History of Germany, 1815-1945*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Carroll, P.N. (1994) *Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Casado, Segismundo (1939) *The Last Days of Madrid*. London: Peter Davies.
- Casanova, Julian (1987) ‘Anarchism and Revolution in the Spanish Civil War: the case of Aragon’. *European History Quarterly*, 17, pp. 423-451.

- Casanova, Julian (1992) 'Anarchism, Revolution and Civil War in Spain: the challenge of social history'. *International Review of Social History*, XXXVII, pp. 398-404.
- Casanova, Julian (1997) *De la Calle al Frente. El anarcosindicalismo en España (1931-1939)*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- Casanova, Marina (1996) *La Diplomacia Española durante la Guerra Civil*. Madrid: Biblioteca Diplomática Española.
- Casas de la Vega, Rafael (1998) *Seis Generales de la Guerra Civil. Vidas paralelas y desconocidas*. Madrid: Fénix.
- Castells, A. (1974) *Las Brigadas Internacionales de la guerra de España*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Casterás, R. (1977) *Las JSUC: ante la guerra y la revolución (1936-1939)*. Barcelona: Nova Terra.
- Castresana, Luis de (1967) *El otro árbol de Guernica*. Madrid: Editorial Prensa Española.
- Castresana, Luis de (1972) *La verdad sobre 'El otro árbol de Guernica'*. Bilbao: Gran Enciclopedia Vasca.
- Cattell, David Tredwell (1957) *Soviet Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War*. Berkeley (CA): Cambridge University Press.
- Cattell, David Tredwell (1965) *Communism and the Spanish Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cava Mesa, Maria Jesús (with Silvestre, María & Arranz, Javier) (1996) *Memoria Colectiva del Bombardeo de Guernika*. Bilbao: Red Gernika.
- Cazorla, A. (2000) *Las políticas de la Victoria. La consolidación del Nuevo Estado franquista (1938-1953)*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
- Ceadel, Martin (1987) *Thinking about Peace and War*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cebrian, C. (1997) *Estimat PSUC*. Barcelona: Empúries.
- Cenarro, Angela (2006) *La Sonrisa de Falange – Auxilio Social en la Guerra Civil y en la Posguerra*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- Ceresole, Pierre (1931) *L'armée suisse: quarante-deux questions*. Basel, Switzerland: Röhm.
- Ceresole, Pierre (1937) *Aux Indes pour la paix vivante: lettres du Bihar 1935-1937*. La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland: Imprimerie Coopérative.
- Ceresole, Pierre (1950) *Vivre sa vérité: Carnets de route*. (2nd ed. 1968). Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions de la Baconnière.
- Ceresole, Pierre (1954a) *For Peace and Truth from the notebooks of Pierre Ceresole*. London: The Banninsdale Press.
- Ceresole, Pierre (1954b) *Religion et patriotisme*. Lausanne, Switzerland: La Concorde.
- Cerruti, Mauro, Guex, Sebastian & Huber, Peter (2001) *La Suisse et l'Espagne, de la République a Franco (1936-1946)*. Lausanne, Switzerland: Antipodes.

- Cervera Perry, José (1988) *La Guerra Naval Española (1936–1939)*. Madrid: San Martín.
- Chatfield, Charles (1971) *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America. 1914-1941*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.
- Chiapuso, Manuel (1978) *El Gobierno Vasco y los anarquistas. Bilbao en guerra*. San Sebastián: Editorial Txertoa.
- Chiapuso, Manuel (2003) *Los Anarquistas y la Guerra en Euzkadi. La Columna de San Sebastián*. Andoain: Abarka.
- Chomsky, Noam (1969) *American Power and the New Mandarins*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Christian, William A. (1972) *Person and God in a Spanish Valley* New York: New York Seminar Press.
- Christian, William A. (1992) *Moving Crucifixes in Modern Spain*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Christian, William A. (1996) *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Churchill, Viscount Victor Alexander Spencer (1964) *All my Sins Remembered*. London: Heinemann.
- Cid, Felip (1996) *La Contribució Científica Catalana a la Medicina de Guerra 1936–1939*. Barcelona: Fundació Uriach. 1878.
- Claudín, F. (1975) *The Communist Movement*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Clemente, Josep Carles (1990) *El Arbol de la Vida. La Cruz Roja en la Guerra Civil Española*. Madrid: Laboratorios Beecham.
- Clemente, Josep Carles (2001), *El cuaderno humanitario*. Madrid: Fundamentos.
- Cloud, Yvonne (1937) *The Basque Children in England*. London: Gollancz.
- Conversi, Daniele (1997) *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Cook, Judith (1979) *Apprentices of Freedom*. London: Quartet Books.
- Coombes, John (1989) *Writing from the Left: socialism, liberalism and the Popular Front*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Coverdale, John F. (1975) *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cruz, R. (1987) *El Partido Comunista de España en la Segunda República*. Madrid: Alianza.
- Cunningham, V. (1986) *Spanish Front: writers on the civil war*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Courvoisier, Raymond (1978) *Ceux qui ne devaient pas mourir*. Paris: Lafont.
- Damrosh, Lori Fischer (Ed.) (1993) *Enforcing Restrain: Collective Intervention in internal conflicts*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Danan, A. (1978) *L'armée des homes sans haine*. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Attinger.



- Davies, A. Tegla (1947) *Friends Ambulance Unit. The Story of the F.A.U. in the Second World War 1939–1946*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Delmer, Sefton (1961) *Trail Sinister*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Díaz, Pablo Morlán (1999) *Horacio Echevarrieta 1870–1963. El Capitalista Republicano*. Madrid: LID.
- Díez Medrano, J. (1995) *Divided Nations: Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*. Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press.
- Dunant, Henry (1962) *Un Souvenir de Solférino*. Berne, Switzerland: Croix Rouge Suisse.
- Duran, Jane (2002) *Silences from the Spanish Civil War*. London: Enitharmon Press.
- Durand, André (1984) *From Sarajevo to Hiroshima: History of the International Committee of the Red Cross*. Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute.
- Durand, André (2002) *Historia del Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja. De Sarajevo a Hiroshima*. Geneva: Colección Científica del Instituto Henri Dunant.
- Durand, Roger (Ed.) (1996) *Gustave Ador: 58 ans d'engagement politique et humanitaire*. Geneva: Fondation Gustave Ador.
- Durgan, A. (1996) *BOC 1930–1936. El Bloque Obrero y Campesino*. Barcelona: Laertes Editorial.
- Edwards, J. (1979) *The British Government and the Spanish Civil War*. London: Macmillan.
- Elorza, A. & Bizcarrondo, M. (1999) *Queridos camaradas. La Internacional Comunista y España 1919–1939*. Barcelona: Planeta.
- Elorza, A. (1978) *Ideologías del nacionalismo vasco 1876–1937*. San Sebastian: Luis Aramburu Editorial.
- Escofet, Federico (1984) *De una derrota a una Victoria: 6 de Octubre 1934 – 19 de Julio 1936*. Barcelona: Argos Vergara.
- Esenwein, G. R. (1989) *Anarchist Ideology and the working-class movement in Spain 1868-1898*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Fagen, Patricia W. (1973) *Exiles and Citizens. Spanish Republicans in Mexico*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Farmborough, Florence (2000) *With the Armies of the Tsar*. New York: Cooper Square Press.
- Feis, Herbert (1948) *The Spanish Stay: Franco and the Nations at War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Fernández, Carlos (1983) *El General Franco*. Barcelona: Argos Vergara.
- Forsythe, David P. (2005) *The Humanitarians. The International Committee of the Red Cross*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foster, Dulles Rhea (1954) *The American Red Cross. A History*. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Fox, George (1997) *The Journal of George Fox*. Philadelphia, PA: Nickalls Edition.
- Franco Salgado, Francisco (1976) *Mis Conversaciones con Franco*. Barcelona: Planeta.

- Fraser, Ronald (1981a) *Blood of Spain*. London: Penguin.
- Fraser, Ronald (1981b) 'Reconsidering the Spanish Civil War'. *New Left Review*, No. 129, Sept/Oct, 35-49.
- Freeman, Kathleen (1965) *If Any Man Build. The History of the Save the Children Fund*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Friedman, Lawrence J. & McGarvie, Mark D. (Eds.) (2003) *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fuller, Eduard (1951) *The Right of the Child*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- Fusi, J. P. (1979) *El problema vasco en la II República*. Madrid: Ediciones Turner.
- Fusi, J. P. (1990) 'Centre and Periphery 1900–1936: national integration and regional nationalisms considered', in Lannon, F. & Preston, P. (Eds.) (1990) *Elites and Power in Twentieth Century Spain* (pp. 33-44). Oxford University Press.
- Fyrth, Jim & Alexander, Sally (Eds.) (1991) *Women's voices from the Spanish Civil War*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Fyrth, Jim (1986) *The signal was Spain: the Aid Spain Movement in Britain 1936–1939*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Garmendia, José María & González Portilla, Manuel (1988) *La Guerra Civil en el País Vasco. Política y Economía*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Gerassi, J. (1986) *The Premature Anti-Fascists: North American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*. New York: Praeger.
- Gerhard, C. (1982) *Comissari de la Generalitat a Montserrat (1936–1939)*. Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat.
- Gibson, Ian (1983) *Paracuellos: como fue*. Barcelona: Argos Vergara.
- Gillett Braithwaite, Marta (1882) *Memorials of Christine Majolier Alsop*. Philadelphia: Henry Longstreth.
- Giral, José Pereira (1938) *Año y medio de gestiones de canje*. Barcelona.
- Gómez-Jordana, Francisco Souza (2002) *Milicia y Diplomacia. Los Diarios del Conde de Jordana 1936–1944*. Burgos: Editorial Dossoles.
- González Calleja, Eduardo (1994) 'Populismo ó captación de Elites? Luces y sombras en la estrategia del Servicio Exterior de Falange Española' en Álvarez Junco, José & González Leandri Ricardo (Eds.) (1994) *El populismo en España y América*. Madrid: Catriel.
- González Hernández, M. J. (1990) *Ciudadanía y acción. El conservadurismo maurista 1907–1923*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Graham, Helen & Alexander, M. S. (1987) *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts: comparative perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Graham, Helen & Preston, Paul (Eds.) (1987) *The Popular Front in Europe*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Graham, Helen (1988) 'The Spanish Socialist Party in Power and the Government of Juan Negrin, 1937-39'. *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 18, 175–206.

- Graham, Helen (1991) *Socialism and War. The Spanish Socialist Party in Power and Crisis 1936–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Graham, Helen (2002) *The Spanish Republic at War 1936–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press .
- Graham, Helen (2005) *The Spanish Civil War. A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Granja, J. L. de la (1986) *Nacionalismo y II República en el País Vasco*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Granja, J. L. de la (1990) *República y guerra civil en Euskadi. Del Pacto de San Sebastián al de Santoña*. Oñate: HAEE/IVAP.
- Granja, J. L. de la (1995) *El nacionalismo vasco: un siglo de historia*. Madrid: Tecnos.
- Griffiths, D. (1983) *Fellow Travellers of the Right*. Oxford: Constable.
- Grisoni, Dominic (& Hertzog, Giles) (1979): *Les Brigades de la Mer*. Paris: Grosset & Fresse.
- Guarner, Vicente (1975) *Cataluña en la guerra de España*. Madrid: Ediciones del Toro.
- Guttman, Allen (1962) *The Wound in the Heart: America and the Spain Civil War*. Chicago: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Guttman, Allen (Ed.) (1963) *American Neutrality and the Spanish Civil War*. Boston: D.C. Heath and Company.
- Hamm, Thomas (1992) *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends (1800–1907)*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.
- Han Williams, Eryl (1993) *A Page of History in Relief – 1944 to 1946*. York: Sessions Book Trust.
- Hart, S. (Ed.) (1988) *¡No pasarán! Art, Literature and the Spanish Civil War*. London: Tamesis.
- Harvey, John & Yates, Christina (eds. and trans.) (1968), *For Peace and Truth: From the note-books of Pierre Ceresole*. London: Collins.
- Harvey, John (1970) *The Diplomatic Papers of Oliver Harvey 1937–1940*. London: Collins.
- Hatton, Helen E. (1993) *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland 1654–1921*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Heenan, L. E. (1987) *Russian Democracy’s Fatal Blunder: The Summer Offensive of 1917*. London: Praeger.
- Heiberg, Marianne (1989) *The Making of the Basque Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heiberg, Martín & Angulo, Manuel Rios (2006) *La Trama Oculta de la Guerra Civil. Los Servicios Secretos de Franco 1936–1945*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- Heron, Alistair (1995) *Quakers in Britain, A Century of Change 1895–1995*. Kelso, Scotland: Curlaw Graphics.
- Herr, R. (1971) *An Historical Essay on Modern Spain*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Hewitt, Gordon (1971) *The Problem of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society, 1919–1942*. Vol. 1. London: SCM Press.
- Hirst, Margaret E. (1923) *The Quakers in Peace and War: an account of their Peace principles and practice*. New York: George H. Doran Company.
- Hodgetts, Brayley (1892) *In the Track of Russian Famine*. London: Fisher Unwin.
- Hofmann, B. (1995) *Anarquismo español y sus tradiciones culturales*. Madrid: Pleyade.
- Hooper, James K. (1995) *The New Spaniards*. London: Penguin.
- Hopkins, James K. (1998) *Into the Heart of the Fire. The British in the Spanish Civil War*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.
- Howson, Gerald (1998) *Arms for Spain*. London: John Murray.
- Hoxie Jones, Mary (1937) *Swords into Ploughshares: An Account of the American Friends Service Committee, 1917–1937*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Huber, Max (1941) *The Red Cross: Principles and Problems*. Geneva: Éditions CICR.
- Huber, Max (1943) *Le Bon Samaritain*. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions de la Baconnière.
- Huber, Max (1954) *La pensée et l'action de la Croix Rouge*. Geneva: Editions CICR.
- Hudson, Miles (2004) *Intervention in Russia 1918-1920. A cautionary Tale*. London: Pen & Sword Books.
- Hyde, Douglas (1950) *I believed: The Autobiography of a Former British Communist*. London: William Heinemann.
- Ignacio, L. (1981) *Los años del pistolero. Ensayo para una guerra civil*. Madrid: Planeta.
- Ignatieff, Michael (1989) *The Warrior's Honour. Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Irujo, Manuel de (1976–79) *Un vasco en el ministerio de Justicia, Memorias*. 3 Vols. Buenos Aires: Editorial Vasca Ekin.
- J. Pons i Porta & J. M. Solé i Sabaté (1991) *Anarquia i República a la Cerdanya (1936–1939) El Cojo de Málaga i els fets de Bellver*. Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat.
- Jackson, Gabriel (1965) *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War 1931–39*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jacob, Norma (1981) *Growing Old: A View From Within*. Philadelphia, PA: Pendle Hill Press.
- James, William (2002) *The Varieties of Religious Experience. A Study in Human Nature 1902*. New York: Random House.
- Jiménez de Aberasturi, L. M. (1988) 'Guerra y movilización popular en el País Vasco', in J. Aróstegui (Ed.) *Historia y memoria de la guerra civil. Encuentro en Castilla y León*. Valladolid: Editorial Junta de Castilla y León.
- Jones, Rufus (1915) *The Quaker Peace Position*. Richmond, IN: Peace Association of Friends in America.

- Jones, Sylvester (1937) *Through Loyalist and Insurgent Spain: The Journal of Sylvester Jones, Dec. 1936 – Jan. 1937*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee.
- Jones, T. Canby (1984) *George Fox's attitude toward war: a documentary study*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends' Service Committee.
- Jones, William (1899) *Quaker campaigns in peace and war*. London: Headley Brothers.
- Jones, William (1914) *Reminiscences of the Franco-German War*. London: Headley Brothers
- Juaristi, Jon (1997) *El Bucle Melancólico. Historias de Nacionalistas Vascos*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.
- Juliá, S. (1977) *La izquierda del PSOE 1935–36*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Juliá, S. (1979) *Orígenes del Frente Popular en España 1934–1936*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Juliá, S. (1984) *Madrid 1931–1934. De la fiesta popular a la lucha de clases*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Juliá, S. (1986) *El socialismo en España. Anales de Historia*. Vol. 1. Madrid: Fundación Pablo Iglesias.
- Juliá, S. (1988) *El Socialismo en las nacionalidades y regiones*. Madrid: Pablo Iglesias.
- Juliá, S. (1989) *Historia del socialismo español 1931–1939*. Barcelona: Conjunto Editorial.
- Juliá, S. (1990) *Azaña: una biografía política*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Juliá, S. (1995) *Política en la Segunda República*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
- Juliá, S. (1997) *Los socialistas en la política española 1879–1982*. Madrid: Taurus.
- Junod, Marcel (1963) *Le Troisième Combatant*. Paris: Payot.
- Jutglar, A. (1984) *Historia crítica de la burguesía en Cataluña*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
- Kägi-Fuchsmann, Regina (1944), *Hilfe über die Grenze 1930-1944*. Bern: Ex-libris.
- Kent, Peter C. (1986) 'The Vatican and the Spanish Civil War'. *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Oct., 441-464.
- Kenworthy, Leonard (1963) 'Pierre Ceresole, dreamer with a shovel', in *Twelve Citizens of the world*. New York: Doubleday.
- Kermode, F. (1988) *History and Value*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kershner, Howard E. (1950) *Quaker Service in Modern War*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Knitel, Hans G. (1967) *Les Délégations du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge*. Geneva: H.E.I.
- Knowles, G. W. (Ed.) (1927) *Quakers and Peace*. London: Sweet & Maxwell.
- Koltsov, Mijail (1963) *Diario de la Guerra de España*. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico.
- Kraus, Hertha (1944) *International Relief in Action, 1914–1943: Selected Records, With Notes*. Sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, Brethren Service Committee, Mennonite Central Committee. Pennsylvania: The Herald Press

- La Porte, Pablo (2001) *La atracción del Imán: el desastre de Annual y sus repercusiones en la política europea (1921–23)*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- Lampe, D. (1959) *Pike: The Unknown Genius*. London: Aylesbury and Slough.
- Langdon Davies, John (1953) *Gatherings from Catalonia*. London: Cassell & Company Ltd.
- Langdon Davies, John (2007) *Behind the Spanish Barricades*. London: Reportage Press.
- Lannon, Frances (1979) The Socio-Political Role of the Spanish Church: a Case Study. *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol 14, nº 2 April 193-211.
- Lannon, Frances (1987) *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875–1975*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Laqueur, Walter (1967) *The Fate of the Revolution. Interpretations of Soviet History*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Lario Sánchez, Juan (1973) *Habla un aviador de la República*. Madrid: G. del Toro.
- Lavayer, Jean-Philippe (1995) 'Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: International Humanitarian Law and the Role of the ICRC'. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 304 (March–April), 162–191.
- Lawson, Bernard G. (1961) *The Overseas and International Service of British and Irish Friends in the Twentieth Century to 1961*. London: Lawson.
- Legarreta, Dorothy (1984) *The Guernica Generation: Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press.
- Little, Douglas (1985) *Malevolent Neutrality; The United States, Great Britain and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Little, Douglas (1988) 'Red Scare 1936: Anti-Bolshevism and the origins of British non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War'. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, No. 2, April, pp. 291-311.
- Litvin, Alter L. (2001) *Writing History in Twentieth Century Russia: a view from within*. London: Palgrave.
- Lizarra, A. de (1944) *Los Vascos y la República Española*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Vasca Ekin.
- Lleixá, Joaquin (1986) *Cien años de Militarismo en España*. Barcelona: Anagrama.
- London, Louise (2000) *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933–1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Long, James (1872) *Rapport de la répartition des secours faite par la société anglaise des Amis (Quakers) aux innocentes victimes de la Guerre en France*. Paris: Adolph Lainé.
- Luebbert, G. M. (1991) *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy. Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Inter-War Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lynam, S. (n.d.) *The Spirit and the Clay*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Macdonald, Nancy (1987) *Homage to the Spanish Exiles – Voices from the Spanish Civil War*. New York: Insight Books Human Sciences Press.

- MacMillan, Margaret (2004) *Peacemakers: the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and its attempt to end war*. London: John Murray.
- Madariaga, R. M. de (1992) 'The intervention of Moroccan troops in the Spanish Civil War: a reconsideration'. *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 22, Jan., pp. 69-97.
- Madariaga, Salvador de (1972) *Spain: A Modern History*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Maisky, Ivan Mikhailovich (1966) *Spanish Notebooks*. London: Hutchinson.
- Malefakis, Eduard (1970) *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Manent i Segimon, A. & Raventós i Giralt, J. (1948) *L'església clandestina a Catalunya durant la Guerra civil (1936–1939). Els intents de restablir el culte públic*. Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat.
- Mangini, Shirley (1995) *Memories of Resistance: Women's voices from the Spanish Civil War*. Yale University Press.
- Manning, Leah (1970) *A Life for Education*. London: Gollancz.
- Marqués, Pierre (1993) *Les enfants espagnoles refugiés en France (1936–1939)*. Paris: Pierre Marques.
- Marqués, Pierre (2000) *La Croix Rouge pendant la Guerre d'Espagne (1936–1939). Les Missionnaires de l'Humanitaire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Marrus, Michael R. (2002) *The Unwanted: European Refugees from the First World War Through the Cold War*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Marshall, Oliver (1991) *Ship of Hope*. Ethnic Committee Oral History Project, North Kensington Archive at Notting Dale Urban Studies Centre.
- Martín Blazquez, José (1939) "I helped to Build on Army." *Civil War Memories of a Spanish Staff Officer*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Martin Mateo, Ramón (1967) "La Asistencia Social como Servicio Público" en "Guía de actividades Públicas Asistenciales". Madrid: Ministerio de la Gobernación..
- Martin Mateo, Ramon (1967) 'Sobre el concepto de Asistencia Social', in *Problemas fundamentales de Beneficencia y Asistencia Social*. Madrid: Ministerio de la Gobernación, pp. 56-68.
- Martín Rubio, Ángel David (2007) *La Cruz, el Perdón y la Gloria* (Book and DVD). Madrid: Ciudadela.
- Martin, Benjamin (1990) *The Agony of Modernization. Labour and Industrialization in Spain*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Martin, Claude (1965) *Franco, Soldado y Estadista*. Madrid: Uriarte.
- Martínez Bande, José Manuel (1976) *Frente de Madrid*. Barcelona: Caralt.
- Martínez de Bedoya, Javier (1996) *Memorias desde mi aldea*. Valladolid: Ámbito Ediciones.
- Massot i Muntaner, Josep (1987) *El desembarcament de Bayo a Mallorca. Agost–Setembre de 1936*. Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat.
- Massot i Muntaner, Josep. (1995) *El Cònsol Alan Hillgarth i les Illes Balears (1936–1939)*. Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat.

- Maurin, J. (1977) *Los hombres de la dictadura*. Barcelona: Anagrama.
- Mawdsley, Evan (1987) *The Russian Civil War*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Maza Zorrilla, Elena (1987) *Pobreza y Asistencia Social en España. Siglos XVI al XX*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid.
- Mazower, Mark (1998) *Dark continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. London: Allen Lane.
- Mazower, Mark (2005) *L'Ombra dell'Europa. Democrazia e Totalitarismi nel XX Secolo*. Milano: Garzanti Libri.
- Meer, Fernando de (1992) *El Partido Nacionalista Vasco ante la Guerra de España (1936–1937)*. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra.
- Mees, Ludger (2006) *El Profeta Pragmático, Aguirre, el primer Lehendakari 1939–1960*. Irun: Alga.
- Mendl, Wolf (1974) *Prophets and Reconcilers: Reflections on the Quaker Peace Testimony*. Swarthmore Lecture, Friends Home Service Committee, London.
- Mendlesohn, Farah (2002) *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War*. London: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Miller, Lawrence McK. (1999) *Witness for Humanity. A Biography of Clarence E. Picket*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications.
- Mitford, Jessica (1960) *Hons and Rebels*. London: Gollancz.
- Moloney, T. (1985) *Westminster, Withall and the Vatican: The Role of Cardinal Hinsley, 1935–1943*. Tunbridge Wells: Borns & Oater.
- Moltke, Helmuth von (1992) *The Franco–German War of 1870–1871*. London: Grenhill Books.
- Monastier, Hélène (1955) *Paix, pelle et pioche. Histoire du Service Civil International de 1919 a 1954*. Lausanne, Switzerland: La Concorde.
- Monastier, Hélène (1960) *Pierre Ceresole d'après sa correspondance*. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions de la Baconnière.
- Montella, Asumpta (2003) *La Maternitat d'Elena, bressol dels exiliats*. Badalona: Ara llibres.
- Montero Moreno, Antonio (1961) *Historia de la Persecución Religiosa en España (1936–1939)*. Madrid: Editorial Católica.
- Montero, Enrique (1995) 'Reform idealized: the intellectual and ideological origins of the second Republic', in H. Graham & J. Labanyi (Eds.) (1995), *Spanish Cultural Studies*, pp.124-133 Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moradiellos, Enrique (1990) *Neutralidad benévola: el gobierno británico y la insurrección militar española de 1936*. Oviedo: Pentalfa.
- Moradiellos, Enrique (1991) 'The Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: Anglo-Spanish relations in early 1936'. *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 21, 339–364.
- Moradiellos, Enrique (1992) 'British Political Strategy in the face of the military rising of 1936 in Spain'. *Contemporary European History*, I, 2, 123–37.



- Moradiellos, Enrique (1996a) *La perfidia de Albión. El gobierno británico y la guerra civil española*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Moradiellos, Enrique (1996b) 'The Gentle General: the Official British Perception of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War', in Preston P. & MacKenzie, A. (Eds.) *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936–1939* (pp. 1-19). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Moradiellos, Enrique (2001) *El Reñidero de Europa*. Barcelona: Península.
- Moradiellos, Enrique (2004) *1936 Los Mitos de la Guerra Civil*. Barcelona: Península.
- Moreillon, Jacques (1973) *Le Comité International de la Croix Rouge et la protection des détenues politiques*. Geneva: Institut Henri Dunant.
- Morrow, Felix (1974) *Revolution & Counter Revolution in Spain*. New York: Pathfinder Press.
- Municio Oliver, Enrique & Pereira Castañares, Juan Carlos (1987) 'La Humanización de la Guerra Civil Española. La Labor de la Cruz Roja' in *Bulletin d'histoire contemporaine de l'Espagne*, 7. Pau, France: Maison des Pays Ibériques. pp. 13-25.
- Murray-Rust, David M. (1995) *Quakers in brief or Quakerism made easy (an overview of the Quaker Movement from 1650 to 1990)*. Merseyside, UK: Friends Home Service.
- Nash, Mary (1995) *Defying Male Civilisation: Women in the Spanish Civil War*. Denver, CO: Arden Press.
- Nelson, C. & Hendricks, J. (Eds.) (1996) *Madrid 1937. Letters of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*. London: Routledge.
- Núñez Florencio, R. (1990) *Militarismo y antimilitarismo en España 1888–1906*. Madrid: CSIC.
- Olaya Morales, Francisco (2004) *La Gran Estafa de la Guerra Civil*. Barcelona: Belacqua.
- Oldfield, Sybil (2006) *Doers of the World: British Women Humanitarians 1900-1950*. London: Oldfield.
- Orduña Prada, Monica (1996) *El Auxilio Social (1936–1940). La etapa fundacional y los primeros años*. Madrid: Escuela Libre Editorial.
- Ormerod Greenwood, John (1951) 'Elizabeth Bevan Tonjoroff', *Journal of Friends Historical Society* (vol. 49. N° 1), pp. 8-23.
- Ormerod Greenwood, John (1975) *Quaker Encounters: Friends and Relief* (Vol. I). York, UK: William Sessions Limited.
- Ossorio y Gallardo, A. (1976) *Vida y sacrificio de Companys*. Barcelona: Nova Terra.
- Othen, Christopher (2007) *Las Brigadas Internacionales de Franco*. Barcelona: Destino.
- Owen, R. J. & Owen, J. (1986) *Save The Children Fund*. Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd.
- Panayi, Banikos (1991) *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815–1915*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Pastor Petit, Domingo (1978) *Los Dossiers Secretos de la Guerra Civil*. Barcelona: Argo.
- Patterson, Ian (2007) *Guernica and Total War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Payne, Stanley G. (1961) *Falange. A History of Spanish Fascism*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Payne, Stanley G. (1967) *Politics and the Military in Modern Spain*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Payne, Stanley G. (1970) *The Spanish Revolution*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Payne, Stanley G. (1984) *Spanish Catholicism: An Historical Overview*. Madison, WI: University Wisconsin Press.
- Payne, Stanley G. (1987) *The Franco Regime 1936–1975*. Madison, WI: University Wisconsin Press.
- Payne, Stanley G. (1993) *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Republic 1931–1936*. Madison, WI: University Wisconsin Press.
- Paz, Abel (1976) *Durruti: The People Armed*. Montreal: Black Rose.
- Peñalba, Mercedes (2009) *Falange Española: Historia de un Fracaso (1933–1945)*. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra.
- Perez Madrigal, Joaquin (1963) *Augurios, Estallido y Episodios de la Guerra Civil en el Ejército del Norte*. Ávila: S. Diaz.
- Pérez Viejo, Tomás (1999) *Nación, identidad nacional y otros mitos nacionalistas*. Oviedo: Nobel.
- Pernau, J. (1989) *Diario de la caída de Cataluña*. Barcelona: Ediciones B.
- Picket, Clarence E. (1953) *For More than Bread: An autobiographical account of Twenty-Two years' Work with the American Friends Committee*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Pictet, Jean S. (1955) *Les Principes de la Croix-Rouge*. Genève: Comité international de la Croix-Rouge.
- Pike, D. Wingeate (1982) 'Franco and the Axis Stigma' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 17, No. 3, July, 369-407.
- Pitteloud, Jean-François, (Ed.) (1999) *Procès-verbaux des Séances du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, 17 février 1863–28 août 1914*. Geneva: Société Henri Dunant/ICRC.
- Podmore, Will (1998) *Britain, Italy, Germany and the Spanish Civil War*. New York: Edwin Mellen.
- Ponamariova, L.V. (1977) *La formación del Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Icaria.
- Potts Brown, Elisabeth & Stuard, Susan Mosher (Eds.) (1989) *Witnesses for Change: Quaker Women over Three Centuries*. New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press.
- Prados de La Escosura, L. (1988) *De imperio a nación: crecimiento y atraso económico en España 1780–1930*. Madrid: Alianza.

- Preston, Paul (1978) *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War. Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic 1931–1936*. (Rev. ed. 1994) London: Routledge.
- Preston, Paul (1984) *Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939*. London: Methuen.
- Preston, Paul (1986) *The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Preston, Paul (1990) 'Populism and parasitism: the Falange and the Spanish establishment 1939–75', in M. Blinkhorn (Ed.) (1990) *Fascists and Conservatives. The radical right and the establishment in twentieth century Europe* (pp. 138-156). London: Unwin/Hyman.
- Preston, Paul (1995a) *Franco*. London: Harper Collins.
- Preston, Paul (1995b) *The Politics of Revenge: fascism and the military in twentieth-century Spain*. London: Routledge.
- Preston, Paul (1996a) *A concise history of the Spanish Civil War*. London: Fontana Press.
- Preston, Paul (1996b) *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936–1939*. Edinburgh: University Press.
- Preston, Paul (2000) *La Guerra Civil Española*. Barcelona: Plaza y Janés.
- Preston, Paul (2001) *Palomas de Guerra*. Barcelona: Planeta.
- Preston, Paul (2008) *We saw Spain Die*. London: Constable & Robinson Ltd.
- Pujol, Jordi (2007) *Memorias 1930–1970. Historia de Una Convicción*. Barcelona: Destino.
- Puzzo, D. (1972) *Spain and the Great Powers*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press.
- Radcliff, P. (1996) *From Mobilization to Civil War. The Politics of Polarization in Gijon 1900–1937*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Radosh, Ronald, Habeck, Mary R. & Sevostianov, Grigory (Eds.) (2001) *España Traicionada. Stalin y la Guerra Civil*. Barcelona: Planeta.
- Rager, H. (1993) *Salvador Rial, Vicari del Cardenal de la Pau*. Barcelona: Abadía de Montserrat.
- Rager, H. (2001) *La pólvora y el incienso. La Iglesia y la guerra civil española (1936–1939)*. Barcelona: Ediciones Península.
- Ranzato, Gabriele (2004) *L'Eclissi della Democrazia – La Guerra Civile spagnola e le sue origine (1931–1939)* (The Eclipse of Democracy. The Spanish Civil War and its origins 1931–1939). Torino: Bollati Boringhieri..
- Reig Tapia, Alberto (2006) *La Cruzada de 1936. Mito y Memoria*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Reverte, Jorge M. (2001) *El Arte de Matar. Como se hizo la Guerra Civil Española*. Barcelona: RBA.
- Richards, M. (1996) 'Civil War, violence and the construction of Francoism.' In P. Preston & A. L. Mackenzie (Eds.) *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936–1939* (pp. 197-240). Edinburgh University Press.

- Richards, M. (1998) *A Time of Silence. Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain 1936–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
- Richards, Vernon (1975) *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution 1936–1939*. London: Freedom Press.
- Richmond, Kathleen (2004) *Las Mujeres en el Fascismo Español – La Sección Femenina de Falange, 1934–1959*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Riquer, Borja de (1997) *El último Cambó 1936–1947*. Barcelona: Grijalbo. (Catalan original issued 1996).
- Risques, Calos & Borrachina, Manel (2001) *Procés a la Guàrdia Civil – Barcelona 1939*. Barcelona: Portic.
- Robien, Louis de (1969) *The Diary of a Diplomat in Russia in 1917–1918*. London: Michael Joseph.
- Robins, Keith (1976) *The Abolition of War: The “Peace Movement” in Britain, 1914–1919*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Robinson, Jane (2006) “Mary Seacole”, *the Charismatic Black Nurse who Became an Heroine of the Crimea*. London: Robinson.
- Robinson, Richard A. H. (1970) *The origins of Franco's Spain: The Right, the Republic and Revolution 1931- 1936*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles.
- Rojas, C. (1979) *La Guerra en Catalunya*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés.
- Romero García, Eladi (2001) *La Batalla del Ebro*. Barcelona: Laertes.
- Romero Maura, Joaquín (1967) ‘Spanish Civil War and after’. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 2, No. 1, January. 157-168.
- Romero Maura, Joaquín (1974) *La Rosa del Fuego: La política de los obreros entre el desastre colonial y la Semana Trágica 1889–1909*. Barcelona: Grijalbo.
- Romero Salvadó, Francisco J. (1999) *Twentieth Century Spain. Politics and Society in Spain 1898-1998*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Romero Salvadó, Francisco J. (2002) *The European Civil War: Reds versus whites in Russia and Spain 1917–1939 in European Warfare 1815–2000*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Romero Salvadó, Francisco J. (2005) *The Spanish Civil War. Origin, course and outcomes*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Romero Salvadó, Francisco J. (2008) *The Foundations of Civil War – Revolution, Social Conflict and Reaction in Liberal Spain, 1916–1923*. London: Routledge, Cañada Blanc.
- Room, Adrian (Ed.) (2000) *Brewer's dictionary of modern phrase and fable*, London: Cassell.
- Rubinstein, David (1999) ‘York Friends and The Great War’. *Borthwick Paper*, No. 96, University of York.
- Rubio, Javier (1979) *Asilos y canjes durante la Guerra Civil de España*. Barcelona: Planeta.
- Rufat, Ramon (1990) *Espions de la République*. St. Niklaan: Ed. Allia.

- Salas Larrazabal, R. (1973) *Historia del Ejército Popular de la República* (4 vols.). Madrid: Editora Nacional.
- Sánchez Albornoz, Nicolás (1987) *The economic modernisation of Spain 1830–1930*. London: London University Press.
- Sanchez, J. M. (1988) *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press.
- Sandoz, Yves (1995) *Mise en oeuvre du droit International Humanitaire*. Geneva: Henri Dunant Institute.
- Sanz Campos, I. & Tusell, J. (1981) *Fascistas en España: la intervención italiana en la guerra civil a través de los telegramas de la "Missione Militare Italiana in Spagna"*. Madrid/Rome: CSIC.
- Sanz Campos, I. (1986) *Mussolini contra la II República: hostilidad, conspiraciones, intervención (1931–1936)*. Valencia: Institución Alfonso el Magnánimo.
- Schlayer, Felix (2008) *Diplomático en el Madrid Rojo*. (Original: *Diplomat im Roten Madrid*, Berlin: 1938, translated by Alejandro Martín Navarro) Sevilla: Espuela de Plata.
- Schlissel, Lillian (Ed.) (1968) *Conscience in America: A Documentary History of Conscientious Objection in America, 1757–1967*. New York: Dutton Paperback.
- Schmitt, Hans A. (1997) *Quakers and Nazis, Inner Light in Outer Darkness*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.
- Serrallonga I Urquidi, Joan (2004) *Refugiats i Desplaçats dins la Catalunya en Guerra 1936–1939*. Barcelona: Editorial Bose.
- Sessions, William K. (1991) *They chose the star. Quaker relief work in France 1870–75*. York, UK: Sessions Book Trust.
- Shubert, A. (1990) *A Social History of Modern Spain*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Sierra, Veronica (2009) *Palabras Huérfanas. Los Niños y la Guerra Civil*. Madrid: Santillana.
- Silver, Christopher (2007) *Renkioi, Brunell's forgotten Crimean War Hospital*. London: Valonia Press.
- Simpson, Sir John Hope (1939) *The Refugee Problem; Report of a Survey*. Oxford Pamphlets in World Affairs, No. 13. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Skoepol, T. (1979) *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skran, Claudena (1995) *Refugees in inter war Europe. The Emergence of a Regime*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Smith, Russell E. & Zeitz, Dorothy (1970) *American Social Welfare Institutions*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Solé Sabaté, J. M. & Villarroya, J. (1987) *L'ocupació military de Catalunya*. Barcelona: L'Avenç.
- Solé Sabaté, J. M. & Villarroya, J. (1989: Vol. 1 - 1990: Vol. 2) *La repressió a la reraguarda de Catalunya (1936–1939)*. Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat.

- Southworth, Herbert (1967) *Antifalange. Estudio Crítico de Falange en la Guerra de España de M. García Venero*. Bordeaux: Ruedo Ibérico.
- Southworth, Herbert (1977) *Guernica, Guernica! A study of journalism, diplomacy, propaganda and history*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Southworth, Herbert (1986) *El mito de la cruzada de Franco*. Barcelona: Plaza y Janés.
- Steer, George Lowther (1938) *The Tree of Guernika – a Field Study of Modern War*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Stein, Louis (1979) *Beyond Death and Exile. The Spanish Republicans in France 1939–1955*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Stone, Glyn (1979) ‘Britain, Non-Intervention and the Spanish Civil War’. *European Studies Review*, Vol. IX, pp. 129-49.
- Stone, Glyn (1989) ‘The European Great Powers and The Spanish Civil War’, in Robert Boyce & Esmonde M. Robertson (Eds.) *Paths to War: New Essays on the Origins of the Second World War* (pp. 199-232). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Stone, Glyn (1994) *The Oldest Ally: Britain and the Portuguese Connection 1936–1941*. London: The Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press.
- Stone, Glyn (2005) *Spain, Portugal and the Great Powers, 1931 1941*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Talon, Vicente (1973) *Arde Guernica*. Madrid: G. del Toro.
- Tatham, Meaburn & Miles, James E. (Eds.) (1919) *The Friends’ ambulance unit 1914-1919: a record*. London: The Swarthmore Press.
- Taylor, Alan John Percival (1965) *English History 1914–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, Alan John Percival (1995) *From Napoleon to the Second International: Essays on Nineteen Century Europe*. London: Penguin Books.
- Terry, Fiona (2002) *Condemned to repeat? The Paradox to Humanitarian action*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Thomas, Gareth (1990) *The Novel of the Spanish Civil War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thomas, Hugh (1990) *The Spanish Civil War*. London: Penguin.
- Thomas, Joan Maria (2001) *La Falange de Franco*. Madrid: Plaza Janes.
- Townson, Nigel (2000) *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain. Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Brighton, Sussex: Academia Press.
- Traina, Richard P. (1968) *American Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Trapiello, Andrés (2002) *Las Armas y las Letras. Literatura y Guerra Civil (1936–1939)*. Barcelona: Península.
- Tremlett, Giles (2006) *Ghosts of Spain*. New York: Walter & Co.
- Trotsky, Leon (1973) *The Spanish Revolution 1931-1939*. New York: Pathfinder.
- Ucelay da Cal, E. (1982) *La Catalunya populista. Imatge, cultura i política en l’etapa republicana (1931–1939)*. Barcelona: La Magrana.

