

TEMA MONOGRÀFIC

Expulsion, emotion and refugee children: forced European migration and refugee pedagogy (1912-1947)

*Expulsió, emoció i nens refugiats:
migració europea forçada i pedagogia de refugiats
(1912-1947)*

Kevin Myers

k.p.myers@bbham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham (Regne Unit)

Siân Roberts

s.roberts.2@bbham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham (Regne Unit)

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RESUM

Aquest article explora com la captura de les dimensions emocionals de la formació pot ajudar a explicar l'arc de la migració forçada i una pedagogia emergent de refugiats a Europa entre 1912 i 1947. Al fer-ho, s'allunya de les inquietants «passions» que dominen la història. La literatura d'aquest període abasta emocions d'ira i odi, fabricades, comunicades i lliures, que van culminar en la persecució, l'exili de població, el

assassinat en massa i el genocidi. En el seu lloc, l'estudi es centra en els «afectes» més positivament avaluats, la compassió, l'empatia i l'amor, que van motivar l'ajut a les poblacions vulnerables, les quals recolzen l'intent de crear lleis internacionals que protegeixen a tots els éssers humans de la mort. És probable que aquests afectats també hagin motivat els intents de protegir i rescatar els nens evacuant-los de les zones de conflicte, fins i tot quan això significava separar-los dels pares i travessar les fronteres nacionals, podent haver estimulat una forma distinta de pedagogia de refugiats en la que les emocions i el treball de les mateixes van tenir una presència distintiva.

PARAULES CLAU: Història de les emocions, història de la infància, refugiats, guerra.

ABSTRACT

This article explores how capturing the emotional dimensions of state formation may help to explain the arc of forced migration, and an emerging refugee pedagogy, in Europe between 1912 and 1947. In doing so it turns away from the troubling «passions» that dominate the historical literature of this period, from the anger and hatred, manufactured, communicated and learnt, which culminated in persecution, population transfer, mass killing, and genocide. Instead, its focus is on the more positively evaluated «affections», the compassion, empathy and love, which motivated aid for vulnerable populations and, arguably at least, lay behind the attempt to establish international laws that protected all human being from the murderous power of states. Those affections also arguably motivated attempts to protect and rescue children by evacuating them from conflict zones, even when that meant separating them from parents and crossing national boundaries, and it may have stimulated a distinctive form of refugee pedagogy in which emotions, and working through them, were a distinctive presence.

KEY WORDS: History of emotions, history of childhood, refugees, war.

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora cómo la captura de las dimensiones emocionales de la formación puede ayudar a explicar el arco de la migración forzosa y una pedagogía emergente de refugiados en Europa entre 1912 y 1947. Al hacerlo, se aleja de las inquietantes «pasiones» que dominan la historia. La literatura de este período abarca emociones de ira y odio, fabricada, comunicada y aprendida, que culminó en la persecución, el exi-

lio de població, el assassinat en masa y el genocidio. En su lugar, el estudio se centra en los «afectos» más positivamente evaluados, la compasión, la empatía y el amor, que motivaron la ayuda a las poblaciones vulnerables, las cuales respaldan el intento de establecer leyes internacionales que protejan a todos los seres humanos de la muerte. Es probable que esos afectos también hayan motivado los intentos de proteger y rescatar a los niños evacuándolos de las zonas de conflicto, incluso cuando eso significaba separarlos de los padres y cruzar las fronteras nacionales, pudiendo haber estimulado una forma distintiva de pedagogía de refugiados en la que las emociones y el trabajo de las mismas tuvieron una presencia distintiva.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Historia de las emociones, historia de la infancia, refugiados, guerra.

I. INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century the impulse to expel, exchange, or murder unwanted populations became a global phenomenon, growing in both scale and intensity, so that refugees have been widely regarded as constituting the major political, economic, social and humanitarian issue of the age.¹ In a wide range of scholarly literature the human jetsam of refugees are symbolic of a new age, an age variously designated as an Age of Extremes, an Age of Anger or, as far as Europe is concerned, an age that witnessed a descent into savagery, violence and blood.²

The dismal apogee of expulsion occurred in Europe in the period 1912-1947. From the outbreak of the Balkans War to post war population transfers between newly configured nation-states, millions of refugees traversed Europe. As a result it is this period, and the arc of expulsion that it represents, that has dominated the literature on forced migration. In this literature there has been a focus on elite-level politics and international relations, on the cultural and

1 MISHRA, Pankaj. *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*. London: Penguin, 2018; JARAUSCH, Konrad H. *Out of ashes: a new history of Europe in the twentieth century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016; UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016*. Geneva: UNHCR, 2017.

