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## **British Government Maritime Evacuations in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939**

‘it is never easy to get concession on humanitarian grounds from Salamanca [home to part of General Franco’s administration].’<sup>1</sup>

British Foreign Office Minute, 28 September 1937

‘it is probable that the occasions on which H.M. Representatives and Consular Officers in Spain have been of assistance to Spanish nationals are more numerous in the case of the insurgent sympathizers than in that of supporters of the other side’.<sup>2</sup>

British Foreign Office Memorandum November 1937

### **Introduction**

The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939 stands out as the most significant conflict between the two world wars. It began in July 1936 with an only partly successful military rebellion against the elected and reformist government of the Second Republic. Foreign observers feared the civil war set in train by the botched coup could provide the spark that would set the world ablaze in another global conflagration.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the beleaguered democracies of Britain and France clung to their policy of military non-intervention in a desperate effort to prevent the conflict from spilling over into other parts of the continent. In August 1936, twenty-eight countries signed the Non-Intervention Agreement and signatories included Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> These three states, however, flagrantly breached the Agreement and sent arms, advisors, troops and munitions in considerable quantities.<sup>5</sup> Both the Agreement and its breaches favoured the rebels grouped around General Franco: firstly, because the Agreement prevented the Republic from purchasing weapons on the international arms market and, secondly, because Franco’s allies sent far more supplies, combatants and advisors than the Soviets.<sup>6</sup>

At the time, British policy raised the hackles of critics who charged that the Non-Intervention Committee condemned the anti-fascist Republican government to an ignominious death.<sup>7</sup>

Since the conflict, accusations of malevolent neutrality or perfidious Albion have haunted much of the historiography of British diplomacy during the conflict. Historians belonging to

this school argue that staff in the Foreign Office discriminated against the Republic because they hailed from privileged backgrounds, worried deeply about the threat of communism and preferred victory by General Franco to the survival of the reformist Republican government which they viewed as opening the door to revolution.<sup>8</sup> Historian Tom Buchanan has shifted attention away from the ideological prejudices coursing through Whitehall and instead has looked at the emotive and humanitarian response of British front-line diplomats to the horrors of war. Buchanan argues British diplomatic officials as a rule were guided in their humanitarian work by a sense of ‘honour, even-handedness, and sympathy for all the victims of the civil war’. He also emphasises the autonomy of consuls from policy makers in London.<sup>9</sup> His approach brought a new focus, but to advance the historiography further we need to re-think the actions of British diplomats in Spain in a number of ways.

Ironically, Buchanan concentrated his study of diplomatic fair play on the help extended to supporters of General Franco in the government zone. As a result, he devoted significantly less attention to the rescue of government supporters in danger of falling into rebel hands.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, while he discussed the danger that Franco supporters faced from revolutionary murderers behind government lines, he did not examine the killings carried out by Francoist death and firing squads. In fact, government supporters suffered far more than Francoists and a large body of literature, which Buchanan did not draw upon, has emerged since the 1980s and demonstrates that the Franco regime killed at least 130,000 presumed opponents while in government-held territory around 50,000 people were murdered.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, while Buchanan accorded some importance to UK-sponsored maritime evacuations of those in danger from violence behind the lines, in reality he only studied them in passing. In addition, Buchanan similarly neglected Spanish documentary sources that reveal much about the actions of British consular officials on the front-line.

Accordingly, to advance our understanding we have to place evacuation work in the context of Francoist violence by drawing on British and Spanish sources. We particularly need to improve our knowledge of British government maritime evacuations. Given the impressive size of the Royal Navy and Spain's extensive coastline and the large numbers involved, the British government enjoyed ample opportunities to rescue those in peril. At present, however, while a significant body of literature exists on British voluntary humanitarian work on behalf of government supporters, we know far less about British-government-backed evacuations by sea.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the current humanitarian literature concentrates on the evacuation of children at risk from bombing and neglects attempts to save adults in danger from the violence behind the lines. It is true that we can count on the valuable work of scholar James Cable who studied UK involvement, and particularly the role of the consul Ralph Stevenson, in the evacuation of Basque refugees from Republican-held territory in the spring of 1937.<sup>13</sup> Cable's work, however, does not discuss the British-backed evacuations that took place in 1936; those which occurred in the summer of 1937; or the rescue efforts made at end of the war in March 1939.

By studying these neglected evacuations, we can gain new knowledge, bring a fresh focus to the literature and reveal the complexities underlying generalisations about the fair play of front-line diplomats. In terms of complexity, study of these evacuations reveals that British naval protection outside Spanish territorial waters allowed tens of thousands of government supporters to escape. In reality, however, many of the evacuations relied on private rather than government initiatives. We should also remember that the Royal Navy only went into action once the refugees had run the gauntlet of Francoist warships patrolling inside territorial waters. Moreover, while Buchanan's study of UK consular officials such as T.W. Bates and Allan Hillgarth allowed him to celebrate their important role in rescuing Francoists, analysis

of their actions in evacuations of government supporters in the summer of 1937 and in March 1939 shows that by insisting on the equal evacuation of government and Franco supporters they hindered the evacuation of those most in danger.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, at crucial moments the absence of a consul on the ground hampered the selection of refugees for evacuation; in other cases, as the Spanish sources help show, through the simple refusal to help they prevented the rescue of many in danger from the Francoist repression.

This is not to argue counterfactually that the Royal Navy should have run the Francoist blockade within territorial waters, although many humanitarian activists proposed this at the time; nor is it to argue that British diplomats in London and on the ground did not face tough policy choices which restricted their willingness to carry out humanitarian work they might otherwise have undertaken. Instead, it is to bring a recognition missing in the literature that British maritime evacuation policy frequently lacked a sense of fair play. Indeed, prejudice as well as calculation helped shape the thoughts and actions of both policy makers in London and front-line British diplomats. Importantly, these diplomats frequently did not act as autonomously as argued Buchanan and as a result many government supporters went before firing squads or served time in Francoist concentration camps, prisons and forced labour battalions.

More importantly in terms of scholarship, however, the Anglo-phone historiography has concentrated too much on the issue of British bias at the expense of analysing crucial Spanish attitudes. In Spain, by contrast, diplomat Javier Rubio has argued that the Francoists proved more concerned with humanitarian concerns than the Republicans.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the evidence offered in this article demonstrates that British officials regarded Franco as the eventual victor in the conflict and believed the British would need to call upon his good will in future years. This meant that they frequently refused to challenge Francoist opposition to

the evacuation of government supporters. By contrast, the Republican government regularly collaborated with British officials and this explains why the UK proved much more successful in evacuating Franco supporters. The article begins by studying contrasting British, Republican and Francoist attitudes towards humanitarianism and evacuation. It continues by examining differing British efforts to evacuate Francoists and Republicans.