- Ucelay da Cal, E. (1995a) 'The nationalism of the periphery: politics and culture in the construction of national identity', in Graham, H. & Labanyi, J. (Eds.) (1995), *Spanish Cultural Studies* (pp. 33-39). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ucelay da Cal, E. (1995b) 'Catalan nationalism: cultural plurality and political ambiguity (1931-1939)', in Graham, H. & Labanyi, J. (Eds.) (1995), *Spanish Cultural Studies* (pp. 144-151). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ugalde, M. (1993) *Mujeres y nacionalismo vasco: Emakume Abertzale Batza 1906–1936*. Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco.
- Ugalde, M. (1992) 'The discourse of gender and the Basque nationalist movement in the first third of the twentieth century.' *History of European Ideas*, 15, issues 4-6, pp. 695-700.
- Ugarte Tellería, Javier (1998) *La Nueva Covadonga Insurgente: Orígenes Sociales y Culturales de la Sublevación de 1936 en Navarra y el País Vasco*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- Valle, Teresa del (Ed.) (1985) *Mujer Vasca: Imagen y Realidad*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
- Veatch, R. (1990) 'The League of Nations and the Spanish Civil War 1936–1939'. *European History Quarterly*, pp.181-207.
- Veiga, Francisco (1978) *La Guerra de les Embaixades, La Falange exterior a Romania i l'Orient Mitjà 1936-1944*. Barcelona: L'Avenç.
- Venero, Maximiano García (1967) *Falange en la Guerra de España. La Unificación y Hedilla*. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico.
- Vignaux, P. (1986) *Manuel de Irujo, Ministre de la Republique dans la guerre d'Espagne 1936–1939*. Paris: Beauchesne.
- Vilar, P. (1977) *Spain. A Brief History*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Vilar, Pierre (1986) *La Guerra Civil Española*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- Viñas, A. (1979) *El oro de Moscú. Alfa y omega de un mito franquista*. Barcelona: Grijalbo.
- Viñas, A. (1984) 'The Financing of the Spanish Civil War', in Preston, Paul (Ed.) (1984) *Revolution and War in Spain 1931–1939* (pp. 246-284). London: Routledge.
- Viñas, A. (2001) *Franco, Hitler y el estallido de la guerra civil*. Madrid: Alianza.
- Vining, Elizabeth Gray (1959) *Friend of Life. The Biography of Rufus M. Jones*. London: Michael Joseph.
- Vinyes, R. (1983) *La Catalunya Internacional. El frontpopulisme en l'exemple català*. Barcelona: Curial.
- Voltaire (François Marie Arouet) (1927) *The Religion of the Quakers in his "Philosophical Dictionary"* (1764), from the English translation in *The Works of Voltaire*, Vol. XIX, Part 2. New York: Dingwall Rock.
- Warrens, Max (1967) *Social History and Christian Mission*. London: SCM Press.
- Waters, Toni (2000) *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan. The limitations of humanitarian relief operations*. Boulder, CO: Boulder West View.

- Watkins, K. W. (1963) *Britain Divided: The Effect of The Spanish Civil War on British Public Opinion*. London & New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons.
- Watson, Robert Spence (2009) *The Villages around Metz (1870)*. Newcastle: JM Carr, Steam Printing Works (1870).
- West, Dan (1938) *Needy Spain, A report on relief work*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee.
- Whealey, R. H. (1983) 'Economic Influences of the Great Powers in the Spanish Civil War: from the Popular Front to the Second World War'. *The International History Review*, Vol. 5- 2, May, pp. 229-254.
- Whealey, R. H. (1989) *Hitler and Spain: the Nazi Role in the Spanish Civil War*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Wigham, Hannah M. (1886) *A Christian Philanthropist of Dublin, Memoir of Richard Allen*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Williams, Eryl Han (1953) *A Page of History in Relief 1944 to 1946*. York, UK: Sessions Books Trust.
- Wilson, Francesca (1944) *In the margins of chaos: recollections of relief work in and between three wars*. London: John Murray.
- Wilson, Francesca (1967) *Rebel daughter of a Country House: The life of Eglantyne Jebb, Founder of Save the Children Fund*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Winston, Colin M. (1985) *Workers and the Right in Spain, 1910–1936*. Princeton
- Woolman, David S. (1969) *Rebels in the Rif: Abd Al Krim and the Rif Rebellion*. Stanford(CA): Stanford University Press.
- Wyman, Mark (1988) *DPs Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Young, Richard & Young, Nigel (Eds.) (1987) *Campaign for peace. Movements in the Twentieth Century*. Manchester University Press.
- Zartman, William & Toural, Sadia (Eds.) (1984) *The Theory and Practice of Mediation*. Boulder, CO: Boulder West View.
- Zirakzadeh, C. E. (1991) *A Rebellious People. Basques, Protests and Politics*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press.
- Zugazagoitia, Julián (1968) *Guerra y vicisitudes de los españoles (2 vols)*. Paris: Librairie Espagnole.
- Zulaika, J. (1988) *Basque Violence. Metaphor and Sacrament*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press.



## Unpublished work

- Barrutia, Rafael de (n.d.) 'Desde Santurce a Southampton. Memorias de un niño vasco evacuado en Mayo de 1937'. (Book Project deposited at the Historical Archive of Basque Nationalism).
- Becerra, Santiago Niño (n.d.) An approach to the systematic of history (Book project).
- Ealham, Christopher Mark (1996) 'Policing the recession: unemployment, social protest and law and order in Republican Barcelona 1931–1936'. Thesis, University of London.
- Fiscalini, Diego (1985) 'Des élites aux services d'une cause humanitaire. Le Comité International de la Croix Rouge.' Mémoire de Licence, Université de Genève, Faculté des Lettres. Département d'Histoire.
- Guthrie, William (1989) Oral History Interview – 14 Wilbur Camp, France 1919 and Esther Farquhar. Spain 1938. American Friends Service Committee, 30 March 1989.
- Municio Oliver, Enrique (1986) Actividades de la Cruz Roja durante la Guerra Civil Española. Memoria de Licenciatura. Departamento de Historia Contemporánea. Facultad de Geografía e Historia. Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Pretus, Gabriel (2003) *Commander Troncoso: a Man for all season in the Northern Campaign of the Spanish Civil War 1936-39*. Dissertation, Royal Holloway University of London.

## **Annexes to Thesis**

---

Document A: Board of directors, International commission for the assistance of child refugees in Spain

Document B: Map: evolution of the campaign in Catalonia

Document C: Kershner's letter to Franco, November 1939

Document D: Kershner's memorandum to Franco, November 1939

**i. Board of directors, International commission  
for the assistance of child refugees in Spain**

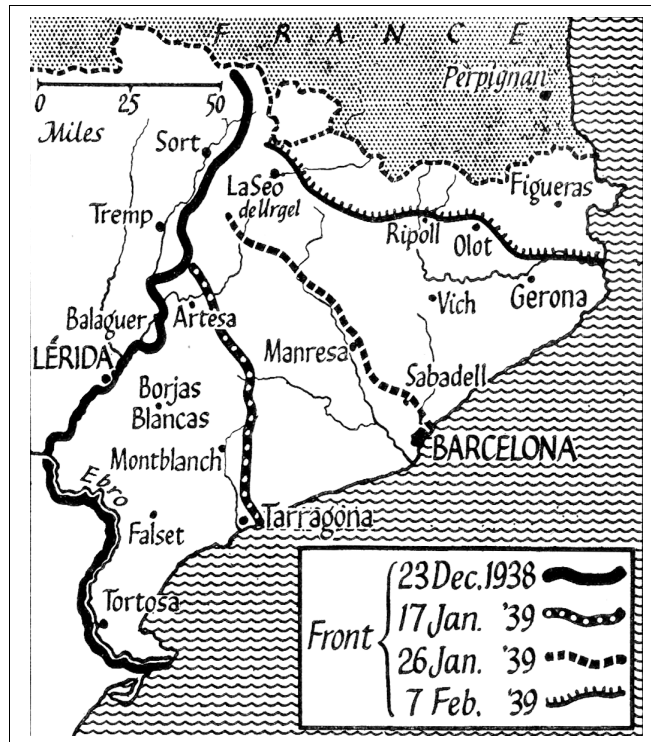
<b>President:</b>	Judge Michael Hanson (Norway) <sup>§</sup>
<b>Vice-President and Director:</b>	Howard E. Kershner (USA)
<b>Vice-Presidents:</b>	Viscount Cranborne (G.B.) Professor Bertil Olhin (Sweden) Madame E. Chevalley (France) Madame G. Malaterre Pellier (France)
<b>Treasurer:</b>	François de Condolle
<b>Members:</b>	Dr Harriette Click (GB) Dr Hilda Clarck (GB)* Pierre Ceresole (Switzerland) The Honorable Mrs Crowsley (GB) Professor J C Drunmond (GB) Mlle Suzane Ferriere (Switzerland) T. Edmund Harvey MB (GB)* Dr de Navailles-Labatut (France) Clarence E. Pickett (USA)* Miss. Edith M. Pye (GB)* Dr Audrey Russell (GB) Professor Noel F. Hall (GB) Howard Sturges (USA)*

---

<sup>§</sup> Also head of the Nansen committee for refugees of the League of Nations.

\* Quaker

**ii. Map: evolution of the campaign in Catalonia**



Source: Thomas, H. (1990), p. 717.

### **iii. Kershner's letter to Franco, November 1939**

I have the honour to call to the attention of Your Excellency a matter which may prove of interest to yourself and of benefit to the Spanish people. Your Excellency is of course aware that we have expended many millions of pesetas in supplying food, clothing and medical supplies to Spanish children and aged people during the tragic days of the late civil war. We have recently inaugurated a programme of sending from America to Spain an additional two million pesetas worth of medical supplies, milk and infant food. In addition to this last-mentioned sum we have a much larger amount which we are using to assist the French Government in caring for the Spanish people in France. Many of them are known to our workers who distribute clothing and supplies to them, and are known also to myself. We believe that most of them are fine people, acceptable citizens of any country, and not connected with any criminal activity.

If Your Excellency would consider it advisable to declare a general amnesty, I believe nearly all of these people would return to Spain promptly. I know that most of them have long been very homesick for their native country. Of course those who have been guilty of any wrong doing would probably not return in any event, but any promise of freedom from difficulty in the event of their return would probably bring back 90 per cent of the Spanish refugees at once.

If Your Excellency should see fit to do this, this Commission would come to Spain with its entire resources to assist in caring for these people until they could be returned to their homes and re-established in their own communities. The greater parts of our funds are now in America so that the help which we would render would represent importations of foodstuffs and supplies into Spain.

A move of this nature on the part of Your Excellency would be so popular in North America that I think we could confidently make a new appeal that additional resources be placed at our disposal for assisting the Spanish people. Under the circumstance mentioned above we would take pleasure in issuing such an appeal.

I need hardly add that this move on the part of Your Excellency would not only be extremely popular in America, but equally popular in France, England, the Dominions, Scandinavia and many other countries. Most of the Spanish people in France are very worthy citizens and would of course prove of great value to your country. Even though a few criminals did slip through on the basis of your amnesty decree, they would soon be caught for new offenses in Spain and the goods accruing to your country as the result of the return of this great number of excellent citizens would certainly outweigh the harm arising from the few unworthy persons who might come back with the others.

As one who has long been interested in Spain and its people, and who has devoted his entire time to this work of assistance, and as Director of this Commission which has received grants from twenty-four governments and from innumerable organisations and individuals all over the world, I cannot too strongly urge upon Your Excellency the most careful consideration of this matter. Moreover, now is the time to do it before these people become involved in the present war and so lost to Spain forever.

With my very best wishes to Your Excellency and Your Excellency's Government in your effort to restore happiness and prosperity to the Spanish people,

I have the honour to remain,

Most respectfully yours,

#### **iv. Kershner's memorandum to Franco, November 1939**

Will Your Gracious Excellency allow me to add a few very personal and confidential words to the content of my letter. I do so with great humbleness of heart and from a deep concern for the welfare of the Spanish people.

As Director for the International Commission for the Assistance of Spanish Child Refugees it has been my duty and privilege to send large amounts of food and clothing to all parts of Your Excellency's country during the late war, and even larger amounts since the war.

During the past year I have several times travelled all over Spain. I have made hosts of friends in your beautiful country and I believe, with real satisfaction, that I have won the affection and love of many Spaniards.

In the name of Him whom you and I both honour as our Saviour and strive to serve, I make bold to plead with Your Excellency to extend to the Spanish refugees in France and other lands the hand of forgiveness and love, even as our Lord has taught us to love our enemies.

There are at present more than 170,000 Spanish refugees in France where many of them are suffering from cold, hunger, and neglect. They are exiles from their native land and their dearest wish is to return home. With France at war, their lot will be very difficult in that country and if Your Excellency does not accept their return, many of them will find places in the army or in industry and so be lost to Spain forever.

Forgiveness is the Christian law of life. Throughout the course of human history vengeance and punishment even though merited have aroused new hatreds and have prevented the achievement of true peace and prosperity.

I sincerely believe that there lies before Your Excellency the unique opportunity to be the greatest man in the history of Spain. By receiving the refugees home from foreign lands, forgiving political offenders, and thus ushering in a new era of love and prosperity and winning forever the loyalty of a united Spanish people, Your Excellency will not only be a happy ruler in Spain, enshrined securely in the hearts of your countrymen, but you will also be loved and respected abroad. You will be setting an example which sooner or later other nations must follow if our Christian civilisation is not to disappear. Who knows but what such action on your part might be the turning point in world history. You might strike a light in Spain which would illuminate the world.

This action on your part might catch the imagination of other rulers and lead to a worldwide movement toward security and peace based on justice and mutual good will. Surely no man ever faced a greater, more historic opportunity.

# Appendix 1: A historical approach to the independent, non-partisan humanitarian agencies

---

## 1. The Quakers: beliefs, behaviour and action

### 1.1 Introduction

The Society of Friends, also known as the Religious Society of Friends and better known as the Quakers, was founded c. 1647 by George Fox, a Leicestershire weaver turned wandering preacher, whose message to the human race was that ‘Christ had come to teach his people himself’.<sup>22</sup> A Church, a priest or a book were not necessary in order to listen to the direct and individually received word of God. In answer to Voltaire’s question, ‘How can you pretend to know whether your discourse is really inspired by the Almighty?’, Andrew Pit, an impressive Quaker, replied,

Whosoever shall implore Christ to enlighten him, and shall publish the truths contained in the Gospel, of which he inwardly feels, such a one may be assured that he is inspired by the Lord.<sup>23</sup>

Their religious observances, therefore, consisted of men and women – who were completely equal – gathering in private homes or Meeting Houses, where they would sit in intense contemplation until one of them spoke as the spirit – which they held to be the Holy Spirit of God – moved them.

How they came by the name ‘Quaker’ is not known for certain. In his *Journal*, George Fox said that in 1650:

Justice Bennett was the first to call us ‘Quakers’, because I bade him quake and tremble at the word of the Lord.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Fox (1997), p. 27

<sup>23</sup> Voltaire (1927), pp. 192-212.

<sup>24</sup> Fox (1997), p. 22.

There was, nonetheless, an earlier English sect whose adherents trembled and shook with emotion during their religious services and Bennett was probably applying the term to Fox's Society as well.<sup>25</sup>

First among the codes of public behaviour of the Quakers was an absolute pacifism: never raise one's voice in anger; never answer violence with violence; never pick up a weapon nor threaten anybody with an instrument that could be used as a weapon; join no army or armed group or police service and with no government whose power stands upon force, which is almost to say with no government at all. They argued that, when talking to another person, whether a close relation or not and regardless of his or her station in life, Quakers should use 'thou' and 'thee', and to more than one person, 'you' and 'ye'. This was seen as a guard against vanity, which shored up class divisions. Thus, terms as 'Sir', 'Your Worship', 'My Lord' and 'Your Excellency', not to mention 'Your Grace' and 'Your Majesty', were forbidden on all occasions as irreligious. Since they viewed the swearing of oaths as the taking of God's name in vain, they refused to swear them even in courts of justice, and hence they constantly got into trouble with every authority, be it civic, military, legal or clerical.

The Quakers also took a determined stance against war. Their Peace Testimony, first expressed in a statement to Charles II in 1661, attests to the Quakers' opposition to war and military service, and is based on the teachings of Christ to love one's enemies.<sup>26</sup> This is an active testimony, as the Quakers do not believe in passive resignation, but in an active policy of protests and demonstrations against policies of war and confrontation. The Peace Testimony, with its emphasis on brotherly love and forgiveness, would be the fundamental reference point for the Quakers and that which moved them to relieve the sufferings of others in need.

The first stage of their evolution into the large and respectable Society of today was made possible by the Toleration Act of 1689. Persecution by the authorities ceased, the price being that whereas Anglican clergy could no longer interrupt and denounce their Meetings, Quakers could no longer interrupt and denounce the services of the Anglican Church or of any other Church. Moreover, the Act enabled the Quakers to survive as self-supporting communities, for their teachings were at least coherent while those of

---

<sup>25</sup> Brewer's "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" (2000), see entry 'Quaker'.

<sup>26</sup> Statements by the Quakers to King Charles II (1661) FHL.



many of their rival congregations were less so. All a Quaker had to do to keep the Faith was to listen to the 'Word of the Lord' at Meetings, obey a few rules relating to dress, speech and marriage (a Quaker could not marry a non-Quaker, but converts were always welcome), and to adopt a peaceful trade and deal fairly.<sup>27</sup>

This deceptively simple code of conduct was put to the severest test during the colonial wars in America, in the 1740s and 1750s, and, above all, by the American War of Independence (1775-1783). As a consequence, the religious side of Quakerism became quieter and more private, while, over the next two centuries, the Quakers achieved fame for their skills in making things and selling them. Indeed, the list of well-known manufacturing and trading companies originally founded by Quakers, even in heavy industry and banking, particularly in the U.K., is extraordinary: Barclays Bank, Lloyds TSB, Cadbury (now Cadbury-Schweppes), Rowntree, Mackintosh and Clark's Shoes amongst others. Ironically, the porridge 'Quaker Oats' has no Quaker connection.

As the Quakers began to form themselves into an organized movement at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century they elected 'Yearly Meetings' which would act as directive bodies to agree on matters of general policy, the chief Meetings being in London and Philadelphia. In turn these 'Yearly Meetings' appointed 'Meetings for Sufferings' to supply money and help to the families of Quakers who had been imprisoned or hanged or had suffered some other serious misfortune. Gradually then, the Quakers expanded from Quietism, the original basis of their practice, as they were increasingly obliged to defend themselves, without resorting to violence, against their persecutors and when they realized, as they became better established, that Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan had to be taken literally.

---

<sup>27</sup> In 1757, in a Militia Act of the British parliament, the Quakers were exempt from the duty of serving in the King's Army when called.

## 1.2 Quaker developments: from the American Revolution to the Franco-Prussian War 1774-1870/1

Thus, in 1774, a century and a quarter after the creation of the Society, the Philadelphia Friends suggested to the New York Meeting for Sufferings, that a fund be raised ‘for the relief of the necessitous *of every religious denomination*’ (my italics) in Boston, where the closure of the port by the British authorities, in response to the ‘Boston Tea Party’, was causing much hardship not only in Boston itself but in the surrounding villages.<sup>28</sup>

This was the first active humanitarian intervention by the Friends, and their method of relief followed the same basic pattern for well over a century. The process would begin as the result of individual appeals from members that activated the body responsible for moving on such an issue, i.e. the Meeting for Sufferings. This was followed by the setting-up of *ad hoc* committees that organized the collecting of funds. Indeed, until the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, the Friends simply collected funds and sent them to committees in the conflict zones. Advice was given to the Friends about the formation of these committees by local doctors, priests and mayors, a formula that created unsatisfactory situations due to the traditional diversity in the political and moral attitudes of those involved.<sup>29</sup>

The first Quaker relief intervention in Boston was a huge success. The fact that £6,000 (in 1774 money) was raised and distributed among 10,000 people in the neighbouring settlements, of whom the majority were not Quakers, is an indication of how solidly based by then was the prosperity of the Quakers in America. In Boston itself, after the British had left, Quakers went from house to house distributing aid to all, without distinction.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the Meetings for Sufferings, the fundamental organizing body during the Boston relief effort, became the antecedent of the permanent Quaker bodies for international humanitarian relief that exist today.

---

<sup>28</sup> The ‘Boston Tea Party’ refers to the protest by the American colonists against the British government, on 16 December 1773, against the increase in taxes to the colonists. It took place in Boston harbour, when protesters destroyed crates of tea bricks in ships that belonged to the British East India Company. This incident has been considered the start of the American Revolution, and became one of its main icons. Cadbury (1943), p. 314.

<sup>29</sup> This, of course, was not the case in Boston, but persons of similar standing, ‘*selectmen*’, advised the committee.

<sup>30</sup> As Moses Brown (1738-1836), a well-known Quaker industrialist active in one of the relief parties said of the Boston experience, ‘It hath been a sort of school to us’. Cadbury (1943), p. 314.

The American War of Independence divided the Quakers between those who supported the rebellion, of whom about 1,000 joined Washington's army, and, although most of them probably did little if any fighting, were disowned by the Meetings, and those who, rejecting the violence of the Patriots, stayed passively loyal to the Crown or declared their neutrality. As a result, many Quakers were arrested as traitors by one side or the other.

From the end of the American War of Independence in 1783 to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, the Quakers became increasingly involved in humanitarian efforts in Europe and America, and thus consolidated their reputation for justice, fairness and lack of prejudice. For example, in the Irish uprising of 1798, led by the United Irishmen under Wolfe Tone<sup>31</sup>, some Quakers were allowed to help the Catholic Irish as well as the British wounded among the prisoners. The yearly meeting of the national meeting of Friends in 1796 had banned all men from keeping guns in their homes, and anyone who disobeyed this order was disowned by the organisation. This position as men of peace enabled the Quakers to offer aid to the wounded and prisoners, to British soldiers and United Irishmen alike, a precedent that was remembered in the Irish Troubles of the twentieth century.<sup>32</sup>

Their reputation was further strengthened by their opposition to slavery, the first people in Britain and America to do so. Fox had denounced it in 1671 and the Philadelphians in 1696 and the few Quakers who owned slaves had either freed them or been expelled from the congregation. Nevertheless, it was not until 1783 that the London Quakers formed an association whose purpose was to abolish slavery everywhere, and it was at a meeting in March 1804, attended by several non-Quaker veterans of the anti-slavery movement, that the British and Foreign Bible Society was inaugurated.<sup>33</sup> In this way, through the Anglican and Non-Conformist clergy, whose wealthy parishioners included bankers, merchants and philanthropists, the Quakers established connections with persons of substance abroad.

---

<sup>31</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone (1769–1798), was a leading figure in the United Irishmen (the Irish independence movement) and is regarded as the father of Irish Republicanism. He died from a wound after being sentenced to death for his part in the 1798 rebellion.

<sup>32</sup> Hatton (1993), pp. 40-41.

<sup>33</sup> This was the same Bible Society that sent George Borrow as an agent to sell bibles to Spain thirty years later. These non-Quaker veterans were William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Charles Grant, Zachary Macaulay and Henry Thornton.

On the basis of this increased support, the Quakers set up a fund, for the ‘Distressed Inhabitants of Germany’, to relieve the suffering of thousands of Germans and their families during and after the Napoleonic wars. Nearly £50,000 was raised from collections throughout Great Britain made by Churches, Quaker meetings and philanthropic societies. The money was sent to Germany through confidential channels and distributed by local Committees of ‘Reverend, Clergymen and Merchants’.<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that important links existed between the London Community of Merchants and Bankers (both Jewish and non-Jewish) with German backgrounds, and their counterparts in Germany, such as the Oppenheimers, Arnsteins, Rothschilds and Akermans. Moreover, Quaker connections with Moravian, Brethren, Mennonites and Pietists<sup>35</sup> in Germany were of great use in the assessment and distribution of local needs.<sup>36</sup>

These early humanitarian interventions by the Quakers, clearly seen during the German relief operation from 1805 to 1816, reveal that the Quakers were always open to collaborations with other organisations, even when their collaborators were not inspired by evangelical pity.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the German relief operation was an example of ecumenical work not seen again until after the end of the Second World War.<sup>38</sup> Undoubtedly this was due to the connections established between the Friends and other organisations within the anti-slavery movement, such as the Bible Society, based as much on friendship ties as on shared doctrine.<sup>39</sup>

The Quakers were also actively involved in relief operations in territories where problems ensued after the Congress of Vienna, held between 1814 and 1815. The Vienna Congress ‘system’ was an attempt to stabilise Europe after the Napoleonic Wars and prevent the spread of nationalism, on the basis of the restoration of the old monarchical territorial system. The numerous conflicts that the ‘Congress system’ engendered saw the Quakers active from 1815 in Eastern Europe, Turkey and Russia,

---

<sup>34</sup> London received ‘satisfactory and minute accounts of the actual distribution’ from these local committees. Ormerod Greenwood (1975), p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Protestant Churches and movements connected in one way or another with the Quakers.

<sup>36</sup> Canton (1904), pp. 38-39.

<sup>37</sup> Although the Quakers often experienced enormous difficulties in collaborating with other forces, as during the Greek operations from 1822 to 1867, this did not prevent them from launching general initiatives of humanitarian aid with other forces. Allen (1847), Vol.1, pp. 339.

<sup>38</sup> With the exception of the collaboration that Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children and its Protestant agency, SCIU, received from Pope Benedict XV in 1919.

<sup>39</sup> Ormerod Greenwood (1975), p. 17.

whilst the problems in Ireland, particularly the ‘Great Hunger’ of 1846/7, also continued to require a Quaker response. The Friends also sent relief to the victims of the Indian famine in the late 1830s, and to Syria between 1860-78, when the country was ravaged by war.<sup>40</sup> The Quakers attempted, without success, to mediate with the Tsar to avoid the Crimean War, but were subsequently banned from the main scenario of the war, and forced to restrict their relief effort to Finnish territory, which was then a Russian possession<sup>41</sup> and a must forgotten site of the confrontation with Russia.

In 1827-1828, the long-standing divergence between the Quietists – who taught the supremacy of the ‘Inner Light’ and eschewed social commitment – and the Evangelicals, activists who held that good works were equally incumbent upon a Christian, widened into a schism which threatened to discredit the whole Quaker movement. This division in America led to the separation between the evangelicals, who called themselves ‘Orthodox’, and the Hicksites, who included both ‘quietists’ and ‘liberals’.<sup>42</sup> In Britain it produced the ‘Beaconite’ controversy in 1835, with more than 300 members abandoning the Society.<sup>43</sup>

It seems clear – looking through their correspondence and records – that Quakers’ intervention in relief work during the 55 years between the defeat of Napoleon in June 1815 and the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870, was mostly unstructured and driven by the personal efforts of the organisation’s most devoted members. In essence, the Friends collected donations and sent them to local committees of notables, who then distributed them according to local needs. This fundamental structure of fundraising for needy causes would continue during subsequent years, but,

---

<sup>40</sup> There was often collaboration between Scottish, Irish and English Quakers in the collection of donations for relief, such as the help given to Polish exiles in Britain during this period.

<sup>41</sup> Their position in favour of a settlement with Russia was presented as ‘unpatriotic’ by the British press of the time.

<sup>42</sup> The Hicksites were followers of Elias Hicks (1748-1830), and included the socially inactive Quietists, and the ‘liberals’, those who valued reason over emotion and questioned the infallibility of the Bible, which provoked their rejection by the evangelical ‘Orthodox’ sector.

<sup>43</sup> The Beaconite controversy took its name from a pamphlet of January 1835, published by a Quaker Minister Isaac Crewdson, entitled ‘A Beacon to the Society of Friends’, which defended a new approach more based on the Bible and the outwork of Christ with well addressed sermons and the end of the silent ‘tedious’ meetings historically associated with the Friends. There also seemed to be some connections with the American Hicksites. The controversy widened the gap between the exponents of the more mystical or introverted theology and those who sustained the more evangelical posture than the philanthropic activities that blossomed in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, supported and helped in the downfall of the existing barriers between Friends and other Christian Confessions. Braithwaite Thomas, (1912).

as we shall see, the Quakers would become much more actively involved in the distribution of resources, and thus re-structure their relief activities accordingly.

### 1.3 The Franco-Prussian War 1870-1

In the many histories of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, which describe the campaigns, battles and sieges of the conflict, it is difficult to find much information on the terrible effects of the fighting upon the people who lived in the areas where the armies passed or clashed.<sup>44</sup> If we wish to find out more about the human tragedies of war, one of the best primary sources are the letters, reports and personal accounts of the Quakers who went to the war on missions of relief. The Quakers drew attention to the terrible human suffering caused by war, and believed that it was their obligation as Quakers to do something to ameliorate it. The only way this could be achieved, they argued, was by going to the assistance of both sides in any conflict. Moreover, this assistance must never be allowed to furnish, even indirectly, armaments of any description to the combatants.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, between two of Continental Europe's major powers, was the result of Prussia's growing military power and Napoleon III's over-estimation of the strength of French forces and his own military leadership.<sup>45</sup> There were, of course, deeper causes of the conflict; the rapid industrialisation in the German lands, particularly the south, and the desires of the German Chancellor, Bismarck, to unite all the German lands under Prussian leadership.<sup>46</sup> War was declared on 15 July 1870, and by 1 September the Prussians had defeated one French army and had captured Napoleon III. A second French army was besieged in Metz, until it surrendered on 23 October. On 4 September, the Third French Republic was declared.

The Prussians followed up their victory by laying siege to Paris, with an army of 240,000 troops, a siege that lasted until the city surrendered on 28 January, 1871. In March, while peace negotiations were underway, the National government was

---

<sup>44</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1924 edition), for example, contains nine pages dedicated exclusively to the military aspects of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

<sup>45</sup> Napoleon III believed that French armies would sweep through Germany like his uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte, had done seventy years before.

<sup>46</sup> Germany, as such, did not exist as a single nation until unification in 1870-1. Unification in 1871 was itself the product, in part, of Prussian success in the Franco-Prussian War. For a good, succinct account of the unification of Germany, and the role of Bismarck in this, see Carr, W. (1974), pp. 120-135.

overthrown by the Commune, and siege conditions thus continued. In May, the Communards themselves were crushed by a French army loyal to the National government led by premier Thiers. The Prussians, on this occasion, were merely bystanders.

Although the Franco-Prussian War was relatively short – less than a year – it consisted of a few crucial battles involving very large forces. For example, there were more than 650,000 soldiers around Metz, which held about 180,000 defenders. The sieges, too, have been unmatched in any subsequent war, except perhaps by some Russian operations during World War II. Armies also lived off the land, taking grain, livestock and other necessities from the local farmers. Houses were often taken from their owners, and stripped of linen and bedding. The distress to the local populations during this war was dramatic and hence the urgent need for widespread relief.

Moreover, sanitary conditions were totally inadequate. For example, 23,489 French soldiers died within six months due to smallpox as conscripts were called up without having been vaccinated. John Bellows<sup>47</sup> refers to a Dutch surgeon, working with the French, who told him that, ‘in one of the French “Ambulances” (Field Hospitals) the survival rate of amputations was of only 2 out of 42 operations and in another, out of 12 amputations, none had lived. Dressings were done every four days and operations were performed with kitchen knives in the curee’s house at Amanvilliers, where blood flowed down to stairs and out of the front door into the street’.<sup>48</sup>

The outbreak of war was responded to by a series of humanitarian initiatives by various benevolent institutions: the International Committee of the Red Cross, the ‘Soeur De la Charité’, the ‘Société de St. Vincent de Paul’ and their equivalents in Germany, and other *ad hoc* bodies set up by a variety of initiatives, which included the London newspapers *The Telegraph* and *The Daily News*.

The Quakers involvement in the Franco-Prussian conflict started on 7 October 1870, in a Meeting for Sufferings held in London. John Hodskin raised the matter by suggesting the setting up of a ‘Friends War Victims Fund’, which was accepted by the meeting and

---

<sup>47</sup> Commissioner from Gloucester (1831–1902)

<sup>48</sup> Bellows (1871), p. 56.

10 Friends were appointed to frame an appeal in answer to the plea from a number of civic and religious dignitaries in North-East France headed by the Mayor of Briey.<sup>49</sup>

An Executive Committee of 15 was established which sat every weekday for two to five hours from 19 October 1870 to 8 May 1871, and thereafter twice a week. From 17 October 1870 to 3 April 1871 a large committee of 51 members met once a week.<sup>50</sup> Afterwards the committee met when summoned. In order to ensure that all the collections went to the relief effort, a 'War Victims Fund Committee' was established to raise funds among Friends to cover administrative expenses. It was also decided to send Quaker delegates, 'Commissioners', into the field, and it was assumed they would pay their own expenses. The 'War Victims Fund Committee' was run by three brothers, Joseph (41 years old), William (43 years old) and Ernest Beck (28 years old), who acted as Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, respectively.

A 'Ladies Committee' was formed in London, in October 1870, under the direction of Christine Majolier Alsop<sup>51</sup>, with local committees throughout the country. Other members included Augusta Fry, Richenda Elizabeth Reynolds, Emilia de Bussens and Ellen Jackson.<sup>52</sup> A warehouse was loaned to the Friends, which included sewing, lifting and weighing machines, and here, as well as at the Quakers' own Bedford Institute, around 100 women were employed in sorting, cleaning, mending and packing clothing and other assorted donated goods, as well as in the making of new garments. They were helped by 'Ladies' volunteers from the Committee and under the supervision of a paid textile technician.

---

<sup>49</sup> Meeting for Sufferings, minutes, 7 October 1870, FHL. Unknown to the Quakers at the time was the fact that this letter, containing the said appeal to the British people, was not so spontaneous, but had been drafted by the correspondent of the *New York Times*, Gustav Müller.

<sup>50</sup> This committee consisted of the executive committee of 15, 8 MPs, some of whom had relief experience, such as Jonathan Pim and William Bennett from the Irish campaign and Thomas Harvey and Joseph Cooper from the Finnish relief effort. Meeting for Sufferings, minutes, 7 October 1870.

<sup>51</sup> Christine Majolier, French Quaker who became Christine M. Alsop by her marriage to the English gentleman M. Alsop, was born in France in 1805. Working with the British Friends in many humanitarian missions, by her French origin she was fully committed to the Franco-German War 1870-71. For more information, see Gillett Braithwaite (1882).

<sup>52</sup> Some of these were from old Quaker families, such as Augusta Fry, granddaughter of Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), prison and social reformer and well-known Quaker philanthropist, Richenda Elizabeth Reynolds (1808-1884), from an old Quaker family, who, with her mother, Richenda Fry, ran a Seaman's Institute in Caen. Non-Quakers like the German Emilia de Bunsen joined the nursing service at the start of the war, while Ellen Jackson, from Liverpool, who spoke fluent French and good German and had relief experience worked also with the Quaker Ladies.



Quaker relief was organized as in previous interventions, depending on committees of local people in the conflict areas, but in this case the committees were formed through two types of bodies: one was the local committees, which carried out direct action in towns and villages, and the other regional committees in the 'departments'<sup>53</sup>, to check on and avoid local shortcomings or imbalances. As in previous conflicts, advice was given to the Friends about the formation of those committees by local doctors, priests and mayors.

Special mention should be made of the work of the Quaker Commissioners, who were introduced for the first time during the Franco-Prussian War. The Commissioners were official representatives of the Society of Friends<sup>54</sup>, acting under the instructions of the Friends War Victims Fund. Their field work was determined by the lists supplied by the local committees and was extremely varied: organizing, distributing goods, delivering donations, indeed in any way that their help was needed.<sup>55</sup>

While inexperienced in the new field of relief, all were reputable and active people in their own right. There were 37 Commissioners in all, with 27 members and 10 non-members of the Society of Friends selected under the principle established by the Meeting for Sufferings that requested 'to find competent individuals to undertake the service'.<sup>56</sup> There were 31 men and 6 women, this being the first time, on French soil, that women served beside men in the field. This outcome had been unplanned; it was simply that the urgency of the situation demanded that women work side by side with men.

There was a small team of Ladies' Commissioners, among whom were the non-Quaker nurses Elizabeth Anne Barclay<sup>57</sup> and Amelia de Bunsen, and the Quakers Richenda Reynolds and Augusta Frey. The women organized, sorted and distributed the large quantities of clothing donated by Friends and visited and helped the sick. The difficulties of organizing this relief were enormous, given that the railways had been

---

<sup>53</sup> French administrative term for regional zones.

<sup>54</sup> See Document A for model of letter of introduction used by the Quaker Commissioners in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), and Document B for a list of the Quaker Relief Commissioners in said conflict, both in Annex to Appendix 1.

<sup>55</sup> In the areas around Metz, the Commissioners provided 13,000 kilograms of flour and 7,999 kilograms of potatoes between early December 1870 and the end of March 1871.

<sup>56</sup> Meeting for Sufferings, minutes, 19 October 1870, FHL.

<sup>57</sup> E.A. Barclay arrived in France in August 1870 at the behest of the recently formed National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War (in the spirit of the Red Cross principles).

taken over by the military and that horse transport was the only form available, which often caused innumerable delays.

Quaker Commissioners also advised and helped in reorganizing farming around Metz, by introducing new techniques of harvesting and seed distribution and supplied complete sets of Fowlers steam ploughs and cultivators.<sup>58</sup> Potatoes and corn seed were also distributed to the needy peasants in time for the spring sowing, together with barley, oats and other seeds. A total of £11,000 was spent on this, which covered about 11,000 acres of cultivated land. In the Dijon and Belfort areas, 700 Swiss cattle were purchased and distributed to make up for the losses of war, while in Paris relief was primarily in the form of financial assistance and clothing, though agricultural help was provided to the surrounding rural areas. By May 1871, a total of 75,000 pounds had been obtained from donors, the most important being from those in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>59</sup>

It must also be taken into consideration that the small Quaker team of Commissioners lived and worked in Metz under the shadow of the smallpox epidemic and other diseases affecting the area. Of the twelve men and women that worked in the Metz district, eight had been ill and one of them, Ellen Allen from Dublin, died. Allen's uncle, Richard Allen, lost the sight of one eye through a severe erysipelas attack.<sup>60</sup>

Amongst the Commissioners there was Robert Spence Watson, a law lecturer, John Bellows, a writer, William Jones, who owned chemical works, and sportsmen such as Henry Tuke Mennell and Thomas Whitwell from the Alpine Club, and Ernest Beck, who went canoeing all over Europe. These were mature men, in their 40s and 50s, the oldest being Richard Allen from Dublin, 67, and Arthur Albright from Birmingham, 59. These were men who usually spoke both French and German. The principle had been to send mature people into the field and have the home organisation run by a triumvirate of young Friends, the Beck brothers.

The Quaker intervention during the Franco-Prussian War was a full-scale operation that reflected a new stage of development of the Quaker relief system. The Quaker presence

---

<sup>58</sup> This was land cultivation machinery developed from 1845 by the Quaker, John Fowler Jr. (1826-1864). Shocked by the horrors of the Irish potato famine of that year, Fowler resolved to devote his time and resources to bringing down the cost of food production.