2 LOWE, Keith. *Savage Continent: Europe in the aftermath of World War II*. London: Viking, 2013; BESSEL, Richard; HAAKE, Claudia B. (Ed.). *Removing peoples: forced removal in the modern world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; MAZOWER, Mark. *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. London: Allen Lane, 1998; HOBBSAWM, Eric. *Age of extremes: the short twentieth century, 1914-1991*. London: Michael Joseph, 1994; ARENDT, Hannah. *On Violence*. London: Allen Lane, 1970.

ideological frameworks that informed policies and practices for both expelling subjects and receiving refugees and, finally, the work of prominent individuals, humanitarian, faith based and occupational groups or organisations that sought to facilitate refugee movement and support refugees.³

States, and processes of state formation, emerge as key actors in this literature. States are pictured as accruing new powers to control their populations. They invested in the social and human sciences that named and categorized people. They developed infrastructures, of borders, passports and policing, that controlled movement and subject groups to new forms of surveillance. Yet while it has been possible to describe these developments, what causes and drives them has remained somehow elusive. Part of the reason for that is the fact that the so-called emotional turn among historians is a recent phenomenon. Concepts of «emotional communities» (Barbara Rosenwein) or emotional regimes (William Reddy) are only beginning to be worked up and applied in historical sub-disciplines such as the history of migration, the history of childhood and the history of education.⁴ Their promise, more theoretical prospect than empirical fact to this point, is to develop richer accounts of human agency in which emotions, including jealousy and hatred, love and compassion, play a part in explaining human motivation and broader political, cultural and educational change.

This article explores how capturing the emotional dimensions of state formation may help to explain the arc of forced migration, and an emerging refugee pedagogy, in Europe between 1912 and 1947. In doing so it turns away from the troubling «passions» that dominate the historical literature of

3 On politics and elite level policy see, for example, HADDAD, Emma. *The Refugee in International Society: Between Sovereigns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; FRANK, Matthew. *Expelling the Germans: British Public Opinion and Post-1945 Population Transfer in Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; LONDON, Louise. *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. On cultural frameworks see SHAW, Caroline. *Britannia's Embrace: Modern Humanitarianism and the Imperial Origins of Refugee Relief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. For a selection of the considerable work on aid see, for example, WILLIAMS, Bill. *Jews and other foreigners: Manchester and the Rescue of the Victims of European Fascism, 1933-1940*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011; STORR, Katherine. *Excluded from the Record: Women, Refugees and Relief 1914-1929*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010.

4 CANCIAN, Sonia. «My Dearest Love...» Love, Longing and Desire in International Migration», MESSER, Michi; SCHRÖDER, Renee; WODAK, Ruth (Ed.). *Migrations: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Vienna-New York: Springer-Verlag, 2012, p. 175-186; OLSEN, Stephanie. «The History of Childhood and the Emotional Turn», *History Compass*, 15 (2017): e12410. doi: 10.1111/hic3.12410; PRIEM, Karin. «Seeing, hearing, reading, writing, speaking and things: on silences, senses and emotions during the “zero hour” in Germany», *Paedagogica Historica*, 52/3 (2016), p. 286-299.

this period, from the anger and hatred, manufactured, communicated and learnt, which culminated in persecution, population transfer, mass killing, and genocide. Instead, its focus is on the more positively evaluated «affections», the compassion, empathy and love, which motivated aid for vulnerable populations and, arguably at least, lay behind the attempt to establish international laws that protected all human being from the murderous power of states. Those affections also arguably motivated attempts to protect and rescue children by evacuating them from conflict zones, even when that meant separating them from parents and crossing national boundaries, and it may have stimulated a distinctive form of refugee pedagogy in which emotions, and working through them, were a distinctive presence.⁵ In short, the claim here is that the emergence of refugee children as a category of persons deserving special treatment, not only in terms of welfare but also pedagogically, is a topic enhanced by attention to emotions. The detailed argument is made in three parts.