### **British attitudes towards humanitarianism and evacuation**

Many historians have pointed to the ideological bias harboured by British officials against the Spanish Second Republic and its supporters: prejudice that would impinge upon UK evacuation work. Historian Douglas Little, for instance, argues that British suspicion of the reforming Republic began with its founding in 1931.<sup>16</sup> For his part the scholar Enrique Moradiellos shows that British antipathy continued at the outset of the Civil War when the rebels also looked set for a quick victory. Moradiellos further demonstrates that through the conflict the British remained unwilling to help the Republican government and did so despite the Republic proving its resilience on the battlefield and the patent intervention of the Germans and Italians.<sup>17</sup> Strategic considerations also explain the UK's favour for the Francoist side. Crucially for British officials, a swift end to the conflict through a rapid Francoist victory would nip in the bud the chances of Germany and Italy drawing closer together through joint intervention in Spain. In turn, this would favour the British tactic of driving a wedge between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.<sup>18</sup> Dividing the dictators in this way would further assist in shoring up the overstretched British position in Europe.<sup>19</sup> **For the historian Ángel Viñas this approach tied in with the hostility shown to the Soviet Union by British prime minister Stanley Baldwin and his successor from May 1937 Neville Chamberlain. Together their deep reluctance to work with the Soviets scuppered efforts**

**to join an alliance of the UK, France and the Soviet Union against the Fascist powers that might have taken a much firmer line against Franco in Spain.<sup>20</sup>**

The sheer number of British officials in Spain, however, as well as the complexity of their responses to the Civil War, hinder efforts to draw generalisations about the role of front-line UK diplomats.<sup>21</sup> Historian Jill Edwards, for instance, notes that twenty-three British consuls were at work in Spain in June 1937.<sup>22</sup> Importantly, a number of of these front-line diplomats turned against the Franco regime's brutality. When Franco's forces captured Badajoz in August 1937, for instance, The Times reported the killing of thousands of prisoners.<sup>23</sup> Thousands more later faced prosecution in emergency summary military tribunals whose officials showed next to no concern for procedural justice.<sup>24</sup> Such violence shocked some British diplomatic staff and the consul in Gijón, for instance, reported with abhorrence after its occupation in autumn 1937 that seventy percent of Francoist emergency summary military tribunal sentences in that city imposed the death penalty.<sup>25</sup> The British *chargé d' affaires* to the government side, John Leche, also grew sickened by the Francoist executions of political opponents and turned from a pro-Franco supporter into an opponent.<sup>26</sup>

Other consuls, however, proved extremely pro-Francoist and particularly after the military coup decimated Republican policing services and led to the arming of many workers. In these circumstances, left-wing gunmen began to settle accounts accrued over many years of struggle with employers. For their part, revolutionaries keen to destroy the power of the Church murdered priests (close to 7,000 religious were murdered) some of whom suffered castration and other forms of ritual mutilation.<sup>27</sup> Iconoclasts also consigned sacred images to the flames.<sup>28</sup> In a range of cases, committees set up by left-wing political organizations to control local areas in the wake of the collapse of the state turned a blind eye while revolutionaries slaughtered people suspected of supporting the revolt.<sup>29</sup> In a number of

instances, members of the local committees were themselves responsible for murders.<sup>30</sup> By the end of 1936, however, most of the killings had come to an end and the government authorities had re-established order.<sup>31</sup> The slaughter influenced some UK consuls such as Norman King in Barcelona. In his reports to London he regularly berated the Republican government and blamed it directly for wide-scale murders committed by anarcho-syndicalists working, he claimed, hand in glove with the government.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile, in London, a group of British officials disconcerted by the violence in Republican territory, but less preoccupied by Francoist killings, drew the conclusion that only those in the government zone required evacuation. One British mandarin, who had absorbed the Francoists' denial of their own violence behind the lines, commented on government supporters waiting for evacuation in August 1937 and noted that 'at least no one is going to murder them'.<sup>33</sup> Attitudes like this could also make British officials reluctant to spend money on evacuating Republicans for whom they harboured little sympathy. George Mounsey, the assistant under secretary of state at the Foreign Office, observed in February 1939, for instance, that British humanitarian activists, rather than the UK government, should charter a ship and ferry the refugees off to Russia where they would enjoy a 'hearty welcome'.<sup>34</sup>

The contrast with the treatment of Franco supporters could prove stark. The documentary record shows that a number of important British officials in the field judged that Francoists in government territory deserved the help of the British government. In Málaga, the Mexican consul recounted that his UK counterpart in the city, Mr. J.G. Clissold, confided in him his horror at the killings being carried out in the city by the 'reds' and secretly worked with the Mexican to smuggle rightists through cordons of workers at the port and out of Spain on British ships.<sup>35</sup> Clissold, however, did little to help government supporters after the Francoists occupied the province in February 1937 and the Francoist went on to kill 7,471



Republican supporters.<sup>36</sup> Clissold, seemed unperturbed by the slaying of government supporters on this scale. In a note to London on 24 March 1937, for instance, he noted that ‘The Courts-martial are being conducted very efficiently and all persons receive a fair trial before being sentenced to death or imprisonment for a period of years.’<sup>37</sup> The remark would have astonished Franco’s Italian allies who were so horrified by the repression meted out in Franco’s emergency summary military courts that they insisted on changing some of the judges and reducing the number of death sentences.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Republican government attitude towards humanitarianism and evacuation**

The willingness of the Republican government to collaborate in humanitarian work provides a crucial factor in explaining British success in helping Francoists. In Madrid, for instance, the British embassy maintained at least five houses in the Spanish capital where supporters of the rebels and Francoists were given refuge with the acquiescence of the government authorities.<sup>39</sup> Particularly audaciously, Captain E. Lance, working out of the British embassy in Madrid in the early part of the war, spirited rightists from the city to the ports of Valencia and Alicante. Revealingly, Lance persuaded the Republican authorities to supply him with trucks and drivers to ferry his refugees to Valencia and Alicante. He also drew on his personal relationship with the Republican foreign minister, Julio Álvarez del Vayo, to call on a police detachment to escort those under his protection through a cordon of workers’ militia guarding the port.<sup>40</sup> Some of the refugees made it through the cordons by dressing in British uniforms and all of them escaped in UK ships.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, from June 1937 the Spanish government allowed the evacuation of all women, children and males under the age of seventeen or over the age of forty-six from Madrid.

Responding to the opportunity, the British consulate in Madrid set up an evacuation office where people afraid to register with the government authorities could offer their details to the

British. UK consular staff proceeded to process their applications with the help of Republican officials. The government Direction-General of Security would later authorise the applications.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, through the summer and autumn of 1937, the Acting U.K. Consul in Madrid, Mr. Milanes, successfully worked with the Spanish Republican government to transport to Valencia 3,500 Francoist refugees holed up in foreign missions in the capital. This included all 120 members of the Madrid Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. From the eastern port, they were evacuated on the British chartered ships.<sup>43</sup>

British officials did have reason, however, to be wary of the government side. The Republican authorities, for instance, arrested Captain Lance, sentenced him to death and only released him in early 1939.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, in August 1937 the Republicans had tried to cajole the unbending Francoist side to allow the evacuation of government supporters stranded in Santander by cutting off electricity and other supplies to the embassies where insurgent refugees had found sanctuary.<sup>45</sup> Unsavoury precedents also haunted the minds of British officials. The Turkish legation, for example, suffered an assault and rightists seeking refuge there found themselves consigned to Republican prisons.<sup>46</sup>

The British also knew that two particular moments could lead to the slaughter of Francoist prisoners: bombing raids and the imminent collapse of the Republican front. In Málaga on 22 August 1936, for instance, rebel planes bombed the city's oil storage facilities. In revenge, a large crowd that included some police officers stormed the local prison and dragged off forty-five right-wing prisoners to their deaths.<sup>47</sup> That said, the massacre of prisoners declined from the start of 1937 and the well informed British officials on the ground realised that the danger was not as great as it had been in the first months of the conflict. A telling example comes from Bilbao. On 4 January 1937, a mob including trade union and militia elements murdered over 200 prisoners in jails in the city after a bombing raid.<sup>48</sup> Although the Basque authorities

proved tardy in responding, they had by late evening brought the situation under control and later prepared prosecutions against sixty-one people.<sup>49</sup> As Sir Henry Chilton, the British ambassador working just over the border in Hendaye and often viewed as deeply anti-Republican, pointed out the Basque government was ferrying large numbers of troops from the front line to maintain order. He further carefully noted the role of the insurgent bombing in sparking the violence.<sup>50</sup> Despite the repetition of the bombing raids, however, the measures taken by the Basque authorities meant the prison massacres did not occur again.<sup>51</sup>