<sup>59</sup> Jones (1899), p. 82.

<sup>60</sup> Sessions (1991), pp. 17-25.

covered the scene of the conflict ‘from the frontier of Luxemburg to the frontier of Spain’<sup>61</sup>, and Quaker Commissioners had visited all French districts affected by the war. The operation had two successive phases, with the main centres of activities covering the Lorraine and the Argonne, in and around the cities of Metz, Paris and Orleans, the corn-growing area of La Baunne, and from Chartres south and east to Tours and Le Mans. This first phase lasted a year until the summer of 1871, when full-scale activity was over. Although the Commissioners had experienced great difficulties in reaching their destinations, often having to travel by horse due to the disruption of the main railway lines, they managed to perform their duties with remarkable efficacy, and overall the operation was a success.

The second phase was not strictly a Quaker project, as the Quaker relief operation was considered over by the summer of 1871.<sup>62</sup> The second phase, from the summer of 1871, could be said to have been a one-man show, undertaken by the Quaker James Long, with Ellen Jackson acting occasionally. Long had been involved since the beginning of the Quaker relief effort, and was described as being ‘an Englishman looking as an Indian fakir or as a Holy Beggar from Tolstoy’s Russia, who had risen from what was thought to be his death bed to go and serve with the Quakers in France’.<sup>63</sup> Long had produced fresh projects of his own, starting with a cattle drive from Spain to the Loire with ostentatious propaganda that included a flamboyant exhibition of the cattle in Blois, banquet included. He followed this with the building of ‘la Cité d’Alsace’ in Belfort, consisting of a village of wooden houses to lodge Alsatian workmen refugees from Germany. This project also ended with a flashy banquet, and a ‘victory tour’ by Long.<sup>64</sup> Long’s last project was of a very different order, and unplanned by him – the Garonne floods of 1875 to which Long responded by going there with relief.<sup>65</sup>

The Franco-Prussian war proved to be a watershed in the development of the Quaker relief system. It was the first major modern war and thus demanded new and untried methods to bring relief to large areas of France. It could be said that the Quakers had

---

<sup>61</sup> Long (1872), p. 66.

<sup>62</sup> A final report was made in 1872 and the last recorded meeting of the General Committee is dated 4 April 1873, without formal minutes.

<sup>63</sup> Ormerod Greenwood (1975), p. 71.

<sup>64</sup> Ormerod Greenwood (1975), p. 59.

<sup>65</sup> In June, 1875, the Garonne and Ariege valleys suffered catastrophic floods that killed 1,000 people and 5,000 heads of cattle and affected a huge area thirty miles wide and 200 miles long. Long travelled to France in the winter of that year, in biting cold (20 degrees below zero), and helped around 8,700 individuals. Bellows (1871), pp. 67-8.

responded with imaginative efficacy, with their local committees and able Commissioners, and the Quakers' efforts could be considered a success, a fact recognized by the French government when it granted the Legion of Honour to three Quaker Commissioners: Richard Allen, James Long and Robert Spence Watson.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, Quaker relief had increasingly taken the form of direct aid and training to countries ravaged by war, such as the introduction of agricultural innovations and support for those on the land, while entire factories were established to cater for the clothing needs of war-torn communities. Certainly, the Quaker intervention in the Franco-Prussian war had raised their profile, symbolically represented by the introduction of the red and black star during the conflict, the emblem of Quaker relief used by them ever since.<sup>67</sup> The conflict also revealed, however, the difficulties of maintaining the principle of impartiality, for even though the Quakers 'set out to help the French and Germans equally'<sup>68</sup>, in practice, this may not have been the case. It must be remembered that the British population, the Quakers included, were clearly pro-German in this conflict, and this was revealed by some dispatches from the field, such as this one from Henry John Allen, who spoke of:

the power, the culture and the mildness of the Prussian, and the folly, the power of self-deception and the disorganisation of the French.<sup>69</sup>

It is difficult to know exactly how these sympathies were translated into practice, as the only written accounts we have of Quaker relief are the depositions given by French civilians to the Legion of Honour committee, which praised the extraordinary efforts made by the Quakers to ameliorate the suffering of those affected by war and the expression of gratitude by Ministers and local authorities on November 1871 when attesting on an official address: "...our country will never forget that in our day of dire necessity, your society, and through your example others in England, have stretched out

---

<sup>66</sup> This honour was also bestowed on three French workmen whom James Long had nominated. After the awarding of the Legion of Honour, the Quakers started a campaign of proselytism, in an attempt to show the French people the religious motives for their benevolence. This campaign, opposed by some sectors in France, had little impact, and no converts were made.

<sup>67</sup> The British Minister in Brussels, Savile Lumley, advised the Commissioners to find a symbol by which they, their baggage and transportation might be recognized, and whereby they might even be able to obtain reductions in freight charges. The 'Daily News Fund', whose Commissioner was using the red and black star, suggested that the Quakers might share it.

<sup>68</sup> Motto of the first two Commissioners to be sent to the conflict, Henry John Allen and William Jones.

<sup>69</sup> Henry J. Allen, 'Dispatch from Strasburg', 31 October 1870, FHL.

to us a brotherly hand”.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the extent to which political preferences affected relief work during the Franco-Prussian War is still unknown.

#### 1.4 On the road to world conflict

From the end of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 up to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Balkans – the territories most affected by the slow decline of the Turkish empire – became the main centre of Quaker relief activities. Quaker relief workers were present during the Bulgarian crisis of 1876-79, in Bulgaria and Armenia in 1896-7, Macedonia in 1903 and during the 1912-13 Balkan wars. In all these interventions Quaker help was directed to providing food and clothing, and sometimes housing and school building, as in Bulgaria in 1876.<sup>71</sup> Another institution run by Quakers – though not an official concern of the Society of Friends – was the Bulgarian Medical Mission, under the direction of Elizabeth Bevan Tonjoroff<sup>72</sup>, in Plovdiv in southern Bulgaria. As was customary in Quaker relief operations, committees and funds were established, and Quakers travelled to stay for periods of various lengths in the countries in conflict. Though these individuals were representatives of the Friends and wore the Red Star, a team of Commissioners was not created to take charge of the relief operation, given the nature of the terrain in these conflicts.

The atrocities that initially stirred consciences produced a continuous stream of goods and monetary donations. However, this situation changed when news of atrocities was superseded by news of other tragedies, and thus funds were drained. This was the case with the Armenian Relief Committee that had been set up in 1896. Popular indignation reacted against the Turks and provoked a substantial influx of donations. At the Yearly Meeting held in early 1897 it was said that £180,000 had been ‘forwarded to the Armenians’, while in April of the same year only £400 had been received. It would seem that a backlash occurred when it was suggested that the Armenians had exaggerated their distress, and that a part of the fund had gone to Turkish banks. The

---

<sup>70</sup> Sessions (1991), p. 67

<sup>71</sup> This relief in Bulgaria was mainly the work of the incorrigible James Long, and thus was not strictly a Quaker mission, though around a fifth of the funds raised in England (6,000 pounds) came from the Quakers. Long provided housing for some 600 families, opened 20 new schools and reconditioned four. Jones (1899), pp. 224-59.

<sup>72</sup> (1847 – 1907) Young English Quaker Governess that in Bulgaria married the Protestant convert called “the Tolstoy of Bulgaria” and dedicated all her life to help and heal and, in general, to the welfare of the other. See Ormerod Greenwood (1951).

operation was terminated in May 1899, although a Friend remained in Constantinople with the Armenian Mission in an unofficial capacity.

The Friends were also involved in relief operations in Russia, in the Volga and Don basins, after Herbert Jones – son of one of the first Commissioners to go to France during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 – returned from the Pamirs and Volga regions with news of the famine there. A Committee was formed in 1891, and famine relief, food and money, was sent with delegates to Russia.<sup>73</sup> This operation met with opposition at home, and newspapers accused the Quakers of only being interested in problems abroad while ignoring the situation at home.<sup>74</sup>

Accusations were also made about the way the money was spent due to extensive Russian corruption and mismanagement.<sup>75</sup> When the Committee presented its report to the Meeting for Sufferings in December 1892, they asserted that the money received, about 37,000 pounds, had been used to relieve the situation in the whole area affected by the famine and spent in food distribution, spring sowing and sanitary treatments to fight typhus and cholera. The Quakers were also involved in helping Russian religious groups close to the Friends' beliefs and undergoing persecution for their pacifist views, such as the Dukhobors.<sup>76</sup> The latter were resettled in Canada, with the help of the American Friends who took over the support previously given by London.<sup>77</sup>

During this period of some fifty years, the Quakers were clearly driven by a mixture of religious affinity and evangelical pity, but in no case was proselytizing the motive of their effort, even though in some isolated cases the Friends' religious attitude would provoke a positive response. However, financially, their relief operations were always dependent on the consciences of the British public. As we have seen, a cause always started with strong support, as public opinion was moved by a particular tragedy, but it would lose steam and be forgotten in a short period of time. This would mean that

---

<sup>73</sup> Meeting for Sufferings, minutes, 6 November 1891, FHL.

<sup>74</sup> 'Blind to the situation at their own door, The Manchester members of the Society of Friends, for instance, who have sent so much good English brass to Russia, what do they feel about the matter?' *Sunday Chronicle*, Manchester, 17 August 1892.

<sup>75</sup> 'Russia is a vast empire of pre-ethical dishonesty', *The Fortnightly Review*, December 1891.

<sup>76</sup> The Dukhobors were a religious group prominent in rural Russia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were doctrinally similar to the Quakers, rejecting the priesthood and sacraments and the authority of both Church and state. They were, of course, also pacifists. *The Columbia Encyclopaedia, Sixth Edition*. (Columbia University Press, 2008)

<sup>77</sup> Minutes of the Friends Committee to Assist the Douchabortzis or Dukhobors Vol. II, FHL.

action was discontinued or lay practically dormant until a new cause would again move public opinion.

### **1.5 A British conflict: Relief to South Africa (1900-1905)**

On 11 October 1899, war broke out between Great Britain and the Republic of the Orange Free State and Transvaal a war that became commonly known as the Boer War. After British defeats in December 1899, what had been viewed as a mere skirmish developed into an all-out conflict. The same month, the Quakers set up a Committee to study the need to establish a War Victims Relief Committee, but nothing was done. Soon, news about the effects of a fierce ‘guerrilla war’ and the concentration camps set up by the British arrived in Britain. Visitors from the war zones described the brutality of the British, the burning of farms and conditions in the concentration camps. Although this led to public debate (and denials by the Army), the Quakers did not react to this, because, as they said afterwards,

“no clear line was established and the course taken by the war, the relief given in Cape Town and elsewhere by other Funds, and the impossibility of obtaining information from the Dutch states and other circumstances continued to block our way”.<sup>78</sup>

Certainly, during the early stages of the war the Friends in London were receiving contradictory information about the situation in South Africa. In 1900 the Quakers sent Joshua and Isabella Rowntree, Quakers who had previously worked in the Cape Colony and Natal, to assess the situation in South Africa. The Rowntrees, who had remained in Cape Town, had sent back reassuring information about conditions there. However, Emily Hobhouse<sup>79</sup>, a non-Quaker, who had travelled to the Boer states of Transvaal Republic and Orange Free State in the same year, sent back alarming reports of the situation there, which was supported by reports from those who visited these states. Many of these reports during the following year, from Quakers in the field, undoubtedly confirmed the dreadful conditions in the camps, but, as their 1902 Report shows, the Friends could not publish, because:

“A correspondence so written would, if published, give rise to controversies beyond its province to deal with, and likely to hinder our work. And lastly, it has been more than

<sup>78</sup> Yearly Meeting Proceedings, 1908, p. 146 (Closing the Relief Fund), FHL.

<sup>79</sup> Emily Hobhouse, daughter of an Anglican clergyman, became a leading campaigner against the concentration camps set up by the British during the Boer War. Oldfield (2006), pp102-6.

once stated to the authorities that our Friends went to relieve and appease, not to inspect and report'.<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, the Quakers were evidently aware of the horrors perpetrated by the British in South Africa, and, although they feared publicizing this situation for the reasons stated above, they could have responded with emergency relief. It would appear that the Quakers found it difficult to respond quickly to the South African emergency, partly because of the distance and the lack of experienced relief workers in the 'Friends South African Relief Fund'<sup>81</sup> but also undoubtedly because of the political implications. This is somewhat puzzling, as politics had not determined their actions in Ireland. Perhaps this was because of the level of brutality shown in South Africa, especially in the concentration camps, and the very public campaign that exposed it.<sup>82</sup>

Hence, the Quakers responded late to the South African emergency, and on a small scale.<sup>83</sup> Emily Hobhouse took the initiative, and focused on Boer women and children, whilst ignoring the other communities of British, Bantus and Indians. Quaker Commissioners, more aware of the wider needs of the conflict, contacted these communities with relief and also visited Boer prisoners<sup>84</sup>, sent books to camps, distributed vegetable seeds, replanted gardens and helped to find school accommodation for children in special need.

When in November 1901 camp conditions improved and rations and supplies were sufficient, the Friends engaged in supply distribution suggested that nurses and teachers were needed more than relief workers. This appeal was answered by a number of Quaker women going to South Africa as nurses, orphanage matrons and teachers.<sup>85</sup>

The small Quaker relief operation was discontinued and the Relief Fund closed in 1908<sup>86</sup> but the Quakers, with a presence in the South African Women and Children's Distress Fund, became more involved in the 'Boer Home Industries', an aid society that

---

<sup>80</sup> Report, 1902, FHL.

<sup>81</sup> Formed in 1900 by the Meeting for Sufferings, it channelled Quaker relief in South Africa and closed in 1908.

<sup>82</sup> It should be remembered that the repression used by the colonial British against the Irish is legendary, as any Irish history work confirms. It was, however, very little publicised in the English press, and therefore virtually unknown to the English public. See, for example, the classic T.A. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

<sup>83</sup> In the course of the conflict and its aftermath, 20 Commissioners and helpers worked in South Africa.

<sup>84</sup> *The Friend* (2) iii, 1922, p. 192, FHL.

<sup>85</sup> Yearly Meeting Proceedings, 1908, p. 146, FHL.

<sup>86</sup> Yearly Meeting Proceedings, 1908, p. 146.



succeeded the former in 1904, under the driving force of Emily Hobhouse. Lace production, the first idea, was abandoned and wool textile activities became central, whose ‘tweeds’ proved to be a great success at the Cape Town Exhibition of April 1908.

The South African intervention was the first conflict in which the traditional Quaker way of organizing through *ad hoc* committees proved to be so slow and cautious that others, such as Emily Hobhouse, took the initiative. Indeed, the Quakers’ involvement came late, was minimal and revealed that the Friends had no clear direction in the conflict, although some individual Friends made an important contribution. It could be the case that the Friends were disoriented by the level of brutality shown by their own kinsmen in the Boar War, and this led to a loss of focus and a lack of direction. The Quakers’ intervention in the Boar War again reveals the impossibility of total ‘impartiality’ in any conflict, despite the brave attempts, and desires, of the Friends to achieve it.

## **1.6 The Quakers and the First World War**

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, and ten days later the Society of Friends had established, as official bodies, the following committees: War Victims Relief Committee (Eastern Europe), War Victims Committee (France), Emergency Committee for Aliens and the National Relief Committee Auxiliary. All of these committees followed the traditional system used in previous conflicts, but there was also a movement to take the Quakers deeper into the war to ‘perform acts of healing’.<sup>87</sup> This stated intention challenged the traditional Quaker attitude to reject being part of a military system and thus led to a protracted debate within the movement.

Formally, of course, the Quaker Peace Testimony and their refusal to be conscripted prevented them being involved in military action<sup>88</sup>, but the point at issue here was to what extent the Friends’ intervention in the war – providing sanitary services to the armies, for example – could be seen as being part of the military machine. The very

---

<sup>87</sup> Friends Christian Fellowship Union meeting, minutes, 14 August 1914, p. 7.

<sup>88</sup> The Quakers had been exempted from the militia in England in 1757, but the Military Service Act, 1916, was unique in that it also provided for exemption on conscientious grounds. This Act was, however, somewhat ambivalent, and there was a debate about how it should be implemented, and who it should cover. Therefore, there was no clear definition and it was thus left to those implementing the Act to deal with this matter on a case-by-case basis.

scale of the conflict demanded a much more embedded presence on the battlefield by relief workers and thus placed the Friends in something of a dilemma. The Young Friends, for example, proposed the setting up of an Ambulance Service, arguing that they would be treating men as human beings and not soldiers, and that being part of an ambulance service did not mean being part of the war on the battlefield.

Although there were numerous appeals for guidance in the matter, the Young Friends did not present the proposal for an Ambulance Service to the Meeting of Sufferings, which took place on 10 September 1914. This latter meeting did, however, address a letter to members to clarify the situation. After recalling its Peace Testimony against war and its opposition against military laws in Australia and New Zealand<sup>89</sup>, the letter asked for coherence with its principles and proposed ways of providing war relief, within the framework that Quaker relief actions had assumed in past conflicts, but added that,

we see danger to principle in undertaking any service auxiliary to warfare which involves becoming part of a military machine<sup>90</sup>

Nevertheless, the Ambulance Service scheme went ahead, in an ‘unofficial capacity’, and was a huge success. The recruitment of volunteers for the unofficial Ambulance services<sup>91</sup> was three times that for the official ‘War Victims Relief Committee’. It is clear, therefore, that the majority of young Quakers were adhering to another ‘version’ of the Peace Testimony, one that was more appropriate to the needs of a major modern war. In September 1914, 60 participants gathered at a training camp at Jordan’s, Buckinghamshire<sup>92</sup>, and were ready for service six weeks later. However, they had no place of action, as the British Army was reluctant to accept an independent unit with ‘Quaker scruples’.<sup>93</sup> But when the Belgian Army collapsed in October 1914, the emergency situation allowed the Joint War Committee of the Red Cross and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem to ask for their services, providing facilities and equipment, but

---

<sup>89</sup> The ‘Imperial Defence Plan’ of 1910 introduced conscription in these two countries, and did not include exemption for the Quakers, as had been the case in England since 1757.

<sup>90</sup> Meeting for Sufferings, minutes, 10 September 1914, FHL.

<sup>91</sup> The Minutes of the War Victims Relief Committee did not refer to the unit as a ‘Friends’ ambulance unit until 24 July 1915, because much discussion took place about the acceptance of it as a ‘Friends’ project.

<sup>92</sup> This was the first of 21 camps used by the service.

<sup>93</sup> From the Military Report (Sanitary), September 1914. Ormerod Greenwood (1975), p. 185.

insisted on the unit being renamed the 'First Anglo-Belgian Field Ambulance' and any reference to the 'Friends' was dropped.

A Committee was set up to run the Ambulance Unit, with Sir George Newman as Chairman, and on 30 October 1914, a party of 43, including 3 doctors, 6 dressers and 8 ambulance cars left London. The Unit's first action started even before arriving on continental soil, as, a few miles out of Dover, their ship arrived at the position where the cruiser 'HMS Hermes' had been torpedoed and was sinking. After taking care of the survivors being transferred to Dover, they restarted their trip and arrived in Dunkirk. There they encountered sheds full of almost unattended wounded, French and Belgian, with a few German and British.

With its headquarters in Dunkirk, and under the umbrella of the Red Cross Joint Committee, the Unit, again called the 'Friends Ambulance Unit', became fully involved in the relief effort, together with the French 'Service de Santé'. It was authorized to establish an Auxiliary Military Hospital, and began the task in cooperation with French forces, and in association with another voluntary unit, headed by the Hon. Lionel Holland. In fact, during the first winter of the war the Friends were involved in civil rather than military relief, and in May 1915 they formed a Joint Committee, 'Aid Civile Belge', with some Belgian civilians. When the war turned into trench warfare and became static in the spring of 1916, 'Aid Civile Belge' took over all non-military work from the Friends Ambulance Unit, becoming a purely civilian organisation. This civilian work consisted mainly of caring for refugees: evacuation and transferral, feeding and providing clothing and medical care, and the setting up or supplementing improvised hospitals.

In the case of military action, both the British and French were reluctant to embed these kinds of private and voluntary services with their own sanitary personnel. The French were less concerned about this, however, and, by December 1914 the Unit with its 24 cars was already active from six bases behind French lines, linked with the medical services of several French Divisions and Army Corp. However, as service with the British Army was still denied to the Unit, the service had an uncertain future, and with its activity reduced, some volunteers left.<sup>94</sup> But, when on 23 May 1915 Italy declared

---

<sup>94</sup> The nature of voluntary work was such that volunteers had the freedom to come and go from the Unit more or less as they pleased.

war on Austria, a new opportunity for action arose, and the call for a ‘British Ambulance for Italy’ started the process. Promoted by the historian G.M. Trevelyan, the proposal was a great success and the new ‘Anglo-Italian Ambulance Unit’ included 16 Quakers among its total of 66 in its first expedition, later followed by 7 other Friends.

As the Italian Army had a different opinion about voluntary service, the Unit was directly involved in the fighting, and in September 1917, at the battle of Monte S. Gabriele, the Unit lost most of its equipment, including many cars. The Unit was also involved in Gorlitz<sup>95</sup>, the Amoretto retreat<sup>96</sup> and other important actions of the war and suffered significant casualties. Table (1) shows the importance of the whole effort of the Ambulance project.

**Table 1: Ambulance Project, September 1914 – February 1919**

No. of people by service:	Italian Ambulance Unit (IAU)	Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU)	Total
Sick and wounded carried	*177,000	277,417	454,417
Members on service**	Abroad***	640	
	At home	720	
Casualties on service		21	
Hospital ship cases <sup>97</sup>		24,000	
Hospital train cases		520,000	

\* 41,000 stretcher cases included

\*\* November 1914: 43; May 1915: 200; November 1915: 465 (when conscription started), November 1916: 600

\*\*\* Included in figures for FAU

Sources: Lawson (1961); and Tatham & Miles (Eds.) (1919).

It should be also noted that the Italian Ambulance Unit drove 1.5 million kilometres and the Friends Ambulance Unit 3.5 million kilometres. Also, that 1,800 men passed through the ranks of the unit; that it provided staff for 12 hospitals in England and

<sup>95</sup> This battle was launched by the Italians on 6 August 1916 who succeeded in establishing a bridge head across the River Isonzo by taking Goritzia. Casualties amounted to 51.000 killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

<sup>96</sup> The Battle of Caporetto was fought between 24 October and 9 November 1917 on the Austro-Italian Front near the town of Kaberid, in present Slovenia, and represented an enormous disaster for Italian forces with 11,000 killed, 20,000 wounded and 275,000 taken prisoner.

<sup>97</sup> The FAU served for a short time living on two ships: the “Glenart Castle”, torpedoed in the Mediterranean without victims on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1917, and on board the “Western Australia”, which was suspended on May 1917 after a year of service in the Channel.

France; and that 140,000 pounds were raised for the FAU. The £10,000 that remained at the end of the service was transferred to one of the 'official' Quaker schemes in the War, the FWVRC, which we shall examine below.

Apart from the 'unofficial' Ambulance scheme, many official Friends' projects were also carried out during the war. The Friends' War Victims Relief Committee, (FWVRC) staffed by those adhering to the 'orthodox' notion of the Quaker Peace Testimony, was involved in more traditional relief operations, helping refugees, being active in maternity units and nursing services, in building and in agriculture. The FWVRC contained members and non-members, but if the FAU was primarily a male project (only 54 women served abroad), the FWVRC contained a greater number of women. During the 1914-18 war, 156 women out of a total of 473 women served abroad, and in the period after the war until 1923, about 800 women had done service in foreign countries. Moreover, the activities of the FWVRC extended to Serbia, Poland and Russia. Whilst the FAU could be considered a practical organisation, the FWVRC was of a more moral and utopian type.

The First World War witnessed Quaker relief operations carried out in the manner of past conflicts, with experienced systems of delegates or Commissioners, with local committees in conflict zones, helping in traditional ways, though adapted to changing times. However, this period also saw the emergence of a new Quaker Peace Testimony, which relieved suffering on the battlefields, forming part, physically if not legally, of the combatants, represented by its ambulance work, and the connected auxiliary services. If the Evangelical spirit drove the activity, the actual sanitary work was permeated by the more secular sentiment of solidarity, and again raised the profile of the Quakers in the field of humanitarian relief.

### **1.7 The Quakers in the Inter-War Period**

The Quakers had been conscious – since the signing of the Armistice in November 1918 – of the famine affecting Germany, aggravated by the blockade imposed by the Allied Powers, which lasted seven months after the Armistice. In spite of enormous difficulties, a relief operation was established, in cooperation with the American Friends, which evolved into separate schemes being run by the American and British Friends. There appeared to have been some problems between the British and American

Friends during this operation, as the Americans, supported by Herbert Hoover, wanted the service to be rendered ‘under the American flag’.<sup>98</sup>

The relief work carried out in Austria since 1914, however, was organized by a joint Anglo-American mission that used about 1,000 Austrian volunteers. Another Anglo-American operation took place in Poland, following a typhus epidemic, and in early 1920 the Quakers were able to restart their activity in Russia, to alleviate the famine. In Russia, however, the Americans split from London, as the former were part of the American Relief Administration, which was opposed to any presence in what had been, since 1917, the Soviet Union.

The activities undertaken by the Friends War Victims Relief committee, which was active in Serbia, Poland and Russia during the First World War, were continued after the war by the “Emergency Committee for the Assistance of Germans, Austrian and Hungarians in Distress”, created in August 1914, and which remained active until 1922. It was set up to help the citizens of enemy countries forced to register as ‘enemy aliens’ and interned in prison camps. The activity of this Committee was not popular with the British public, though it did obtain the support of key Church figures, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

The Friends were also involved in the upheavals that engulfed Austria from February 1934 to March 1938.<sup>99</sup> Under the experienced Quaker relief worker Hilda Clark<sup>100</sup>, the Friends mounted an impressive relief mission to help the socialists and their families after their rebellion was crushed in February 1934. Some 5,000 pounds was distributed to more than 8,000 families in need. When the Nazis suffered repression after their aborted putsch in July 1934, however, the Quakers found it difficult to react so positively, despite the pressure put on them by German churchmen and the chairman of

<sup>98</sup> Herbert Hoover, (1874-1964), head of the American Relief Administration and future 31<sup>st</sup> President of the USA, himself a Quaker, was extremely aware of the dire situation in Germany after the war, and thus provided funds for the relief operation. However, the ‘exclusive’ way in which this relief was handled caused problems with the British Friends and other relief agencies. Vining (1959), pp. 172-3.

<sup>99</sup> In February 1934, a demonstration by Socialists in Vienna was repressed violently, after five days of fighting, by the Austrian army under the orders of the Right-wing Chancellor, Dollfuss. After crushing the Socialists, Dollfuss then promulgated a fundamentally fascist constitution in May, which, however, was not sufficient for the Austrian Nazis, who murdered Dollfuss in an aborted Nazi coup in July 1934. Dollfuss’ successor, Schuschnigg, then proceeded to repress the Nazis, and many fled, were imprisoned or killed. They were not, however, defeated, and their constant pressure seriously weakened Schuschnigg’s government over the following years. The Austrian Nazis finally achieved their aim in the Anschluss with Nazi Germany in March 1938.

<sup>100</sup> Dr Hilda Clark (1881-1935) was a relief worker and suffragist, who had been active in relief operations throughout Europe since the First World War.

the American Quaker organisation.<sup>101</sup> Although the Quakers did help some Nazis later<sup>102</sup>, after relief to the socialists ended in the autumn of 1936<sup>103</sup>, the Quakers, again under the able leadership of Hilda Clark, concentrated their efforts on helping Jews to escape persecution, by giving them advice on obtaining visas, and by helping them directly with grants.<sup>104</sup>

## **1.8 An Assessment: the Quakers' relief operations until 1936**

The relief operations mounted by the Friends, since the eighteenth century American Revolution, were essentially motivated by evangelical pity, and doctrinally based on their foremost statement of intent, the Peace Testimony. As we have seen, though the pattern of engendering relief action remained the same – an individual member would launch an appeal to a Meeting of Sufferings – the organisation of relief itself changed dramatically over time.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 was a major landmark in this process, when Quaker delegates, Commissioners, were sent throughout France to oversee the relief process, and relief was administered on a much larger scale. Moreover, the scope of relief developed over time, Quaker interventions in relief – before the Franco-Prussian War – had consisted mainly in the collection of funds, which would be sent to local committees established in conflict zones.<sup>105</sup> Increasingly, however, the Quakers became involved in food and medical relief and the making and sending of clothes. Indeed, entire factories were dedicated to supplying clothing apparel during the Franco-Prussian War. Longer-term objectives also began to come into play: agricultural techniques were taught, schools built and administered and Quaker nurses and midwives sent to improve

---

<sup>101</sup> The German Methodist Benjamin Heinrich Unruh (1881-1959) approached the Quakers with a donation and a proposal of relief for the Austrian Nazis, as did Rufus Jones, chairman of the American Friends Service Committee that warned that it “would seem like discrimination to continue to help socialists and not Nazis”. After consultations with the AFSC, the Friends Service Council and the Austrian and German Quakers, the proposal was turned down. Schmitt (1997) pp. 86-89 and Letter from Rufus Jones to the AFSC, 3 September, 1934, AFSCA.

<sup>102</sup> From their centre in Berlin, the Quakers defended 126 pro-German activists in Lithuania, who had been detained there for their work in favour of the transfer of Memel (now Klaipeda) to German control. They visited these prisoners and helped their families, until they were freed in March 1938. See Schmitt (1997) p. 92

<sup>103</sup> Some 76,000 pounds had been spent in this relief operation.

<sup>104</sup> The staff in Vienna was increased to 20 to attend to the work of the Jewish community.

<sup>105</sup> Funds were normally collected from wealthy Quakers and other well-off acquaintances, but increasingly – given the British people's greater knowledge of world events through newspapers – collections were also made in churches, Quaker meetings and public gatherings.

sanitary conditions in post-war zones. The First World War was another milestone in the history of Quaker relief operations, when the Young Friends were involved on the battlefield as ambulance staff, suffering significant casualties in the process. Moreover, this work on the battlefields meant that the Young Quakers had to re-interpret the Quaker Peace testimony, thus revealing, yet again, the dynamic nature of Quaker organisations, and their commitment to relieving the distress of those in need.

Despite these enormous achievements – and the Quakers’ stated desire to administer equally to both sides in a conflict – the Friends discovered the difficulties of being totally impartial in their efforts, revealed during the Franco-Prussian War, but most clearly during the Boer War and the events in Vienna between 1934 and 1938. Organisational inadequacies also played their part in the limitations of Quaker relief operations, again most evident during the Boer War. The lack of a permanent international body to oversee relief operations undoubtedly contributed to the slowness of response to a conflict situation. The ‘Continental Committee of the Meeting for Sufferings’ (CCMS) was set up in 1818 to administer continental European activities, mostly in France, Germany, Norway and Denmark, while the missionary organisation, the ‘Friends Foreign Mission Association’ (FFMA), created in 1868, sent missionaries to India, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Madagascar, China and Syria. This body was not officially recognized as a Quaker organisation until the end of the First World War in 1918.<sup>106</sup> The Continental Committee was discontinued in 1919, and superseded that year by the ‘Council for International Service’, designed to establish Quaker ‘embassies’, first in Europe and then to the rest of the world. In 1924, this latter body took over the remaining activities of the ‘Friends Emergency and War Victims Committee’ established at the start of World War I, and finally, in 1927, merged with the officially recognized ‘Friends Foreign Mission Association’ to form the ‘Friends Service Council’ (FSC). Thus, in 1927, for the first time, the Quakers had a permanent international relief body to oversee their operations, an organisation which would be put to the test most severely during their interventions in the Spanish Civil War.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> As the old Meeting for Sufferings retained its competence to deal with any matters it chose, there were doubts about the acceptance of an important Mission instrument such as the FFMA as a formal Quaker body.

<sup>107</sup> The FSC, seen as a permanent body when established, saw its mission as one akin to the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) of the American Quakers, set up in 1917, which wished to provide even non-Quaker conscientious objectors to war with an alternative to military service, seeing in them a source of voluntary workers.



## 2. The Red Cross

### 2.1 Henri Dunant and the Battle of Solferino

The reality of the care given to those wounded in the battles of the nineteenth century is well summed-up in this quote from a history of the International Committee of the Red Cross:

“The military surgeons attached to the French Army were good but scarce: 4 veterinaries for every 1,000 horses, but only one surgeon for the same number of men”.<sup>108</sup>

The lack of an adequate system of relief for those wounded in war was acutely felt by Henri Dunant, a Swiss Calvinist, who laid the foundations of what was to become one of the major relief organisations of the twentieth century, the Red Cross.

Jean Henri Dunant was born in Geneva in 1828, into a devoutly Calvinist family of some standing in Genevan society, who were known for their charitable works in helping the sick, the poor, orphans and parolees. It would appear that the young Dunant was particularly affected by a visit to the Toulon prison in France, where he saw first-hand the suffering of prison inmates. Dunant grew up during a period of religious awakening known as the *Reveil*, and at the age of eighteen joined the ‘Geneva Society of Almsgiving’, and spent most of his free time visiting prisons, the sick, the poor and the dying. He read to prisoners every Sunday afternoon – Travel, History and Science – and in 1852 founded the Geneva chapter of the YMCA.<sup>109</sup>

A bank employee, Dunant was assigned by a colonial company (Compagnie Genevoise des Colonies de Sétif), and visited Algeria, Tunisia and Sicily in 1853.<sup>110</sup> Three years later, he set up a business to operate in foreign colonies, and having been granted a land concession, formed a corn-growing and trading company, the Financial and Industrial Company of Mon-Djémila Mills’ (Société financière et industrielle des Moulins des Mon Mons-Djémila). Unfortunately the land and water rights were not clearly assigned

---

<sup>108</sup> Boissier (1963), p. 26.

<sup>109</sup> The Young Men’s Christian Association was founded in London in June 1844 by George Williams, a 23-year old sales assistant in a draper’s shop. He and his group of fellow drapers organized the first YMCA to substitute Bible Studies and prayer. It was a response to the dreadful and unhealthy living conditions in the big cities during the industrial revolution.

<sup>110</sup> Inspired by these travels, Dunant wrote his first book, *An Account of the Regency in Tunis*, published in 1858.

and the colonial authorities proved to be particularly uncooperative. Therefore, Dunant decided to appeal directly to the French emperor, Napoleon III, who was fighting with his army in Lombardy at the time. France was fighting as an ally of Piedmont-Sardinia against Austria, which had occupied most of Italy.

Having been recommended to see the emperor by the aunt of the French General, Beafort d'Hantpoul, Dunant arrived in Brescia, Italy, in June 1859, but, finding the emperor had left, went by chariot to Castiglione della Stiviere the next day. That very same day, a few kilometres east of Castiglione, on the edge of the small village of Solferino, a battle had taken place for three hours in the afternoon. The most bloody battle since Waterloo, this murderous '*one day tournament between armies*'<sup>111</sup> left 30,000 injured, dying and dead remaining on the battlefield, and there appeared to be little attempt to provide aid.

Dunant proceeded to the church in Castiglione, the Chiesa Maggiore, where more than 500 injured were kept, while around 200 were kept outside. Dunant, shocked and horrified, took the initiative and organized the civilian population to provide assistance to the injured, an action that was deeply resented by the local population. 9,230 wounded were placed in Castiglione (8,056 French, 1,123 Austrian and 61 from Sardinia-Piedmont), with only 10 doctors to care for them. Lacking sufficient materials and supplies, Dunant himself organized the purchase of needed material and helped erect makeshift hospitals. He succeeded in obtaining assistance from some of the local population, and the slogan '*Tutti fratelli*' (We are all brothers) was coined by the women.<sup>112</sup>

Leaving Castiglione several days later, Dunant proceeded on his journey to see the emperor, but his flattering pamphlet of the emperor and his petitions regarding his Algerian venture were flatly turned down by Napoleon III.<sup>113</sup> He did, however, plead the cause of the wounded, suggesting that the Austrian doctors imprisoned by the French should be freed and used to help the injured, a plea that was, indeed, successful.

---

<sup>111</sup> Ignatieff (1998), p. 118.

<sup>112</sup> Around 15 other foreigners helped the wounded at Castiglione.

<sup>113</sup> Dunant was deeply impressed by Napoleon III, and had written a glowing pamphlet of the emperor comparing him to Charlemagne. He also believed that this might be useful in his attempt to deal with his Algerian problem, which he thought could only be solved by the intervention of the emperor himself. In fact, the emperor never received Dunant, and the letter refusing the pamphlet was probably given to him by the emperor's private secretary

Although this practice had occurred occasionally in past conflicts, Dunant's intervention with the French authorities on this occasion assured that this practice would become customary in the future.

Dunant continued his work at Castiglione, returning home at the end of June and arriving in Geneva the same day, 10 July 1859, on which peace was agreed at Villafranca by Napoleon III and Franz Joseph of Austria. Haunted by the carnage at Castiglione, and having failed to get his Algerian project off the ground, at the end of 1861 Dunant began writing a book about his experience of war. Completed in November 1862, *Un Souvenir de Solferino (A Solferino Memory)* outlined Dunant's vision for a system of relief for those wounded in war.<sup>114</sup> The reality of the battle's aftermath are summed up by Dunant: the abandonment of the wounded; the lack of cooperation from the local population, who were deeply fearful; the respect of the military for the wounded enemy and the equality in the treatment of the wounded of both sides; and the need to use the doctors of the defeated side to heal the wounded. Given this reality, Dunant proposed that during periods of peace Aid Societies should be formed with the purpose of taking care of the wounded in war and staffed by dedicated voluntary workers who would be trained for the task. He also proposed the holding of an international congress, to establish international and agreed principles that would be the basis for the Aid Societies in the various countries of Europe, and the issuing of rules necessary to govern their activities.

The book had a profound impact on the Geneva lawyer Gustave Moynier, who presided over a benevolent private institution, Société d'Utilité Public (Public Utility Society). Moved by the horrendous picture of the war wounded painted by Dunant, Moynier set up a permanent sub-committee within his society, 'The International Committee for Aid to the Wounded in Situation of War', the embryo of what was to become the International Committee of the Red Cross. The committee was formed by five members: Henri Dunant, Gustave Moynier, Theodore Maunoir (doctor), Louis Appia (doctor) and General Henri Dufour, famed for his actions during the Swiss Civil War of 1847 and a well-known humanitarian.

---

<sup>114</sup> Dunant published the book himself – 1,600 copies – and sent it to monarchs, policymakers, the military, well-known philanthropists and writers and friends all over the world.

The first meeting of the Committee took place on 17 February 1863, and soon after the Committee's name was changed to 'Comité International de Secours Aux Blessés' (International Committee for Assistance to the Wounded), with General Dufour as President, Moynier as Vice-President and Dunand as Secretary. At the second meeting on 17 March a series of points were agreed, the most salient of which were: a) to promote the formation of societies in each country that would be in charge of the development of activities, including the establishment of a voluntary sanitary corps; b) the societies must be accepted by the authorities and the voluntary sanitary workers corps subject to the military authorities and under their rules during military campaigns; and c) these corps would be placed at the back of the army, and should create no problem for the army. Moreover, it was agreed that these corps would take their own food, medicine and other necessary material, provide their own transportation and be no cost to the army. The corps would, however, be called by the army when needed and dismissed at the army's command. The corps itself would be well organized along hierarchical lines, and a Managing Committee would supply the corps when needed, in consultation with military leaders.