The first part of the article explains how humanitarian action, and its focus on children, developed a consistent language and iconography that recognised the reality of xenophobia, discrimination, conflict and war in increasingly violent Western European nation states. That language, and the distinctive iconography that it developed, helped to carve out an international space that allowed increasingly professionalised aid organisations to champion the needs of refugee groups. The organised evacuations of children that followed are indicative of the significant shifts, in size and geographical scope, of a nineteenth century ethics of compassion that became more international, if not notably less gendered, during the interwar period.⁶ Yet the very quality of that compassion, appealing to universal if still racialized notions of moral duty, was both predicated on, and developed through, a distinctive and pervasive sense of fear. Originating in the First World War, and remaining pervasive throughout interwar Europe, it was a fear exacerbated by new

5 The historical distinction between, and contemporary re-emergence of distinction between passions and affections is helpfully discussed in DIXON, Thomas. «“Emotion”: The History of a Keyword», *Crisis Emotion Review*, 4/4, p. 338-344; TAYLOR, Lynne. *In the Children's Best Interests: Unaccompanied Children in American-Occupied Germany, 1945-1952*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017; NEHLIN, Ann. «Building Bridges of Trust: Child Transports from Finland to Sweden during the Second World War», *War & Society*, 36/2 (2017), p. 133-153.

6 SHAW, Caroline. *Britannia's Embrace: Modern Humanitarianism and the Imperial Origins of Refugee Relief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

military technologies that enabled the saturation bombing of civilian targets.⁷ The powerful literary and artistic tropes through which fear of civilian bombing was expressed were an important influence on state formation, and the child migration policies they sometimes devised, in the period before 1939.

The second part of the article describes and analyses how this fear was mobilised. Fear helped to give tangible shape and form to a compassion for children that became demonstrably more international, or at least European, in this period. Portrayed as deserving and innocent victims, their evacuation and reception in receiving was predicated on a form of emotional labour, and politics that has received scant historical attention. Previous studies tended to see emotions as the direct outcome of the membership of different political or faith communities. That position can be re-evaluated, and significantly amended, by drawing on recent work both on the history of emotions exploring the productive capacities of fear in changing «pedagogical, parenting and policy approaches to childhood emotions».⁸

Thirdly, we tentatively suggest that one way in which fear was productive was the emergence of a refugee pedagogy in the first part of the twentieth century. Distinctively experiential, reflective and interactive, this refugee pedagogy was stimulated by an emerging emotional regime in which children, and especially refugee children, were worthy of a particular quality of sympathy but also attributed feelings and states that had to be worked through.

2. PICTURING FEAR

Spanish refugee children may not be an exemplar case of forced migration but the circumstances of their departure from Spain meet many of the criteria that that Dirk Hoerder assigned to the category.⁹ Refugee children,

7 BOURKE, Joanna. *Fear: a cultural history*. London: Virago, 2006.

8 OLSEN, Stephanie. «Introduction», OLSEN, Stephanie (Ed.). *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; STEARNS, Peter N.; HAGGERTY, Timothy. «The Role of Fear: Transitions in Emotional Standards for Children, 1850–1950», *The American Historical Review*, 96 (1991), p. 63-94; BAKKER, Nelleke. «The Meaning of Fear. Emotional Standards for Children in the Netherlands, 1850-1950: Was There a Western Transformation?», *Journal of Social History*, 34 (2000), p. 369-391.

9 HOERDER, Dirk. «Migration Research in Global Perspective», *Sozial.Geschichte Online*, 9 (2012), p. 63-84. URL: <http://www.stiftung-sozialgeschichte.de>.

like African slaves and other forms of indentured labour, were attributed a degree of passivity that helps to explain the fact of their migration. It was the imagined vulnerability of children, and the elevation of childhood to a special and exalted phase of life, that led Jose Antonio Aguirre, first president of the Provisional Government of the Basque Country, to plead specifically for their evacuation in the aftermath of the Nazi bombing of Guernica. That plea was directed both at parents, who were encouraged evacuate their children from the war zone, and at European states who were asked to accept the refugees while the battle for Northern Spain reached its conclusion.¹⁰