The British also feared that Republican defeat could lead to slaughter. Nevertheless, the Republicans often worked hard to avoid this danger, if not always with total success. The Basque government, for instance, had thrown its weight behind the Republic, and on its surrender of Bilbao in June 1937 carefully escorted 1,000 prisoners to Francoist lines to avoid the danger of last-minute atrocities. That said, it retained seventeen prisoners as hostages and bargaining chips against Francoist 'reprisals'.<sup>52</sup> By the same token, at the end of the Civil War in Catalonia, the Republican authorities evacuated all their prisoners across the border to France where they set them free. Despite such efforts, events could sometimes lead to the worst British fears coming to fruition. In the chaos of the retreat from Catalonia, for instance, forty-two prisoners, fell into the hands of rogue elements who murdered them.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Francoist attitude towards humanitarianism and evacuation**

While the government side often worked to save lives, Francoist officials frequently adopted a much more brutal attitude: even towards the fate of their comrades caught on the other side of the lines. In the Bilbao case, for instance, the British ambassador Henry Chilton had become distressed by the bombing raids on the city and the subsequent prison massacres. He wasted little time in telegramming Franco and warning him off another bombing raid.

Crucially, he voiced his frustration the general's consistent refusal to take into account the

role of bombing raids in provoking violence and implored Franco to show some concern for the fate of his 'adherents'.<sup>54</sup>

The evidence shows that Franco's callousness consistently characterised his dealings with exasperated UK officials. The British consul in Bilbao, Mr. Stevenson, carrying out prisoner exchange talks in early 1937, for instance, had learned of the cynicism guiding Francoist negotiators. A Francoist officer had let slip to him that within his administration there was no real interest in the fate of Francoist prisoners held in Bilbao because 'they were of no political significance to the military party and not worth the implied recognition of the Basque government if they were to meet the latter's conditions as regards exchange of lists'.<sup>55</sup> The British regularly stumbled against such hard-nosed attitudes when they appealed to Franco for clemency for government supporters about to face the firing squad. The insurgent leader simply ignored the UK representations and by November 1938, officials in London had sunk into despair. One Whitehall mandarin noted wearily that 'there is nothing more H.M.G. can do; we have already delivered so many protests and made so many appeals'.<sup>56</sup>

The British concluded that Franco harboured no interest in humanitarian work. As a British official in London noted in July 1937, for instance, 'General Franco apparently is not prepared to charter ships to carry white [Francoist] refugees from Valencia and they have, therefore, to be paid for either by themselves or by such contributions as can be obtained on grounds of humanity from private individuals or from the Treasury'.<sup>57</sup> Staff in London grew increasingly jaded and in the autumn of 1937 a British official despaired that 'it is inconceivable that General Franco will authorise a large scale evacuation of women and children from Gijon'.<sup>58</sup> In a similar vein Lord Plymouth, the parliamentary under-secretary to the Foreign Office, explained in October 1937 that the British government had learned from experience there was no point in appealing to Franco to help evacuate civilians.<sup>59</sup> Eden

echoed these statements later in the month stating that appealing to Franco was ‘merely to court refusal’.<sup>60</sup>

In this context, the British realized that the best hope for saving lives lay in encouraging the much-more-committed Republicans to endeavour to trade prisoners with the Francoists. A problem here, however, was that the Francoists seemed unmoved by the threat to their own supporters languishing in Republican prisons. A good example comes in the insurgent bombing of Gijón just before the town’s fall in the autumn of 1937. British officials warned that carrying out the raids ran the risk of provoking reprisal killings of right-wing prisoners in the town. Once again, the Francoist showed complete disregard for their imprisoned supporters trotting out the misleading propaganda line that their political prisoners had already been murdered. Chilton was forced to conclude that ‘so far as Salamanca is concerned [its] prisoners must be left to their fate’.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, at the end of the Civil War the Francoists would not make concessions to win guarantees for their prisoners in Madrid who the British feared, incorrectly as it turned out once again, might be murdered in the chaos of surrender.<sup>62</sup>

### **British evacuations of Francoists**

The British, with the cooperation of the Republican government, helped rescue Francoists the insurgent administration would have abandoned to their fate. Efforts to rescue right-wing refugees hiding out in diplomatic missions in Madrid provide a strong case in point. At the start of the war, these missions gave shelter to 8,000 people who feared for their lives at the hands of left-wing militia forces and revolutionary groups.<sup>63</sup> We have already seen that the Spanish government extended considerable aid to these refugees. British diplomats, however, complained that the Francoists would not contribute to the costs of evacuating their supporters. As Foreign Office staff noted, this forced Francoist refugees into the arms of

‘private individuals’ or ‘the Treasury’.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the British became so despondent about their efforts to secure finance from Franco for rescue missions that they refrained from asking him for funds even while pleading for contributions from other states.<sup>65</sup>

The willingness of the British to pay for large-scale evacuations of Francoists that the insurgents would not finance is readily apparent. As early as November 1936, for instance, the British government had helped evacuate 11,095 right-wing refugees in 220 voyages covering 75,724 miles and at a cost of £40,000. It had not helped evacuate any refugees from the government side except through a relatively small scheme through Dr. Junod of the International Red Cross.<sup>66</sup>

Similarly, in August and September 1937, while, as we will see, Republican refugees lay stranded in Santander, the Treasury authorised spending £15,000 on chartering a ship to transport refugees from the Madrid missions to France. In the event, the British made available both the British hospital ship HMS Maine for this work and chartered the SS Gibel Zerjon from the Bland Line for nine weeks.<sup>67</sup> The cost soon soared and by 29 November the British had expended £25,000.<sup>68</sup>

The spending, however, brought good results for refugees identified with the Franco cause and between June and October 1937, the British estimated that they had ferried out of Spain, from the Missions in Madrid and beyond, 7,500 people of whom ‘the immense majority were of Right Wing sympathies’. Over 2,000 of these refugees made it out of the country in the specially chartered SS Gibel Zerjon.<sup>69</sup> As a Foreign Office report dated 1 November 1937 concluded ‘it is probable that the occasions on which H.M. Representatives and Consular Officers in Spain have been of assistance to Spanish nationals are more numerous in the case of insurgent sympathisers than in that of supporters of the other side’.<sup>70</sup>

Part of the explanation for this unequal treatment lies with the belief of officials in London that the lives of the Francoists lay under threat. In some ways, this is perfectly understandable because of the killings that had taken place of prisoners in cities such as Málaga and Bilbao. In 1937, the argument that lives lay in danger also gave officials in London some leverage with a reluctant Treasury. They made this argument, however, despite receiving assurances from consular official John Leche on the ground that these refugees faced little real danger and having received Chilton's earlier communication about the measures taken in Bilbao to protect prisoners.<sup>71</sup>

The fear of Republican killings, however, was perhaps also too diplomatically useful to be tempered by the careful reports coming from Spain. By the summer of 1937 it had become particularly important for the British to assuage deep Francoist anger caused by British co-operation in the evacuation of supporters of the Republic. The difficulties began in the spring of 1937 when the British were forced to confront General Franco after a scandal broke in the UK that the British merchant navy was being intimidated from entering Republican port by the small Francoist navy. A public outcry had also arisen in the UK after Franco's side had bombed Basque Catholic civilians in Guernica in late April. In response, the British government ordered the Royal Navy to escort ships carrying thousands of Basque refugees across international waters. The furious Francoists berated the British and contended that this 'must be a precedent never before recorded in the history of a naval blockade' and so represented an 'attack on the prestige of its [the Francoist] Navy and upon the sovereignty of Spain'.<sup>72</sup> They also complained that the British denied them the belligerent rights which would have allowed them to stop, search and confiscate ships. Most of all, however, Francoists were furious that British 'intervention' had prejudiced the Francoist war effort.<sup>73</sup> In protest, the Francoists were refusing to grant British consuls full recognition. Seeking to

pour oil on these troubled waters, the British toiled hard to persuade the Francoists that their humanitarian intervention in the Civil War had greatly benefited the insurgents.