With these agreed principles, in August 1863 Dunant and Moynier proposed the holding of an international conference in Geneva and Dunant travelled around Europe to promote it. A 'Concordat Draft', based on the principles outlined above, was presented together with the invitation.<sup>115</sup> In Berlin, while proposing the conference to a Congress of Statistics being held there, Dunant met the chairman, Dr Basting, a Sanitary Officer in the Dutch Army and an admirer of Dunant, who suggested the inclusion of the concept 'neutrality' for the sanitary workers involved in relief work. Thus, an 'addendum', containing the notion of 'neutrality' – written by Dunant without prior consultation with the International Committee – was included in the invitation to the conference.<sup>116</sup> Dunant continued his travels throughout Germany with the amended statutes. In Saxony, the king accepted to be the patron of the conference, while in Potsdam, at an official reception given by King William I to which Dunant was invited, Dunant contacted representatives from Prussia, Russia, Spain, Bavaria and Norway. During the following weeks, Dunant and Dufour succeeded in securing assurances from

---

<sup>115</sup> See Document D with the 'Concordat draft' text. Dunant had travelled throughout Europe earlier in the year distributing his book, and had received positive reactions in various countries (Holland, Prussia, Italy, the Grand Duchy of Baden and Hesse.)

<sup>116</sup> See Document E with the Addendum.

French, Austrian, Bavarian and British contacts to attend the conference, and, finally, on 26 October 1863, at the Athenée Palace, the Geneva Conference opened.<sup>117</sup>

## 2.2 The Geneva Conference 1863

The conference was attended by 31 representatives; 16 representing states and 4 representing philanthropic institutions.<sup>118</sup> Moynier, who effectively presided over the conference, proposed: a) the formation of a society in every European capital that received assurances from its own government that, in the event of a conflict, its offer of help shall be accepted; b) when war starts, every society (i) organizes help for its own country's army by providing a voluntary corps that is placed to the back of its army and places them as far away as necessary so as not to disturb the army's movement, but also at a distance which allows them to provide assistance once the battle starts; (ii) the voluntary workers shall be sent to the places where needed at the request of the army's first in command; (iii) help should be provided to the wounded of both sides in battle, with no distinctions; (iv) the voluntary workers should not be treated by any party as an enemy, and the workers should wear a distinctive sign that allows them to be recognized and respected, such as that worn by a priest or a nun of the Sister of Charity order.<sup>119</sup>

The above proposals, Moynier pointed out, made it necessary to achieve an agreement between nations, whose text, after praying for God's benediction of the conference, was read out by Moynier, together with its 'Supplement'.<sup>120</sup> Dunant, acting as Secretary, spoke about having received around 40 letters, including those from the kings of Belgium, Denmark and Portugal and others from medical and philanthropic societies, all of which were ready to support the Committee's efforts. Other issues discussed at the conference were those affecting war prisoners (brought up by Prince Demidoff from Russia), which, he argued, should be helped and allowed to receive mail from their families. The Russian War Minister, Dimitri Milutine, though expressing sympathy for the proposed initiative, argued that governments should be left to modify the pertinent

---

<sup>117</sup> Some of these contacts were made with Ministers of War in their respective countries. This was the case with Bavaria, France and Britain. At the last meeting of the International Committee just prior to the conference, there appeared to be a negative reaction to the 'addendum' on neutrality attached by Dunant to the invitation to conference. However, in the minutes, drafted by Dunant, there is no reference to the 'neutrality' controversy. (Minutes of the ICRC, ICRC)

<sup>118</sup> For a full list of those attending, see Document F.

<sup>119</sup> Sisters of Charity are nuns of a French order dedicated to the care of the sick and wounded.

<sup>120</sup> See Documents D and E.

international law of their respective countries, but should not be forced to do so by the Committee. This idea was important and affected the subsequent debates in the conference, as they now had to focus solely on the operational aspect of the societies and their workers, and thus refrained from trying to establish an international law for the wounded.

Though some delegates showed some hesitation vis-à-vis the proposal at first<sup>121</sup>, during four days of discussion, after analyzing the draft agreement article by article, the proposal to set up a Sanitary Voluntary Corps was approved. It was also agreed that these voluntary workers would wear a distinctive sign, to show their neutrality during a conflict. Dr Appia proposed the wearing of a white bracelet with a red cross insignia, while the conference expressed the wish that this distinctive sign be used by all the sanitary services of the armies, so that combatants would be able to clearly distinguish those non-combatants who were sanitary personnel.<sup>122</sup> The notion of neutrality, which Moynier believed could cause problems at the conference, was approved unanimously, and the conference – which was not official, but launched as a private initiative – closed on 30 October 1863. Its practical result is reflected in the ‘Resolution and Wishes Adopted’, which became the fundamental charter of the Assistance to the Wounded in War.<sup>123</sup>

After the conference the main objective of the Committee was to establish societies in as many countries as possible, and to get the neutrality of sanitary workers recognized by governments through the signing of a Convention. Those who attended the Geneva conference were written to, and told what the Committee was expecting from them.<sup>124</sup> The first society was established at Württemberg in December 1863, followed by the Grand-Duchy d’Oldenbourg in January 1864 and Belgium and Prussia in February 1864. Disappointingly, Holland, Austria and Britain were not responsive, arguing that they already had an adequate sanitary situation for their armies, although Holland was

---

<sup>121</sup> The British delegate, Rutherford, believed that the proposed societies would be superfluous, given the enormous strides taken by the British in sanitary matters during the Crimean War, while a member of the French delegation, Prevail, argued that the presence of non-military people on the battlefield would cause difficulties for the military. The Prussian and German-speaking delegation, though supportive of the proposal, wanted the voluntary corps to be placed in hospitals at the rear of the battlefield. However, the spirited defence of the proposal by the ICRC delegate, Dr Mannoïr, opposing Mr Bordier from the French delegation, was crucial in gaining support for the draft agreement. See ICRC, minutes of the Geneva Conference, 26 October 1863.

<sup>122</sup> Boissier (1963), p. 109.

<sup>123</sup> See Document G.

<sup>124</sup> See Document H.

probably more concerned about having a private association tending the wounded on the battlefield.<sup>125</sup> The Russians, though favourable, were reluctant to accept the idea of voluntary workers.

The Committee, which met on 12 March 1864, was considering how best to promote the resolutions and wishes of the Geneva conference, when a new European conflict erupted – the war which pitted Austria and Prussia against Denmark. The Committee decided to send two delegates: Captain Van de Veldt (Dutch delegate to the Geneva conference) to meet the Danes, and Dr Appia to meet the Prussians.<sup>126</sup> The Committee approached the Swiss government in June, and the Federal Council (the Swiss Cabinet of Ministers) decided to call for the holding of a Diplomatic Conference on 8 August 1864, where all European sovereign states were invited, as were the United States, Mexico and Brazil. It was hoped that at the proposed conference these states would formally accept the ‘Resolutions and Wishes’ of the Geneva conference of October 1863, and convert them into a Convention.

On 8 August 1864, General Dufour opened the ‘International Conference for the Neutralisation of the Sanitary Military Service on the Battlefield’, and, after 15 days of discussion, the text of the ‘Convention pour l’Amélioration du Sort des Militaires Blessés’ (‘Convention for the amelioration of the conditions of the wounded and sick of the Armed Forces in the Field’) was finally drafted, and signed on 22 August. This text, which became the 1<sup>st</sup> Geneva Convention, was signed the same day by 12 of the attending states: Grand-Duchy of Baden, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Grand-Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Prussia, Switzerland and Württemberg, and this agreed Convention remained open for other states to sign. Thus, the 1<sup>st</sup> Geneva Convention of 1864 – a short agreement with 10 articles – had still not come into force. The 1864 agreement simply confirmed that the negotiations had reached a certain stage, but still awaited, as Pierre Boissier said, that the powers ‘transformed the engagement into a marriage’.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> Britain was adamant that the reorganisation of the sanitary corps during the Crimea covered the needs of its army, while Austria believed that the already existing ‘Austrian Patriotic Helping Society’ for the military met its needs.

<sup>126</sup> Both were also delegates of the Geneva Section, which had been established on 17 March 1864.

<sup>127</sup> Boissier (1963), p. 223.

### 2.3 The Red Cross faces the reality of war: the building of the organisation

Although the Committee of the 'Assistance to the Wounded in War' sent two delegates (wearing the armband with a red cross on a white background) to observe the war by Prussia and Austria against Denmark in 1864<sup>128</sup>, the Austrian-Prussian War of 1866 was the first time the Geneva Convention of 1864 was applied, and the first time the national relief societies had been active. By 1866, 14 states had ratified the Geneva Convention<sup>129</sup>, among them Prussia. Austria, on the other hand, though it ordered its Army to follow the Convention, did not ratify it. The Italians, who had ratified the Convention, joined the war on the Prussian side, in an attempt to recover Italian territory occupied by the Austrians.

The result of the war, which ended in September 1866 with a resounding Prussian victory at Sadowa, revealed a clear lesson for the future humanitarian order emanating from the Geneva Convention. In Prussia, where the Central Committee of the Red Cross was accepted by the government and worked closely with the Army, the charitable effort of private individuals and institutions had been well channelled to help the wounded on the battlefield. In the battle of Sadowa, for example, with more than 40,000 wounded and killed (two thirds of whom were Austrian), transportation and hospital treatment (where chloroform was first used) worked with remarkable efficiency. In Austria, however, where there was considerable material relief in the hands of a few private agencies, the absence of the Red Cross organisation was evident in the lack of qualified personnel and adequate transportation, and, perhaps more importantly, inadequate cooperation with the military authorities, who were in charge of sanitary operations.<sup>130</sup>

Certainly, the success of the Red Cross in its relief operations during the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 gave the organisation a much higher profile, and immediately

---

<sup>128</sup> The war by Austria and Prussia against Denmark entailed a dispute between these powers about the status of the province of Schleswig-Holstein, which Prussia argued was an integral part of Prussia. For a full debate on this issue, and the way in which Prussia used this dispute to extend its power, see Carr, W. (1974), pp. 102-16.

<sup>129</sup> The states that had ratified the Geneva Convention by 1866 were: France, Switzerland, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Grand Duchy of Baden, Greece, Great Britain, Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Württemberg, Prussia and Turkey.

<sup>130</sup> This situation was confirmed by the American doctor, Evans, who was a member of the American Sanitary Commission. Boissier (1963), p. 241.



after the war three new states adhered to the Geneva Convention,<sup>131</sup> and three new Red Cross Societies were formed in Russia, Austria and Belgium. Following up on this dynamic, the Red Cross had a presence at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in October 1867, with its 'International Exhibition of Societies for the help of the Wounded Military'. Prior to the Exhibition, a conference was held in Paris in August, in an attempt to study the 1866 conflict and how the national societies had performed. The conference was attended by representatives of the Red Cross and those of 16 national committees of national societies, 6 governments, 2 cavalry orders and 4 individuals without mandate.<sup>132</sup> Three sub-committees had been formed before the conference to study and present proposals on the following topics: a) the extension of the neutrality statute to the voluntaries sent by the Red Cross Societies following the armies; b) the obligation to send back all the wounded to their respective countries, and not just those unfit for military service; and c) the proposal to introduce in the military rules of the respective states all the necessary changes to adapt them to the Geneva Convention articles, when ratified by each state.

The Paris conference, held on the 25 August 1867, was addressed by Moynier, who put forward the following proposals: 1) extension of the Convention to war on the sea; 2) that the personal properties of those killed or wounded should not be touched; this prohibition meant, in effect, that a 'battlefield police' should be established by the states in conflict; 3) the practice of placing the killed of the enemy in common graves without identification should be stopped; a clear sign or a document in the uniform should be taken before burial and sent to the civil or military authority of the place where the deceased was born; and 4) the obligation of providing a list of the killed, wounded and sick to the respective state in conflict should be established.<sup>133</sup>

As the Paris Conference could not revise the Convention<sup>134</sup>, a Diplomatic Conference was called in October 1867 to clarify matters. The issues brought up at the Paris Conference were discussed, such as the neutral status of voluntary workers, which, due

---

<sup>131</sup> These states were Saxe-Royal, Portugal and Russia.

<sup>132</sup> One of whom was Henry Dunant, who resigned as secretary due to his involvement in the bankruptcy of the Geneva Credit Bank.

<sup>133</sup> There was also a suggestion at this conference that the ICRC should be transferred to Paris. Moynier was against this proposal, and argued that Geneva was a neutral place that could act as an amalgamating body for the increased number of national societies.

<sup>134</sup> The Convention could only be revised by being ratified by the member states at a diplomatic conference.

to French opposition, was rejected, as, it was argued, neutral status could only be given to those forming part of their own Army Sanitary Service. It was established, however, that wounded prisoners, once treated, should be sent back to their country of origin, though officers would be exempt from such treatment, given the strategic and intelligence risks involved. Moreover, nine articles were written adapting the Convention rules to the Navy. A further two conferences took place during the following years: in Saint Petersburg in October 1868, where, at the request of Tsar Alexander II, the use of certain explosive bullets was prohibited, while the II. International Conference of the Red Cross, in Berlin in 1869, established an 'Office for Correspondence and Information', the forerunner of the 'Central Agency of Investigation'.

#### **2.4 The Franco-Prussian War 1870-1**

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 was the first major test for the Committee and the effectiveness of the Geneva Convention. For the first time all the various aspects of Red Cross organisation were in place: Prussia and France had signed the Geneva Convention; both had their own national Red Cross societies; and they had even notified the Swiss government requesting that the additional articles of the 1868 Paris Conference be accepted, though they had still not become part of the Convention. Moreover, there were now 23 national Red Cross societies in neutral countries who were prepared to take part in the relief effort.<sup>135</sup>

Despite these organisational advances, the reality of the Franco-Prussian War relief effort proved to be far from adequate. Essentially, there were enormous differences between the French and Prussian relief efforts. Prussia was well organized, and the Army Sanitary Services coordinated effectively with the Red Cross Society.<sup>136</sup> On the contrary, the French lacked organisation, and there was no coordination between the Army and the Red Cross. This resulted in a tragic reality: on the Prussian side, only

---

<sup>135</sup> Through extremely hard work, and the personal intervention of Moynier, a Provisional Committee for the Aid of the Wounded in the Ottoman Empire was formed in Istanbul, in June 1868. This was the first non-Christian state to have a representation in the international movement of the Red Cross. The societies that were established soon after in other Muslim countries, such as Iran, chose the Red Crescent logo, and thus were called 'Red Crescent Societies' though they were considered part of the International Red Cross.

<sup>136</sup> The Prussian Red Cross society had 1,956 local committees with 250,000 members scattered around the country.

10% of the wounded treated in hospitals died, while on the French side three times more men (318.000) died from inadequate medical treatment than did from enemy fire. As Boissier says:

To cure their wounded and sick, the French Army had a Military Sanitary Corps that was similar to the one at Solferino, with the same problems and lack of resources.<sup>137</sup>

Although the French Red Cross made a great effort to cope with the situation, as did private organisations and Red Cross societies from neutral countries<sup>138</sup>, there were overwhelming problems on the French side, such as the lack of information vis-à-vis the rules of the Convention, despite leaflets outlining these rules in French being distributed by the Prussians. Perhaps more importantly, both the Prussian and the French Red Cross societies were limited to helping their own co-nationals, as the generals of both sides had not accepted the idea of volunteers from the opposing side being present behind their own lines, and, sadly, ambulances were used to transport arms.

Nevertheless, some progress was made during this war. On 18 July 1870, three days after the declaration of war, the ICRC notified the National Red Cross societies that an ‘Office of Correspondence and Information’ had been established in Bale (Switzerland), following the agreements of the 1869 Berlin conference. The Office had a triple purpose: a) to centralise information about war prisoners; b) to publish lists of injured soldiers; and c) to allow prisoners of war to be searched. The Bale Office also acted as a coordinating body between the French and the Prussian Red Cross Societies, and informed the neutral Red Cross societies about the needs of the wounded.

There is little doubt, however, that the reality of war had revealed the limitations of the Convention in terms of concrete relief work, which undoubtedly provoked disillusionment among members of the organisation. Indeed, the Red Cross movement underwent a severe crisis after the Franco-Prussian War, revealed in the fact that a meeting of the organisation did not take place until 1880, ten years later. For the limitations and weakness of the movement could be seen clearly when the organisation involved itself in a conflict that confronted two leading powers, as in the war of 1870-71. Neither the ICRC nor the national societies dared propose anything that could provoke the fracture of the movement born in 1863.

---

<sup>137</sup> Boissier (1963), p. 321.

<sup>138</sup> Russia and Switzerland sent military doctors to help both combatants, while Luxembourg, Holland and other countries sent doctors, nurses and ambulances.

Nevertheless, there were other, internal organisational issues involved in the crisis of these years. Moynier, amongst others, had toyed with the idea of winding up the activities of the ICRC, once the National Societies were established and working. This had been the original mandate of the ICRC, and it had now been fulfilled.<sup>139</sup> However, the deficiencies encountered during the Franco-Prussian War – particularly those of the National Societies – convinced Moynier that the ICRC, based in Geneva, was now much more relevant. The ICRC, based in a neutral country like Switzerland, could be an active player in the relief field, and able to assume humanitarian actions in a way that the National Societies never could. It could also remain neutral in a Europe in shock from the dramatic change in the balance of power.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, the international organisation could work with national societies to improve their performance, and be a crucial coordinating body between them.

Over the following years, various initiatives were taken vis-à-vis the conventions to be followed during war, and in particular the issue of prisoners of war and the ICRC's role in civil conflicts (i.e. civil war). At the 1<sup>st</sup> Peace Conference in The Hague in 1889, 'dum-dum' bullets – considered particularly wounding and deforming – were prohibited<sup>141</sup>, while the Geneva Conference in 1906 discussed how the handling of the wounded and sick could be improved, and resulted in: 1) More detailed and precise terminology than that of the 1864 Geneva Convention; 2) new provisions on the burial of the dead and transmission of information; and 3) the voluntary Aid Societies were for the first time expressly recognized. It also changed provisions that had been proven impracticable, such as the duty to repatriate the wounded, which was transformed into a mere recommendation and the prerogatives of the inhabitants bringing help to the wounded, which reduced the numbers to reasonable proportions.

The VII International Conference held in London in 1907 proposed the idea of a prisoners of war statute, and called on the national societies 'in order that they, forced by the circumstances, have the obligation to assist (in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1899) prisoners kept in their territory'. This was followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> As David P. Forsythe says, "In fact, the Red Cross idea almost perished during the Franco-Prussian War". Forsythe (2005), p. 24.

<sup>140</sup> The ignominious defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War, and the emergence of a united Germany under Prussian leadership in 1871, revealed a dramatic change in the power balance in continental Europe.

<sup>141</sup> These bullets were called 'dum-dum' because the British arsenal of the same name close to Calcutta (India) had stored munitions of this type.

Peace Conference at The Hague in 1907, a conference proposed by the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. At this conference 44 countries signed an agreement on how prisoners of war should be treated and banned the use of any sort of reprisal against the defeated.

Shortly before the First World War, the IX International Conference in Washington in 1912 discussed the role the ICRC should play in internal conflicts (i.e. civil wars), but agreement could not be reached. The discussion evolved around the question of the role of the national societies in these kinds of conflicts, as a strict interpretation only allowed for their functioning in international conflicts. The ICRC recognized the lack of definition of such societies in civil conflicts, but stated that it was clear that there was a possibility of intervention, as its statutes referred to helping the ‘injured in campaign’, and did not specify if these were ‘military’ or ‘belligerents’ – thus all those injured were considered civilians. Although the conference did not obtain a consensus on the matter, a resolution was approved which created a body of ‘neutral delegates’ to be credited before the governments of countries in conflict.

Indeed, the issue of the ICRC’s role in civil conflicts had surfaced much earlier, when the International Committee was first involved in a civil conflict, the Second Carlist War in Spain, 1872-6. Something similar to the Red Cross had existed in Spain since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the uprising against the Napoleonic invasion on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1808, a ‘Society of the Holy Cross and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May’ was established, under the patronage of the order of St. John of Jerusalem and with the humanitarian values of the Catholic Church. Spain had sent two delegates to the 1863 Geneva Conference<sup>142</sup>, and had signed and ratified the 1<sup>st</sup> Geneva Convention in 1864, and a Spanish society had been established, the ‘National Committee for Aid to the Military Wounded’, organized with the help of the order of St. John of Jerusalem. The Society had been declared a Public Utility, and in 1870 the Society, now called the Red Cross, delivered humanitarian aid during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 (its first foreign intervention) and then intervened directly during the Second Carlist War of 1872-6.

Although the ICRC had not officially contacted the Spanish Red Cross during the Second Carlist War – believing that the ICRC’s role was restricted to international conflicts – Gustave Moynier knew its president, Dr Landa, and through him the ICRC

---

<sup>142</sup> Dr Nicasio Landa, Commander of the Army Sanitary Corps, and Joaquín Agulló, Count of Ripalda.

made contact with the Carlist Pretender, Carlos of Bourbon. After negotiations, it was agreed by the generals of both sides that they would not execute prisoners or the wounded. But what right had the ICRC to contact a party – the Carlists – that was not a registered state or territorial entity? As a result of the ICRC's intervention in this conflict, the Committee produced a conclusion on this issue that would have great importance for the future, when it stated:

Any power that offers in its military organisation enough warranties of order, has the right to be considered in war as a state.<sup>143</sup>

It was this stance, when Civil War erupted in Spain more than sixty years later, in 1936, which allowed the ICRC to communicate and negotiate with Franco, given that at that time there were still not any clear legal grounds to regulate civil conflicts.

The question of the treatment of prisoners of war was also discussed at the Washington Conference of 1912. Following the wish expressed at the London Conference of 1907, the conference expressed the view that the National Red Cross Societies should organise, in peace time, special commissions who would be in charge, during wartime, of collecting and conveying to the ICRC the aid received for military prisoners, and the ICRC, through its neutral delegates – created at this conference – would control and ensure the distribution of such aid sent to individual military prisoners. Aid that was not individually designated would be distributed to the rest of the prisoners, while the national societies would assume the costs incurred by the ICRC and the work of its neutral delegates. Such wishes expressed by the Conference, though not ratified by a Convention, clarified the position of the ICRC and opened the pathway for the active presence of the ICRC in future conflicts. This was put to the test during the First World War, when there was intense intervention in favour of prisoners of war from all countries involved.

## **2.5 The Red Cross facing a world conflict in the 1914-1918 war: a major test**

Despite Moynier's belief in an active future for the ICRC after the Franco-Prussian War, the organisation played little part in the conflicts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It played a minor role in the Balkans, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and the Boer War. During

---

<sup>143</sup> Moreillon (1973), pp. 26-27.

the Spanish colonial wars of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the ICRC played a conservative role, denying the Spanish request to help negotiate the release of Spanish soldiers captured by Philippine insurgents, arguing that this request fell outside its mandate.<sup>144</sup>

In effect, the ICRC considered itself an organisation with a moral influence that could be exercised over states and national societies, in order that the latter intervened in the humanitarian relief of the victims of war. The ICRC influenced others to act and gave financial help to other bodies, but the organisation itself did not intervene directly. The structure of the organisation reflected this, as on the eve of the world conflagration, in August 1914, the ICRC had no administrative staff.<sup>145</sup>

The First World War (1914-1918), however, dramatically changed the ICRC's role, and the organisation was forced – due to the scale of human suffering involved – to become a more active protagonist in the relief field. The National Societies of the Red Cross of the countries affected by the conflict carried out medical aid to the wounded, while the ICRC became increasingly associated with prisoners of war, in particular the issue of prisoners' human rights. A new body, The International Prisoners of War Agency, created on 14 August 1914 and headed by the General-Secretary of the ICRC, Paul Des Gouttes, became the centre of this activity, and evolved into a large administrative operation, employing 30 volunteers. The Prisoners of War Agency collected information about the numbers of prisoners and their situation, often visiting them, informing them and exchanging them when possible, while simultaneously providing aid and other measures of relief.<sup>146</sup>

The Prisoners of War Agency of the ICRC coordinated its activities with the Vatican, which, in 1915, had created a Special Service of Research for missing persons. Pope Benedict XV, who, a few years later would meet the Save The Children founder, Eglantyne Jebb, had met the ICRC president, Gustave Ador, on a visit to Rome in January 1916, and from then on an effective coordination of research and information regarding prisoners and the civilian populations of countries in conflict ensued. The Prisoners of War Agency ceased its activities on 31 December 1919, and the ICRC now

---

<sup>144</sup> Pitteloud (Ed.) (1999), pp. 609-10.

<sup>145</sup> Durand, A. (2002), p. 35.

<sup>146</sup> To give some idea of the enormous amount of work performed by the Prisoners Agency, a questionnaire sent to prisoners in July 1916 – asking for information regarding the disappeared, dead or wounded in their units – yielded replies which, solely from the French prisoners, covered 228 books of 400 pages, including 90,000 pieces of information absent from the official lists.

directed its attention to the repatriation and relief of civil populations and the medical missions. The issue of prisoners of war continued to be an enormous problem, however, as there was a total of 2,500,000 prisoners (1,500,000 from the Central Powers and 1,000,000 from Russia) at the end of the war. The ICRC thus set up a new body in 1920, the Research Service, whose mission was to search for missing persons and provide documentation for ex-prisoners, while trying to help their families survive the dreadful conditions reigning in post-war Europe.

Apart from its relief activities, the ICRC played an important role as guardian of the Geneva Convention agreements, and vetted their fulfilment by the signatory countries involved. To this end, the ICRC kept in contact with the 38 National Societies in service during the war, and made continuous efforts to prohibit chemical warfare. Certainly, the profile of the ICRC and the National Red Cross Societies had been greatly enhanced during World War I, as Geoffrey Best confirms:

The fundamental principles of protecting the sick and wounded, and of treating prisoners decently, survived the war intact, strengthened, indeed, by so many millions of people becoming acquainted, in the course of so prolonged a war, with the work of the ambulances and hospitals on the one hand, and the predicaments of the POW'S and their families on the other. The ICRC and the National Red Cross societies came out of the war raised in reputation and regard.<sup>147</sup>

The work of the ICRC – principally its efforts in helping detainees – was recognized in 1917, when the ICRC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>148</sup>

## **2.6 The aftermath of the First World War**

After the Armistice was signed in 1918, the main challenge for the ICRC was the repatriation of the displaced, the continuing work with ex-prisoners<sup>149</sup>, and the humanitarian crisis produced by the Russian revolution of 1917 and the Hungarian revolution of 1919. The first intervention in aid of political prisoners took place in

---

<sup>147</sup> Best, G. (1983), p. 52.

<sup>148</sup> The work with detainees had been carried out by 41 delegates through 524 visits, a figure that merits attention when considering that 17 delegates and 5 deputy delegates served the ICRC during the Spanish Civil War. Knitel (1967), p. 43. See Chapter 3, above.

<sup>149</sup> Part of this work was to provide *ad-hoc* documentation for ex-prisoners to enable them to exercise their national rights, a task provided by the ICRC during the Spanish Civil War for both sides, as we shall see.



Russia in 1918 and in Hungary in 1919, while the insurrection in Herzegovina in 1918 and the internal problems in Montenegro in 1919 led to the creation of the first missions in aid of the victims of internal conflicts. Edouard Frick, the delegate before the Soviet authorities<sup>150</sup> after establishing the new Red Cross, brought up the matter of political prisoners, and alluded to the right to intervene in internal problems or conflicts.<sup>151</sup>

Further definition of the role of the ICRC in civil conflicts took place at its X. Conference, held in Geneva in August 1921. Resolution 14, which was approved, stated that the Red Cross is above political and social opinions, religion, races, classes and nations, and that all victims of civil wars and social and revolutionary clashes have the right to be attended to. 'Ius gentium'<sup>152</sup> cannot be violated, and reprisals and the taking of hostages of family members is outlawed. Although in principle the National Societies were to be in charge of performing and monitoring compliance with this resolution, given the peculiar nature of internal conflicts, which could hinder the work of these societies, it was agreed that the mandate of intervention in relief work be entrusted to the ICRC. The XV. ICRC Conference, held in Tokyo in 1934, also dealt with the issue of civil conflict, and authorized the ICRC to:

Deploy in favour of civil victims the same activities due to be performed as to the military prisoners<sup>153</sup>

However, this formulation was somewhat vague and never specified what these activities consisted of, because the Diplomatic Conference which was supposed to redefine them never took place. Therefore, on the eve of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, while there had been ample discussion and agreement about the role of the ICRC in civil conflicts, the lack of precision and diplomatic assent of these agreements meant that, in practice, the ICRC, and the National Societies, acted, on the whole, in an *ad hoc* manner, in an attempt to bring humanitarian relief to all those involved.

---

<sup>150</sup> Frick acted as the head of the Relief Mission, formed in December 1918, in favour of Russian prisoners.

<sup>151</sup> The 'old' Red Cross had been dissolved by the Soviet authorities and Frick had been entrusted with establishing a new one. In alluding to the question of intervention in internal conflicts, he referred to the discussion at the X. Conference, although this was not expressed in any convention.

<sup>152</sup> The Right of the People, understood as Human Rights.

<sup>153</sup> ICRC, art. 25. Draft International Convention (Tokyo 1934).

## **2.7 The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the eve of the Spanish Civil War**

The ICRC was, and still is, a private organisation based on Swiss law, with Protestant roots, but based on a liberal and philanthropic ethos. The central office during the Spanish Civil War was Villa Moynier in Geneva, and its President Max Huber, Doctor in Law. All its members were Swiss and linked to families that had traditionally contributed members to the Committee. Originally Committee members had come from the Swiss French Cantons (although Max Huber was from Zurich), but over time the Committee had evolved to embrace a much wider representation of Swiss territory. The majority (90%) of the 114 members in 1931 were university graduates from liberal professions<sup>154</sup> and mainly Protestant.<sup>155</sup> In 1933 the budget of the ICRC was 150,000 Swiss francs, and had a staff of twelve. It was financed by the national societies, the recently created ICRC Foundation and income from its various investments.

## **2.8 The ICRC and the neutral delegates**

The image of the ICRC, in the field of action, was created by its 'neutral delegates', those directly nominated by the Committee for relief action. Those designated as neutral delegates were normally well known to the Committee, or indeed members of the Committee itself, and many held, at the same time, important diplomatic or government posts. For example, Edouard Odier, Vice-President of the ICRC (1917-32), was the Swiss Ambassador in St. Petersburg under the Tsarist government, and Voldemar Wherlin, ICRC delegate to Moscow until 1938 (heading the so-called Wherlin Mission of the ICRC in the Soviet Union between 1920-38, designed to help the 8,000 or so Swiss nationals living in the Soviet Union), had represented the Nansen Committee of the League of Nations.<sup>156</sup>

Although the greater involvement of the ICRC in conflicts from the First World War required an increase in the number of delegates, the selection of delegates continued to be based on personal contacts and known ability. The delegate Marcel Junod (medical

---

<sup>154</sup> Fiscalini (1985), pp. 62-63.

<sup>155</sup> The first Catholic member, Guiseppe Motta, was designated in 1923, and Cornelio Sommaruga, also a Catholic, was President from 1987 till 1999.

<sup>156</sup> The High Commission for Refugees established on June 27, 1921, by the League of Nations under the direction of the Famous Norwegian Explorer Fridtjof Nansen (who had been heavily involved in the relief to Russian refugees from the civil war in the Soviet Union).

doctor, 1904-1961), contacted in October 1935 to cover a post in Ethiopia, where conflict had erupted after the Italian invasion in 1935, had been appointed through a friend who had been part of Junod's Movement of Help to Russian Children in 1927. Junod visited the zone when under the control of Haile Selassie, the Abyssinian emperor, before the country was totally controlled by the Italians. The ICRC did not have an authorized presence in the territory, and therefore he was back in Geneva by July 1936, where he received the Spanish assignment.

The Swiss Army was another source of recruitment for the neutral delegates of the ICRC. The delegate, Raymond Courvoisier, a member of the Swiss Army, was told by his colonel that his mission in Spain 'would be accounted for in his career', proof, it would seem, of the strong connections between the Swiss Army and the ICRC. The delegates were francophone, mainly bachelors and members of the military sanitary corps. The recruitment was temporary, for a month, but that could be extended for successive months until one of the parties demanded the termination of the contract.<sup>157</sup>

The ethos of the ICRC, and the desired attitude of its neutral delegates, can be seen in these quotations from ICRC delegates' instructor Sydney Brown in 1936:

When you are on the spot, thousands of kilometers away from Geneva, you have to lean mainly on your imagination. There are the texts of the Red Cross, but above all there is its spirit.<sup>158</sup>

And Marcel Junod speaking about the guiding principles of the philosophy of the ICRC, which should inform the work of the delegates:

The ICRC delegate shall work with an absolute detachment from his own interests, and must be resolved not to serve either directly or indirectly one interest against another interest. A delegate must only attest, and then to act as he can and as best he can. He has no other mission than to prevent and alleviate the sufferings of the victims, military as well as civilian.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> See attached as Document J the model Agreement used for the enrolment of Delegates.

<sup>158</sup> As a retired delegate, Hugo Slim, referred to in November 2005, when he presented his paper, 'The Influence of Geneva. Eleven Genevan ideas on the world today', given to the Comité Romand de la Association des Anciens Délégués du ICRC (AAD) (ICRC – Geneva, 2005). He referred to 'pragmatism' as one of the virtues of the delegate, expressed by instructor Brown.

<sup>159</sup> Junod (1963), pp. 82-3.

### 3. Service Civil International (SCI)

Pierre Ceresole, the man who conceived of SCI, was born in Lausanne, in the Swiss canton of Vaud, in August 1879. Ceresole was from a well-off political family<sup>160</sup> and well-educated, having obtained a degree in engineering and a PhD. A rather dreamy and mystical youth<sup>161</sup>. Ceresole, after training in mathematics and physics in Göttingen and Munich, left Europe for the United States in 1908. There, teaching French Literature in the Hawaiian Islands, he discovered the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, leader of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Transcendentalist movement.<sup>162</sup> In Emerson Ceresole believed he had found a kindred spirit, a rebel with a deep respect for Nature, including human nature, which undoubtedly influenced Ceresole's ideas of promoting world peace. He also fashioned himself on Emerson, as both intellectual and man of action, and Ceresole believed that the abolition of war was the next step to ending slavery and experimenting with new ways of living, through a Christian revolution, which would lead to 'The Confederation of the Peoples of the World'.<sup>163</sup>

Over the following years, working as an engineer, first in Japan and later in Switzerland, Ceresole put his ideas into action. During the First World War, in 1915, Ceresole refused military service and was sent to prison. This was the beginning of his campaigns against military service and refusal to pay military tax that Ceresole was involved in throughout his life, and saw him in and out of prison until his death in 1945. Throughout the First World War Ceresole lectured against war, and in 1918, evidently influenced by William James and his notion of a 'moral substitute for war' and 'peace armies'<sup>164</sup>, Ceresole presented his idea of the civil service for peace thus:

There are two ways of organizing a Civil Service; 1) it could be organized on a purely

---

<sup>160</sup> His father, a judge, had been a colonel in the Swiss Army and President of the Swiss Confederation in 1873. The Swiss President is elected yearly by Parliamentarians of the Confederation.

<sup>161</sup> Seventeen-year old Ceresole was said to have had a 'mystical' experience while walking in the Swiss forest of Gantenaz.

<sup>162</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1883) was a poet, essayist and philosopher, and considered an excellent orator. Emerson was leader of the Transcendentalist movement, whose ideal spiritual state is one that "transcends" the physical and empirical. This can only be realized through the individual's intuition, and not through the doctrines of established religion. In 1836 he wrote the essay 'Nature', which presented his approach to life.

<sup>163</sup> Anet (1974), p. 42.

<sup>164</sup> William James (1842-1910), psychologist and philosopher, wrote significant works on religion and mysticism. Ceresole had studied the series of lectures that James had given in Edinburgh in 1902, on 'Varieties of Religious Experiences', including mystical experiences, and in the same year James had put forward his idea of a 'moral substitute for war', where he invited young students to form peacetime armies to help enemies or neighbours in times of trouble. James (2002), p. 328.

national basis by making it a special branch of national service in which men, satisfying certain conditions, could enroll in a service independent of the army, or 2) another solution would seem more desirable, that is that the department responsible for organizing the service should be considered an international institution, which forms the real, concrete core of that universal homeland to whose creation we look forward to.<sup>165</sup>

In 1918, Ceresole went to Bilthoven, Holland, to attend a meeting of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a movement of Christian Pacifists formed in England during World War I. The meeting was attended by Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Catholics, Quakers and Freethinkers, and deeply impressed Ceresole.<sup>166</sup> There, he glimpsed the possibility of a Civilian Service for Peace, a constructive alternative for those who opposed war. His meeting with Quakers was of considerable importance, though he wished to extend the Quakers' wartime relief missions to armies of men and women on a permanent footing, who would be from all countries, races and religions, but united by the idea of helping others.

The idea of the civil service for peace finally materialized in 1920, in Esnes, near Verdun in France. Under the direction of Ceresole, a small group of Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Dutch, Swiss and Americans – all of them pacifists and conscientious objectors – worked for five months repairing the war damage wrought on this small French village. The first project at Esnes was funded by Maria Van der Linden<sup>167</sup> who donated her small fortune and later became fully dedicated to the cause. She was to be the first 'sister', the cook and nurse for the small group. The project also had some support from the French Government.<sup>168</sup>

In June 1921, Ceresole, in a circular addressed to recruit volunteers, set up a Civilian Service without official support, having been refused official status by the Swiss government. At the end of 1921 a Committee was formed, and Pierre recruited his brother, Ernest, a Swiss Army colonel, to the project. Over the following years the Service acted in France repairing war damage, in Switzerland in reconstruction work after serious avalanches and floods in 1922, and in flood-ravaged Liechtenstein in 1928,

---

<sup>165</sup> Anet (1974), p. 24.

<sup>166</sup> Ceresole was greatly heartened by a speech by a German man, who wanted to go to France and help repair the devastation caused by German soldiers during the First World War: "We have been discussing for two days. That's enough. My brother was a German soldier. He fought in France. He did his part in ruining that country. I want to do my part in restoring it. To reconstruct." Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>167</sup> Dutch member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

where around 700 volunteers from 10 countries and from more than 50 different professions worked for six months.

Throughout the 1920s, Ceresole and the Civilian Service carried out relief efforts in Switzerland and France, often being involved in large-scale projects involving hundreds of volunteers.<sup>169</sup> During the depression of the 1930s, the idea of work camps became very popular in England, which introduced the idea of volunteers dedicating their holidays to this service, and thus the composition and the duration of the Camps became more varied. The principle of unspecialized labour in the camps was maintained, with the majority of the volunteers being Sixth-Formers or university students, while a small number were somewhat older. Wales was the scene of many camps during this period, where volunteers tried to increase the food supply for unemployed miners through the creation of garden projects. Refugees and displaced persons from Central Europe after World War I and during the interwar period were also integrated into the camps.

In 1934, SCI embarked on its most ambitious project hitherto and extended its activity to Bihar in Northern India, where an earthquake had destroyed many villages. The earthquake had been accompanied by floods of unprecedented severity, which had led to the displacement of villages to other locations while dikes were being constructed. And it was here, where Pierre Ceresole had travelled personally in 1934 and 1935, while SCI was still engaged in the Bihar project, that news arrived, in July 1936, of the military uprising in Spain.

## **4. Save the Children**

### **4.1 The Save the Children Fund and its founder, Eglantyne Jebb**

Francesca Wilson, Jebb's biographer, called her 'the rebel daughter of a country house'<sup>170</sup>, while her colleagues at the Fund nicknamed her the 'White Flame', due to her pale complexion and frail appearance, the result of a thyroid disease which affected her all of her life. Eglantyne Jebb, was, indeed, born in a country mansion on 25 August

---

<sup>169</sup> Such as the landslide that crushed the Swiss village of Someo in September 1925, where, for 57 days, 310 men took part in the relief operation organized by SCI, the heavy floods that affected Aquitaine in France in 1929, where 250 volunteers laboured throughout the summer, and the relief effort in Aargau in Switzerland, where storms had destroyed orchards. 276 volunteers were recruited for relief work there. Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>170</sup> Wilson (1967).