Guernica, and all it came to symbolize, is a decisive contextual factor in explaining the evacuation of the children. Small groups of children had already begun to migrate to France to escape Franco's encroaching Nationalist forces in January 1937. Refugee numbers increased dramatically at the end of March when German Condor Legions and the Italian Aviazione Legionaria bombed the town of Durango. Durango was a civilian centre of little or no strategic importance but as many as 350 people died in the raid. They are remembered today by a plaque in the town and by commemorative activities that claim an unenviable place in European history as the first city subjected to an aerial bombardment designed to destroy morale and kill civilians.¹¹ Saturation bombing had, of course, already been inflicted on subject or rebellious populations by imperial powers but the bombing of Guernica on April 26 brought the gruesome realities of modern warfare directly to the European continent. Guernica, like Durango, had no strategic importance and therefore no military defences but it was a historic town and revered by Basque nationalists as the site of their ancient capital. A campaign of saturation bombing was deliberately planned for market day in order to maximize civilian casualties. The three hour raid killed as many as 1600 civilians.¹²

In the aftermath of Guernica it may seem facile to point out that the parents of children in the Basque country retained a degree of agency in considering

10 PAYÀ RICO, Andrés. «Infancia y exilio: historias de vida de los niños de la Guerra Civil Española en Bélgica», *História da Educação*, 22/55 (2018), p. 209-224; PAYÀ RICO, Andrés. «Spaanse kinderen. Los niños españoles exiliados en Bélgica durante la Guerra Civil. Experiencia pedagógica e historias de vida», *El futuro del pasado*, 4 (2013), p. 191-205; LEGARETTA. *The Guernica Generation*, p. 100.

11 URL: <https://basquebooks.blogs.unr.edu/march-31-1937-the-mola-proclamation-and-the-bombing-of-durango-and-elorrio/>

12 MORCILLO, Aurora G. *Memory and cultural history of the Spanish Civil War*. Leiden: Brill, 2014; BROTHERS, Caroline. *War and Photography*. London: Routledge, 1996, especially part III on «taboo, anxiety and fascination» in the representation of refugees.

whether to send their children abroad. Yet parents certainly deliberated about that decision and it was widely reported, and now widely remembered, as a terrible necessity.¹³ It is important to stress the perceived necessity for evacuation. Civilian casualties of war were not a novel phenomenon but, alongside the sacralization of childhood, parents on both sides of the conflict were likely to have been influenced by a rich seam of cultural production that imagined and feared the destructive possibilities of air power.¹⁴ Ian Patterson has explored this work in detail and he notes the range of authors –H.G. Wells, Basil Liddell Hart, Giulio Douhet, J.F.C. Fuller– who explored the destructive possibilities and consequences of air power. This genre of work cut across military strategy handbooks, popular fiction and journalism. It therefore reached a wide popular audience and it encouraged a pervasive sense of fear that went beyond the commonplace idea that war was becoming more ruthless and destructive. Instead, millennial and apocalyptic imagery communicated the sense that the world was on the path to a mortal crisis and that the war in Spain was the beginning of a decisive conflagration. When Hermann Kesten gave his 1939 novel, *Children of Guernica* (1939), an ironic epithet he was accurately capturing this sense of impending doom: «Enjoy yourselves while you can. Who knows if the world will last another three weeks?».¹⁵

The cultural repertoire of destruction, fear and doom did not, of course, only affect parents. It also affected the decisions of policymakers, administrators and politicians. Evacuation was recommended and supported by the Basque government and its welfare agencies. But organized population movements on the scale of 30,000 children require at least the tacit support of other states and a whole range of intermediate actors to facilitate movement. It was arguably one of the conspicuous successes of the Basque government to successfully negotiate for the removal of so many children. After all, the development of restrictions on immigration in states across the world led John Hope Simpson to observe by 1939 that the world had become «divided into ‘racial’ and economic compartments» that were «to a considerable degree

13 YOUNG, Glennys. «To Russia with “Spain” Spanish Exiles in the USSR and the Longue Durée of Soviet History», *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 15/2 (2014), p. 395-419.

14 ZELIZER, Viviana A. *Pricing the Priceless Child: the changing social value of children*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; KÖSSLER, Till. «Children in the Spanish Civil War», BAUMEISTER, Martin; SCHÜLER-SPRINGORUM, Stefanie (Ed.). «If you tolerate this...». *The Spanish civil war in the age of total war*. Frankfurt/M.: Campus Verl., 2008, p.154-170.