It was precisely for this reason that, in a note to Franco in July 1937, Chilton boasted to Franco that the British had already evacuated from Republican-held Valencia around 20,000 political refugees and reminded the general of British work in favour of those trapped in the missions in Madrid.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the autumn of 1937, the Foreign Office laboured on a long memorandum detailing the help it had extended to Francoists. As the document highlighted ‘H.M.G have frequently been taxed with unduly favouring one side in the Spanish war and even of indulging in a form of veiled intervention under cover of humanitarian activities’.<sup>75</sup> In 1939, Foreign Office staff remained wary of the damage they had done to their relations with Franco. MP Mr. Wedgwood, for instance, tabled a question in the House of Commons on 8 March 1939 enquiring whether given all the assistance extended to rescue Francoists in the Civil War would the UK government now provide similar support to Republican forces on the brink of defeat. Writing in response at a time when Franco was about to secure total victory, Foreign Office staff noted that they did not wish to prejudice relations with Franco and the example of the Basque evacuations showed that rescue efforts would be resented.<sup>76</sup>

### **British evacuations of Republicans**

As the Civil War unfolded, Franco’s forces gradually occupied more and more government territory. This, however, did not always mean that the British evacuated greater numbers of Republicans. One reason for this was that British officials would simply not fund the evacuation of refugees from the Republican side. The UK government defended its refusal to help pay for the evacuation of government supporters on the argument that the Spanish government had declined a UK offer to help bring about the ‘international organization of relief on an impartial basis’.<sup>77</sup> This overlooked the fact that the Spanish government feared



that the 'impartial' League of Nations committee in question featured considerable Italian representation (before Italy left the League in December 1937). The British position also passed over the fact that complete lack of collaboration from the Franco side even for its own supporters did not stall UK help in evacuating insurgent supporters.<sup>78</sup>

This inflexible British attitude left supporters of the Spanish government to rely on their own resources. The Republican-supporting Basques, for instance, chartered eight vessels at their own expense to evacuate supporters.<sup>79</sup> That said, they deliberately chartered British merchant ships in the hope that if the Francoist navy tried to interfere with the vessels, the Royal Navy would sail to the rescue.<sup>80</sup> As we have seen, despite some initial reluctance, the UK government eventually offered Royal Navy protection on the high seas to these craft. This left a number of brave captains and crew, working for handsomely rewarded shipping owners, to hazard the three-mile-water zone where they could be fired upon and captured by waiting Francoist vessels.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, in the twilight of the war, the Republican government had to work with the shipping business France Navigation, a French Communist Party company contracted by the Republican prime minister, Juan Negrín, to arrange evacuations and, as we shall see, at this point the British did not provide the crucial protection needed to allow the ships out to sea.<sup>82</sup>

Even the historic evacuations forced on the reluctant British in the spring of 1937, which helped thousands of government supporters to escape, suffered a number of drawbacks. Prime among these lay the British condition that both government supporters and their opponents were evacuated in equal measure.<sup>83</sup> From the point of view of the danger facing civilians trapped near the front line, the stipulation enjoyed the merit of helping Francoists locked up in jail and in danger of lynching when the front collapsed. Indeed, the British consul, Mr. Stevenson, tried to enforce the rule and strove to drive a bargain with the Basques

by insisting that for every 5,000 refugees taken out of the country, 250 political prisoners accompanied them.<sup>84</sup> Across the north of Spain as a whole, Franco supporters benefited greatly and Foreign Office staff noted that ‘out of a total of 9,000 refugees transported from North Spanish ports on board H.M. ships, approximately 5,000 were of Right Wing sympathies’.<sup>85</sup> In terms of rescuing those in danger from the terrible Francoist repression that followed in the wake of occupation, and who formed the vast bulk of those in peril, however, working for the rescue of Franco supporters made little sense.

British actions in the summer of 1937 at Santander and later at Gijón further demonstrate the limits to UK assistance to those in danger from Francoist violence. In these ports, the British government, citing international law on territorial waters, refused to protect vessels within the three-mile limit. Critics relying on a legal briefing from the pro-Republican law firm Elwell & Binford Hole of London, however, pointed out that under the Hague Convention, and a precedent of 1904, ‘neutrals have an absolute right to save persons who are in distress at sea’ even within territorial waters.<sup>86</sup> The British government, however, did not accept this interpretation. We have to understand the UK government’s position on this legal question in the context of the fears and tactics of Royal Navy officials. Crucial figures within the admiralty, such as Admiral Sir Ernle Chatfield, believed the fleet was below strength and feared becoming involved in a humiliating conflict that could draw in other powers. Chatfield also highlighted the Royal Navy’s weakness to the British government in order to press for rearmament.<sup>87</sup>

The UK government’s reading of the law, however, left Franco’s forces free to seize British ships as prizes of war. During the crisis at Santander in August 1937, when between 80,000 and 120,000 refugees had flooded into the city in the hope of escape, for instance, the Francoists deployed their fleet inside territorial waters to capture the British ships the

Moulton, the Candleston Castle and the Mirapanu.<sup>88</sup> Many other ships simply could not enter the harbour because when they tried they came under fire from Francoist warships, although a number of courageous British merchantmen did run the blockade that summer.<sup>89</sup> Tens of thousands, however, remained trapped. As British refugee worker Anne Caton, left stranded out at sea waiting to enter Santander, explained British policy abandoned refugees who could not take flight facing 'execution or imprisonment'.<sup>90</sup>

The rule proved a constant thorn in the side of humanitarian activists battling to evacuate those in danger from the Francoist repression at Santander. Accordingly, backbench MP and humanitarian activist Eleanor Rathbone judged that 'the British navy is the greatest factor in Franco's blockade'.<sup>91</sup> Rathbone was angered as she argued it was doubtful that Franco would wish to 'incur the odium of sinking even Spanish or other foreign ships carrying only refugees.'<sup>92</sup> British officials, however, were more swayed by the need to assuage Francoist reproaches over the Bilbao evacuation and proved more mindful of the limitations of the Royal Navy in a possible wider conflict than they were of the needs of government supporters.