1876 in Lyth, Ellesmere, Shropshire, educated at Oxford and profoundly religious. As Francesca Wilson says, “like Florence Nightingale, Eglantyne was tormented by a sense of mission and a feeling of guilt until she had found what her mission was”.<sup>171</sup>

Working first as a teacher on graduation, then for the ‘Charity Organisation Society’, Eglantyne became increasingly aware of the poverty and appalling social conditions then prevalent in large parts of the country.<sup>172</sup> Her baptism of fire, however, occurred in 1913, when working for the Macedonian Relief Fund (MRF) in the Balkans.<sup>173</sup> In 1912, a ‘Balkan League’ of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro was able to defeat the Turks and free Macedonia. When Eglantyne arrived in Macedonia in March 1913, the war was over, but the refugees from the war, both victors and vanquished, numbered some 10,000.<sup>174</sup> The MRF was feeding and taking care of some 6,000 of them. This experience left a lasting impression on Eglantyne, as Francesca Wilson says:

In Skopje, Eglantyne saw for the first time the plight of refugees, who were then a rare phenomenon, far from what they were, alas, soon to become. She visited the rooms, crowded with two or three families, where grown-ups had to take turns to sleep; and watched shivering children waiting for the soup or bread the MRF doled out to them. This made a great impression on her. Without these experiences, she would not perhaps have been determined to ‘save the children’ later on.<sup>175</sup>

During the First World War, Eglantyne was involved – together with her sister Dorothy – in attempting to counteract the one-sided propaganda written in the British press. They imported newspapers from Germany, Hungary and Austria, and their articles included such subjects as the aims and causes of the war, peace discussions, reprisals, treatment of prisoners, atrocities, the idea of the League of Nations, and the impact of the war on the conditions of life in the affected countries. Published in the highly prestigious university weekly, ‘Cambridge Magazine’, these articles especially highlighted the social conditions in the countries affected, particularly the case of

---

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>172</sup> Eglantyne taught at a primary school in Marlborough, where many pupils were from poor families. The Charity Organisation Society, based in Cambridge, was an organisation that coordinated the efforts of various charities, and its approach was considered more ‘scientific’, as it focused on real needs and dispensed with indiscriminate giving. Her research on social conditions in Cambridge, ‘Cambridge, a study in Social Questions’, was published in 1866.

<sup>173</sup> The MRF had been set up by Noel Buxton, the brother of her brother-in-law, Charlie.

<sup>174</sup> In June, 1913, the Balkan Wars recommenced, but Eglantyne was back in England, poor health having prevented her from returning to the area.

<sup>175</sup> Wilson (1967), p. 141.

German and Austrian women and children, who were suffering fatalities due to the Allied blockade in 1917, with only turnips and cabbage to eat and without milk to nurse their children.

The peace resulting from the armistice of 11 November 1918 did not bring an end to the starvation, as the blockade against enemy countries remained in force. If the war had killed millions of men, its economic aftermath was killing women and children. Therefore, both sisters and a group of friends founded a pressure group, the 'Fight the Famine Council', with Lord Parmoor<sup>176</sup> as Chairman. The objective was to obtain a cessation of the blockade and to raise a large international loan to revamp Europe's ailing economy. The Council was an instant success, and received the support of politicians, writers, academics and bishops. However, it did not achieve its main objectives, as the victorious powers continued the blockade, and a large loan proposed to revamp the dying Europe's economies, could not be raised.

#### **4.2 The founding of the Save the Children Fund**

Given the lack of support encountered in the 'Fight the Famine Council', Dorothy and Eglantyne proposed that the council shift its emphasis to organizing relief exclusively for children, and thus, on 15 April 1919, the Council set up the Save the Children Fund. Launched at the Royal Albert Hall on 19 May 1919, it proved to be an unforeseen success. The donations that immediately poured into the SCF were mostly small sums, but the contribution from the Miners Trade Union – represented at the Albert Hall by its President, Robert Smillip – was 10,000 pounds, collected by the miners themselves. That sum was to increase to 35,000 pounds shortly after, due to new appeals to the miners.

During these early years, the SCF functioned as a Fund. The SCF worked through existing organisations, such as the Quakers and the Vienna Relief Fund, which carried out the actual work of feeding the starving children of Europe. More than 150,000 pounds were spent daily in feeding 30,000 Austrian children over six years old, while milk was provided for infants and food for expectant mothers. Given the lack of equipment and drugs in Austrian hospitals, the SCF contributed towards these expenses

---

<sup>176</sup> Charles Alfred Cripps, 1st Baron of Parmoor (1852-1941), British politician (former Conservative who later joined Labour), was a strong supporter of the League of Nations and Church of England causes.



too. The SCF also provided relief, through grants, to at least 40 organisations working in Armenia, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic states. These operations were overseen by SCF doctors<sup>177</sup>, who were sent to the places to which relief was donated.

Therefore, the SCF worked effectively through other selected agencies, which meant that the Fund did not have to dramatically increase the number of its employees or volunteers. It could thus focus almost exclusively on collecting funds for children in need. It was, indeed, extremely successful in this endeavour, as Edward Fuller attests, when he called the SCF a ‘Brobdingnagian collecting bag’.<sup>178</sup> As we shall see, this method employed by the SCF in its relief work was still in force during the first stages of the Spanish Civil War, from 1936 to 1937 when it worked with British Quakers, providing funds through their joint appeals. These funds were administered through Quaker personnel and supervised by volunteers sent by the SCF.

### **4.3 Save the Children, the Vatican connection and the Union**

Despite the success of the SCF in collecting funds, the needs were so great that Eglantyne, an extremely religious person, believed that the Church should be involved. Having been turned down by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who refused to make an appeal on behalf of the SCF to the Church of England, Eglantyne approached Pope Benedict XV.<sup>179</sup> The Pope’s response was positive, and he issued an Encyclical asking all Catholic Churches throughout the world to collect money for the distressed children of Europe on Holy Innocents Day (28 December 1919). Given this lead by the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury made a similar appeal to the Anglican Church.

Eglantyne was granted an audience with the Pope, which was a great success.<sup>180</sup> Eglantyne deeply impressed the Pope, who donated £25,000 to the SCF and promised a new appeal through a Second Encyclical in 1920, an appeal that would be made directly on behalf of the SCF.<sup>181</sup> It was suggested that the Pope nominate a Catholic for the executive of the SCF, as Catholics were under-represented in the Fund. The Pope

---

<sup>177</sup> Some of these doctors were volunteers and some were under contract to the SCF.

<sup>178</sup> Fuller (1951), p. 32. Brobdingnagian, an inhabitant of Brobdingnag in *Gulliver’s Travels*, where everything was gigantic.

<sup>179</sup> This request to the Pope was signed by 14 eminent people.

<sup>180</sup> The audience, planned for twenty minutes, lasted over two and a half hours.

<sup>181</sup> Eglantyne was surprised that the Pope should entrust such large sums of money to a Protestant organisation, especially one that had little Catholic representation on its executive.

nominated William Andrew Mackenzie, a former doctor who worked for the Catholic publishers Burns and Oats.<sup>182</sup>

The worldwide appeal by the Catholic Church made possible the next step in the history of the SCF – the formation of an international body in Geneva to administer the Pope's projected fund. The 'Save the Children Fund International Union' (SCIU) was formed at a Constitutive Assembly in Geneva, held on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of January, 1920, in the same hall where Henri Dunant witnessed the birth of the International Red Cross more than fifty years earlier. It was founded by the London Save the Children Fund and the 'Comité International de Secours aux Enfants' of Berne (Switzerland) and under the patronage of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Leading members were from the British Save the Children Fund and the Swedish Rada Barnen (Save the Children), various national organisations of the SCF and the Red Cross, which was an extremely important supporter of the Union.<sup>183</sup>

Unfortunately, because of illness, Eglantyne was unable to attend the first Conference of the International Union, held in Geneva in February 1920. It was, however, a great success, where representatives from both camps in the First World War were present. As the British Quaker, Edith Pye, said of this event:

All the different countries and all the different faiths seemed really to coalesce. It was delightful to see the Bishop of Exeter talking to a German YMCA man, etc. etc. One felt that the narrow national wall really had fallen at the sound of the trumpet you have blown.<sup>184</sup>

Eglantyne's dream of the unity of mankind, where all the religions of the world worked together, seemed to have become a reality.

---

<sup>182</sup> Mackenzie left his job at Burns and Oates to work for the Fund.

<sup>183</sup> The Constituent Assembly emerged from a 'Comité d'Initiative', formed in Geneva in November 1919, on which Eglantyne and C.R. Bruxton represented the London SCF; M. Golden, who would later be a director of the SCF, but then represented the Anglo-Czech Relief Fund; Dr Mauro, for the Internationale Spitals Hilfsaktion in Vienna; Lt. Col. Frederic Frey, Oscar Bosshardt and A. Erb, members of the Comité International de Secours; Frederic Ferriere and Etienne Clouzot of the International Committee of the Red Cross; and George Werner of the Geneva Benevolent Central Office.

<sup>184</sup> The Quaker Edith Pye was awarded the French *Légion d'Honneur* for her work at the maternity home at Chalons during the First World War. In 1920 she was working with the Friends in Austria. Wilson (1967), p. 181.

#### 4.4 The refugees

Child refugees were undoubtedly one of the largest groups of children helped by the SCF at this time, and the countries bordering the Soviet Union the main field of its activity, as thousands fled from the revolution. Greece was one of the major recipients of refugees, also the result of the Agreement on the Exchange of Population.<sup>185</sup> Greece received around 1.5 million refugees, some of Greek origin and some from other nationalities. More than 1,000 children were fed by the SCF in Athens, where the SCF set up an eye clinic, as eye diseases were common there at the time. The sight of many children was saved by such a clinic. Hospitals also treated children affected by epidemics, such as malaria. Bulgaria and Albania also received the help of the SCF, and model villages were established for refugees, in collaboration with their governments.<sup>186</sup>

By the middle of 1921, the SCF had collected more than a million pounds in Britain, and by then conditions had improved in Central Europe and Germany, where President Hoover's project of serving a 'meal a day' to school children had been a great success and had almost eliminated famine.<sup>187</sup> However, famine again stalked Central Europe in August 1921, with a horrendous famine in the Soviet Union. The League of Nations assigned relief work in the Russian Saratov district to the SCF where, for the first time, the SCF sent out its own workers to supervise their soup and milk kitchens there.

The Fund had, hitherto, always worked through other agencies, to whom it gave grants for relief work. Now, however, with its new position of financial stability, the Fund was able to send out its own teams who acted as agents to administer relief on behalf of the 14 member nations of the International Save the Children Union. The relief operation, under the auspices of the SCF, worked well, and more than 157 million meals were served to 300,000 children, demonstrating the efficacy of the slogan 'One shilling a week' to feed a child. The SCF also acted as agents for the Russian Famine Relief Fund, administered by Nansen, through which it donated some 250 million adult rations to the needy. Despite the evident success of the Fund's relief operation in the Soviet Union,

---

<sup>185</sup> By a Convention signed in Geneva (Switzerland) on 30 January 1923 between Turkey and Greece, it was agreed that, as from 1 May 1923, there would be a compulsory displacement of all Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox Church living in Turkey back to Greece, while all Greek nationals of Moslem faith living in Greece would be sent back to Turkey.

<sup>186</sup> In 1921 the SCF also obtained the running of the Anglo-Yugoslav Children's Hospital in Belgrade, which was extended to include a sanatorium in 1934.

<sup>187</sup> This project was promoted and funded in part by the American Government and was run by the AFSC, the American Quaker organisation.

there were, nevertheless, criticisms from those who opposed the Fund's charitable activities in a communist country. Throughout the relief operation, from 1921 to 1923, the Jebb sisters tried to counteract these detractors by launching press campaigns and showing films that revealed the extreme need in Soviet Russia, and which also demonstrated the positive effect of the relief work. Eglantyne certainly seemed proud of the Fund's efforts in this operation, as she said:

In the famine relief in Russia we succeeded in attaining a degree of international co-operation which had never been approached before.<sup>188</sup>

Undoubtedly the Fund's efficient way of organizing underlay the success of famine relief in Soviet Russia. Eglantyne administered the work of the SCF in London in a professional manner, and believed that voluntary organisations should employ methods at least as efficient as their commercial counterparts, and should be governed by 'scientific' practices.<sup>189</sup> In early 1920 she hired a manager, Lewis Golden, who employed managerial principles and controls, and a publicity officer – a former newspaper journalist – to increase Fund collections, which certainly bore fruit: in two years, by 1922, over a million pounds had been collected and the SCF acquired national and international status.

#### **4.5 International law for children**

Between 1921 and 1923, Eglantyne and the SCF had focused mainly on the plight of children in the defeated countries after World War I. Nevertheless, it had always been the aim of the SCF and its supporters to establish a permanent body that could engage in on-going welfare work and to extend their activities beyond emergency situations, such as earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters, and, of course, the impact of wars on populations. They wished to set up children's hospitals, welfare centres and young people's workshops, even in the more developed countries of the West.

Eglantyne realized that to continue, permanently, to obtain support for the world's children, and not only in times of disaster, would require an international, legal recognition of the rights of the child. She therefore drafted the 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child' in 1923, which was published in the SCF magazine, 'The World's

---

<sup>188</sup> Freeman (1965), p. 7

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, p.121

Children'. This declaration was adopted by the International Union immediately and approved by the League of Nations in 1924. From then on, the work of the SCF was much more oriented towards training its staff and carrying out research into the best ways of helping children. It also promoted the 'First International Congress on Children's Welfare' in 1925. It campaigned for free school meals in Britain and established a school for poor children.

By the end of 1928, Save the Children had collected more than 4 million pounds, and began considering extending its work to Asia and Africa. Eglantyne, who wanted to hold an international conference that would decide how best to proceed with this project, died on 17 December 1928, without having seen this venture take off. Indeed, although the SCF and the ISCU organized a conference in Geneva to consider the condition of children in Africa – and the SCF established a Child Protection Committee that promoted the recognition and respect of the rights of children throughout Asia and Africa in the 1930s – it was only in the 1950s that the SCF could dedicate a substantial proportion of its funds to projects outside Europe.<sup>190</sup>

#### **4.6 The home front**

Although, from 1920 on, the SCF was engaged in relief work abroad, the SCF was also very active in Britain during these years, essentially providing welfare services to those in need.<sup>191</sup> As in other countries, the SCF worked through other organisations, either by donating needed material or by supplying financial aid. From 1920 to 1926, the Fund helped infant welfare clinics and St. Pancras Borough Council, gave donations to the Salvation Army, the Church Army, the Invalid Children Aid Association and the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Child. In 1926, the Fund set up its own project when it acquired Fairfield House in Broadstairs in Kent. This purchase was the result of a medical report that showed that a large proportion of London elementary school children were listless, pale and thin. Fairfield House was designed as a holiday home for these children, or, better still, as a residential school outside the capital.

---

<sup>190</sup> It did set up a nursery school in Addis Adaba, Ethiopia (then Abyssinia), in 1936.

<sup>191</sup> The problems in post-war Britain were severe, especially as state welfare relief was minimal. The increasing focus of the SCF on problems in Britain was also partly due to the criticisms it received for "sending money to other countries while there are children at home in need". Freeman (1965), p. 47.

During the same year, 1926, a General Strike was called by the TUC in Britain, which had particularly devastating effects in Wales and the Northeast. The Fund gave emergency relief to children, by distributing milk, food and clothing. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) assisted the SCF in this relief, by supplying technical advice and economic support, the first in a long line of collaborations between the two organisations.

During the post-strike years, and particularly from the onset of the depression in the early 1930s, the SCF concentrated its efforts on Wales, particularly in the mining valleys, one of the most deprived areas in Britain.<sup>192</sup> The SCF employed the sponsorship scheme used during the years of the European famine, whereby rich schools became godmothers for schools in depressed areas, or individual children in need were ‘adopted’ by benefactors. Subscriptions were also raised for these children, and the child’s family would also be helped. When unemployment was considered a national emergency, in the winter of 1933, the SCF established an open-air nurseries program, staffed by unemployed adults, who cleaned, washed and cared for children between the ages of two and five. The nurseries were managed by trained superintendents, whose salaries during the first year were paid by Lady Nancy Astor, first woman member of parliament. This scheme was so successful, that, when unemployment receded in the late 1930s the nurseries, now officially recognized, continued their activity and represented around 20% of nurseries (11) of the 58 nurseries that existed nationally at the time.

#### **4.7 The Save the Children Fund and the struggle for child welfare**

During the inter-war years the SCF campaigned vigorously for a well-organized system of child welfare, focusing mainly on free school meals and free milk for school children. The Fund pressed for the application of the 1921 Education Act, which authorized local government to organise free school meals, but which very few of them did. The SCF provided school meals in many places and free milk for children in South Wales, thus anticipating the government by several years. It also provided country holidays for city children.<sup>193</sup> The pressure exercised by the SCF in the 1930s finally bore

---

<sup>192</sup> “The death rate in Merthyr Tydfil, for example, was 103 for 1,000 births at that period, when over the whole of England and Wales the rate was only 70 per 1,000”. Freeman (1965), p.49.

<sup>193</sup> Freeman (1965), p. 52.

fruit in the Education Act of 1944, which established many of the welfare provisions championed by the SCF, the most important of which was free school meals for poor children.

The Fund, therefore, starting as an emergency relief agency in 1919, had, during the following years, evolved into a permanent provider of relief for children in need and a powerful pressure group for children's welfare in Britain. Its ability to collect funds and to allocate them effectively had been the hallmark of its activities, inspired by the thinking of its founder, Eglantyne Jebb. Thus the Save the Children Fund in Britain, and the Union in Geneva, were well-equipped to deal with the civil war that erupted in Spain in 1936, and to care and support the children involved in the bloodshed.

## **Annexes to Appendix 1**

---

- Document A: Letter of Introduction used by Quaker Commissioners in the Franco-Prussian war
- Document B: Quaker commissioners in the Franco Prussian War 1870-1871
- Document C: Quaker Relief Projects
- Document D: Concordat project, draft text
- Document E: Addendum to the Concordat draft text
- Document F: Participants at the Geneva Conference, 1863
- Document G: Resolutions of the Geneva Conference, 1863
- Document H: Draft Letter to participants at the Geneva Conference
- Document I: Convention for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded in armies in the field, 1864
- Document J: Draft contract of the neutral delegates
- Document K: Territorial partition of Spain, end of July 1936
- Document L: ICRC Delegates during the Spanish Civil War



**Document A: Letters of introduction used by Quaker  
Commissioners in the Franco-Prussian war**

**Letter of introduction used by all Relief Commissioners in 1870:**

[English translation below]

*Le Porteur de la présente*

*Est envoyé par la Société Religieuse des Amis connue en Angleterre par le nom de la «Société des Amis» dite des Quakers.*

*Il part pour apporter des secours à ceux-là seulement qui souffrent des conséquences de la guerre actuelle, sans avoir pris part au combat.*

*Nous, les Membres de la dite Société des Amis, nous -----que toute guerre est contraire à la volonté et à l'Esprit de notre Père Céleste tels que cet Esprit et cette volonté nous sont démontrés dans la Nouveau Testament ; étant cependant touchés d'un sentiment d'amour Chrétien, nous désirons soulager autant qu'il sera en notre pouvoir les souffrances et la misère de ceux de l'une ou de l'autre Nation qui n'ont pris aucune part au combat, se souvenant que nous sommes tous enfants d'un Père et que le Sau----- est mort pour tous.*

*Nous supplions donc, tous ceux chez qui notre ami se présentera de lui aider à remplir son important Mission.*

The bearer of this document \_\_\_\_\_ is sent out by the Religious Society, known in England as the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, solely to give relief to the non-combatants sufferers through the present War.

We, the members of the above-named a Society of Friends believe all war to be contrary to the Will and Spirit of our Heavenly Father, as shown in the New Testament, but moved by Christian love, we desire to alleviate, as far as may be in our power, the misery of non-combatants, irrespective of Nationality, remembering that all are children of one Father and that one Saviour died for all.

We therefore entreat all to whom the bearer may come, to aid him in the fulfilment of this mission.

**Letter of Introduction used by Relief Commissioners from summer 1871:**

[English translation below]

*Le Porteur de la présente*

*Vient de la part de la Société Chrétienne des Amis, autrement appelés Quakers.*

*Plusieurs des Membres de la dite Société ont pris part, d'une manière fort active, pendant l'hiver et le printemps passés, à la distribution de secours temporels envers ceux qui ont subi de souffrances à subir en conséquence de la guerre qui vient d'avoir lieu. C'est le même motif d'amour Chrétien que les portes maintenant à tacher de faire du bien à leurs âmes.*

*Ce n'est point un esprit de secte de leurs Frères en France, mais c'est purement pour répondre autant qu'il leur sera donné de le faire la connaissance de l'Évangile de notre Seigneur et Sauveur Jésus Christ dans toute sa simplicité.*

*Et nous prions tous ceux à qui le porteur de ce certificat se présentera de vouloir bien lui donner l'aide qui sera en leur pouvoir pour l'accomplissement de cette Mission de Charité Chrétienne.*

The Bearer of this document.

comes on behalf of the Religious Society, known in England as "The Society of Friends commonly called Quakers".

Many Members of the above named Society have been active during the last Winter and Spring in distributing relief to the Sufferers by the late War, and the same spirit of Christian love which led us to care for their perishing bodies now leads us to endeavour to do good to their immortal souls.

Uninfluenced by political or sectarian motives our objects is to promote among our French brethren the knowledge of the simple Gospel of our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ: and we entreat all to whom the Bearer may come to aid in the fulfilment of this Mission of Christian love.

## ii. Quaker Commissioners in the Franco-Prussian war 1870-1871

Name	Home Town	Age in 1870
Henry John Allen	Dublin	32
William Jones	Co. Durham	42
Thomas Whitwell	Stockton-on-Tees	33
Robert Spence Watson	Newcastle	33
Eliot Howard	Tottenham	28
William Pumphrey	York	53
Daniel Hack, Jnr.	Brighton	36
John Bellows	Gloucester	40
Elizabeth Ann Barclay		
J. Augusta Fry		
Richenda F. Reynolds	London	62
Amelia de Bunsen	London	53
Samuel Gurney	Surrey	54
John H. Gurney, Jnr.	Norwich	22
Charles Elcock	Gloucester	
Henry Tuke Mennell	Croydon	35
Theodore Neild	Manchester	26
John Dunning	Middlesbrough	43
Joseph Smith	London	51
Thomas Snowdon		
Thomas D. Nicholson	Birkenhead	
Samuel James Capper	Liverpool	30
Charles Wing Gray	Halstead, Essex	25
Joseph Crosfield	Reigate	58
Edmund Pace	Upper Clapton	57
William Beck	London	47
William B. Norcott	Southampton	
Walter Ryley	Liverpool	
Ellen Jackson		
Ernest Beck	London	28
William Dyne	Leytonstone	52

James Hack Tuke	Hitchin	52
James Long		
John Burnett Tylor	London	43
Arthur Albright	Birmingham	59
Wilson Sturge	Birmingham	37
J. Fyfe Stewart	London	25
Ellen Allen	Dublin	42
Richard Allen	Dublin	67

### iii. Quaker relief projects

Relief Projects undertaken by the British (and Irish) Friends (Quakers) including some joint projects with the American Friends (until the Spanish Civil War).

- 1709 Help organised for the “Poor Palatines” (German Pietists and other emigrants to America), and for French “Prophètes” and other Protestants suffering after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV
- 1755 Anthony Benezet organises relief for three shiploads of French (“Acadian”) exiles from Nova Scotia sent to Philadelphia.
- 1774 Quaker relief during the siege of Boston “for the necessitous of every denomination”, supported by Friends throughout America, in Ireland and in Great Britain. A “Donation Fund for the Relief of Friends in America” was still active in England in 1786.
- 1805-16 Relief of suffering in Germany organised by several committees, and supported by a committee of Friends, with Luke Howard supervising the general distributions of funds through local German committees.
- 1811 Relief of British prisoners of war in France, and French prisoners of war in Great Britain; and for Danish and Norwegian prisoners in England, some of whom became Quakers.
- 1814 Relief of sufferers from tempest and shipwreck in the Scilly Isles. Antigua Relief Association. Subscription for Bavarians suffering persecution and desiring Bible translation. Secret aid to Dukhobors (c.1815-30).
- 1823 First report of “A Committee of the Society of Friends managing a fund for the Relief of the Distressed Greeks”.
- 1824-25 Relief of famine in Ireland.
- 1830 Relief of Polish exiles undertaken by Scottish, Irish and English Friends.
- 1838 Indian Famine Relief, with Quaker participation; renewed in later famines, notably in 1877-78, and in 1896-97, and 1900 (under missionary suspicions).
- 1846-47 “The Great Hunger” in Ireland; major relief scheme.
- 1856-57 Relief in the Hebrides, organised by Donald Ross and E.O. Tregelles.
- 1857-68 Relief in Finland, for victims of the war between Russia and Great Britain, and later for famine victims.
- 1860 and 1878 Relief in Syria, for victims of massacre and war.
- 1870-73 First official “Friends War Victims Relief Committee” in the Franco-Prussian War; followed by post-war help, and relief of victims of Toulouse floods.
- 1876-79 “East of Europe War Victims Fund” for relief in Bulgaria and to other victims of Balkan wars (renewed in 1896-97).

- 1880-81 Irish Famine Relief Fund, followed in 1886 by relief in Aran Islands, etc.
- 1883-86 Shetland Relief Committee.
- 1891-93 Russian Famine Relief in the Volga provinces.
- 1895-96; 1897-1906 Committee to aid the Dukhobors.
- 1896 Armenian Relief from famine and persecution.
- 1899-1908 Friends South African Relief Fund, during and after the Boer War.
- 1903-04 Macedonian Relief Committee.
- 1912-14 Friends War Victims Relief Committee, Eastern Europe (for victims of the Balkan Wars).
- 1914-19 Friends Ambulance Unit I.
- 1914-23 Friends Emergency Committee for the assistance of Germans, Austrians and Hungarians in distress, united from 1919 with the Friends War Victims Relief Committee set up in 1914.
- 1915-19 Quaker support for Serbian Relief Fund, for the Anglo-Italian Ambulance Unit, and other bodies.
- 1924 Relief in Morocco.
- 1933 Germany Emergency Committee, later called the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens (until 1950).
- 1934-36 Relief in Austria during civil strife; including distribution of Trade Union funds and help to German victims of the Austrian government.

#### **iv. Concordat project, draft text**

[English translation below]

##### **Projet de Concordat**

###### **Titre Ier**

Article Premier.- Il existe, dans chacun des pays concordataires, un comité national, dont le mandat consiste à remédier, par tous les moyens en son pouvoir, à l'insuffisance du service sanitaire officiel dans les armées en campagne.

Ce comité s'organise lui-même, de la manière qui lui paraît la plus utile et la plus convenable.

Art. 2.- Des sections, en nombre illimité, peuvent se former pour seconder le comité national. Elles sont nécessairement placées dans la dépendance de ce comité, auquel seul appartient la direction supérieure.

Art. 3.- Chaque comité national doit se mettre en rapport avec le gouvernement de son pays et s'assurer que ses offres de service seront agréées en cas de guerre.

Art. 4.- En temps de paix, les comités et leurs sections s'occupent des améliorations à introduire dans le service de santé militaire, dans l'installation des ambulances et des hôpitaux, dans les moyens de transport pour les blessés, etc., et en poursuivent la réalisation.

Art. 5.- Les comités et les sections des divers pays peuvent se réunir en congrès internationaux pour se communiquer leurs expériences, et se concerter sur les mesures à prendre dans l'intérêt de l'œuvre.

Art. 6.- Au mois de janvier de chaque année, les comités nationaux présentent un rapport sur leurs travaux pendant l'année écoulée, en y joignant les communications qu'ils jugent utile de porter à la connaissance des comités des autres pays.

L'échange de ces communications et de ces rapports s'opère par l'entremise du comité de Genève, auquel ils sont adressés.

###### **Titre II**

###### **Dispositions spéciales en cas de guerre**

Art. 7.- En cas de guerre, les comités des nations belligérantes fournissent les secours nécessaires à leurs armées respectives, et pourvoient en particulier à la formation et à l'organisation de corps d'infirmiers volontaires.

Ils peuvent solliciter l'appui des comités appartenant aux nations neutres.

Art. 8.- Les infirmiers volontaires s'engagent à servir pendant un temps limité, et à ne s'immiscer en aucune façon dans les opérations de la guerre.

Ils sont employés, suivant leur désir, au service de campagne ou à celui des hôpitaux.

Les femmes sont nécessairement affectées à ce dernier.

Art. 9.- Les infirmiers volontaires portent, dans tous les pays, un uniforme ou un signe distinctif identique. Leur personne est sacrée et les chefs militaires leur doivent protection.

Lors d'une entrée en campagne, les soldats de l'une et l'autre armée sont informés de l'existence de ces corps et de leur caractère exclusivement charitable.

Art. 10.- Les corps d'infirmiers ou secourus volontaires marchent à la suite des armées, auxquelles ils ne doivent donner aucun embarras, ni occasionner aucun frais. Ils ont leurs moyens de transport, leurs vivres, leurs provisions de médicaments et de secours de tout genre.

Ils sont mis à la disposition des chefs d'armées, qui ne les utilisent que lorsqu'ils en sentent le besoin. Pendant la durée de leur service actif, ils sont placés sous les ordres de l'autorité militaire et astreints à la même discipline que les infirmiers ordinaires.

*[English Translation]*

## Chapter I

Article First – There is, in each of the signatory countries, a national committee whose commission consists in the remedy, with all the means and resources at hand, the insufficiency of the official sanitary service in the armies in operation.

This committee shall organise itself as deemed most appropriate and useful

Art. 2.- Sections can be created, unlimited in number, in order to assist the national committee. These sections shall necessarily depend on the committee, to which the senior management solely belongs.

Art. 3.- Each national committee must contact the government of its country and ensure that its service offers shall be admitted in the event of war.

Art. 4.- In peacetime, the committees and their sections shall engage in the improvements to be introduced in the military health services, in the installation of ambulances and hospitals, transport means for wounded, etc, and in following their execution.

Art. 5.- Country committees and sections can gather in international congresses in order to share their experiences and agree measures to be taken for the sake of the work.

Art. 6.- During the month of January of each year, the national committees shall submit a report of their work during the previous year, enclosing the information they deem worth to be made known to the other countries.

This exchange of information and reports shall be made through the intervention of Geneva committee, to which they shall be addressed.

## Chapter II

Special dispositions in the event of war

Art. 7.- In the event of war, the committees of the countries at war shall give the necessary assistance to their respective army, providing particularly for the training and organisation of volunteer nurses corps

They can request support from the committees of neutral countries.



Art. 8.- The volunteer nurses shall commit to serve for a limited term, and not to intervene in any way in war operations.

They shall be employed, according to their will, in the campaign or hospital services.

Woman shall necessarily be affected to the latter.

Art. 9.- The volunteer nurses shall wear, in all the countries, an identical uniform or distinctive sign. Their person is sacred and the military officers must protect them.

When entering in campaign, the soldiers of both armies must be informed of the existence of these corps and that their nature is solely charitable.

Art. 10.- The volunteer nurses or helpers shall follow the armies, which they must not hinder in any way, nor cause any expense. They shall have their own transport means, food, and all kind of medicine and aid supplies.

They shall make themselves available to the army officers, who will use them only when they consider necessary. During their active service, they shall be under the orders of the military authorities, and subject to the same discipline of the ordinary nurses.

## **v. Addendum to the Concordat draft text**

### **Supplément à la convocation d'une Conférence International à Genève", 15 septembre 1863**

«En conséquence de l'accueil favorable fait à son plan dans le Congrès de statistique, le Comité de Genève propose, en outre du projet de concordat:

- 1) Que chaque gouvernement de l'Europe daigne accorder sa protection spéciale et son haut patronage au Comité général national qui doit être créé dans chacune des capitales de l'Europe, et qui sera composé des personnes les plus honorables et les plus estimées.
- 2) Que ces mêmes gouvernements déclarent, que désormais, le personnel médical militaire et ceux qui en dépendent, y compris les secoureurs volontaires reconnues, seront regardés comme personnes neutres par les puissances belligérantes.
- 3) Qu'en temps de guerre, les gouvernements s'engagent à faciliter les moyens de transport du personnel et des provisions charitables que ces sociétés enverront dans les pays envahis par la guerre.

Enfin le Comité de Genève désire que la Conférence internationale étudie et discute les moyens de réaliser cette œuvre éminemment humanitaire et philanthropique, tout en respectant les lois, les habitudes et les usages des différentes nations de l'Europe.

Il désire également que la Conférence examine comment, dans une lutte entre grandes puissances, on pourra porter les secours les plus efficaces sur le théâtre de la guerre, pour les ressortissants de l'une et l'autre armée, en évitant soigneusement toute idée d'espionnage, et tout ce qui serait en dehors du but spécialement charitable et chrétien de cette œuvre excellente. Le Comité de Genève espère donc que les gouvernements de l'Europe voudront bien donner, à leurs délégués à cette Conférence, les instructions nécessaires à ces divers égards.»

#### *English translation*

### **Supplement to the calling of an International Conference in Geneva, 15 September, 1863**

“As a result of the favourable reception given to its plan during the statistics Congress, Geneva Committee proposes, further to the concordat project:

- 1) That each European government agrees to give its special protection and high patronage to the national general Committee to be created in every European capital city, which shall consist of the most honourable and estimated persons.
- 2) That the said governments declare that, thereafter, the military medical personnel and their dependants, including the acknowledged volunteer aids, be considered neutral persons by the powers at war.
- 3) That in wartime the governments undertake to provide the transport means for charitable personnel and supplies these societies will send to the countries invaded by war.

Finally Genève Committee wishes the international Conference to study and discuss the means to carry out this work essentially humanitarian and philanthropic, while respecting the law, uses and customs of every country in Europe.

It wishes also the Conference to examine how, in a fight between great powers, would it be possible to carry the most efficient aid to the war scenario, for the nationals of both armies, avoiding carefully all idea of espionage or any other idea beyond the essentially charitable and Christian aim of this excellent work. Geneva Committee expects that then the European governments would be ready to give to their delegates to this Conference, the relevant instructions.”

## vi. Participants at the Geneva Conference, 1863\*

Dr Unger, Physician-in-Chief of the Austrian Army

Dr Steiner, Physician-Commander, representing the Grand Duchy of Baden

Dr Dompierre, Head Physician Artillery Corps, representing Bavaria

Dr Landa, Surgeon-Commander, and Joaquín Agulló, Count of Ripalda, representing Spain

Mr de Preval, Junior Intendant of the Imperial Guard and Dr Boudier, Physician-in-Chief, representing France

Mr Chevalier, French Consul in Geneva

Dr Rutherford, Inspector-General of Hospitals, representing Great Britain

Mr Mackenzie, British Consul in Geneva

Dr Oelker, representing Hanover

Major Brodrück, Battalion Staff Commander, representing the Grand Duchy of Hesse

Mr Capello, Italian Consul in Geneva

Prince Henry XIII of Reuss, delegated by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem

Dr Basting, Physician-Commander, and Captain Van de Velde, former naval officer, representing the Netherlands

Dr Loeffler, Physician-in-Chief of 4th Army Corps, and Dr Housselle, Counsellor and Member of the Ministry of Health, representing Prussia

Captain Kireiew, aide-de-camp of the Grand Duke Constantin and Mr Essakoff, Librarian to the Grand Duchess Helene Pavlovna, representing Russia

Dr Gunther, Chief Military Physician representing Saxony

Dr Skoeldberg, Administrative Officer of QM Medical Supplies, and Dr Edling, Physician-Commander, representing Sweden

Drs. Hahn and Wagner representing Württemberg

Dr Lehman, Chief Military Physician, and Dr Briere representing Switzerland

Professor Sandoz, representing the Neuchatel Society of Social Science

Mr Moratel, from the Society of Public Welfare of the Canton of Vaud

Mr de Montmollin, Mr de Perregaux and Dr Engelhardt, Divisional Physician in the Swiss Army, in a private capacity

---

\* The list is that given in *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 32, November 1963, p. 569. Joaquín Agulló from Spain has been added, though he is not included in their list, because he is known to have participated, and is noted as such in Spanish sources. See for example Clemente (2001), p. 37

## **vii. Resolutions of the Geneva Conference, 1863**

[English Translation below]

La Conférence internationale, désireuse de venir en aide aux blessés, dans le cas où le Service de santé militaire serait insuffisant, adopte les résolutions suivantes:

Article Premier.- Il existe dans chaque pays un comité, dont le mandat consiste à concourir en temps de guerre, s'il y a lieu, par tous les moyens en son pouvoir, au Service de santé des armées.

Ce comité s'organise lui-même de la manière qui lui paraît, la plus utile et la plus convenable.

Art. 2.- Des sections, en nombre illimité, peuvent se former pour seconder ce comité, auquel appartient la direction générale.

Art. 3.- Chaque comité doit se mettre en rapport avec le gouvernement de son pays, pour que ses offres de service soient agréées, le cas échéant.

Art. 4.- En temps de paix, les comités et les sections s'occupent des moyens de se rendre véritablement utiles en temps de guerre, spécialement en préparant des secours matériels de tout genre et en cherchant à former et à instruire des infirmiers volontaires.

Art. 5.- En cas de guerre, les comités des nations belligérantes fournissent, dans la mesure de leurs ressources des secours à leurs armées respectives ; en particulier, ils organisent et mettent en activité les infirmiers volontaires, et ils font disposer, d'accord avec l'autorité militaire, des locaux pour soigner les blessés.

Ils peuvent, solliciter les concours des comités appartenant aux nations neutres.

Art. 6.- Sur l'appel ou avec l'agrément de l'autorité militaire, les comités envoient des infirmiers volontaires sur le champ de bataille. Ils les mettent alors sous la direction des chefs militaires.

Art. 7.- Les infirmiers volontaires, employés à la suite des armées, doivent être pourvus, par leurs comités respectifs, de tout ce qui est nécessaire à leur entretien.

Art. 8.- Ils portent dans tous les pays, comme signe distinctif uniforme, un brassard blanc avec une croix rouge.

Art. 9.- Les comités et les sections des divers pays peuvent se réunir en congrès internationaux, pour se communiquer leurs expériences et se concerter sur les mesures à prendre dans l'intérêt de l'œuvre.

Art. 10.- L'échange des communications entre les comités des diverses nations se fait provisoirement par l'entremise du Comité de Genève.

Indépendamment des résolutions ci-dessus, la Conférence émet les vœux suivants:

A) Que les gouvernements accordent leur haute protection aux comités de secours que se formeront, et facilitent autant que possible l'accomplissement de leur mandat.

B) Que la neutralisation soit proclamée, en temps de guerre, par les nations belligérantes, pour les ambulances et les hôpitaux, et qu'elle soit également admise, de la manière la plus complète,

pour le personnel sanitaire officiel, pour les infirmiers volontaires, pour les habitants du pays qui iront secourir les blessés, et pour les blessés eux-mêmes.

C) Qu'un signe distinctif identique soit admis pour les sorps sanitaires de toutes les armées, ou tout au moins pour les personnes d'une même armée attachées à ce service.

Qu'un drapeau identique soit aussi adopté dans tous les apys, pour les ambulances et les hôpitaux.

### *English Translation*

The international Conference, in its wish to help the wounded whenever the military health Service proves insufficient, adopts the following resolutions:

Article First.- There is in each country a committee whose mandate consists in helping, in war times, if necessary, with every means at reach, the armies' health services.

Art. 2.- Sections can be created, unlimited in number, in order to assist this committee, to which the general management correspond.

Art. 3.- Each committee must contact the government of its country so that its service offers are admitted should the case arise.