15 PATTERSON, Ian. *Guernica and Total War*. London: Profile Books, 2007.

watertight».¹⁶ Simpson was reflecting on a global turn to restrictionism that he saw beginning in the First World War but then consolidated and developed in the interwar period as liberal ideals of free movement for trade and labour gradually fell in the face of xenophobic nationalisms, economic turmoil and fears for internal security.¹⁷ Yet this picture, faithfully reproduced by historians and activists who write with uncanny regularity of the door slamming shut on immigrants and refugees in this period, needs some qualification.¹⁸

Rather than simply preventing the arrival of all immigrants and refugees most states in the inter-war period moved towards, or further developed, systems for managing migration. In the United Kingdom the 1919 Aliens Act and subsequent Aliens Orders extended and consolidated the legislation and associated administrative measures originally introduced as emergency war time legislation. It granted the executive, and specifically the serving Home Secretary, wide discretionary powers around the admission and deportation of migrants and refugees. This was a deliberately flexible position that, in theory at least, allowed states to be relatively open or restrictive, to select migrants or reject them and to control their movement into the country and the labour market. Yet such power required administrative machinery. Accordingly, the control of immigration became centralized, charities marginalized and immigration officials dealt with a proliferating paper trail of passports, permits and labour visas. Aliens were required to register with police and entered the National Aliens Register. It is clear that, by the 1920s, the infrastructural power of the state for the control of migrant and migrant heritage populations was considerable.¹⁹

16 SIMPSON, John Hope. *The Refugee Problem: a survey*. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.

17 FAHRMEIR, Andreas; FARIN, Oliver; WEIL, Patrick (Ed.). *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period*. New York: Berghahn, 2003; TORPEY, John. «States and the Regulation of Migration in the twentieth-century North Atlantic World», ANDREAS, Peter; SNYDER, Tim (Ed.). *The Wall Around the West: State Borders and Immigration Controls in North America and Europe*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, p. 31-54.

18 See, for example, CARON, Vicki. *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 356.

19 REINECKE, Christiane. «Governing Aliens in Times of Upheaval: Immigration Control and Modern State Practice in Early Twentieth-Century Britain Compared with Prussia», *International Review of Social History*, 54/1 (2009), p. 39-65; BEN-UR, Aviva. «Identity Imperative: Ottoman Jews in Wartime and Interwar Britain», *Immigrants & Minorities*, 33/2 (2015), p. 165-195; LONDON, Louise. *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British immigration policy, Jewish refugees and the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

There can be little doubt that, for the most part, this power was employed to restrict migration to Britain and, especially, to discriminate against Germans, Russian Jews and black British seamen.²⁰ Yet the rather vague policy position and the degree of executive power invested in the home secretary crucially opened up the Home Office to the lobbying activities of non-governmental organizations seeking to champion the claims of particular refugee groups. Two factors, both associated with the First World War, help explain why children were easily the object of the most sustained lobbying. Firstly, the extreme violence of the First World War, and its recording in visual imagery, may have helped to change attitudes to the physical signs of suffering. Starvation, for example, lost its association, if only temporarily, with «lazy and morally inadequate human beings».²¹ Disabled war veterans, particularly those who were blinded or who had lost a limb, evinced considerable interest and public support across European nations.²² These examples indicate how European societies became more familiar with, and more sympathetic towards, signs of human suffering. Secondly, if sympathy towards the suffering was routinely reserved only for one's own side in the conflict, the development and practices of distinctively international humanitarian agencies helped ensure that children were at least partial exceptions to partisan sympathies. The name of the Save the Children Fund (SCF), founded in 1919 by the philanthropic sisters Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton, indicates quite clearly the special force of children's suffering.²³ Jebb's experience as a relief worker in the early Balkan wars, and her specific distress at the vulnerabilities of Muslim Albanian refugee children, led her to campaign for all children affected by war. Photography and visual imagery, and the seeming documentary proof of suffering that they offered, were a key element in their educative and fund

20 CESARANI, David. «An Alien Concept? The Continuity of Anti-Alienism in British Society before 1940», CESARANI, David; KUSHNER, Tony (Ed.). *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain*. London: Cass, 1993; ROWE, Michael. «Sex, 'race' and riot in Liverpool, 1919», *Immigrants & Minorities*, 19/2 (2000), p. 53-70.

21 HUNGER, James Vernon. A Modern History, cited in KIND-KOVÁCS, Friederike. «The "Other" Child Transports: World War I and the Temporary Displacement of Needy Children from Central Europe», *Revue d'histoire de l'enfance «irrégulière»*, 15 (2013), p. 75-109.