The reluctance of the British to challenge Franco within territorial waters was compounded by the actions of front-line consular officials. As we have seen, the presence of the consul Mr. Stevenson in Bilbao had helped bring about large-scale evacuations, although he had insisted on evacuating in equal numbers of Francoists and government supporters. At Santander, however, the British consul, Mr. Bates, had fled by the time the crisis hit in August.<sup>93</sup> Although his pro-consul, Ángel Ojanguren, was on the spot, British officials used Bates' absence to argue that with no consul on the ground it would prove impossible to make an equitable selection of Republicans and Francoists for evacuation.<sup>94</sup> The stipulation badly affected the evacuations from Santander from late June 1937. With no consul on the ground,

the equality rule could not be enforced and so the Royal Navy would not provide protection on the high seas. In June 1937, for instance, five British ships with accommodation for 8,000 refugees were anchored in Santander harbour waiting for a guarantee of a British naval escort.<sup>95</sup> Although it was Foreign Office policy to evacuate consuls at times of perceived danger, the backbench independent MP Eleanor Rathbone pointed out it 'is difficult to believe that any British Consul would have resented exposure to risk for such a purpose'.<sup>96</sup>

British humanitarian volunteer Commander Harry Pursey, however, was on the ground and tried to make up for the absence of the consul. This future backbench Labour MP for Hull and described variously as representing the International Red Cross, the Chief for Basque Evacuation was also known to be seeking an entry into the world of journalism.<sup>97</sup> Pursey argued that he could draw on his experience in evacuating refugees in the Russian Civil War to carry out the selection that Bates could have made had he been on the ground. The British remained tight-lipped about his offer.<sup>98</sup> Pursey eventually escaped from Gijón navigating an open boat loaded with a number of refugees through the Francoist blockade for ten hours.<sup>99</sup>

Consul Bates endangered refugees by his presence as well as his absence. He demonstrated this when he briefly sailed into Santander to rescue Francoists in a trade with the Basques. The proposed exchange concerned 400 members of the Basque Nationalist Party, the PNV, most in danger of execution by Franco's firing squads. Bottled up in Santander in August 1937, the PNV had sought British help in their evacuation, but the UK spurned these efforts on the argument that evacuations had to be approved both by the Republican and Francoist authorities. With the Francoists keen to lay their hands on their enemies and keeping quiet on evacuations this condition left the PNV leadership in grave danger.<sup>100</sup> Despite this, the parties managed to put together a deal which Bates would eventually undermine.

The agreement between Francoists and the PNV came about through the offices of the Basque leader Juan Ajuriaguerra and the Francoist military governor of Irún, Captain Tronsco, and with British mediation. The central terms of the pact rather hazily stated that the prisoners would be exchanged either for ‘remaining members of the Basque government’ or more broadly ‘members of the late Basque administration’. In either case, however, front-line British diplomats enjoyed permission from London to take action to rescue prisoners of political importance in grave peril.<sup>101</sup> Those guarding the hostages were also to be rescued.<sup>102</sup> To put the deal into practice, Captain Tronsco, Jesús María de Leizaola, a leading figure in the PNV, and Consul Bates all boarded HMS Keith in St. Jean de Luz to sail to Santander. Once on board the British warship, however, Bates gave Leizaola to understand that he knew nothing of the deal. At Santander Leizaola states that he tried to persuade Bates to take on 150 Basque leaders (the number the Basques believed the destroyer could accommodate), but the consul replied that this was too many. In response, Leizaola offered to reduce his number to fifty, to which Bates remained silent. Only when they arrived off Santander did Bates tell him that no more than seventeen leaders, in equal number to the quantity of prisoners they believed to be held by the Basques, would be taken off. At this point, Leizaola, in a heart-wrenching moment, had to turn away around forty of his fellow Basques begging him to do something for them.<sup>103</sup> The captain of the Keith reported that he had rescued ten hostages, six guards and nineteen ‘Basque government officials’. Bates refused to use his discretion to save those in grave peril and the captain of the Keith supports Leizola’s claims by noting that he had turned away ‘about forty’ Basques.<sup>104</sup> The consequences soon arrived and on the 14 October 1937 six Basque nationalists, including some of the important leaders, went before a Francoist firing squad.<sup>105</sup>

The point about these evacuations in the summer and autumn of 1937 is not that the British operating in international waters did not help thousands escape. Indeed, the Manchester Guardian reported, for instance, on 27 August 1937, for instance, that 10,000 refugees had arrived in France from Santander in the previous forty-eight hours.<sup>106</sup> We also know that ‘as many as 11,000 refugees from Gijón arrived in France in just a few hours in the autumn of 1937’.<sup>107</sup> Historian James Cable places the figure for the total number who escaped northern Spain at 100,000 with 89,000 of them enjoying Royal Navy protection on the high seas. Spanish diplomat Javier Rubio puts the figure even higher and cites French press reports stating that by November 1937 130,000 refugees had arrived in France from northern Spain.<sup>108</sup> We need to bear in mind, however, that these evacuations were neither initiated nor sponsored by the British. Moreover, UK consular officials often hampered rather than supported evacuation efforts and they did so when the British were battling for Franco’s favour.

These points are even clearer at the end of the Civil War in the very different circumstances of an imminent Francoist victory. Once again HMG’s policy forced the Republican government to rely on its own funds and supporters. The exception is the case of the Republican leader Colonel Casado, who had come to power in a coup in March 1939, and a few hundred of his supporters who had helped the British. Moreover, British consuls eager to secure Franco’s favour issued orders that prevented the Royal Navy offering the protection that might have allowed thousands of refugees to escape.

The desire to bring about a swift end to the war and curry Franco’s favour played a vital role in restricting British help to Republicans in peril. On 8 March 1939, the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, unwilling to upset Franco, announced that his government would only help with evacuation if Franco, who from 28 February enjoyed UK diplomatic recognition,

granted his permission and if Chamberlain felt satisfied that British assistance was merited upon humanitarian grounds.<sup>109</sup> On 11 March, the British formally requested the Spanish general's consent.<sup>110</sup> Franco did not deign to reply until mid April; well after the crisis had passed.<sup>111</sup>

British consuls also received instructions that they should not give members of the Republican government encouragement by thinking they could continue to resist and get away at the last moment in a British ship. Moreover, UK policy laid down that Spaniards would only be evacuated if they formed part of an exchange agreement or if they were members of the government, or relatives of ministers, and their lives stood in immediate danger.<sup>112</sup> This policy did nothing for the mass of the population from whom the British estimated 50,000 lay in danger in central and southern Spain.<sup>113</sup>

The Republicans made matters worse for themselves. In February 1939, rather than carrying out an evacuation, Negrín's government hoped to go on fighting in order to gain a position of strength from which to force Franco to agree to peace terms and to achieve the essential condition that there should be no reprisals.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, Negrín's ambassador in London, Pablo de Azcárate, was working with the British at the end of the month to try and hammer out an agreement with Franco that would allow for Republicans to leave Spain in British vessels with Franco's approval.<sup>115</sup> By procrastinating, however, the Republicans let the chance slip.<sup>116</sup> Azcárate suffered a further major set-back at the end of February when the president of the Republic, Manuel Azaña, resigned and so undermined the legitimacy of the Republican system by leaving it without a formal head of state and rendering the British much more reluctant to negotiate with the Republicans.<sup>117</sup>

In this cauldron of troubles, Colonel Casado, Commander of the Republican Army of the Centre, launched his coup on 5 March and seized power in Republican territory believing he

could come to terms with Franco.<sup>118</sup> In the chaotic events thrown up by the revolt, the Republican navy left Spanish waters and docked in Algeria where at the end of the month, 30 March, the French handed over the ships to the Francoists.<sup>119</sup> The loss of these vessels cost the Republic dear because they offered one of the few ways of escorting refugee ships through the net cast by Franco's warships hovering outside territorial waters.