Art. 4.- In peacetime, the committees and their sections shall see to the means of becoming really useful in war time, particularly preparing all kind of material aid and seeking the training and education of volunteer nurses.

Art. 5.- In the event of war, the committees of the countries at war shall provide, to the extent of their resources, aid to their respective army; particularly, they will organise and launch the volunteer nurses, and will implement premises, in agreement with the military authorities, to heal the wounded.

They can request support from the committees of neutral countries.

Art. 6.- Upon request or with the agreement of the military authorities, the committees shall send volunteer nurses to the battlefield, who will be then placed under the direction of the military officers.

Art. 7.- The volunteer nurses employed following the armies must be provided, by their respective committees, of all that is necessary for their maintenance.

Art. 8.- They shall wear, in all countries, as uniform distinctive sign, a white armet with a red cross.

Art. 9.- The committees and sections of each country can gather in international congresses in order to share their experience and agree measures to be taken for the sake of the work.

Art. 10.- The exchange of information between the committees of the countries shall provisionally be made through the intervention of Geneva Committee.

Notwithstanding the resolutions above, the Conference express the following hopes:

A) That the governments grant their highest protection to the aid committees to be created and facilitate as much as possible the fulfilment of their commission.

B) That neutrality is declared, in war time, by the belligerent countries, for ambulances and hospitals, and that it is also admitted, as completely as possible, for the official medical personnel, for the volunteer nurses, for the inhabitants who bring help to the wounded and for the wounded themselves.

C) That an identical distinctive sign is admitted for the medical corps of all the armies, or at least for the persons belonging to the same army affected to this service.

That an identical flag be also adopted in all the countries for hospitals and ambulances.

## viii. Draft Letter to participants at the Geneva Conference

[English Translation below]

Monsieur et honoré Collège

Pour les travaux de la Conférence de Genève ne soient pas stériles, il est fort désirable que les personnes qui y ont pris part, et spécialement les délégués des gouvernements, veuillent bien permettre au Comité central provisoire de compter sur leur obligeante coopération. C'est avec l'espérance qu'elle ne lui fera pas défaut que je prends la liberté de vous adresser en son nom les demandes suivantes, afin que l'œuvre commencée marche avec ensemble, et parvienne le plus tôt possible à sa pleine réalisation.

Quant à la formation d'un *comité* de secours dans votre pays, veuillez nous faire savoir si vous êtes disposé à en prendre l'initiative, et si nous pouvons nous reposer sur vous du soin de son organisation d'après les bases votées par la Conférence ?

Quant aux *vœux* que nous avons formulés, pouvez-vous vous charger de les transmettre à votre gouvernement, et de nous faire savoir officiellement dans quelle mesure il est disposé à y adhérer ?

A cet égard, le Comité genevois, après avoir réuni les éléments d'une enquête européenne, fera tout ce qui dépendra de lui pour que les bonnes dispositions qu'il aura rencontrées se traduisent par des faits.

Pour aider à discerner nettement les points sur lesquels il sera possible d'arriver à un accord international, je vous demande la permission de vous rappeler et de préciser les questions à adresser à chaque gouvernement:

- 1° Le gouvernement est-il disposé à accorder sa haute protection au Comité de secours pour les blessés qui se formera parmi ses ressortissants, en suite des résolutions de la Conférence de Genève, et à lui faciliter autant que possible l'accomplissement de son mandat?
- 2° Le gouvernement adhérerait-il à une convention internationale ayant pour objet:
  - a) La neutralisation en temps de guerre,  
Des ambulances et des hôpitaux militaires,  
Du personnel du Service sanitaire officiel,  
Des infirmiers volontaires recrutés par le Comité de secours,  
Des habitants du pays qui iront secourir les blessés,  
Des militaires blessés?
  - b) L'adoption d'un uniforme ou d'un signe distinctif identique pour les personnes attachés au Service de santé, et d'un drapeau identique pour les ambulances et les hôpitaux?

Si cette dernière proposition était agréée, y aurait-il quelque objection à ce que le brassard et le drapeau blancs, avec une croix rouge, fussent généralement admis?

J'espère, Monsieur et honoré collègue, que vous voudrez bien me faire connaître le plus tôt possible vos intentions, ainsi que le résultat de vos démarches, et je saisis cette occasion pour vous prier d'agréer l'expression de mes sentiments dévoués.



Le Président de la Conférence  
G. Moynier.

*English translation*

Sir and Hon. Colleague

For the Geneva Conference works not to be sterile, it is very desirable that the persons who have taken part, and particularly the governments delegates, be so kind as to allow the provisional central Committee to count on their amiable cooperation. It is in the hope that such cooperation shall not be lacking that I take the liberty to address you in its name the following requests, so that the work started progresses in a coordinate way et reaches as soon as possible its fulfilment.

With regard to the creation of an aid *committee* in your country, could you please let us know whether you would be ready to take the lead, and whether we can rely on you its organisation according to the basis approved by the Conference?

As for the *wishes* we have expressed, could you please undertake to transmit them to your government and to let us know officially to which extent it is ready to adhere thereto?

In this respect, the Geneva Committee, after gathering the elements of a European survey, will do its best so that the good will found is translated in acts.

In order to help to clearly differentiate the points on which an international agreement could be reached, I request your permission to remind you and make more specific the questions addressed to each government:

- 1° Is the government willing to agree its high protection to the aid Committee for the wounded to be created by its nationals following the resolutions of Geneva Conference, and to make as smooth as possible the fulfilment of its mandate?
- 2° Would the government adhere to an international convention whose object would be:
  - a) Neutrality in war time,  
Of ambulances and military hospitals,  
Of hospital and ambulance personnel,  
Of volunteer nurses recruited by the aid Committee,  
Of the inhabitants of the country who bring help to the wounded,  
Of the soldiers wounded?
  - b) The adoption of an identical uniform or a distinctive sign for the persons attached to a health Service, and an identical flag for ambulances and hospitals?

Should this last proposal be agreed to, would there be any objection to the general admission of a white flag and armet with a red cross on?

I look forward to hearing from your intentions and from the result of your steps,

Yours sincerely,

The President of the Conference,  
G. Moynier.



## **ix. Convention for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded in armies in the field, 1864**

[English Translation below]

### **Convention pour l'amélioration du sort des militaires blessés**

Article Premier.- Les ambulances et les hôpitaux militaires seront reconnus neutres, et, comme tels, protégés et respectés par les belligérants, aussi longtemps qu'il s'y trouvera des malades ou des blessés.

La neutralité cesserait si ces ambulances ou ces hôpitaux étaient gardés par une force militaire.

Art. 2.- Le personnel des hôpitaux et des ambulances, comprenant l'intendance, les Services de santé, d'administration, de transport des blessés, ainsi que les aumôniers, participera au bénéfice de la neutralité lorsqu'il fonctionnera et tant qu'il restera des blessés à relever ou à secourir.

Art. 3.- Les personnes désignées dans l'article précédent pourront, même après l'occupation par l'ennemi, continuer à remplir leurs fonctions dans l'hôpital ou l'ambulance qu'elles desservent, ou se retirer pour rejoindre le corps auquel elles appartiennent.

Dans ces circonstances, lorsque ces personnes cesseront leurs fonctions, elles seront remises aux avant-postes ennemis par les soins de l'armée occupante.

Art. 4.- Le matériel des hôpitaux militaires demeurant soumis aux lois de la guerre, les personnes attachées à ces hôpitaux ne pourront, en se retirant, emporter que les objets qui seront leur propriété particulière.

Dans les mêmes circonstances, au contraire, l'ambulance conservera son matériel.

Art. 5.- Les habitants du pays qui porteront secours aux blessés seront respectés et demeureront libres.

Les généraux des Puissances belligérantes auront pour mission de prévenir les habitants de l'appel fait à leur humanité et de la neutralité qui en sera la conséquence.

Tout blessé recueilli et soigné dans une maison y servira de sauvegarde. L'habitant qui aura recueilli chez lui des blessés sera dispensé du logement des troupes, ainsi que d'une partie des contributions de guerre qui seraient imposées.

Art. 6.- Les militaires blessés ou malades seront recueillis et soignés, à quelque nation qu'ils appartiennent.

Les commandants en chef auront la faculté de remettre immédiatement aux avant-Postes ennemis les militaires blessés pendant le combat, lorsque les circonstances le permettront et du consentement des deux partis.

Seront renvoyés dans leur pays ceux qui, après guérison, seront reconnus incapables de servir.

Les autres pourront être également renvoyés, à la condition de ne pas reprendre les armes pendant la durée de la guerre.

Les évacuations, avec le personnel qui les dirige, seront couvertes par une neutralité absolue.

Art. 7.- Un drapeau distinctif et uniforme sera adopté pour les hôpitaux, les ambulances et les évacuations. Il devra être, en toute circonstance, accompagné du drapeau national.

Un brassard sera également admis pour le personnel neutralisé, mais la délivrance en sera laissée à l'autorité militaire.

Le drapeau et le brassard porteront croix rouge sur fond blanc.

Art. 8.- Les détails d'exécution de la présente convention seront réglés par les commandants en chef des armées belligérantes, d'après les instructions de leurs gouvernements respectifs et conformément aux principes généraux énoncés dans cette Convention.

Art. 9.- Les Hautes Puissances contractantes sont convenues de communiquer la présente convention aux gouvernements qui n'ont pu envoyer des plénipotentiaires à la conférence internationale de Genève, en les invitant à y accéder ; le protocole est à cet effet laissé ouvert.

Art. 10.- La présente Convention sera ratifiée, et les ratifications en seront échangées à Berne dans l'espace de quatre mois, ou plus tôt si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi les plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signée et y ont apposé le cachet de leurs armes.

Fait à Genève le vingt-deuxième jour du mois d'août de l'an mil huit cent soixante-quatre.

#### *English Translation*

#### **Convention for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded in armies in the field**

Article First. Ambulances and military hospitals shall be recognized as neutral, and as such, protected and respected by the belligerents as long as they accommodate wounded and sick.

Neutrality shall end if the said ambulances or hospitals should be held by a military force.

Art. 2. Hospital and ambulance personnel, including the quarter-master's staff, the medical, administrative and transport services, and the chaplains, shall have the benefit of the same neutrality when on duty, and while there remain any wounded to be brought in or assisted.

Art. 3. The persons designated in the preceding Article may, even after enemy occupation, continue to discharge their functions in the hospital or ambulance with which they serve, or may withdraw to rejoin the units to which they belong.

When in these circumstances they cease from their functions, such persons shall be delivered to the enemy outposts by the occupying forces.

Art. 4. The material of military hospitals being subject to the laws of war, the persons attached to such hospitals may take with them, on withdrawing, only the articles which are their own personal property.

Ambulances, on the contrary, under similar circumstances, shall retain their equipment.

Art. 5. Inhabitants of the country who bring help to the wounded shall be respected and shall remain free. Generals of the belligerent Powers shall make it their duty to notify the inhabitants of the appeal made to their humanity, and of the neutrality which humane conduct will confer.

The presence of any wounded combatant receiving shelter and care in a house shall ensure its protection. An inhabitant who has given shelter to the wounded shall be exempted from billeting and from a portion of such war contributions as may be levied.

Art. 6. Wounded or sick combatants, to whatever nation they may belong, shall be collected and cared for.

Commanders-in-Chief may hand over immediately to the enemy outposts enemy combatants wounded during an engagement, when circumstances allow and subject to the agreement of both parties.

Those who, after their recovery, are recognised as being unfit for further service, shall be repatriated.

The others may likewise be sent back, on condition that they shall not again, for the duration of hostilities, take up arms.

Evacuation parties, and the personnel conducting them, shall be considered as being absolutely neutral.

Art. 7. A distinctive and uniform flag shall be adopted for hospitals, ambulances and evacuation parties. It should in all circumstances be accompanied by the national flag.

An armlet may also be worn by personnel enjoying neutrality but its issue shall be left to the military authorities.

Both flag and armlet shall bear a red cross on a white ground.

Art. 8. The implementing of the present Convention shall be arranged by the Commanders-in-Chief of the belligerent armies following the instructions of their respective Governments and in accordance with the general principles set forth in this Convention.

Art. 9. The High Contracting Parties have agreed to communicate the present Convention with an invitation to accede thereto to Governments unable to appoint Plenipotentiaries to the International Conference at Geneva. The Protocol has accordingly been left open.

Art. 10. The present Convention shall be ratified and the ratifications exchanged at Berne, within the next four months, or sooner if possible.

In faith whereof, the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the Convention and thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Geneva, this twenty-second day of August, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four.

## **x. Draft contract of the neutral delegates**

[English Translation below]

### **Modèle de Convention établi pour tous les délégués envoyés en Espagne<sup>194</sup>**

Entre le Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, d'une part, et Monsieur ....., d'autre part, il a été convenu ce qui suit:

1. Le Comité International de la Croix-Rouge charge M. ...., en qualité de délégué-adjoint, d'une mission en Espagne, sous la direction de M. le D' Marcel Junod, chef de mission.
2. La durée de la mission de M.... est d'un mois à compter du .... au .... 1936. La durée de la mission pourra être prolongée de mois en mois, par tacite reconduction.
3. Le Comité International de la Croix-Rouge paiera à M. .... :
  - a) une allocation de francs suisses 750 (sept cent cinquante francs) à titre de traitement mensuel ;
  - b) les frais de voyage, aller et retour, payables en francs suisses, sur présentation de pièces justificatives, visées par le chef de mission ;
  - c) les frais d'une assurance contre les accidents et maladies pour une somme de francs suisses 75.000 (soixante-quinze mille) en cas d'invalidité, aux termes énoncés dans la police d'assurance.
4. M...., s'engage à exercer la plus grande économie dans ses dépenses.
5. M. ...., s'engage :
  - a) à se conformer exactement aux instructions qui lui ont été ou lui seront données par son chef de mission, M. le D' Marcel Junod ;
  - b) à observer la plus stricte neutralité dans ses propos et dans ses actes ; à s'abstenir de toute manifestation ayant un caractère politique ou confessionnel, ainsi que de toute activité ayant un caractère commercial ; à se souvenir constamment de sa qualité de représentant de la Croix-Rouge Internationale ;
  - c) à s'astreindre à la plus grande discrétion ; il lui est notamment interdit, soit au cours de son voyage, soit à son retour, de faire des communications quelconques dans les journaux, de se prêter à des interviews, de faire des conférences sans l'autorisation expresse du comité International de la Croix-Rouge;
  - d) à s'abstenir dans ses conversations privées ou dans ses actes de tout ce qui pourrait nuire à l'action ultérieure du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge.

Fait en double, à Genève, etc...

---

<sup>194</sup> ACICR 212/1, 63

**Model convention drafted for all the delegates sent to Spain<sup>195</sup>**

Gathered,

For the first party, the Red Cross International Committee, and for the second party Mr .....,

It is agreed as follows:

1. The Red Cross International Committee entrusts Mr ..., in the capacity of deputy-delegate, a mission in Spain, under the direction of Mr le D' Marcel Junod, head of the mission.
2. The duration of Mr ...'s mission is a month, starting the .... until the .... 1936. The duration of the mission can be extended monthly, by tacit renewal.
3. The Red Cross International Committee shall pay Mr ... :
  - a) an allowance amounting to Swiss francs 750 (francs seven hundred and fifty) by way of monthly remuneration ;
  - b) trip expenses, return, payable in Swiss francs, against evidencing documents, checked by the head of the mission;
  - c) expenses for an accidents and medical insurance for the amount of Swiss francs 75,000 (seventy five thousand) in the event of disability, in the terms set forth in the insurance contract.
4. M...., undertakes to be most economical in his expenses.
5. M. ...., undertakes:
  - a) to strictly follow the instructions given or to be given to him by his head of mission, Mr le D' Marcel Junod ;
  - b) to observe the most strict neutrality in his comments and actions; to refrain from any representation of a political or confessional nature, as well as from any activity of a business nature ; to remember permanently his capacity of International Red Cross representative ;
  - c) to subject himself to the utmost discretion; it is particularly forbidden, either during his trip, or on his return, to make any statements in press, give interviews, give conferences without the express authorisation of the Red Cross International Committee;
  - d) to refrain in his private conversations or his actions of all that could hinder any subsequent Red Cross International Committee action.

Signed in duplicate, in Geneva, etc...

---

<sup>195</sup> ACICR 212/1, 63

## xi. Territorial partition of Spain, end of July 1936



Source: Thomas, H. (1990), p. 216.



## xii. ICRC Delegates during the Spanish Civil War

### Republican zone

General Delegate:	Dr Marcel Junod	
Deputy:	Daniel Clouzot	
Madrid:	Dr Georges Henny Capt. Eric Arbenz	16/09/36 - 08/12/36 From 11/1/37
Barcelona:	Dr Horace Barbey Dr Roland Marti Prof. Philippe Halm	25/9/36-28/1/37 1/12/36-14/4/37 04/37-31/3/38
Valencia:	Dr Roland Marti	04/37-31/04/38
Bilbao:	Capt. Georges Graz Lt. Raymond Courvoisier	08/11/36-14/06/37 07/07/37-27/10/37
Santander:	Captain Pierre Weber Captain George Graz	12/36-06/37 14/06/37-24/08/37
Alicante :	Captain Eric Arbenz	15/12/36-24/12/36

### Nationalist zone

General Delegate:	Comte Horace de Pourtales (Main Delegate)	12/36-11/38
Burgos:	Dr Raymond Broccard Captain Jean d'Amman	16/09/36-25/11/36 05/05/37-15/02/38
San Sebastian:	Lt. Raymond Courvoisier Captain Jean d'Amman	12/36-28/02/38 From 15/2/38
Saragossa:	Paul de Rham	15/12/36-15/1/37 and back on 10 February 1937 until 20 February 1937
Seville:	Dr Werner Schumacher	12/12/36-31/01/37
<b>France</b> (for the Spanish conflict):		
St Jean de Luz	Lt. Raymond Courvoisier Muntadas (attached Delegate)	01/1937-02/1938
Marseille	Captain George Graz	09/37-10/37

# **Appendix 2: Politics and humanitarian relief in the Spanish Civil War: the Evacuation of Basque children to England in May 1937**

---

## **1 Introduction**

In April 2007, I attended an Oxford University Seminar to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the arrival of Basque children, who had been evacuated from Bilbao to escape the bombing during the Spanish Civil War. I heard the oral testimony of two of the “niños”, Herminio Martínez and Helvecia Hidalgo, then both in their eighties. Herminio, the son of poor Castilian immigrants to Bilbao, told of the hazardous journey he had experienced at the age of 11, moving from camp to camp in Britain, with his eight – years old brother. Helvecia, from a socialist family and then aged 14, was somewhat luckier, having been taken under the protection of a well-known Quaker family, the Cadburys, soon after she arrived.

Despite their different experiences of evacuation, both Herminio and Helvecia agreed on one important point, i.e. the devastating emotional impact it had on the rest of their lives. Helvecia was reunited with her mother eleven years later, but their relationship was seriously affected by the long absence and their different cultural experiences in the intervening years. Herminio believes that his capacity for affection was severely stunted by the trauma of evacuation and loss at such an early age. Moreover, these Basque “niños” questioned the wisdom of evacuating such small children, less than a month before Bilbao was finally taken by the Nationalists, an event that was clearly foreseen. Surely, it would have been possible to send them to other areas of Spain, where the bombardments were not so intense. In that way, they could have been more easily reunited with their families in Bilbao when the war ended.

This encounter with the Basque “niños” stimulated and broadened my interest in the subject of the evacuations and the displaced children that was fundamental in the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Save the Children International Union (SCIU). It led me to embark on a more profound study of their

evacuation to England, to highlight the plight of civilian victims of war, how politicians can use a humanitarian situation to further their own political “agenda”, and the role of some humanitarian children’s aid organisations that have to try to avoid to be used by these politicians.

The motives for choosing the evacuation to England and not one of the many others to France, Belgium, Soviet Union, Mexico and other countries, was that, in addition to the fact that the voices of surviving Basque “niños” sent to England awakened my interest, the displacement of these Basque children to England was the clearest example of what I wanted to present. In this episode we find the Basque Government and its political objectives — those of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJCSR)<sup>196</sup> and Leah Manning,<sup>197</sup> with their evident attempt to use the evacuation to involve the British Government on the Republican side — and the process of negotiation of a Neutral Zone, promoted by the ICRC and backed by some of the agencies, with the inconsistent position of a British Consul, Ralph Stevenson, and a last “moment of silence” by the ICRC Delegate, all of which we shall study in this investigative work.

I began by consulting secondary sources on the subject, which are fairly extensive. Some of these, such as Claudena M. Skran’s *Refugees in inter-war Europe. The Emergence of a Regime*,<sup>198</sup> and Sir John H. Simpson’s *The Refugee Problem: Report of a Survey*<sup>199</sup>, locate the case of the Basque refugee children in the context of the European refugee phenomenon, dealing with the British Government’s attitude on the subject. Other works, such as Yvonne Cloud’s *The Basque Children in England*<sup>200</sup>, look closely at life in the colonies, the repatriation, the destiny of the children and their integration into British society on the eve of World War II. Dorothy Legarreta has produced a very thorough work about the refugee children during the Spanish Civil War *The Guernika Generation: Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War*.<sup>201</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> An *ad hoc* agency established in Britain to channel the relief efforts of various organisations and existing agencies.

<sup>197</sup> Leah Manning was a Labour MP and office of the National Union of Teachers representing the Union in the NJCSR.

<sup>198</sup> Skran (1995).

<sup>199</sup> Simpson (1939).

<sup>200</sup> Cloud (1937).

<sup>201</sup> Legarreta (1984).

James Cable's *The Royal Navy and the Siege of Bilbao*<sup>202</sup> pays more attention to the period preceding the evacuation and the role of the Royal Navy in the blockade of Basque ports by Franco's forces. He records, in some detail, the relationship between the British and Basque Governments and their connections to the Republicans and Nationalists, but do not introduces into the picture the key element the proposals for a Neutral Zone represented. Adrian Bell's *Only for three months: The Basque Children in Exile*<sup>203</sup> published the first extensive British work dedicated to this subject, while Oliver Marshall's pamphlet *Ship of Hope*<sup>204</sup> provides an oral recollection of some of the Basque children's experiences.

Other British scholars have concentrated on the "British dimension" of the evacuation and the role of the NJCSR, the body created in Britain shortly after the military coup in Spain, which became the coordinating vehicle for the "Aid to Spain" movement. Jim Fyrth's book *The Signal was Spain – The Spanish Aid Movement in Britain 1936-1939*<sup>205</sup> explores the relationship between the Labour Party, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Communist Party within the NJCSR, as did Tom Buchanan's *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement*<sup>206</sup> and *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*.<sup>207</sup>

In Spanish, with the exception of the references in Luis de Castresana's book *El otro árbol de Guernika*<sup>208</sup> and its sequel *La Verdad sobre El otro árbol de Guernika*<sup>209</sup>, very little material existed until Gregorio Arrien published *La Generación del Exilio: Génesis de las Escuelas Vascas y las Colonias Escolares 1932-1940*<sup>210</sup>, followed by other works by the same author and by the paper of Jesús Alonso Carballés, *La prensa franquista de Guipúzcoa frente a las evacuaciones por mar de refugiados vascos (mayo-junio, 1937)*.<sup>211</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> Cable (1979).

<sup>203</sup> Bell (1996).

<sup>204</sup> Marshall (1991).

<sup>205</sup> Fyrth (1986).

<sup>206</sup> Buchanan (1991).

<sup>207</sup> Buchanan (1997).

<sup>208</sup> Castresana (1967).

<sup>209</sup> Castresana (1972).

<sup>210</sup> Arrien (1983).

<sup>211</sup> Alonso Carballés(1992).

In all the above literature, however, there is very little about the evacuation itself, or the role of the forces that promoted the evacuation. Only Gregorio Arrien, first in his essay ‘El Gobierno vasco y la evacuacion de niños 1936-1937’<sup>212</sup> and later in his book *Niños vascos evacuados a Gran Bretaña 1937-1940*,<sup>213</sup> refers in more detail to the Basque Government authorities being part to the evacuation and their relationship with their British counterparts.<sup>214</sup> Perhaps the lack of references in Spanish secondary sources was the main reason why British scholars made practically no use of the Spanish primary sources that were available -though only accessible with difficulty- after Franco’s death. Spanish secondary sources are very much based on oral recollections from Basque refugee children, with some information on the Basque Government through press releases. Moreover, there was no official Decree, Order or other legal document issued by the Basque Government and published in the *Official Gazette*<sup>215</sup> regarding the evacuations, from the formation of the Basque Autonomous Government in 1936 to the cessation of its publication in 1937, following the end of the Basque Government control of the region.

In conclusion, an analysis of the secondary sources concerning the evacuation of the children to Britain show that there is no in-depth work addressing the evacuation itself. This justifies, in my opinion, the importance of studying, in the context of the Humanitarian Relief in the Spanish Civil War, the full picture of the evacuation as an idea, the motivations behind the evacuation and its participants. This study will, hopefully, highlight the difficulties encountered by humanitarian aid organisations within the context of the complex politics of Civil War, and their problematic resolution for those most affected: the Basque children refugees.

## **2 The War in the North**

In mid-August 1936, Nationalist troops under General Mola, mainly *requetés*<sup>216</sup> from Navarra, began an attack on the Basque province of Guipúzcoa, and by 05 September, the frontier town of Irún was captured, thus sealing the border between the Basque

---

<sup>212</sup> Arrien (1986).

<sup>213</sup> Arrien (1991).

<sup>214</sup> He mentions Social Assistance, Justice, Culture, Finance and Interior Departments as those dealing with the evacuation in Bilbao.

<sup>215</sup> Official publication of the Basque Government.

<sup>216</sup> Carlist Militias

country and France. From then on, the northern provinces of Vizcaya, Santander and Asturias were cut off from the Republic and communication with the rest of the Popular Front zone was only possible by air or sea. Just ten days later, San Sebastián was surrendered by Basque nationalists without a shot being fired. *Gudari* forces (Basque nationalist soldiers) had remained in the city to ensure that it was not burned like Irún by the retreating Republican forces, clearly revealing the ambivalence many Basques felt towards the Republic of the Popular Front.<sup>217</sup>

Certainly, the situation in the Basque provinces differed fundamentally from that in the rest of the Popular Front zone. While certain Basque forces, such as the trade unions, *Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos* (STV), and the Basque party *Acción Nacionalista Vasca* (ANV), rallied immediately to the defence of the Republic, the forces of the leading Basque party, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV), were divided in their allegiances. Socially conservative and arch-Catholic – and supported mainly by the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry – the PNV had little in common with the left orientation of the Popular Front, and it was generally believed that it was the promise of autonomy – the Basque Autonomy Statute was approved on 1 October 1936) – that kept the Basques loyal to the Republic.<sup>218</sup>

The new Basque Government, set up under the Presidency of José Antonio Aguirre on 7 October 1936, was dominated by the PNV, and trade unions were excluded. Private property and the Church were respected, which the Basque Government's own police force, the *Ertzaina*, was established to protect.

After months of inactivity, the Nationalists' northern offensive began on 31 March 1937. The capture of the northern regions — with coal in Asturias and shipyards and steel-making in Vizcaya — would be crucial to the Nationalists, which controlled overwhelmingly agrarian regions. Moreover, this was an extremely weak point in the Republic's defences, cut off from the rest of the Republican territory and with difficulties of establishing a unified military command.<sup>219</sup> The strategy of the Nationalist

---

<sup>217</sup> Fraser (1981a), p. 189.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>219</sup> As Romero Salvadó points out, the northern provinces could not be helped by sea as the bulk of the Republican fleet was engaged in the Mediterranean guarding the supply routes from Russia. A coordinated defence was also absent, as concepts of unified military command which would have facilitated this were resisted, and, particularly in Vizcaya, military efforts were seen in terms of local resistance. Romero Salvadó (2005), p.147.

general, Mola, with nearly 40,000 troops and the air support of the German Condor Legion, was the systematic use of dive-bombing and saturation bombing of cities; essentially this was a use of terror bombing on a scale never previously seen in any European war, and which was designed to practise techniques which would be used during the Blitzkrieg of the Second World War.<sup>220</sup>

Despite Nationalist superiority in men and weapons, especially airpower, the Basques, under President Aguirre, fought bravely, aided undoubtedly by the mountainous terrain. Mola's expectation of capturing Vizcaya in three weeks proved false, and it took him three months to totally subdue the province. Continuous and sustained terror bombing of small towns such as the bombardments of Elorrio, Otxandiano and Durango at the beginning of April did, however, gradually undermine resistance. The greatest, and most symbolic destruction, however, occurred in the small market town of Guernica, the ancient Basque capital, on 26 April 1937. Guernica was attacked in a military operation that has been the subject of much discussion about those responsible, their objectives and their victims. The evidence that bombers and fighters of the Condor Legion bombed and attacked the town is clear, but the estimates of the number of victims range from the 200 dead suggested by Vicente Talon<sup>221</sup> to the 1,600 that Romero Salvadó affirms. For Romero Salvadó, this action was "a clear message, like Badajoz one year earlier, to those who offered resistance to Franco's new order".<sup>222</sup> On 29 April 1937, Guernica fell to the Nationalists and on 1 May, Mola attacked all along the front<sup>223</sup> and proceed to advance towards Bilbao. The large refugee population and the lack of a real effort by the Nationalists to count the casualties, made it impossible to arrive at an exact figure.

The destruction of Guernica, followed by Mola's rapid advance towards Bilbao, did not just undermine morale in the Basque country, it also revealed the tenuous links that existed between the PNV-dominated Basque Government and the Republic of the Popular Front. Tensions between the Basque Government and the Republic had, of course, been present since the beginning of the war, and it was clear that, ideologically, the PNV was much closer to the Nationalists. Indeed, negotiations to reach a separate settlement between the Basques and Franco continued unabated throughout the

---

<sup>220</sup> Preston (1986), p. 139.

<sup>221</sup> Talon (1973), p. 91.

<sup>222</sup> Romero Salvadó (2005), p. 148.

<sup>223</sup> Thomas, H. (1990), p 630.

conflict.<sup>224</sup> As the war in the north intensified from the spring of 1937, tensions between the Basque Government and the Republic increased, and there was a widespread belief within the Basque administration that the Republican Government, then resident in Valencia, had deliberately discriminated against the Basques by its failure to send adequate aircraft.<sup>225</sup> As the Nationalist campaign in the Basque provinces proceeded, showing that a Republican victory might not be achievable, the Basque Government, through various channels<sup>226</sup>, insisted that the Civil War was a Spanish, rather than a Basque affair, as the Basques were another kind of people; well mannered and more “democratically oriented” towards the liberal ideas best represented by Britain. The Basque Government argued that the Basque country needed to be spared both the nightmare of a Franco takeover and the “red menace” that they feared the Republic represented. Independence or a protectorate under international supervision was deemed the best solution.

Moreover, just after the bombing of Guernica Basque President Aguirre made a dramatic appeal to the world on April 27, calling for the evacuation of children, women and non-combatants from the Basque country to other countries.<sup>227</sup> Some evacuations from the Basque country had, of course, taken place, particularly at the start of the war, when refugees crossed the French border before it was controlled by rebel troops<sup>228</sup> and later, when women and children, supporters of the rebels, fearing being shot or imprisoned, were sent to France and Belgium. Both these countries had also accepted some refugee children sent by the Basque Government before Aguirre’s appeal on 27

---

<sup>224</sup> For more on this subject, see Pretus (2003).

<sup>225</sup> Sir Henry Chilton, British Ambassador to Spain, reports a private letter from Ralph Stevenson, British Consul at Bilbao, dated 9 April 1937, from which he extracted a part. The letter refers to various visits of relevant Basque officers, one of whom was Sr Joaquin de Eguia, the so-called “First Lord of the Basque Admiralty”, in respect of which Stevenson tells Chilton: “Eguia told me, inter alia, that it was the general belief of Basque in Government offices from the President down, that Valencia’s failure to send promised, adequate aircraft to enable Bilbao to ward off raiders, was really Valencia’s policy to allow the independent Basques a dose of such punishment as they will not easily forget.” PRO: FO 371-21369-W723/37/41.

<sup>226</sup> (a) Meeting in the Foreign Office on 3 May 1937; requested by Sir Walter Citrine, TUC General Secretary (on behalf of Sr Ignacio de Lizaso) Sir Richard Vansittart and Sr Lizaso, in the presence of Sir George Mounsey, in charge of Spanish Affairs [He actually was Assistant Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs in charge of Spanish Affairs during the Civil War] (PRO: FO 371.21291, Docs. 10–16.); (b) Memo dated 18 May 1937 from Sr de Lizaso to EMV (full name undisclosed), member of the Wright Organisation, a lobbying organisation active in Britain and the United States, which also represented South African interests. (References on the U.S. Senate Register) See at Document A (in Annex to Appendix 2) the image of a copy authenticated by the seal of the Basque Nationalism Archives – AHNV. GE-462, 2 (8 May 1937).

<sup>227</sup> See Document B for the copy of the letter addressed to the President of the International Red Cross on 29 April 1937 and its English translation.

<sup>228</sup> Many of them returned later when Guipúzcoa fell totally under Franco’s control.



April, but evacuations to France and other European countries became more formalised after his call. In January 1937 a special Desk was established in Bilbao by the Basque Government to implement a planned evacuation of children to colonies in France.<sup>229</sup> However, it was not until 21 May 1937 that the British accepted the first Basque refugees, when the steamer *Habana* sailed from Bilbao to Southampton, escorted by *HMS Fearless*, with 3,881 children, 95 women teachers, 120 younger women teachers and 15 Catholic priests aboard.

### **3 The Aguirre Appeal and the Evacuation**

President Aguirre's appeal to the world on 27 April, requesting the evacuation of children, women and non-combatants from the Basque country, was made the day after the bombardment of Guernica, and thus in the midst of popular revulsion in Europe against the terror tactics being employed by the Nationalists in the Civil War. Franco's forces, had, of course, attempted to deny their role in the atrocity, and even claimed that the Basques themselves had dynamited the town for propaganda purposes.<sup>230</sup> However, *The Times* correspondent, George Steer, had been in Bilbao, and had travelled to Guernica immediately after the bombing. He reported in his dispatch of 28 April on the central role of the Condor Legion in the bombing, and the terror tactics used during the destruction of Guernica.<sup>231</sup> The impact on public opinion was, immediate, without doubt contributing to the favourable response to Aguirre's call for evacuation.

In Britain, those supporting the legal Republican Government had begun mobilising immediately after the military coup, and in July 1936, the Spanish Medical Aid Committee (SMAC) was created to provide medical units for the Republican army. The SMAC was promoted by medical workers from the left-wing of the Labour Party, and enthusiastically supported by the left-wing Labour MP, Leah Manning, who became its Secretary, with Dr Hyacinth Morgan<sup>232</sup> as Chairman. Thus began the "Aid to Spain"

---

<sup>229</sup> *Euzkadi Roja* 9 Jan 1937 and *La Tarde* 10 Jan 1937.

<sup>230</sup> Preston (1986), p. 140; Romero Salvadó (2005), p.148.

<sup>231</sup> After strafing the town for over three hours, the planes of the Condor Legion "plunged low from above the centre of the town to machine-gun those of the civilian population who had taken refuge", *ibid*, p. 141.

<sup>232</sup> Dr Hyacinth Bernard Wenceslaus Morgan (1885-1956), of Irish origin and born in the West Indies, worked in Glasgow mental hospitals and served as a doctor in France in World War I. Back from the conflict he practised in London and went into politics as Labour MP from 1929–1931 and 1940–1956. Along with Dr Charles Brook he was central in the formation of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee (SMAC).

movement, which proceeded to organise a fundraising campaign for the Spanish Republic all over Britain.

The Spanish Medical Aid Committee would eventually form part of the NJCSR, set up in November 1936. The NJCSR, was founded as the result of a visit to Spain by MPs, promoted by Wilfred Roberts, Liberal MP for North Cumberland, who travelled in early November 1936 with five MPs, two Labour and three Conservative. After the visit, Roberts drafted a report and called for a Committee to be formed. Hence, on 16 November 1936, a meeting was held at the House of Commons with representatives from 38 organisations. Somewhat later, on 21 November, the NJCSR was born at a meeting at the London Friends' House, with 15 founding members, the leading figures of which were: Chairman, Kathleen Marjory, Duchess of Atholl (generally known as the "Red Duchess"); Wilfred Roberts, Liberal MP for North Cumberland and foremost promoter of the project; Isabel Brown from the Communist Party; Leah Manning and Ellen Wilkinson, both from the left-wing of the Labour Party and already very active in the "Aid to Spain" campaign; and the independent Eleanor Rathbone. Other organisations also part of the NJCSR were the Salvation Army, the Friends,<sup>233</sup> the Save the Children Fund and SMAC. Henceforth, the NJCSR would become the coordinating vehicle for "Aid to Spain".

The Committee was created as "an all party, non-political, non-sectarian body to coordinate relief work and to undertake certain specific pieces of work not being done by other organisations".<sup>234</sup> However, in practice, those who had created the NJCSR were pro-Republican and, in general, it was the Left — the Communist Party and the Labour Left: that is, those who had been active in the "Aid to Spain" movement from July 1936 — who were the most committed and active force within it.<sup>235</sup> This undoubtedly caused problems with other organisations within the NJCSR, such as the Friends (Quakers), who referred in their meetings to the "partisan" stances of the Committee, despite the fact that the majority of the British Friends were pro-Republican. The Save the Children

---

<sup>233</sup> Represented but keeping their freedom of action (more "cooperation" than "coordination"), FSC, minutes, 13/1/1937, FHL.

<sup>234</sup> Typed, undated report, Mss 308/3/NJC/1, W. Roberts papers, MRO.

<sup>235</sup> "The Aid to Spain campaign was the nearest thing to a People's Front that came about in Britain", Fyrth (1986), p. 22.

Fund voiced similar complaints, and both organisations called on the Committee to open all meetings with a statement of impartiality.<sup>236</sup>

There were also differences within the NJCSR vis-à-vis the question of evacuation of children and non-combatants from the Basque country. The Friends were adamantly opposed to evacuation, revealed in a letter dated 11 February 1937 from the Friends' representation in Spain, Calle Urgell, 121, Barcelona, to O.F. Olden in Norway, referring to the possibility of Spanish children going to Norway:

“There is a great deal of difference of opinion about the advisability of sending children abroad because of the difficulties of language, of housing, of supervision”.<sup>237</sup>

The Friends' attitude towards evacuation remained unchanged even after the Guernica bombing, as is confirmed by an undated and unsigned report called *Refugee Children Colonies suggestion to help: Sending Children Abroad* [sic], attached to the Minutes of the Committee on Spain on 4 May 1937:

“Not a wholly satisfactory plan because of the differences of languages and customs, the relative great expense of travel, the danger of losing track of an occasional child ... the psychological difficulty of the children themselves”.<sup>238</sup>

The Save the Children Fund, an organisation with enormous experience in this field, was of a similar mind, illustrated by a note dated 4 May 1937, with reference to a telephone conversation between Lewis Golden, secretary of the Save the Children Fund, and Mr J. Cooper, from the Home Office. According to Cooper,

“Mr Golden said he could not emphasise too strongly that his society, which has upwards of twenty years experience succouring refugee children in all parts of the world, was absolutely opposed in principle to the removal of young children from their native country. Where this has been done the later results were too often deplorable and for his part he would sooner see them die in their own land than rot slowly in exile where they deteriorate physically, morally and mentally”.<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>236</sup> SCF Council, minutes 17/6/1937, referred to in Buchanan (1997), p. 98.

<sup>237</sup> FSC CoS, minutes, 8/3/1937, FHL.

<sup>238</sup> FSC CoS, minutes, 4/5/1937, FHL.