Casado also hoped to negotiate with Franco and his head of evacuation, Antonio Pérez García, working on an understanding that his opponents would allow an evacuation from eastern ports, did not start work until 26 March 1939. Pérez, however, commanded few ships, had little money to charter foreign vessels and wanted for diplomatic missions overseas to broker deals.<sup>120</sup>

The Paris-based International Committee of Co-ordination and Information for Republican Spain, however, had arranged ships to help with evacuation. Towards the end of the war, it created the International Delegation for Spanish Evacuation and Relief.<sup>121</sup> Relying on its own resources, this delegation had access to three vessels under the control of France Navigation.<sup>122</sup> These included the Winnipeg which had capacity for up to 6,000 people and the Ploubazanec which could accommodate over 1,000.<sup>123</sup> It also enjoyed permission from the Mexican government to transport the refugees to this sympathetic country. The three ships lay off Alicante waiting to pick up Republicans assembled in good order on the docks in numbers estimated between 4,000-12,000.<sup>124</sup> The last ship inside the harbour, the British merchant vessel the Stanbrook had left Alicante at 11.00 pm on 28 March with over 2,600 refugees crammed aboard.<sup>125</sup> Distrusting the Francoist navy, however, the captains of the French vessels outside the harbour kept their distance from territorial waters and awaited a naval escort that would guarantee their safety.<sup>126</sup>



The influence of British consuls now became decisive. The British consul in Valencia, Abbingdon Gooden, had removed himself to the British-owned port of Gandía where he hoped to be able to evacuate Casado. Here Gooden could call on HMS Sussex, HMS Galatea, and HMS Nubian.<sup>127</sup> The hospital ship Maine also lay further off shore. Gooden issued instructions that HMS Sussex was not to proceed from Gandía to Alicante to provide protection to the French merchant ships chartered by the International Delegation. This mattered because only the British enjoyed a naval presence in the area: a French destroyer only arrived up the coast from Alicante in Gandía on the 31 March where it then made its way to Alicante.<sup>128</sup> It had escorted the Poubazalanec to the territorial limits at Alicante but then a Francoist ship scared it off. This left the Winnipeg stranded outside the harbour too.<sup>129</sup>

Gooden acted the way he did despite the fact that the British Senior Naval Officer, Rear-Admiral Tovey, had shown willingness to escort the refugee ships into Alicante to carry out this work.<sup>130</sup> This represented a major victory for the International Delegation which favoured entering the port without Franco's prior permission and calling the bluff of any of his waiting warships. What stopped Tovey and Gooden, however, was a report from British Vice Consul Allan Hillgarth in Francoist-occupied Mallorca that Franco would consider the evacuation an unfriendly act which 'we should not live down for years'.<sup>131</sup> Gooden reported that 'I could hardly afford to ignore' this caution.<sup>132</sup> Importantly too, the British consul at Alicante reported there were no British citizens were present in the town and this too took its toll because the U.K. government had dispatched orders that Royal Naval craft should not visit Spanish ports for the sole purpose of evacuating Spaniards.<sup>133</sup> Despite a leading British member of the Delegation, Sir George Young, appealing to Tovey that the mere presence of international observers on the ground would save lives, the Rear-Admiral resolutely refused to take the delegates to Alicante.<sup>134</sup> This left the thousands lined up and looking out to sea at Alicante

waiting for a promised U.K. warship that never arrived.<sup>135</sup> The International Delegation reported that such actions meant that instead of rescuing a possible 6,500 people they could help no more than 650 escape.<sup>136</sup> The Francoists soon captured masses of people who had assembled at Alicante in the hope of escape. They first separated families and then imprisoned 45,000 in a concentration camp. The fate of significant numbers of the prisoners is illustrated by Ricardo Zabalza, a member of the Socialist Party executive who the Francoist captured in Alicante and then shot in Madrid in February 1940.<sup>137</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The Spanish Civil War stands out as the most important conflicts between the two world wars as well as one of the most brutal. It is this brutality that makes the study of the humanitarian efforts to alleviate suffering so important. The vast bulk of the historiography of British diplomatic responses to the War, however, has devoted a great deal of attention to the British policy of military non-intervention and we know less about British government intervention in humanitarian relief. It is true that we understand much about British charitable evacuations of children during the Spanish Civil War, but we have much to learn about British-government-backed maritime rescue efforts of adults at risk from violence behind the lines. The literature that we do have in English mentions these efforts in passing and passes over the repression carried out by the Franco regime. Moreover, studies of British front-line diplomats emphasise their even-handedness towards the two sides. Such studies of have focused too much on the attitudes of British officials and do not sufficiently taken into account the hostility of the the Franco side to evacuations alongside the contrasting cooperation of the Spanish government. Meanwhile, in Spain some authors have emphasised the humanitarianism of the Francoists

The article shows that the attitudes and behaviour of British consular officials who played a pivotal role in organising maritime evacuation differed between those like Clissold who

demonstrated little concern for the suffering of the thousands killed by Francoists in Málaga and consuls like Stevenson in Bilbao who worked hard to evacuate Republicans in danger. We can conclude, however, that at decisive moments, such as at Santander and Gijón in 1937 as well as on the east coast in 1939, British consuls such as Bates and Gooden showed limited interest in fair play and more concern with appeasing Franco. As a result, many thousands fell victim to the Francoist repression. This is not to suggest that the British did not face difficult policy choices, but it does reveal the under-appreciated importance of hostile Francoist attitudes towards evacuations and points to a complexity that brings into question generalisations about the fair play and autonomy of British front-line diplomats.

The Republican government much more frequently proved a willing partner in humanitarian activity than the Francoists. Significantly in this regard, the Republic provided considerable help and latitude for the British to evacuate Francoists. It also demonstrated concern for its own supporters by financing and arranging evacuations while also seeking agreements with the insurgents. Very often brutal Francoist attitudes prevented these life-saving schemes, although so too on occasion did Republican misjudgement and British bad faith.

In recent years, historians have grown much more aware of the scale of Francoist violence behind the lines and recognise that the Spanish Civil War stands out for its brutality. The literature on the humanitarian response to this form of ‘total war’, however, has yet to catch up with the outpouring of publications on the Francoist repression. This article shows that British government maritime evacuations provide a significant starting point. Moreover, by focusing on the adults in danger from Francoist violence behind the lines we also shift attention away from the four thousand Basque children taken out of Spain when facing the perils of front-line bombing who have attracted most attention in the wider refugee literature.<sup>138</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, FO [from now on FO only] 371 21376, W17966.
- <sup>2</sup> FO 371 21378 W20121.
- <sup>3</sup> An example in Claude Bowers, *My Mission to Spain: watching the rehearsal for World War II*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954).
- <sup>4</sup> Jill Edwards, pp 222-223.
- <sup>5</sup> John Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). Robert H. Whealey, *Hitler and Spain. The Nazi Role in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004). Daniel Kowalsky, *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
- <sup>6</sup> Gerald Howson, *Arms for Spain: the untold story of the Spanish Civil War*, (London: John Murray, 1998).
- <sup>7</sup> An example in Katherine Atholl, *Searchlight on Spain*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938).
- <sup>8</sup> Prime examples include Douglas Little, *Malevolent Neutrality. The United States, Great Britain and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) and Enrique Moradiellos, *El refugio de Europa: las dimensiones internacionales de la Guerra Civil española*, (Barcelona: Península, 2001). **Ángel Viñas, *La soledad de la República. El abandono de las democracias y el viraje hacia la Unión Soviética*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2006), pp. 64-68; pp. 76-78. Ángel Viñas, *El honor de la República. Entre el caos fascista, la hostilidad británica y la política de Stalin*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2009), p. 543. Ángel Viñas y Fernando Hernández Sánchez, *El desplome de la República*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2009), pp. 390-391.**
- <sup>9</sup> Buchanan, p. 281.
- <sup>10</sup> Buchanan, p. 292.
- <sup>11</sup> Francisco Espinoza, (ed.), *Violencia roja y azul: España, 1936-1950*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2010).
- <sup>12</sup> Examples include Jim Fyrth, *The Signal was Spain: the Spanish Aid movement in Britain, 1936-1939*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986) and Dorothy Legarreta, *The Guernica Generation: Basque refugee children of the Spanish Civil War*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1984).
- <sup>13</sup> James Cable, *The Royal Navy & the Siege of Bilbao*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
- <sup>14</sup> Buchanan, 'Edge of Darkness', p. 292.
- <sup>15</sup> Javier Rubio, *Asilos y canjes durante la guerra civil española. Aspectos humanitarios de una contienda fratricida*, (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1979), pp. 361-369.
- <sup>16</sup> Douglas Little, *Malevolent Neutrality. The United States, Great Britain and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 31-32. Helen Graham, 'Casado's Ghosts: Demythologizing the End of the Spanish Republic', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain, Portugal and Latin America*, 89, 7-8 (2012), 255-278, 256-257, note 6.
- <sup>17</sup> Moradiellos, 'British political strategy', 123-137.
- <sup>18</sup> Edwards, *The British Government*, 1-3, 32-36. Enrique Moradiellos, *La perfidia de Albión*, 166.
- <sup>19</sup> R.A.C.Parker, 'Great Britain, France and the Ethiopian Crisis 1935-1936', *The English Historical Review*, 89, (1974), 293-332, 296.
- <sup>20</sup> **Viñas, *La soledad*, p. 76. Viñas, *El desplome*, pp. 390-391.**
- <sup>21</sup> Buchanan, 'Edge of Darkness', p. 281.
- <sup>22</sup> Edwards, pp. 220-221.
- <sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 17/08/1936.
- <sup>24</sup> On military trials see Pablo Gil, *La noche de los generales. Militares y represión en el régimen de Franco*, (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2004).
- <sup>25</sup> FO, 371/22629 W 12163/29/41 29/09/1938.
- <sup>26</sup> FO 371 22615 W 16172.
- <sup>27</sup> Josep M. Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroya i Font, *La repressió a la retaguarda de Catalunya (1936-1939) Volum I*, (Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1989), 80.
- <sup>28</sup> José Luis Ledesma, *Los días de llamas de la revolución. Violencia y política en la retaguarda republicana de Zaragoza durante la guerra civil*, (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2003), 115-120. María Delgado Ruiz, *Luces iconoclastas. Anticlericalismo, espacio y ritual en la España contemporánea*, (Barcelona: Ariel, 2001), 52-63.
- <sup>29</sup> Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya i Font, *La repressió*, 78.
- <sup>30</sup> Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya i Font, *La repressió*, 78-80.
- <sup>31</sup> Javier Cervera Gil, 'Violencia en el Madrid de la Guerra Civil: los Paseos (Julio a diciembre de 1936)', *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea*, 13-14 (2010), 63-82, 70-75. Glicerio Sánchez Recio, *Justicia y guerra en España. Los Tribunales Populares, (1936-1939)*, (Alicante: Instituto de Cultura Juan Gil-Albert, 1990).

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- <sup>32</sup> Maria Thomas, 'The front line of Albion's perfidy. Inputs into the making of British policy towards Spain: The racism and snobbery of Norman King' in *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 20 (2007), 105-127, 116. Antony. Eden, *The Eden Memoirs. Facing the Dictators*, (London: Cassell, 1962), 406.
- <sup>33</sup> FO 371, 21374 W 14656.
- <sup>34</sup> FO 371 24153 W 3149.
- <sup>35</sup> Diego Carcedo, *El «Schindler» de la Guerra Civil. La historia del diplomático mexicano que salvó a centenares de refugiados de ambos bandos*, (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2003), 200-201. Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, *My House in Málaga*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1938), p. 125.
- <sup>36</sup> Francisco Espinosa Maestre, (ed.), *Violencia roja y azul. España, 1936-1950*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2010), 77.
- <sup>37</sup> TNA: PRO, FO 371/21288 W 6597/1/41, Clissold to Pollock, 24/03/1937.
- <sup>38</sup> John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 191-192.
- <sup>39</sup> University of Cambridge, Templewood Papers, XIII File 5, Templewood to Franco, 23/08/1943.
- <sup>40</sup> C. E. Lucas Phillips, *The Spanish Pimpernel*, (London: Heinemann, 1960), 93-111.
- <sup>41</sup> Lucas Phillips, *The Spanish Pimpernel*, 30-159.
- <sup>42</sup> FO 371/21378 W20121.
- <sup>43</sup> FO 371 21378 W20121.
- <sup>44</sup> Archivo Ministerio Asuntos Exteriores (AMAE) R594, Caja 1, Chilton to Sangroniz, 30/11/1936. Buchanan, 'Edge of Darkenss', 302.
- <sup>45</sup> FO 371 21374 W 1567 and 21373 W 15336.
- <sup>46</sup> AMAE, R 1501, 3, Folio 7.
- <sup>47</sup> Norton, *Muerte en Málaga*, p. 180. Tomás López, *Treinta semanas*, p. 64. García Alonso, *Flores del heroism*, p. 158.
- <sup>48</sup> George Steer, *The Tree of Gernika: A Field Study of Modern War*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), 114-120.
- <sup>49</sup> Pedro Barruso Barés, 'La represión en las zonas republicana y franquista del País Vasco durante la guerra civil', *Historia Contemporánea*, 35 (2007), 653-681, 654-655.
- <sup>50</sup> FO 425/414 No. 17 W 1058/127/41.
- <sup>51</sup> Steer, *Tree of Gernika*, 120.
- <sup>52</sup> Pedro Barruso Barés, 'La represión', 665. FO 371 21372 W 13220.
- <sup>53</sup> *The Times*, 14/2/1939. John Hope Simpson, *Refugees. A Review of the Situation since September 1938*, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, August 1939), 56.
- <sup>54</sup> FO 425/414 No. 18.
- <sup>55</sup> FO 425/414 Enclosure No. 26 Consul Stevenson to Sir Henry Chilton, 14/01/1937.
- <sup>56</sup> FO 371 22614 W 14613.
- <sup>57</sup> FO 371 21373 W 14750/37/41 30/07/1937.
- <sup>58</sup> FO 371/21376 W 17966.
- <sup>59</sup> FO 371 21377 W 18718.
- <sup>60</sup> FO 371 21377 W 19114.
- <sup>61</sup> FO 371/21376 W 17965.
- <sup>62</sup> AMAE, R 834, 29, Chetwode to Franco 25/02/1939.
- <sup>63</sup> FO 371 21378 W 19954.
- <sup>64</sup> FO 371 21373 W 14750.
- <sup>65</sup> FO 371 21376 W 17965/66.
- <sup>66</sup> University of Liverpool, Special Collections and Archives, Rathbone Papers (from now on RP only) XIV.2.12.(54).
- <sup>67</sup> FO 371 21375 W 16599. FO 371 21374 W 16236. FO 317 21375 W 16604.
- <sup>68</sup> FO 21378 W 20054.
- <sup>69</sup> FO 371 21378 W 20121.
- <sup>70</sup> FO 371 21378 W 20121.
- <sup>71</sup> FO 371 21374 W 14656. FO 371 21374 W 15672. FO 371 21375 W 16599.
- <sup>72</sup> FO 371 21370 W 19108.
- <sup>73</sup> FO 22614 W 857. Edwards, *The British Government*, pp. 107-115. *The Times*, 10/07/1937. *The Times*, 9/07/1937. *Catholic Herald*, 23/07/1937.
- <sup>74</sup> FO 371 21272 W 13350.
- <sup>75</sup> FO 371 21372 W 20121.
- <sup>76</sup> FO 371 24153 W 4132.
- <sup>77</sup> FO 371 21369 W 8214. See also FO 371 2137 W 1456/37/41.
- <sup>78</sup> On Italian domination see RP XIV.2.11. (6), 7/07/1937.