<sup>239</sup> From Mr Cooper (Home Office) to Mr Roberts (Foreign Office), ‘Proposal to evacuate children from Bilbao to the United Kingdom’. PRO: FO 31721370. Docs. 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192. Registry Number W1947/37/41.

In a meeting of the NJCSR on 25 February 1937, the possibility of giving refuge to Basque children in Britain was raised, proposed by Capt. James McNamara, a right-wing Tory MP. He suggested that the children should be brought to England and housed in hostels until adoption, in the case of disappearance or death of the parents. This proposal was contested by the left-wing Labour Peer, Lord Listowel, who thought it ill-advisable to bring children to “cold and Protestant England”, and suggested that it would be better to contact the French, who had already begun to receive Spanish children.<sup>240</sup> By 1 May 1937, however, feeling within the Committee had changed, seen clearly in a letter to *The Times* on that date, in which a large number of NJCSR members wrote in support of evacuation. By this time, a broad spectrum of the English political class was in favour of evacuation, as can be seen from the political diversity of the signatories of the 1 May letter.<sup>241</sup>

This change was undoubtedly related to the bombardments of small Basque towns, which commenced at the beginning of April, but particularly the bombing of Guernica on 26 April. Basque President Aguirre immediately denounced the bombings of Elorrio, Otxandiano and Durango on 4 April in a telegram to Sir Henry Chilton, British Ambassador to Spain, resident in Hendaye, France.<sup>242</sup> The first call for a large-scale evacuation of Basque children to Britain, however, was issued by Ralph Stevenson, the British Consul in Bilbao, who cabled Anthony Eden to that effect on 8 April.<sup>243</sup> Stevenson<sup>244</sup> informed Eden that he had received assurances from the French Consul that France would assist, and had found President Aguirre eager to accept such a

---

<sup>240</sup> NJCSR, minutes, 25/2/1937, p. 1, MRO.

<sup>241</sup> The letter was signed by Katherine Atholl, Noel Buxton (1860–1948), liberal MP; Arthur Slater (1881–1975), politician, academic and Pro-European; Ellen Wilkinson (1881–1847), Labour MP, Leftist and supporter of the International Brigades; Irene Word (1895–1980), Conservative MP; Judy Megan Lloyd George (1902–1966), Liberal MP (later, in 1955, Labour) and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party; Harold Nicolson (1886–1968), British diplomat and politician who moved from the Fascist party of Sir Oswald Mosley to Labour in 1935; Eleanor Rathbone (1872–1946), Independent MP, social reformer and enemy of appeasement; one of the first to alert public opinion to the rise of fascism in Europe; Thelma Cazelet-Keir (1899–1989), National Conservative MP; Philip Noel-Baker (1889–1982), Labour MP, diplomat, academic and disarmament campaigner; Anthony Crossley, Conservative MP; David Grenfell (1881–1968), Welsh Labour MP (1922–1959).

<sup>242</sup> GE 381-3, AHNV.

<sup>243</sup> PRO: FO 37121291.

<sup>244</sup> The Madrid newspaper *ABC* announced in its issue dated Friday, 2 April 1937, p. 9: “The British Consul profoundly impressed”: Referring to the reaction of Consul Stevenson when visiting Durango after a bombardment of the Nationalist planes: “impressed by the catastrophe and with no comparison to the bombardments he saw in the European War”.

humanitarian project, and that the President had agreed to issue the necessary passports “without political discrimination”.<sup>245</sup> Stevenson stressed that,

“...owing to dangers to Bilbao civilian population from repeated aerial bombardments I have, in collaboration with French Consul, who is telegraphing in identical terms, proposed to Basque Government large scale evacuation of women and children. Basque Government are eager to accept proposal and promise to issue necessary passports without political discrimination. I submit for consideration most urgently by H.M.G., in consultation with French Government, that have suggested themselves here”.<sup>246</sup>

There seems little doubt, however, that Stevenson, though deeply moved by the carnage from the bombings, was being pressured by sectors of the Basque army and prominent Basques for a large-scale evacuation after the first bombings on 4 April.<sup>247</sup> Ralph Stevenson was sympathetic towards the cause of the Basques and influential with them. Captain Mac Grigor, of the Fourth Destroyer Flotilla, operating on the Biscay Bay, reported to the Admiralty about Stevenson.<sup>248</sup> “Mr Stevenson, our Consul, obviously carries great weight with the Basque Ministers”: And very enlightening is that on 13 April 1937, reacting to the British Government policy of accepting the effectivity of the blockade to the Basque Ports by the Nationalist navy, Stevenson sent a despatch opposing in fact such policy:

“The Basques, it can not be gainsaid, are displaying amazing fortitude ... their last resource of food supplies, built upon carefully planed British Charter parties and paid for in advance, would now appear to be cut off by Franco diplomacy, or by a change in policy, hardly credible, of His Majesty’s Government.... Is he [referring to the Basque Men] not superior in every way except numbers, to his Spanish oppressor?”<sup>249</sup>

No comment. Even the most enfeverished activist of the PNV, strict follower of Sabino Arana,<sup>250</sup> had probably restrained himself from printing such unsustained and racism tainted expression.

---

<sup>245</sup> PRO: FO 37121369.

<sup>246</sup> PRO: FO 371213691.

<sup>247</sup> Stevenson sent a letter on 9 April to the British Ambassador in Spain (resident in Hendaye, France), reporting visits from Basque officers and prominent Basques, such as Sr de la Sota (one of the founders of the Basque Nationalist Party, PNV), about the evacuation of women and children on a large scale. PRO: FO 37121369. W. 7231/37/41, docs. 433, 434, 435.

<sup>248</sup> PRO: AMD 1163512.

<sup>249</sup> PRO: FO 37121291.

<sup>250</sup> Sabino Arana Goiri (1865-1903): Basque (from Vizcaya) writer, father of the Basque Nationalism and founder of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).

President Aguirre's representative in London Sr Lizaso was similarly active in trying to win over members of the NJCSR for evacuation, as Leah Manning stated to Stevenson when she arrived in Bilbao on 24 April:

"I am here at the request of the Basque Government, through their delegation in London, and I propose to evacuate Basque children to England for dispersal throughout my country until Franco is defeated. All I ask you to do is to present me to President Aguirre".<sup>251</sup>

However, despite Manning's obvious support for such a project, the scale of the evacuation proposed by Aguirre when she met him on the 25th April went far beyond what she had expected, as she says:

"I asked the president how many children he had in mind, "about 4,000" said he, and without waiting for my gasp of astonishment, went on: "They'll be in family groups, aged between five and sixteen, and they will be in the charge of their priests and teachers – about 300 adults". My first coherent thought was that perhaps the Basque Government had chartered an ocean liner, maybe one of the "Queens", but since I had lost the power of speech, I said nothing"<sup>252</sup>.

The bombardment of Guernica was to dramatically alter these perceptions, and Aguirre's plea to Europe on 27 April was followed by a formal proposal from the NJCSR to the Foreign Office to offer refuge to Spanish children evacuated from Northern Spain.<sup>253</sup> The following day, Steer's article appeared in *The Times*, which was subsequently published in other newspapers.<sup>254</sup> The Basque situation was discussed in Cabinet the same day, 28 April (by the Committee on Foreign Policy), and it was agreed to help Basque child refugees, under certain conditions, and it was proposed that the Royal Navy escort refugee ships to friendly ports.<sup>255</sup>

Events now moved swiftly. Stevenson's call to Aguirre to surrender Bilbao and spare his people useless slaughter was rejected, the Basques believing that the defences of the

---

<sup>251</sup> Manning (1970), p. 124. There is a letter, signed by Sr Lizaso (the Basque Government's representative in London), addressed to President Aguirre, introducing Leah Manning and asking for cooperation, dated 28 April 1937, GE-242-2, AHNV.

<sup>252</sup> Manning (1970), p. 125

<sup>253</sup> The Foreign Office then referred this proposal to the Home Office. PRO: FO 3721369. W 8214/37/41, Docs. 497, 498.

<sup>254</sup> *Daily Star*, *Daily Express* and *Ce Soir* also published Steer's article the following day.

<sup>255</sup> PRO: FO 37121372. Docs. 6, 7. Telegrams 140, 143.

city, the famous “iron ring”, could not be breached.<sup>256</sup> Pressure was mounting on the British Government to agree to evacuation, with the lobbying campaign by the NJCSR and the evident support of British public opinion. There are numerous expressions of the pressure exercised by the NJCSR. On 6 May 1937, there was a request by W. Roberts and the Duchess of Atholl for the Government to contribute one pound for every pound privately collected. This was opposed by Sir George Mounsey (Assistant Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in charge of Spanish Affairs during the Civil War) as a violation of “non-intervention”.<sup>257</sup> On 10 May there were two letters from W. Roberts to the Foreign Office regarding the evacuation scheme and the funds held by the NJCSR (£4,000) and on 13 May there was a letter from W. Roberts to Chamberlain, in which he states that the NJCSR intended to go ahead “without authorisation”.<sup>258</sup> On 14 May Leah Manning gave assurances to the Basque Government regarding British acceptance. The British Consul, Stevenson, asked her to wait.<sup>259</sup> On 17 May Leah Manning “forced” British Vice-Consul, Sr Angel Ojanguren, in the absence of Consul Stevenson, to accept 4,000 children<sup>260</sup>, and on 18 May the Duchess of Atholl appealed to Eden, explaining the risk to Bilbao girls of “about fifteen” to the advancing Moorish troops, if the town should fall.<sup>261</sup>

Guernica was discussed during Parliamentary Questions on 28 April<sup>262</sup>, and the Spanish Ambassador in London, Sr Azcarate, called on Lord Cranborne, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, on the same evening with an official request for British assistance in the evacuation of Basque women and children, including the possible reception of these refugees in France and England. Lord Cranborne, although not in favour of the proposal, agreed to bring the matter before Eden, Foreign Secretary at the time.<sup>263</sup>

On 29 April, Stevenson called on the Foreign Office to provide British destroyers to evacuate the Basque Government (500 people), and the Foreign Office contacted the

---

<sup>256</sup> Stevenson made his plea to Aguirre on 28 April, two days after the Guernica tragedy. PRO: FO 37121291. The “iron ring” defences are discussed in Romero Salvadó (1999), p. 148 and Preston (1986), p. 142.

<sup>257</sup> PRO: FO 37121371.

<sup>258</sup> PRO: FO 37121370 (10 May) and PRO: FO 37121371 (13 May).

<sup>259</sup> PRO: FO 37121370.

<sup>260</sup> Manning (1970), p. 130.

<sup>261</sup> PRO: FO 37121370.

<sup>262</sup> PRO: FO 37121369, Doc. 338.

<sup>263</sup> PRO: FO 37121369, W 8557/37/41, Docs. 36, 37, 38. Sr Azcarate also visited the Home Office on 15 May.

British Ambassador, Sir Henry Chilton, stating the possible need to approach Franco in relation to the evacuation matter.<sup>264</sup> Although on the same day the Home Office and a ministerial group<sup>265</sup> agreed in principle to the evacuation, there was great reluctance to supply British naval protection, which could, possibly, embroil Britain in the Spanish conflict, against the stated public policy of non-intervention.<sup>266</sup>

Moreover, the British policy of “neutrality” in the Spanish conflict had already been seriously exposed in skirmishes on the Cantabrian coast from the beginning of April. The Nationalists had announced a blockade of Republican ports on the Cantabrian coast on 4 April, and Admiral Lord Chatfield, First Sea Lord, and the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Chilton, both clearly pro-Nationalist, had informed the British Government that the blockade was effective because the River Nervión had been mined by the Nationalists, and British ships could thus be shelled if they refused to stop. Despite assurances from the Basques that the mines had been cleared, London ordered the Royal Navy flotilla to inform all British vessels en route to Bilbao to wait in the French port of St Jean de Luz until further orders were issued.<sup>267</sup>

Although serious doubts were raised in the House of Commons about the Royal Navy’s assurances regarding the effectiveness of the blockade<sup>268</sup>, it was the action of the small British merchant ship, the *South Seas Spray*, on 20 April that clearly revealed the hollowness of the Navy’s claim. Ignoring Royal Navy instructions, the ship arrived in Bilbao from St Jean de Luz without any interference from Nationalist warships nor, evidently, from mines. Given this lead, other ships waiting on the French Basque coast set sail for Spain. Chamberlain’s Government was deeply discredited, as was the Admiralty, whose First Lord, Sir Samuel Hoare, had evidently received the information about the Nervión mines from the Nationalist Navy.<sup>269</sup>

These entanglements on the northern coast throughout April not only discredited the Government and the Navy, but they had also threatened to expose the clearly pro-

---

<sup>264</sup> PRO: FO 37121369, W-8467/37/41, Doc. 540, and PRO: FO 37121369, Doc. 3.

<sup>265</sup> These ministers met as the United Kingdom Delegation to the Imperial Conference. PRO: FO 37121370.

<sup>266</sup> In reality Britain had supported Franco from the onset of the Civil War. For an excellent account of British support for Franco, see Moradiellos (1990) and Moradiellos (1996b).

<sup>267</sup> Beevor (2001), pp. 240-1.

<sup>268</sup> There were only four Nationalist ships guarding 200 miles of coast and the Basque shore batteries controlled an area beyond the three mile limit. Ibid, p. 241.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.



Francoist nature of the British Government, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty, and thus could seriously undermine the British public policy of non-intervention. Therefore it is not surprising that the British expressed caution vis-à-vis the use of the Navy in any evacuation from Northern Spain. It could also be the case that the British Government did not want to upset Franco by giving succour to his enemies, as the Government was certain of his victory in the Civil War, and went to enormous lengths to support him.<sup>270</sup>

However, the pressure on Britain to intervene in the evacuation issue was intense over the next few days, both from the Basque Government and British public opinion.<sup>271</sup> Nevertheless, perhaps the most important factor in deciding the issue was the involvement of the French Navy, which, it was noted on 29 April, was already escorting refugee ships from Northern Spain.<sup>272</sup> The Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy met the next day and a telegram was sent from the Foreign Office to Ambassador Chilton to communicate with Franco through the Military Governor of Irún, Commander Troncoso, regarding the Royal Navy's involvement.<sup>273</sup> Another telegram from the Foreign Office to Chilton the same afternoon asked him to get in touch with the French Ambassador in Spain and with the Basque Government. By that time, the Home Office had agreed to the request from the NJCSR to accept Basque refugees, on the condition that there would be no cost to the Government.<sup>274</sup>

#### **4 Alternative Offers to Evacuation: the “Safe Zone” Proposals from Franco and the International Committee of the Red Cross**

The British Ambassador, Sir Henry Chilton, sent a communication to General Franco on 30 April 1937, announcing,

...as a matter of courtesy the instructions being issued to His Majesty's ships to afford facilities for all possible protection to any ships leaving Bilbao with non-combatant

---

<sup>270</sup> Moradiellos (1996b).

<sup>271</sup> On 30 April, the Basque Government called for evacuation to take place the very same day and that Franco should be informed that British ships would protect the evacuation. *Euskadi* also *Euzkadi Roja*, 31 Apr 1937, p. 1. *The Times*, 30 Apr 1937, p. 8.

<sup>272</sup> PRO: FO 37121370.

<sup>273</sup> PRO: FO 37121372, Doc. 6.

<sup>274</sup> The conditions of acceptance were that the Basque refugees would be independent of all political parties, and that there would be private funds for education and expenses, “only private funds for the operation to preserve the principle of non intervention and to prevent His Majesty's Government being exposed to similar demands in other cases”. PRO: FO 37121372.

refugees on board, when such ships reach the high seas.<sup>275</sup>

Franco's answer was received in the afternoon of 1 May 1937 from Salamanca, sent by José Antonio Sangroniz, Head of Franco's Diplomatic Cabinet, in charge of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations, and communicated by the Military Governor of Irún, Commander Julian Troncoso.

In point 5 of Franco's reply it stated,

“West of Bilbao, as far as Santander, there is a zone of ‘red territory’ far removed from the theatre of war, in which the civil population can escape from danger. Their evacuation to a foreign country is therefore unnecessary since non-combatants can take refuge in that area. A safety zone, moreover, could be established if the international Red Cross would guarantee that it would not be used for military purposes”.<sup>276</sup>

Franco's proposal for a Safe Zone<sup>277</sup> was viewed favourably by Sir George Mounsey from the Foreign Office. On 2 May, Mounsey addressed the Foreign Secretary, Eden, giving his present position regarding the Anglo-French scheme to evacuate the civil population of Bilbao. He explained why he felt that General Franco's offer of a Neutral Zone guaranteed by the Red Cross should be accepted on the grounds outlined. Mounsey believed that Franco's proposal was reasonable and should be explored, because, he argued, there was no possibility of evacuating 300,000 people from Bilbao, as the Basque Government had requested after Guernica.<sup>278</sup>

Mounsey also protested against the use of British naval vessels to escort evacuation ships, a feeling evidently shared by the Admiralty, as Chief of the Naval Staff, Sir Ernie A. Chatfield, pointed out, summarising his policy,

“I am using every effort I can and such influence as I possess to reduce our enemies and to avoid our rushing into dangerous situations which we are not prepared to follow to the end. It is essential that we should make friends and not enemies while our defence

---

<sup>275</sup> After much discussion about the way to “communicate” to the Salamanca Government the decision to use the Royal Navy to protect refugee ships sailing from Bilbao, it was decided “to inform” Salamanca concerning the instructions issued to the Navy. This was a result of the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy PRO: FO 371.21370. W9159/37/41, Docs. 196-207.

<sup>276</sup> PRO: FO 371.21369: W. 8710/37/41, Docs. 104, 105, 106.

<sup>277</sup> Also referred to as Neutral Zone.

<sup>278</sup> PRO: FO37121369 W8866/37/41, Docs. 134, 135, 136, 137, 137, and one unmarked document attached.

position is still weak. I shall be glad when the next two years are safely past”.<sup>279</sup>

However, public opinion continued to be in favour of evacuation, and the *Times* letter of 1 May had confirmed the pro-evacuation position of a broad sector of the political class. This was clearly revealed during Parliamentary Questions on 6 May, when Major General Sir Alfred Knox asked,

“The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will give the substance of General Franco’s reply to the request for acquiescence in the project of evacuating the civil population of Bilbao and of the alternative proposals for safeguarding non-combatant lives put forward by General Franco. Does not this reply of the nationalist leader show that his attitude towards the civil population is just as humane as that of any sentimental supporter of the Spanish Government in this country?”<sup>280</sup>

Knox’s question, however, was answered from the Labour benches by a Mr Mander, who replied,

“Was not his attitude to the civil population very clearly indicated in Guernica?”

Clearly, the Guernica bombing cast a strong shadow over the issue, and Franco’s proposal was not seriously considered at first. Therefore on 5 May, Sir Henry Chilton addressed a note to Salamanca communicating the decision to continue preparations for the evacuation. On 6 May, Franco’s answer was sent to Chilton, and, apart from references to the intervention and the sinking of the nationalist battleship *España*<sup>281</sup>, it referred to the Safe Zone as follows:

“The humanitarian and affectionate feelings of his Excellency, the Generalísimo Franco, towards the population of Vizcaya moved him to seek a solution by which this attack against the sovereign rights of Spain might be avoided and by which the difficulties attendant upon the carrying out of the evacuation might be spared: a solution was offered with the possibility of establishing a zone of refuge under the auspices of the International Red Cross in order to save the civil population from useless suffering. This offer is maintained in full, provided that the International Red Cross guarantee, and the Basque authorities agree, that the said zone shall not be, like the safe zone in

---

<sup>279</sup> This was expressed in a letter to the Commander in Chief of the China Station, on 11 November 1937. PRO: FO37121370.

<sup>280</sup> PRO: FO 371. 21369, Doc. 148.

<sup>281</sup> The Nationalists thought that the Royal Navy had been somehow involved in the sinking of their battleship *España*. This was not the case. The ship struck a Nationalist mine off Santander and sank.

Madrid<sup>282</sup>, a centre of military training, a storehouse of munitions for any kind of warlike activity. The representative of the International Red Cross should be called upon to intervene in this matter”.<sup>283</sup>

A note from the Foreign Office following Franco’s repeated offer of a Safe Zone asked Chilton to find out if Salamanca stood by its offer and if so, to put it to the Basques. The text also revealed that Salamanca no longer accused the Navy of having anything directly to do with the sinking of the *España*, as was first thought.<sup>284</sup> Despite the resolution of the *España* issue, however, there continued to be encounters between British and Nationalist ships in the northern sea lanes.<sup>285</sup> There was obvious disquiet regarding the situation in the northern seas, clearly revealed in a message sent from the Captain of *Destroyer 6* to the Admiralty on 3 May. The Captain requested the Bilbao Consulate to inform the Basque Government concerning Franco’s reply and the danger of attack from “bombing and rebel ships”.<sup>286</sup>

In Bilbao itself the situation was desperate, with continuous bombing and constant pressure on its ground defences. The ICRC was extremely worried and believed that an evacuation of the population was practically impossible, given the lack of naval assets and Franco’s refusal to allow it. On 3 May, the ICRC made contact with the British Ambassador, Chilton, and the French Ambassador, Herbette, informing and requesting:

“Our delegate in Bilbao has transmitted to the Basque Government a message asking about the evacuation assets and food we can offer in favour of Bilbao’s women and children. Stop.

ICRC has not any material means of evacuation or feeding but is ready to cooperate with you if you believe it as useful, in accordance with our capability and especially by the services of our Bilbao Delegate George Graz. Stop.

We shall be grateful to be informed about the steps foreseen by the British and French authorities”.<sup>287</sup>

---

<sup>282</sup> On 7 November 1937, Franco unilaterally declared the Salamanca neighbourhood in Madrid a zone free of bombardments. While never accepted by the Republican Government, the declaration was basically kept to by Franco’s planes. That neighbourhood was mainly the residence of the upper bourgeoisie. Martínez Bande (1976), p. 235.

<sup>283</sup> PRO: FO 37121370 W-9108/37/41, Docs. 169, 170, 171, 172.

<sup>284</sup> PRO: FO 371. 21370: W 9108/37/41, Docs. 169, 170, 171, 172.

<sup>285</sup> PRO: ADM 1163516 and PRO: FO 37121292 refer to incidents on 4 May 1937.

<sup>286</sup> PRO: FO 37121369: W 8734/37/41, Docs. 112, 113.

<sup>287</sup> Docs. 2242, 2243, 3 May 1937, in ‘Correspondance générale et rapports 1936–1950’ (16/4/1937-10/5/1937), B CR 212 GEN-12, ICRC; henceforth ICRC (1937b).

A few days later, however, the Committee agreed with the proposal sent from London by a representative from “the Basques abroad”, Luis Ortuzar, for a Safe Zone for women, children and old people.<sup>288</sup> Certainly the ICRC had never been in favour of massively evacuating children from Northern Spain, and therefore was responsive to Ortuzar’s idea of a Safe Zone. Nevertheless, the existing correspondence made it clear that the ICRC would have cooperated with the evacuation<sup>289</sup>, if that had been possible, and supported by the British and French. It is evident, however, that the ICRC had few resources at its disposal to offer for such an evacuation, and there were fears, voiced by Muntadas, Delegate of the ICRC at St Jean de Luz, France<sup>290</sup>, that both the French and British ambassadors were pro-Franco, and therefore he would only accept evacuation if it were ordered by London.<sup>291</sup> Moreover, Raymond Courvoisier, the ICRC Delegate in France during the Spanish conflict, was sure of the imminent fall of Bilbao into Franco’s hands and the risk to the lives of pro-Franco prisoners in Bilbao prisons, having had the precedent of the hundred or so pro-Francoists killed as retaliation for the first bombings of Bilbao.

Hence the Committee decided to send a telegram to St Jean de Luz, with the text addressed to Salamanca, proposing the agreement for a Safe Zone in Bilbao. On 5 May a telegram was sent by the ICRC asking General Franco, following a proposition from the “Basques abroad”, if it would be possible to find a “safe zone” near Bilbao, for old people, the sick, women and children.<sup>292</sup> On 11 May, the President of the Nationalist Red Cross (NRC), the Count of Vallellano, relayed to Pourtales, ICRC Delegate in Salamanca and Burgos, the following note sent by the Marquis of Rialp of the Nationalist Red Cross in answer to this request:

---

<sup>288</sup> Doc. 2250, 5/5/1937, in ICRC (1937b). Telegram text : “Vous prie etablir Bilbao zone franche pour enfants, femmes et viellards qui pourront pas etre evacue ou voudrons pas quitez Bilbao – STOP – vous prie faire quelque chose pour les Basques STOP – Un Basque n’oublie jamais. Merci d’avance – Ortuzar.” (“Please establish a Save Zone in Bilbao for children, women and old people that could not be evacuated or did not want to leave Bilbao – STOP – please do something for the Basques – STOP – A Basque never forgets. Thank you – Ortuzar”.)

<sup>289</sup> Doc. 2243, 3/5/1937, in ICRC (1937b). Telegram from the ICRC to Herbet, the French Ambassador: “Our Delegate at Bilbao has transmitted us the Basque Government message asking about evacuation and subsistence means the ICRC can offer to Bilbao women and children STOP – ICRC has not any means but is ready to cooperate with you...”

<sup>290</sup> He was also Deputy-Delegate to Raymond Courvoisier, the ICRC Delegate in France.

<sup>291</sup> Doc. 2254, Telephone conversation between de Muntadas and Dr Junod on 4 May 1937 (transcription), in ICRC (1937b).

<sup>292</sup> Doc. 2250, in ICRC (1937b); ‘Proces – Verbeaux de la Commission d’Espagne’, volume I (27/8/1936-12/5/1937) No 147, B CR 212 PV-01, ICRC.

“The Diplomatic Cabinet Chief Executive has asked me to inform you that he has received the telegram and he awaits the acceptance of the idea by the International Red Cross in respect of a security zone guaranteed by the Red Cross from Bilbao to Santander, which could contain a refuge for non-combatants, because in paragraph 5 of the answer from the Government (Salamanca) to the British Ambassador (referring to the document of 01 May, discussed above), we said that there existed in the Red territory a zone far from war actions. There the population could avoid danger, and evacuation abroad was unnecessary, and to this the British Ambassador answered that he was notifying this indication to the Basque “dirigents”. The National Government awaits an answer that has not arrived as of today”. Marquis of Rialp.<sup>293</sup>

By 12 May, the British Government had received two requests for a Safe Zone, one from Franco and one from the ICRC. The proposal from the ICRC, was, in fact, identical to Franco’s, and had, indeed, been promoted by Luis Ortuzar, representing what the ICRC called “The Basques Abroad”. But, who was Luis Ortuzar? Luis Ortuzar was a former chief of the Basque police (Ertzaina) to whom Jesus María Leizaola<sup>294</sup>, a member of the Basque Government, had entrusted the task of establishing direct links with the British Government, essentially, it would seem, to set up financial and commercial links in London. These were seen as operational bases in the event of the situation becoming more extreme, which would happen when, first, Basque territory and then the war itself were lost. Indeed, in 1938 Ortuzar formed a British company, the *Continental Transit Company Ltd.*, with him as director and shareholder, where the Basque Government channelled a substantial part of its financial reserves, in fact, the vast majority of its funds. At the end of the war this transfer would become the object of a political and judicial dispute in British courts, as Ortuzar refused to transfer control to

---

<sup>293</sup> M. de Pourtales and Sir Henry Chilton, the British Ambassador, met on 11 May 1937 at the request of the British diplomat and Pourtales transcribes something incredible: “Zone Neutre: Les Anglais n’avaient pas compris d’après les notes recues de Salamanque que ce gouvernement avait l’intention de faire creer une zone neutre pour la population de Bilbao, Chilton soumettra cette question au gouvernement basque aussitôt qu’il aura la confirmation de Londres. (“The British did not understand from the notes received from Salamanca that this Government had the intention to establish a Neutral Zone for the Bilbao population. Chilton will submit this matter to the Basque Government once he has had the conformity [sic] from London.”) This is not credible, because all the Foreign Office documents show a real understanding of the proposal.

<sup>294</sup> Jesús M<sup>a</sup> Leizaola Sánchez (San Sebastian, 1896-1989), Basque lawyer and politician, active member of the PNV (Basque Nationalist Party), during the Civil War was a member of the Defence Board of Bilbao and Justice and Culture Minister of the Basque Government under President Aguirre. After Aguirre’s death in 1960, he became “lehendakari” (President) of the Basque Government in Exile. In 1979, after Franco’s death in 1975, he transferred the Presidency to Carlos Garaikoetxea, who had been democratically elected. He remained an MP until 1981, when he resigned. Leizaola, a man who combined politics with cultural and intellectual activities, always backed the possibility of a separate understanding with Franco to finish the Basque struggle during the war in the North, building a workable relationship with Commander Troncoso. See Pretus (2003).

a new body, the *Euzkadi National Council*, formed in 1940 by Manuel de Irujo to succeed the Basque Government. Ortuzar believed that the Basque Government had been suspended, given the absence of most of its members, including the President, Aguirre, a view supported by Leizaola.<sup>295</sup>

Ortuzar, Leizaola's envoy in London, had, through his contacts within the ICRC, succeeded in getting his proposal for a Safe Zone approved by the Committee. Both Ortuzar and Leizaola were, moreover, adamantly opposed to the Leftist direction of the Popular Front and supported the need to arrive at an understanding with Franco, maintaining contact with Salamanca through Commander Julian Troncoso, the Governor of Irún. The latter, with personal links to both the French and British Ambassadors, had been attempting to attract the "foralist" wing of the PNV to the Nationalist cause, a sector which had been extremely unhappy with the position of the "independentist" wing under Aguirre, which had finally agreed to support the Republic after the granting of the autonomy statute in October, 1936.<sup>296</sup>

It is evident that Troncoso played an important role as the main link between the pro-Franco Basques and the British Government, both of whom had much to gain from Franco's proposal of a Safe Zone. The former, given their political allegiances, had no interest in a continuing war in their homeland, while the British Government, which also supported Franco, did not want the Navy to become more involved in the conflict as it could seriously stretch its resources and expose the hypocrisy of its supposed non-intervention policy. In Franco's case, it is clear that he was adamantly opposed to Royal Navy intervention within Spanish waters, which would contravene Spanish sovereignty. But there were other important benefits of a Safe Zone to Franco and the Nationalists: Franco could perhaps "redeem himself" after the Guernica atrocity, and demonstrate his "humanitarian and affectionate feelings towards the population of Vizcaya", and show that "the attitude of the nationalist leader towards the civilian population is just as

---

<sup>295</sup> Correspondence and related documents to this conflict are deposited in the ARTEA Archive (Basque Nationalism) and EUSKOMEDIA Archive S. Sebastian. There is also a recent work on J.A. Aguirre, Mees (2006). In a letter from Jose Antonio Aguirre to Jesus Maria Leizaola on 24 November 1944, Aguirre defined this row as the "black hole of our exile" that "has hurt us much and on more than one occasion". (AHNV: GE: 265, 4.)

<sup>296</sup> The "foralist" wing of the PNV desired the restoration of their old privileges, the "fueros", and autonomy within Spain. The "independentist" wing wanted its own separate state and secession from Spain. It also seems to be the case that Troncoso was attempting to bring about a rapprochement between the "foralists" and the Navarrese Carlists. Pretus (2003), pp. 3, 10 and 11.

humane as that of any sentimental supporter of the Spanish Government in this country”.<sup>297</sup>

The “independentist” wing of the PNV, represented by Aguirre, President of the Basque Government, was adamantly opposed to the idea of the Safe Zone and argued instead, as we have seen, for a large-scale evacuation of women, children, old people and non-combatants from the Basque country. Aguirre also had his representative in London, José Ignacio de Lizaso<sup>298</sup>, who had been extremely influential within the NJCSR, the agency that sent one of its leading representatives, Leah Manning, to Bilbao on 24 April.<sup>299</sup> A meeting on 3 May at the Foreign Office, between Sir R. Vansittart<sup>300</sup> and José Ignacio de Lizaso, in the presence of Sir H. Mounsey, reveals clearly their strategy. After expressing his thanks for escorting refugee ships from Bilbao<sup>301</sup>, Lizaso went on to state:

“The Basques are in a terrible situation because they are trapped between Franco (who does not control the atrocities of his troops) and Caballero [Largo Caballero, the Spanish Premier], who, if he obtained control of the Basque provinces would suppress their liberties and bring the Basques under a “state of the Reds”. The Basques only asked for peace and although their sympathies might in some circumstances lean further towards General Franco, they realise that he is not a free agent but is dominated by Fascism and that that is a regime entirely unsuited to the Basque nature”.<sup>302</sup>

Lizaso argued against the proposal for a neutral zone, because Franco could not be trusted and the International Red Cross was ineffective. Moreover, referring to Franco’s proposal [that he already knew existed] for a Safe Zone near Santander, Lizaso commented:

“There was no territory to which they could retire except in the direction of Santander,

---

<sup>297</sup> Franco’s proposal of a Safe Zone, put to Chilton quoted above. PRO: FO 37121370 W-9108/37/41, Docs. 169, 170, 171, 172. Major General Sir Alfred Knox, during Parliamentary Questions on 6 May, quoted above: PRO: FO 371. 21369, Doc. 148.

<sup>298</sup> A personal friend of Aguirre who was, through the Basque Delegation in London, the voice of the Basque Government in Britain. He was always on a “collision” course with the Spanish Ambassador, Azcarate, by acting as a “de facto” representative of an independent state.

<sup>299</sup> Leah Manning’s trip is discussed in Section 3.

<sup>300</sup> Sir Richard Vansittart was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. This meeting was requested by Sir Walter Citrine, TUC General Secretary, on behalf of Sr Lizaso.

<sup>301</sup> The Royal Navy was helping to escort refugee ships to France, in joint operations with the French Navy.

<sup>302</sup> PRO: FO 37121291 – W8936/1/41 – Situation of the Basques. Docs. 10–17.



and that was a foreign and hostile country”.<sup>303</sup>

The real purpose of the meeting, Lizaso continued, was to ask Vansittart if a possible mediation in Spain by the powers (as presented by Churchill) was Churchill’s idea or that of H.M. Government, to which he did not receive a reply. Lizaso was then asked if he thought mediation by the British in the Spanish conflict was possible, to which he answered in the negative, stating that he believed more suffering was needed and the conviction by both parties that neither could win. Lizaso then presented the Basque position:

“But when this time was reached I hope that the mediating powers would insist that under the terms of settlement there should be established such essential conditions for peace such as freedom of thought, order and self-determination of the people. There is no possibility in Spain of one region ruling another and the future regime, which must be secured against further outbreaks of civil strife, must be based on some kind of confederation of Spanish peoples, each enjoying essential privileges”.<sup>304</sup>

It was clear that Lizaso was proposing to the British the possibility of a future independent state for the Basques, but before leaving the meeting Lizaso confirmed that at that moment nothing could be done except to work for the evacuation of non-combatants and he asked that the visit be kept entirely confidential. Not even the Spanish Ambassador should know of it.<sup>305</sup>

In a memo dated 18 May, from Lizaso to a member of the Wright Organisation<sup>306</sup>, the Basque desire for a future independent state is again confirmed:

“The only end to the war which would benefit Spain would be the disintegration and weakening of the Spanish state. This state of affairs would also prove happiest for the Basque country. In the end there would be neither victors nor vanquished, but only a weak and divided Spain, sufficiently weak to allow foreign powers to intervene and decree what should be the construction of the new state”.<sup>307</sup>

What seems to emerge from these statements by Lizaso is that foreign intervention, most probably British, could construct a new state, which might not even bear the name

---

<sup>303</sup> PRO: FO 37121291 – W8936/1/41 – Situation of the Basques. Docs. 10–17. (In the interpretation of the Basque Government, the Basque forces would not fight outside their homeland).

<sup>304</sup> PRO: FO 37121291 – W8936/1/41 – Situation of the Basques. Docs. 10–17.

<sup>305</sup> PRO: FO 37121291 – W8936/1/41 – Situation of the Basques. Docs. 10–17.

<sup>306</sup> See footnote 33(b).

<sup>307</sup> See footnote 33(b); Document A.

“Spain”, but perhaps be called the “United States of Iberia”. This was to be stressed as much as possible in future propaganda as a necessary means of guaranteeing peace in Europe. The different nationalities in this new state would be Castille, Andalusia, Valencia, Catalonia, Aragon, Galicia and Euzkadi (the Basque country). It was considered desirable that British public opinion should be convinced that the only guarantee of peace in the Iberian Peninsula lay in the establishment of a peninsular state in which the Basque country would preserve its absolute independence. This was because she was a nation different from the rest, and because of her strategic and geographic position she would prove to be another Belgium for Europe.<sup>308</sup> The rest of the document continues along the same lines.<sup>309</sup>

It is clear that the Basque Government under Aguirre was unhappy with both “Spanish” options, and was pushing its claims for an independent Euzkadi, which they believed the British – who they saw as close to them politically and “temperamentally” – could possibly help them achieve. The evacuation to Britain – though undoubtedly conceived of in humanitarian terms – to remove non-combatants, especially children, from the dreadful effects of the bombings – could also fulfil a more political role. Certainly the increasing involvement of the Royal Navy in the evacuation would mean greater contact between the British and the Basques, and, hopefully, greater understanding between the two “nations”. Similarly, contacts established in Britain between the refugees, particularly the children, and the British people, would create a wave of sympathy for the Basque cause and these “sentimental links” could possibly establish the basis for a future move toward independence.<sup>310</sup>

Political motives were also present in the pro-evacuation stance of the NJCSR, dominated by the Labour Left and the British Communist Party. The horrors of the bombings, experienced first-hand by Leah Manning on her trip to Bilbao, were no doubt felt deeply by all those involved in the NJCSR, and perhaps the first reaction to such suffering was to propose the removal of children, without considering the longer-term

---

<sup>308</sup> Probably trying to establish a parallel with the traditional British view that Belgian independence should be guaranteed to preserve the European balance of power.

<sup>309</sup> See Document A (foot note 33 b)

<sup>310</sup> The Basque Government was thus the pioneer of a strategy that has been employed during the last thirty years by two “nations” without a state, the Palestinian refugees in the Middle East and the people of Western Sahara. Children from Palestinian settlements and from Polisario Front camps in Algeria stay for a few months in Spain, hosted by Spanish families. The presence of these children over many years has strengthened pro-Palestinian and pro-Polisario feeling in Spain.

effects of such an action. However, there were undoubtedly political motives operating here as well, as further British involvement in the evacuation could possibly influence British policy towards Spain, as would the plight of child refugees from Republican Spain. It would certainly bring the war to the attention of the public.<sup>311</sup>

Mr Cooper, from the Home Office, in a note dated 4 May, expressed the views of Lewis Golden, secretary of the Save the Children Fund, on the political nature of the evacuation campaign:

“From his own knowledge of the workings of the Joint Committee (the NJCSR), he [Lewis Golden] had been forced reluctantly to the view that the desire to get the children sent to this country was activated largely by political motives and he had been quite unable to understand why the Committee should not consider the very reasonable plan to remove the children to another part of Spain where they would be looked after in an entirely suitable manner. Funds contributed by foreign sympathisers could be administered on their behalf by an impartial body such as the International Red Cross or the Save the Children International Union, which are able and ready to undertake the work at much less cost and without serious disturbance”.<sup>312</sup>

Lewis Golden, referring to a meeting of the NJCSR, feared that:

“...the voice of the people who have only the interest of the children at heart will be drowned out by those who wish to make political capital out of the imminent catastrophe at Bilbao”.<sup>313</sup>

Golden expressed a further fear, the possibility that:

“...some of the most ardent members of the Committee may act precipitously and send a large number of children to this country in a ship chartered for the purpose, without waiting for Home Office approval to be given to the scheme”.<sup>314</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> The struggle to win the support of the democratic powers had guided Republican policy from the beginning of the Civil War, but by May 1937, as the situation became increasingly desperate, there was greater pressure to attract support. This, as it happened, was extremely naïve, as both the British and the U.S. were unstinting in their support for Franco, and this would of course continue to the end of the War, a fact unknown by the British and American public at the time, given the public policy of non-intervention.