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- <sup>79</sup> FO 371 21372 W 12797.
- <sup>80</sup> Cable, *The Siege*, p. 58.
- <sup>81</sup> P.M.Heaton, *Welsh Blockade Runners in the Spanish Civil War*, (Newport: The Starling Press, 1985). P.M.Heaton, *Spanish Civil War Blockade Runners*, (Abergavenny: P.M. Heaton Publishing, 2006). The British received reports that ship owners received 50,000 Francs from the Spanish government for every trip accomplished. FO 371 21374 W 16012, Paris Embassy to Western Department. Foreign Office staff also took the idea popular that the time that shipowners acted from generosity with a pinch of salt. FO 371 21373 W 14750/37/41, 30/07/1937.
- <sup>82</sup> Ángel Bahamonde and Javier Cervera, *Así terminó la guerra de España*, (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2000), 495. J. Martínez, 'El Stanbrook. Un barco mítico en la memoria de los exiliados españoles', *Pasado y Memoria. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 4 (2005), 65-81, 66.
- <sup>83</sup> FO 371 21369 W 8502.
- <sup>84</sup> Cable, *The Siege*, p. 138.
- <sup>85</sup> FO 371, 21378, W 20121.
- <sup>86</sup> RP XIV 2, 13, (34).
- <sup>87</sup> Edwards, pp. 128-19
- <sup>88</sup> *The News Chronicle*, 6/08/1937.
- <sup>89</sup> Heaton, *Welsh Blockade Runners*, pp. 55-71. Anne R. Caton, *The Martyrdom of the Basques*, (London: National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, 1938), p. 9.
- <sup>90</sup> Caton, *The Martyrdom*, p. 17.
- <sup>91</sup> Warwick Modern Records Centre (from now on MSS only) MSS 308/3/OV/ 3. RP XIV 2 li (5) and X IV 2.11 (11).
- <sup>92</sup> Blair Castle Archive Duchess Katherine Papers, 44/2 9/07/1937.
- <sup>93</sup> FO 371 21378 W 20121.
- <sup>94</sup> Irargi – Centro de Patrimonio Documental de Euskadi. Fondo Periko Beitia, C06/06-07, folio 157.16.
- <sup>95</sup> RP XIV 2.11 (II)
- <sup>96</sup> FO 371/21375 W 17048.
- <sup>97</sup> RP, XIV.2.ii.(5). *The Times* 25/08/1937, 26/08/1937. Hull History Centre, U/DPU/1876.
- <sup>98</sup> RP X 2.11 (II).
- <sup>99</sup> Caton, *The Martyrdom*, pp. 17-18.
- <sup>100</sup> FO 371 21374 W 15980.
- <sup>101</sup> FO 371 21403 W 16036. W 15996
- <sup>102</sup> *The Times* 25/08/1937.
- <sup>103</sup> FO 371 21403 W 16036, W 15966, W 16036. Irargi – Centro de Patrimonio Documental de Euskadi, Fondo Carlos Blasco Imaz. Escrito de Jesús María de Leizaola al Presidente del Euzkadi Buru Batzar. C 15/01. On the agreement to rescue the Basque leadership and the guards of the hostages see *The Times*, 25/08/1937.
- <sup>104</sup> Aguirre's escape *The Times*, 26/08/1937. Captain of the Keith in FO 371 21403 W 16036.
- <sup>105</sup> <http://blogs.deia.com/historiasdelosvascos/2012/10/15/santona-catorce-hombres-fusilados-al-amanecer/> (visited 6/09/2013).
- <sup>106</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 27/08/1937.
- <sup>107</sup> FO 21378 W 14013. Report of The National Committee for Spanish Relief, October 1938, p. 2.
- <sup>108</sup> Javier Rubio, *La emigración de la Guerra Civil de 1936-1939. Historia del éxodo que se produce con el fin de la II República española. Volumen Primero*, (Madrid: San Martin, 1977), 56.
- <sup>109</sup> FO 371 24153, W 4132
- <sup>110</sup> FO 371 24153 W 4400.
- <sup>111</sup> FO 371 24154 W 6196.
- <sup>112</sup> FO 371 24153, W 2247.
- <sup>113</sup> FI 371 24153 W 2247.
- <sup>114</sup> Julio Álvarez del Vayo, *Freedom's Battle*, (London: William Heinemann, 1940), 277.
- <sup>115</sup> AMAE, RE, 150, 14 Folio 5.
- <sup>116</sup> AMAE, RE, 150, 14, Folios 7-11.
- <sup>117</sup> AMAE RE 150, 14, Folio 11.
- <sup>118</sup> Bahamonde and Cervera, *Así terminó*, 41-52, 340
- <sup>119</sup> Bahamonde and Cervera, *Así terminó*, 430-437. Michael Alpert, *La guerra civil española en el mar*, (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1987), 353-358.
- <sup>120</sup> FO 371 24154 W 5088, Godden to FO 26/03/1939. Colonel S. Casado, *The Last Days of Madrid. The End of the Second Spanish Republic*, (London: Peter Davies, 1939), 216.
- <sup>121</sup> International Committee of Coordination and Information to Aid Republican Spain: July 18 1936 July 18 1938. *All Free Men of the World For Republican Spain*, (Paris, 1938), 1.

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- <sup>122</sup> Bahamonde and Cervera, *Así terminó*, 495. J. Martínez, 'El Stanbrook', p. 66.
- <sup>123</sup> Bahamonde and Cervera, *Así terminó*, 496.
- <sup>124</sup> An eyewitness who got away by plane, Mr. Ulmann, a member of the International Delegation, estimated 6,000 refugees had gathered at Alicante FO 371 24154 W 5943. One of those present, Eduardo de Guzmán, put the figure at 20,000. Eduardo de Guzmán, *El año de la victoria*, (Madrid: G. del Torro, 1974), 14.
- <sup>125</sup> Martínez, 'El Stanbrook', 70.
- <sup>126</sup> FO 371 24154 W 5691.
- <sup>127</sup> FO 371 24154 W 5263.
- <sup>128</sup> See Casado, *The Last Days*, 294-297. RP XIV 2.12 (16) Report of the International Delegation.
- <sup>129</sup> RP XIV 2.12 (16) Report of the International Delegation.
- <sup>130</sup> FO 371 24154 W 6012.
- <sup>131</sup> FO 371 24154 W 5263.
- <sup>132</sup> FO 371 24154 W 6705.
- <sup>133</sup> FO 371 24154 W 5943, Report of the International Delegation.
- <sup>134</sup> RP XIV 2.12 (16) Report of the International Delegation.
- <sup>135</sup> de Guzmán, *El año*, 14.
- <sup>136</sup> RP XIV 2.12 (16) Report of the International Delegation.
- <sup>137</sup> Paul Preston, *The Last Days of the Republic*, (London: Harper Collins, 2016), pp. 296-297; p. 305.
- <sup>138</sup> Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide. Global, National and Local Perspective during the Twentieth Century*, (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 103-125.