<sup>312</sup> Pro: FO: 37121370: Registry number W9147/37/41 From Mr Cooper (Home Office) to Mr Roberts (Foreign Office): Description: Proposal to evacuate children from Bilbao to United Kingdom. Docs. 184, 186 - 192.

<sup>313</sup> Pro: FO: 37121370: Registry number W9147/37/41 From Mr Cooper (Home Office) to Mr Roberts (Foreign Office): Description: Proposal to evacuate children from Bilbao to United Kingdom. Docs. 184, 186 - 192.

It is evident, therefore, that the humanitarian crisis affecting Bilbao became a politically charged issue, and that the two options – evacuation versus Safe Zone<sup>315</sup> – became increasingly identified with Republican and Francoist politics respectively. This is revealed in the press at the time, which divided along Left/Right lines on the issue. *Unidad*, a right-wing organ from San Sebastian, gives us an idea of how the evacuation was viewed on the Right, in an article on 10 May:

“The red-separatist cruelty stops at nothing, now (after trying to break the unity of Spain), it is destroying the unity of the family. Here are Spanish children who are pulled from the arms of their mothers by English “humanitarianism” so that they can be put under the protection of the French Popular Front”.<sup>316</sup>

Other right-wing newspapers, such as *El Diario Vasco* (San Sebastián), put forward the idea, on 7 May, that:

“The evacuation of women and children was not a voluntary act, but a suggestion of the Russian command operating in Bilbao”.<sup>317</sup>

Previously, on 5 May, *El Diario Vasco* had stated that:

“...los pobres salen engañados de Bilbao y se quedan, llenos de tristeza, en un medio hostil y desapacible, porque así los disponen los tiranos que disponen de sus vidas y de las de sus familias”.<sup>318</sup>

The overwhelming impression given was that the Basque Government had forced the children to leave Bilbao purely for propaganda purposes, a feeling echoed by other right-wing organs between May and early June.<sup>319</sup> The Catholic Church, through the voice of the Spanish Primate, Cardinal Gomá, also expressed its views: “...preocupación por los niños que los marxistas habían robado de España”.<sup>320</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> Pro: FO: 37121370: Registry number W9147/37/41 From Mr Cooper (Home Office) to Mr Roberts (Foreign Office): Description: Proposal to evacuate children from Bilbao to United Kingdom. Docs. 184, 186 - 192.

<sup>315</sup> Even if the details of the Neutral zone offers were not of public knowledge

<sup>316</sup> Alonso Carballés (1992).

<sup>317</sup> *El Diario Vasco* (San Sebastián) 7 May 1937.

<sup>318</sup> “These poor children who are leaving Bilbao have been fooled, and they are left full of sadness in a hostile and unpleasant place, because that is what the tyrants, who control their lives and that of their families, have decided for them.” *El Diario Vasco* (San Sebastián), 5 May 1937.

<sup>319</sup> There were references to “stolen children”, “criminal exportation”, “children kidnapped”, “criminal despatches” and similar accusations during this period. *El Diario Vasco*, 15 & 22 May & 9 June; *La Voz de España*, 10 June; *Amistad*, 14 May; and *Voz de España*, 9 May.

<sup>320</sup> “Concern for the children the Marxists had stolen from Spain.” This was expressed in Gomá’s letter to the “Primados”, First Bishops of France, Great Britain, Belgium, Mexico and other countries. Indeed, the

Left-wing opinion and the Bilbao press, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly in favour of evacuation. The press in Bilbao certainly played an important role in the evacuation process, and would occasionally publish information about decisions from the different Ministerial departments, in particular *Asistencia Social*, with lists of children to be registered for evacuation and news of ships arriving and leaving Bilbao.<sup>321</sup> Indeed, the blockade of Bilbao and the intervention of Britain in the escorting of both incoming and departing vessels became an obsession and the main press issue in March, April and May of 1937. It seemed clear that the press was expressing the need for Britain to become involved in the conflict and often compared the British attitude with that of the French, who had played a prominent role in evacuations from the onset of the bombings in the Basque country.<sup>322</sup>

Given this polarisation between pro-Republican and pro-Franco positions vis-à-vis the humanitarian crisis in Bilbao, it would be the British, with contacts within both camps, who finally resolved the issue. On 11 May, Ambassador Chilton notified the Foreign Office that the International Red Cross representative,

“...who has just arrived from Salamanca, informs me that the authorities there await result of approach which they assume that His Majesty’s Government is making to Basque Government, and, while very doubtful whether proposed neutral zone would materialise it might be politic to take the matter up with the Basque Government and International Red Cross”.<sup>323</sup>

---

claim made by Gomá was that the majority of the children evacuated from Spain by the “Red” Government had belonged to right-wing families, whose parents had been assassinated, or had been orphans taken in by religious charities whose parents had been exterminated. As these children had now become state dependents, the state had readily dispatched them. *El Diario Vasco, La Voz de España* and *Unidad* (San Sebastián), 8 May 1937, and the Official Gazette of the Vitoria Diocese, 15 October 1937. See also Alonso Carballés (1992).

<sup>321</sup> As mentioned in Section 1 above, the Official Gazette of the Basque Government, from its commencement of publishing in late 1936 until May 1937, makes no mention of the displacement of children from the Basque country to other countries, and research at the AHNV did not reveal any Minutes of the Basque Government. Given this, the final conclusion must be that the displacement operation was conceived and developed through verbal negotiations and agreements between the President (J.A. Aguirre) and the Ministers (consejeros) of Social Assistance, Interior and Finance, without any supporting legal publication. Therefore, the press was one of the few sources of written documentation of the evacuation.

<sup>322</sup> See *Euzkadi* (Bilbao) 8, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25 April 1937; 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 13, 18, 21, 24 May 1937 and 2 June 1937; *El Liberal* (Bilbao) 6, 8, 15, 22, 23 April 1937 and 2, 3, 7, 20, 21 May 1937; *La Gaceta del Norte* (Bilbao) 9 December 1936; *Euzkadi Roja* (Bilbao) 2 December 1936, 7 April 1937 and 15 June 1937.

<sup>323</sup> PRO: FO 37121269 – W 8710/37/41, Docs. 104, 105, 106.

It would seem that even Ambassador Chilton, a pro-Francoist in favour of the Safe Zone and opposed to further Royal Navy involvement, was doubtful that the Safe Zone would actually materialise. Why was this the case? It is highly probable that the British already knew of the position of the Basque Government, which was adamantly opposed to the creation of a Safe Zone, although, officially, Franco's proposal had not yet been put to it. However, it seems unlikely that this would entirely determine British Government thinking, and more plausible to suggest that the British believed that the imminent victory of Franco in the north would eliminate the need for a Safe Zone, and also free the Navy from its escort duties.<sup>324</sup>

It could be the case, of course, that by this point in time the British Government was in a situation of paralysis, as the alternative of the Safe Zone was not desired by the most active forces in the "Aid to Spain" movement, who were crucial in influencing the views of the press and public opinion on the subject. Tom Buchanan, for example, believes that:

"The British evacuation was largely the result of a frenetic campaign by Leah Manning, an agent of the National Joint Committee in Bilbao, who successfully – surprisingly so given the diplomatic ramifications – petitioned the British Government to allow a small number of children to enter Britain. This decision, opposed by the Foreign Office, was probably influenced by the furore over the bombing of Guernica on 26 April, and by the example set by the recent French evacuations.

Leah Manning's success was a rare triumph for emotive political pressure over expert opinion. The British Government's permission was granted in the face of opposition not only from the Foreign Office, but from all of the agencies with a recognised expertise in the subject."<sup>325</sup>

Though there is little doubt that Leah Manning's energetic campaign was extremely influential, and successful, the above account does seem to give enormous weight to the power of the press and public opinion, which, in most situations, they simply did not have.<sup>326</sup> Public opinion and the press, it would seem, can sometimes tip the balance if

---

<sup>324</sup> Documents investigated at PRO archives indicate the absolute conviction of the British Government concerning the quick termination of the War in the north with a Franco victory.

<sup>325</sup> Buchanan (1997), p. 110.

<sup>326</sup> A case in point is the massive demonstration against the Iraq war in February 2003. Over a million people – the largest political demonstration in British history – marched to show their opposition to the war, but this did not change the Government's thinking and Britain and the U.S. invaded Iraq in March of that year.

the Government is undecided and/or discredited<sup>327</sup>, but it is rarely decisive in a Government's calculations, particularly on foreign policy.<sup>328</sup> It seems more likely that Britain believed that Franco would triumph in the north in the very near future, which would resolve the situation without too much inconvenience for the British, but, "politically", Britain had to appear to be continuing to explore Franco's proposal, which seems to be the thrust of Chilton's memo. Moreover, a "humanitarian" gesture by the British towards the Spanish Republic, such as the evacuation of children, could have the added attraction of restoring the Government's credibility after the debacle in the northern seas [the arrival unmolested of the British Vessel "Sea Spray" to the Bilbao Port, when the British Governments maintained the blockade of Basque Ports was effective]. In any case, the French had been extremely active in the evacuations from the Basque country since the end of 1936, and it would "not look good" for Britain if it was seen to be oblivious to the suffering of those under heavy bombardment.

It could also be the case that there were differences of opinion within different sectors of the Government concerning the feasibility of a Safe Zone. It would appear that Ambassador Chilton, closer to events unfolding in Spain and with direct contact with both Republican and Francoist representatives, was extremely "doubtful" that the Safe Zone would be implemented. The Foreign Office and the Admiralty, however, being further removed from the situation on the ground, and deeply worried about the Navy's involvement, seemed more positive about the possibility. On 11 May, in reply to Chilton's communication regarding the information given by the ICRC representative returning from Salamanca, Sir G. Mounsey, from the Foreign Office, asked the Ambassador to:

"Please ascertain from Military Governor of Irún whether Red Cross representative's impression is correct. If it is, you are authorised to get in touch at once with Basque Government and put General Franco's offer to them".<sup>329</sup>

On the same day, 11 May, records also include minutes of a conversation between Mr Seal, from the Admiralty, and Mr Pollock, from the Foreign Office, in which, as a result

---

<sup>327</sup> This can be seen in Ireland, after the Easter uprising of 1916. Though the uprising ended in total failure, the repression against its leaders by the British stirred Irish popular opinion, and led to the success of the Irish republican party, Sinn Fein, which won the elections of 1918.

<sup>328</sup> The Iraq war again springs to mind.

<sup>329</sup> PRO: FO 37121370: W9291/37/41: Proposed neutral zone for civil population of Bilbao. Docs. 227 - 229.

of Mr Seal's worries about future requirements of the Navy to escort ships with refugees, Mr Pollock explains:

"I also pointed out to Mr Seal that we were doing our best to prevent the necessity for further large scale evacuations to France or this country by following up General Franco's alternative proposals for a neutral zone and for reception of the Basque Children on nationalist territory".<sup>330</sup>

A further note from Mounsey to Lord Cranborne (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State) on 11 May gives a very precise summary of the process concerning the involvement of Britain, the use of the Royal Navy for the evacuations and the Safe Zone:

"If it is desired to pursue General Franco's practical suggestion and free our Navy from their increasingly embarrassing protecting duties, it might be possible, after consulting the French Government, to send a reply, saying that, noting the re-affirmation of General Franco's previous offer, Sir Henry Chilton is now instructed to seek his definitive approval of it being immediately submitted to the Basque Government either in its present form or with any more detailed additions, such as the place to be selected, the arrangements to be made for removal and supervision, which the Governor of Irún will authorise him to put forward. It might be added that H.M.G. are prepared for their part to discontinue, and to invite the Basque and French Government to discontinue the evacuation of any more of their people by sea as soon as it is clear that the Land Scheme is acceptable to all parties".<sup>331</sup>

Whatever the truth of the matter, it is clear that the British Government did not act swiftly or energetically regarding the Safe Zone proposal put to them by Franco on 1 May, which does lead one to think that the British were never really serious about its possibilities. In any case, a meeting took place in Bilbao, with Stevenson, British Consul in Bilbao, President Aguirre and Georges Graz, representative of the International Red Cross, during which the Safe Zone was rejected definitively. Stevenson outlined the reasoning behind the rejection as follows:

"Should the Basque Government be ready to establish a neutral zone between Bilbao

---

<sup>330</sup> PRO: FO 37121370; W93122/337/41; Evacuation of civil population from Bilbao. Docs. 238 - 240.

<sup>331</sup> Pro: FO 37121370: W9493/37/41: Evacuation of refugees from Bilbao: question of activities of His Majesty's Ships. Docs. 2903, 294, 295 (back page). The wording of this document is highly significant – why should the Navy be embarrassed to escort civilians to safety, if Britain were truly neutral in the conflict? Obviously, because it was helping Franco's enemies, a highly embarrassing situation for the pro-Franco Navy.



and Santander to spare the civil non-combatant population from the war? Such a proposition is unreal because there is no settlement big enough between the two cities to shelter the refugees, as it is impossible to improvise tents or barracks for 300,000 persons and there is a lack of water and goods. And a massive evacuation would provoke a defeatist wake and produce panic”.

President Aguirre accepted all of Stevenson’s arguments, and added:

“In consideration of the spirit of our Basque soul, it shall never be a question of migrating to Santander, where the spirit is different from our Christian and Basque mentality. The war conditions are also favourable to us and Vizcaya shall become the grave where all Franco’s forces die”.<sup>332</sup>

Aguirre then addressed Stevenson, declaring:

“You can tell your British Ambassador that we can in no case consider the creation of this neutral zone”.

Finally, addressing the ICRC representative Georges Graz, he added:

“You, Mr Graz, can tell the International Red Cross that the Basque Government cannot foresee the creation of this zone”.

Graz pointed out that he was not personally in charge of any official “*demarche*”<sup>333</sup>, omitting to mention the telegram on 5 May from the ICRC to the British and French Ambassadors proposing a Neutral Zone. Why did the ICRC representative change his mind on the subject? Was Graz swayed by Stevenson’s opinion, or had Graz never agreed with the Neutral Zone proposed by the organisation he represented, the International Red Cross?

It is impossible to know the answer to these questions, but it does seem probable that Graz realised that, with both the British Consul representative and the leader of the Basque Government united against the Safe Zone proposal, it would be impossible to implement it. It may also be that he believed, as did Stevenson, that the Safe Zone was not practically possible, as these Foreign Office sources reveal:

---

<sup>332</sup> This was very far from the truth, as only the perimeter around the “iron ring” was still resisting in Vizcaya by this time.

<sup>333</sup> Pourtales, Horace de (1937), report on the establishment of the Neutral Zone between Bilbao and Santander sent to the Committee on Spain with the information supplied by Graz, 20 May 1937, Doc. 2382, in ‘Correspondance générale et rapports 1936–1950’ (10/5/1937-3/6/1937), B CR 212 GEN 13, ICRC; henceforth Pourtales (1937).

“During that meeting [i.e., on 11 May]<sup>334</sup>, the Red Cross representative (Mr Graz), stated that “he thought the suggestion impracticable, *since* there were no villages between Bilbao and Santander capable of housing large numbers of people, or any water or sanitary arrangements. Also, in the event of an advance on Santander, refugees would be in an uncomfortable position.”<sup>335</sup> [emphasis in original]

These Foreign Office sources are totally at odds with those of the International Red Cross, which attribute these arguments to Consul Stevenson.<sup>336</sup> Again, we do not know what the truth of the matter is as the documentation on this issue is contradictory. It does seem plausible to believe, however, that both Stevenson and Graz believed that there were serious technical difficulties involved in establishing the Safe Zone, although neither was, technically, capable of assessing this adequately. With the technical capacity of the time and the agreement of both fighting sides, helped by the International Red Cross and the British and French Governments, I believe it would have been possible to create a decent temporary shelter for many thousands of people in a territory not directly implicated in the war at that time.<sup>337</sup> After all, we are talking here about protecting children, women and old people from bombardments and the misery of war, not about building a permanent housing complex or a big city. It must also be remembered that the distance from Bilbao to Santander is more than 100 kilometres and the area is about 5,000 square kilometres (the whole Basque country is about 7,000 square kilometres). Also, there were some important villages and towns, such as Castro-Urdiales<sup>338</sup> and Laredo, which could have been converted into a nucleus for the Safe Zone very easily, with temporary constructions built nearby.

Furthermore, if the evacuation had been sponsored by Britain, France and the ICRC, the panic and the potential feeling of defeat would have been much less than what

---

<sup>334</sup> ICRC sources placed the meeting on 14 May and the PRO documents on 11 May.

<sup>335</sup> PRO: FO37121370. [emphasis in original]

<sup>336</sup> Pourtales (1937).

<sup>337</sup> In 1854, during the Crimean War, after Florence Nightingale revealed the dreadful conditions of the Military Hospital of Scutari, the British Government commissioned the engineer Brunel to design a prefabricated hospital that was shipped to the Crimea and erected. This was completed in five months, and prefabricated wood and canvas buildings were set up in the malaria-free zone of Renkioi in the Crimea. Florence Nightingale referred to them as “magnificent huts”. Silver (2007). Also, during the First World War, Major Niss of the 29th Company of Royal Engineers, designed a portable multi-use circular hut, and 10,000 were built during the war. This hut was further developed after the war, when it became cheaper and easier to build. It is reasonable to believe that in 1937, many years later, with all the advances in construction techniques, these performances had been dramatically improved.

<sup>338</sup> Consul Stevenson, when presenting his ideas to Aguirre, explained: “The first village that could lodge about 10 to 12,000 people is Castro Urdiales, and this village is in Santander territory and not in Vizcaya.” Pourtales (1937).

eventually occurred – the desperate situation of the population of Bilbao leaving the city in the direction of Santander without order or control. A safety zone does not mean that war stops. Although the zone was planned to be under the control of the International Red Cross, if the Nationalist troops advanced in the direction of Santander, the zone would have fallen into Franco’s hands and would no longer be Basque or Republican Government territory. Whilst the zone was a better option for the population than being bombed, perhaps it was this eventuality – the future control of the zone by Nationalist forces – that caused uncertainty as to its future, and made it unpalatable to all those affected by the Guernica tragedy.<sup>339</sup>

Some words of President Aguirre closing the meeting are quite enlightening of the Basque reasoning: “Mr Consul.... In consideration to the Basque soul, we shall never migrate to Santander, where the spirit is so different to our Christian and Basque Nationalist mentality...<sup>340</sup>. Was Protestant Britain a better destination?

News of this definitive rejection of the Safe Zone, must have reached Franco fairly quickly, given that his mediator in this issue, Troncoso, was close to both British and Basque sources.<sup>341</sup> Ambassador Chilton, in a telegram of 20 May, stated:

“That 13 May 1937, Mr Malcolm [British Embassy in Hendaye] was told by Irún Military Governor that “suggestion [i.e. Safe Zone] was originally put up with a view of heading off His Majesty’s Government from evacuating women and children but, as they were now doing the latter, General Franco’s Government were no longer interested in creating a neutral zone”.<sup>342</sup>

The ostensible reason for Franco withdrawing the Safe Zone proposal – that the British Navy was escorting refugee ships – does not make sense, as the Navy had been escorting refugee ships since 1 May, after Franco’s offer, which did not seem to affect Franco’s proposal, which he had reiterated on 11 May, before the meeting with

---

<sup>339</sup> It was not just the memory of the terror used in Guernica, but that of other massacres by the Nationalists (often with the use of Moorish troops), such as that of Badajoz in August 1936, where some 4,000 prisoners were taken to the bullring and shot. As Mike Richards has shown, the use of mass repression and terror by the Nationalists had an important social component – to terrorise the working class into submission and to purge Spain of all its “anti-Spain” elements, thus laying the basis of the new state totally devoid of dissent. Richards (1998).

<sup>340</sup> Pourtales (1937).

<sup>341</sup> As we have seen, Troncoso had close connections with the pro-Franco wing of Basque nationalism, represented by Leizaola, promoter of the ICRC proposal of the Safe Zone, and with the British Ambassador, Chilton.

<sup>342</sup> PRO: FO 37121370; W 9707/37/41.

Stevenson, Graz and Aguirre. It seems fairly clear that Franco had already received news of the rejection of the Safe Zone proposal through Troncoso, while the feasibility of the Safe Zone was also being placed in doubt by the progress of the war itself. For the military attack on Santander was now being planned at Salamanca, and Nationalist thinking was that the conquest of Santander was not far away – in fact it took place on 26 August 1937 -, a little more than two months after Bilbao fell to Franco's troops on 19 June 1937. Once they controlled the territory, the Safe Zone would be more of a burden than an asset.

Nevertheless, once the idea of the Safe Zone was buried, on 15 May the Foreign Office sent a telegram to Stevenson which officially approved the evacuation to England of 2,000 children between the ages of six and twelve, 900 boys and 1,100 girls, together with 100 women and 15 priests.<sup>343</sup> The Basque Children's Committee was then set up, under the presidency of the Duchess of Atholl, but with representatives from the Salvation Army, the Catholic Church, with Cannon Graven representing the Catholic Archbishop Hingles, and Conservative, Liberal and Labour Party members, and members of the TUC (Trades Union Congress).

Members of the Committee travelled throughout Britain to establish branches of the Basque Children Committee (BCC), and raise funds.<sup>344</sup> Supported by all political parties, people from all walks of life contributed to the sponsoring of Basque children, who would be housed in rural communities – referred to as “colonies” – organised by various secular and religious bodies.<sup>345</sup> Through negotiation with both the Home Office and the Foreign Office, Leah Manning and the Duchess of Atholl succeeded in obtaining authorisation for the acceptance of 4,000 children, aged from 5 to 15, with a preference for girls.<sup>346</sup> Finally, on 21 May 1937, the steamer *Habana* left Bilbao,

---

<sup>343</sup> This approval had been given as a result of a meeting between the Home Office and the NJCSR, including representatives of the Salvation Army. PRO: FO 37121370. On the same day, 15 May, Azcarate, Spanish Republican Ambassador in London, approached Roberts from the Foreign Office about the neutral zone. He complained of the British approach to the Basque Government without going through him, and indicated that his Government was against the idea of a Safe Zone, which had already been rejected in Madrid, following Franco's proposal. PRO: FO 37121370.

<sup>344</sup> The Home Office calculated that it would cost 10 shillings per week to house and educate a child in Britain. As with the NJCSR, it would appear that it was the Left – Left Labour and Communist Party members – who were the most active force in the BCC, and took most of the decisions on the Committee.

<sup>345</sup> Such as the BCC, the Catholic Church, The Society of Friends (Quakers), the Salvation Army and other religious bodies.

<sup>346</sup> The Duchess of Atholl, from the BCC, had sent a telegram to Eden, stressing the Committee's concern at the fate of “girls of about 15, should Bilbao fall and foreign troops (essentially the Moors) be allowed to run rampant through the city”. PRO: FO 37121370.

escorted by *HMS Fearless*, with 4,111 Basque refugees aboard, the majority of whom, 3,881, were children.

Given these developments in the process of evacuation from 15 May, it is truly astounding that, on 18 May, Sir G. Mounsey should send a note proposing contacts with the Military Governor of Irún and the Basque and Spanish Republican Governments concerning the Safe Zone.<sup>347</sup> A telegram from Ambassador Chilton on 19 May, informed the Foreign Office that Franco had not been interested in the Safe Zone since 13 May. Mounsey, taking note of Chilton's telegram, replied on 20 May:

“It seems useless to pursue the matter with such unhelpful and uncompromising combatants”.<sup>348</sup>

How are we to understand this? It does seem extraordinary that the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the Foreign Office, in charge of Spanish Affairs at the time, should be unaware that Franco had withdrawn his offer of the Safe Zone on 13 May, and that his own department had authorised the evacuation of refugees from Northern Spain on the 15th. Was the authorisation of the evacuation not his responsibility, as the person in charge of Spanish Affairs? This could be, of course, a question of total incompetence and due to a lack of communication between different sections of the Foreign Office, but perhaps it reveals, yet again, the lack of seriousness with which the British treated Franco's and the ICRC's proposals of a Safe Zone.

## **5 Conclusions**

The case of the evacuation of refugees from the Basque country, and the role of the aid organisations in this, is ample proof of the enormous difficulties involved in carrying out humanitarian actions – and assessing them on their merit – within the context of a Civil War. As we have seen, the idea of evacuating civilians to Britain to escape the constant bombings endured in Bilbao was viewed as an eminently “humanitarian” act, and thus supported – especially after Guernica – by large sections of the British population, including a wide spectrum of the British political class. Evacuation, however, was also seen by the Autonomous Basque Government as a means of

---

<sup>347</sup> PRO: FO 37121370 W. 9634/37/41, Proposed creation of a Neutral Zone in Northern Spain. Docs. 327, 328.

<sup>348</sup> PRO: FO 37121370 W9634/37/41, Doc. 328.

propagating its aim of independence, and thus was integrally related to its future political aims. Evacuation, and the increasing involvement of the British Navy that it implied, was also part of the political strategy of the Left within the NJCSR, who were attempting to move British policy away from “non-intervention”, and was therefore a policy in support of the internationally beleaguered Republic.

Certainly not all those involved within the NJCSR were in favour of evacuation. The Save the Children Fund, which had much experience in this field, and the Society of Friends (Quakers) were adamantly opposed to evacuation, but they were overtaken by the much more “activist Left” within the Committee, the weight of public opinion after Guernica, and the lack of another alternative. An alternative, when it emerged in the form of the Safe Zone put forward by Franco on 1 May and by the ICRC days later, after the dramatic appeal by President Aguirre for mass evacuation, and when the process of evacuation was well underway, was discarded by President Aguirre without sound supporting arguments, backed by Consul Stevenson and with the mixed support and silence of ICRC delegate Graz.

If the posture of George Graz can be interpreted as the position of a practical soldier (Graz was a Captain in the Swiss Army) knowing that with the opposition of both, Stevenson and Aguirre, the Neutral Zone proposal had not any possibility to progress, Ralph Stevenson’s promotion of the evacuation, affirming difficulties which were not based on previous professional research into the technical feasibility of the zone, represents a more serious matter.

Stevenson, through his process of involvement in the war in the North, became close to the Basque cause touched by humanitarian sentiments towards the Basques that the Basques were, in front to the Goliath (the Franco forces, the “Spaniards”). For him, to see the children out of the conflict represented guarantee of safety without deepening into other considerations.

Furthermore, maybe after Guernica it would have been difficult for the Basque Government to be seen negotiating with Franco regarding a Safe Zone, such was the level of popular anger in Bilbao at the time. Nevertheless under the umbrella of Britain, France and the Red Cross, the safety and care the Zone should represent, was in my

opinion an attractive alternative to the bombs and hunger, for the women, children and the old that day after day massed in Bilbao

Perhaps as importantly, the British – the only power that could feasibly have carried out such an undertaking, accompanied by the French – did not react quickly or energetically enough to Franco’s proposal, undoubtedly because they believed a Francoist victory was imminent. Although the British, who were strongly pro-Franco – particularly the Admiralty – were unhappy with the escort role assigned to the Navy in the evacuation, it was probably seen as a short-term inconvenience, which saved them the expense, and trouble, of erecting and maintaining a Safe Zone. Additionally, when many refugees were being accepted in France, Mexico and the Soviet Union, it was imperative that the British were seen to be doing something, otherwise it would look as if they didn’t care.<sup>349</sup>

On the Nationalist side, Franco also had his political reasons for proposing a Safe Zone. Undoubtedly it was an attempt to somewhat “restore his image” after the horrors of Guernica, and also to end the constant skirmishes between the British Navy and the Nationalist fleet in the northern seas.

The Safe Zone proposed by Franco was also supported by the pro-Franco Basques, who succeeded in getting the International Red Cross to accept their proposal of a Neutral Zone, which was identical to Franco’s own. Increasingly, therefore, we begin to see a political pattern emerge: the Left (and the autonomous Basque Government) being in favour of evacuation, while the Right (including a sector of the Basques) supported the idea of a Safe Zone. This clear division undoubtedly produced a certain dynamic, with an increasing hardening of attitudes on both sides, which precluded a serious discussion about the plight of those it was supposed to serve: The Basque children.

Ultimately, it was the progress of the war itself that decided the issue. Bilbao fell to Franco’s troops on 19 June, and with the Nationalist’s conquest of Santander on 26 August the Safe Zone idea became obsolete, and the British Navy was relieved, at last, from its “embarrassing duties” of escort. The remainder of the north was rapidly taken throughout September and October, and Gijon and Avilés in Asturias were captured on 21 October 1937.

---

<sup>349</sup> See Marshall (1991).

The war in the north was now over, and the repatriation of children got underway. After the fall of Santander on 26 August, the Apostolic Delegation of the Vatican in Spain worked on the preparation of lists of Basque parents reclaiming their children, which only included claims considered genuine, and not enforced by any Francoist authority. Father Henry Gabana was sent to England as the Apostolic Representative to deal with repatriation. From late August 1937 to early September 1937, all requests for repatriation faced the opposition of the Basque Children's Committee, which refused to accept any request if not previously checked by an "ad hoc" delegation to be sent to Nationalist Spain to investigate. This idea of this delegation was never accepted by the Salamanca Government, as it was considered an insult. Thus, the repatriation process reached an impasse, with accusations of "political bias" being hurled at the NJCSR and the BCC by the Conservative MP Captain MacNamara and the Catholic Church.

The slow pace of repatriation after August 1937 was, inevitably, dogged by political differences and distrust. The difficulties for the Leftist members of the NJCSR in negotiating with the Nationalist Government and the Catholic Church while the Civil War still raged are fairly evident, as was the idea that these children would be returned to a fascist state.<sup>350</sup> Hence, those forces dealing with repatriation, as with the handling of the entire humanitarian crisis in Bilbao since April, lost sight of the needs of those affected – the Basque child refugees and their parents. Sadly, this was probably inevitable in the political context of the Spanish Civil War, a war engendered by extraordinary polarisation and distrust.

---

<sup>350</sup> At the meeting held on 4 October 1937 by the Basque Children Committee, Wilfred Roberts told Father Gabana that, "The position from a business standpoint was that Franco wanted the children and we have them. He should therefore accept our terms." MRO. TVC archive: BCC Minutes, 4 October. 1937. The letters of Sir Wilfred Roberts regarding the repatriation are deposited in the Modern Records Office at Warwick University (MSS-308/3/RO1-58- Repatriation and the Roman Catholic Church).



## **Annexes to Appendix 2**

---

Document A: Memorandum concerning British policy towards the Basque Country

Document B: Basque government appeal to the ICRC

**Document A: Memorandum concerning British policy towards  
the Basque Country**

TLL/PL

18th  
May,  
1937

MEMO: FROM J.I. de L. TO E.M.W.

These are confidential notes which I submit to the Wright organisation so that with their assistance a series of articles can be prepared which will help to guide public opinion along the right lines until responsible British political quarters decide to intervene in the Spanish Civil War.

First of all, I should like to address a series of letters to public people in British political circles who, because of their prestige and independence in party politics, could with all impartiality develop a completely new trend of thought in England.

My position of being more or less an official in the Spanish Embassy, however, makes it difficult for me to address letters to the above mentioned public people, since the representative of the Basque Government is supposed to voice the opinion of that Government.

The Valencia Government policy is that of being sole victor in the Civil War, and my opinion is that a victory for them would only mean an armistice unless the foreign Powers intervene. This would prove very beneficial to the Basque country.

For centuries the enemies of the Basque people have been not those of the extreme right or of the extreme left, but simply those who were not Basques.

That is to say that if the Valencia Government wins the war, the Basque country would be in the most favourable condition to retain her autonomy, but experience of Spanish governments has shown that even this happy result

6E.462.2

would not be good enough. We cannot trust the Central Government.

The only finish to the war which would benefit Spain would be that of disintegration and weakening of the Spanish State. This state of affairs would also prove the happiest for the Basque country. At the finish there would be neither victors nor vanquished, but only a weak and divided Spain, sufficiently weak to allow foreign Powers to intervene, and decree what should be the construction of the new State.

This possibility of intervention in the affairs of Spain, and the decided importance of constructing a new State, which perhaps would not even bear the name of Spain, but say that of the "United States of Iberia", should be stressed as much as possible in future propaganda as a necessary means of guaranteeing the peace of Europe.

The different nationalities concerned in Spain would be those of Castilla, Andalusia, Valencia, Catalonia, Aragon, Galicia and Euskadi (the Basque country).

It is desirable that British opinion should be convinced that the guarantee of peace in the Peninsular lies in the establishment of a peninsular state in which the Basque country would preserve an absolute independence, and which because she is a nation different from the rest, and because of her strategical and geographical position would prove for Europe another Belgium.

What about the possibility of intervention by the Great Powers; England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia?

Up to date the policy of these States has been as follows.

Italy thought that there was sufficient feeling against the legitimate Government, that a coup d'etat, such as Mussolini's march on Rome, would enable Franco's Fascist party to seize the reins of power in a few days. Confined of this, Italy assisted Franco; though I am certain that assistance was rendered after events adverse to Franco's cause had become manifest; Italy did not think assistance was necessary at the beginning of the campaign.

German policy has been much the same as the Italian, but they have been intelligent enough to avoid involving themselves so deeply.

French and English policy has been the only reasonable one. In order to gain time to arm in case there should be another European conflagration, and in order to gain the sympathy of the world, they have adopted a "non-intervention" policy.

What is the actual state of the war in Spain? - My personal impression is that Franco is making a last desperate bid on the Bilbao front, so that he can obtain the confidence of Italy and Germany in his ability to win the war. I am convinced that Franco's last effort has been a failure, because, although the advance on Bilbao has, to a certain extent, been successful, without doubt his project and his promise to both Italy and Germany was that he would take Bilbao on the 2nd May, and today, the 15th, he stands no chance of taking the city, since, in the offensive, he has lost more than 10,000 men and spent millions. Furthermore the taking of Bilbao is far from being a reality. His own people themselves confess that the resistance of the Basques is becoming increasingly stronger, and that it will be very difficult to culminate the offensive with the capture of Bilbao.

Again, the capture of Madrid also becomes more impossible, and the advance made by Government troops on the Toledo and Talavera flank will ease the Basque front, and endanger the position of the rebels who are near Madrid. A break in that sector would place the armies of Franco near Madrid in the greatest danger, and they would have to abandon that front.

The reorganisation of the Catalan army, and the sense of discipline and order that is being imposed in Catalonia provides another reason for thinking that Franco's position is daily becoming worse.

#### POSSIBLE CHANGE OF ITALIAN AND GERMAN TACTICS

I am convinced that these two countries will completely

GE-462-2

change their tactics of open intervention in favour of France as his prospects of winning continue to recede, and I am certain that Germany and Italy are sufficiently intelligent to reverse their policy completely when they consider that a convenient moment presents itself.

If such is the case I am certain that both Germany and Italy would be the first to suggest collaboration with France and England so that the triumph of the Valencia Government should not be too decisive. I am sure that as the possibilities of France winning decrease, so will the probabilities increase of Germany and Italy acceding to a policy of intervention in the war, and the search for a formula conciliatory to both sides in the conflict.

This being the case we arrive at that most important point - the solving of the Basque problem which being attained must be the subject of international guarantee.

#### THE ORIENTATION OF BRITISH OPINION

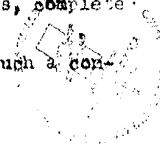
Assuming that intervention is possible and after conducting an able campaign to convince British opinion that intervention is the best means of ending the war, we should support the idea propounded by Churchill in the debate in the House of Commons when he enumerated the three types of intervention. (

But in this selection it is necessary to bear in mind and support the rights of Euzkadi.

Should the moment arrive when the foreign Powers intervene, it will be because the weakness of Spain will be manifest, a strong and proud State would not allow interference with its internal affairs.

When the moment does arrive it is important that at the peace conference the Basque country should be equally if not better represented than the governments of Valencia or Franco, and that the peace treaty should confer on the Basques, with the full recognition of the Powers, complete sovereignty within a federal State of Spain.

To help obtain full rights for Euzkadi in such a con-



ference one can make use of Lloyd George's speech in Parliament when he stated that he wished to see the Basque country properly represented when a Spanish peace conference took place (

If during all the past months of war one wished to find a government which had displayed equanimity, good rule and humane behaviour, one has only to point to the Basque, the only government that has comportated itself properly. If only for that reason the Basques should be given full rights and their system of democratic government taken as an example for the rest of Spain.

If Mr. Eden on the said that the Basque Government most resembled the English, and that the Basque Government appealed to British sympathy more than did those of Barcelona or Burgos, that saying should be used as the corner stone of future policy and greater rights should be granted to the Basque Government than to those of Valencia, Barcelona or Burgos.

In other words it is necessary to build up a propitious atmosphere in England so that when intervention comes the Powers that help to construct a new Spain will guarantee for ever the independence of Baskadi as a bulwark of peace for Europe.

After all the Basque country is the oldest in Europe, and as such should be safeguarded internationally from the extremists of either side of whom either is capable of utterly destroying her, and her civilization.




6E-462-2


## ii. Basque government appeal to the ICRC

[English translation below]

C. R.

  
Euzkadi'ko Jaurlaritzza  
Leindakuntza  
Gobierno de Euzkadi  
Presidencia

Copie conforme  
ARCHIVES DU CICR

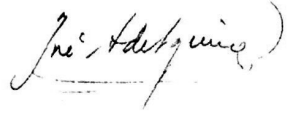


Los más espantosos e inhumanos bombardeos de los que hay memoria en la historia del mundo están exterminando nuestras ciudades y nuestra raza. Siboto se halla amenazado por un asedio inmediato, en el que los medios de destrucción más perfectos de todo el mundo continuarán ensayándose.

Se han acogido a nuestra hospitalidad más de trescientos mil mujeres y niños, que no pueden ser víctimas de tan monstruosa tragedia si en el mundo civilizado existe algún sentimiento de piedad o alguna institución capaz de conarse ante crímenes de esta naturaleza.

El Gobierno vasco, que afronta esta situación - que no ha provocado - con la serenidad de quien resuelve una causa justa, y actúa con el respeto a los más elementales sentimientos humanos, de la que tiene presente la Cruz Roja Internacional, delegada aquí, como presidente de dicho organismo en Euzkadi, formula comunicación a Hinebra para que se nos diga si pueden evitarse a los trescientos mil mujeres y niños, que están siendo víctimas del crimen del lado, los sufrimientos y horrores que amargan sus vidas, y qué medios de evacuación y de subsistencia pueden ofrecernos, además de los que aporta el Gobierno vasco, con la urgencia que las circunstancias reclaman.

Siboto, veinticuero de abril de mil novecientos treinta y siete.



1311  
19 MAI 1937

Sr. Presidente de la Cruz Roja Internacional

1 1 1 9

Government of the Basque Country

Presidential Department

[Stamp of International Committee of the Red Cross Geneva: Attested copy ICRC)

The most frightening and inhuman bombardments ever remembered in the history of the world are exterminating our cities and our race. Bilbao is threatened by an immediate blockade, in which the most perfect means of destruction in the whole world will continue being tested.

More than three hundred thousand women and children have taken refuge with our hospitality, and they cannot be victims of such a monstrous tragedy if in the civilised world there is any feeling of pity or any institution capable of being moved by crimes of this nature.

The Basque Government which is facing this situation – which it has not provoked – with the serenity of one who defends a just cause, and is acting with a respect for the most elemental human feelings, of which the International Red Cross already has proof, asks you, as President of that body in the Basque Country, to send a communication to Geneva so that they can tell us if the three hundred thousand women and children, who are victims of the crime referred to, can be prevented from suffering the horrors which threaten their lives, and what means of evacuation and subsistence can be offered to us, in addition to those provided by the Basque Government, with the urgency that the circumstances demand.

Bilbao, the twenty-ninth of April. One thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven,

[signature]

To the President of the INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

Bilbao