22 VERSTRAETE, Pieter; SALVANTE, Martina; ANDERSON, Julie. «Commemorating the disabled soldier: 1914-1940», *First World War Studies*, 6/1 (2015), p. 1-7; BOURKE, Joanna. *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

23 MAHOOD, Linda. *Feminism and voluntary action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876-1928*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

raising activities from the start.²⁴ These activities comprised fund raising, governmental lobbying and arranging relief on the ground victims of war, famine and forced migration in Armenia, Austria, Germany, Greece, Russia and in all of the regions affected by the First World War and its aftermath.²⁵ In addition, the SCF and other aid organizations transported groups of children away from disaster zones for periods of rehabilitation.

President Aguirre's plea for the evacuation of women and children from the Basque country succeeded because Europeans shared some significant items in their cultural systems. An ideology of childhood that sacralized innocence and vulnerability turned the already widespread fear of aerial bombardment into a morally objectionable and indefensible military tactic. The ruthless deployment of that tactic in Europe, and in the context of unprecedented media coverage, would bring immediate results because states had, in some sense, become emotional.

3. MOBILIZING COMPASSION

The Times journalist Geroge Lowther Steer was in Bilbao having dinner with colleagues on the evening of the 26 April 1937. Sometime during that dinner the journalists were sought out by a Basque government official who told them that Guernica had been destroyed. Steer set out for Guernica and when he got there he found a scene of utter devastation. His report, published in both the *Times* and the *New York Times* on 28 April, was vivid and unsparing. «In the form of its execution and the scale of destruction it wrought, the raid on Guernica is unparalleled in military history», wrote Steer before accurately identifying the object of the bombardment as the «demoralization of the civil population' and the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race».²⁶ Despite having been in Abyssinia to witness Italian air assaults on Ethiopian towns and

24 KIND-KOVÁCS, Friederike. «The "Other" Child Transports», p. 3, 6; GORIN, Valérie. «L'enfance comme figure compassionnelle: étude transversale de l'iconographie de la famine aux dix-neuvième et vingtième siècles», *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 22/6 (2015), p. 940-962; LARA MIQUEL, Avelina; COMAS RUBÍ, Francisca. «The War Child. Childhood photographed in the Republican military press during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39)», *History of Education and Children's Literature*, 23/1 (2018), p. 279-303.

25 MAHOOD, Linda. *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children Fund, 1876-1928*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

26 *The Times*, 28 April 1937.

bases Steer successfully established the idea that an epochal change had taken place. The destructive possibilities of air power were no longer simply feared but, for those inclined to trust Steer's reporting, now a demonstrable fact.²⁷

Every facet of the Spanish Civil War was, of course, fiercely contested. Nationalists initially denied it had happened at all and then attempted to pin the blame on Basque communists, alleging that they had burned the town to the ground in search of a propaganda victory. Steer's journalism was therefore arguably more effective precisely because he did not readily identify with socialism or the political left. He was something like a liberal nationalist, and a particularly romantic one, who wrote with melancholy regret at the clash of modern political ideologies on display in Spain. The Basques were an ancient, dignified and innocent people caught up in a vicious struggle and this distinction probably aided the genuine sense of international outrage stimulated by Steer's reports.

Probable and prominent readers of the Times that April morning included Hitler, who ordered copies to be confiscated and destroyed and put Steer on a Gestapo wanted list, and Picasso who was reportedly immediately outraged and who employed the same language and imagery when announcing displays of his masterpiece.²⁸ Less celebrated but more important for the purposes of this paper was the Liberal MP Wilfred Roberts. By the afternoon of the 28 April Roberts was on the telephone to the Home Office in his capacity as the secretary of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJC). Officially an «all-party, non-political, non-secretarian» body founded to provide humanitarian aid for the victims of the war in Spain, Roberts was seeking the permission of the Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, to land child refugees in Britain for a temporary period. According to the surviving note of the conversation Roberts referred to the strength of public feeling around the bombings and its victims and urged a speedy decision because «the time was approaching when there may be no children left to remove».²⁹

The National Government was clearly reluctant to admit refugee children from Spain who it understood as representing a risk to a declared policy of non-intervention and, whatever the guarantees offered by charitable

27 RANKIN, Nicholas. *Telegram from Guernica: The Extraordinary Life of George Steer, War Correspondent*. Faber, 2003.

28 LAITY, Paul. «What Sport!», *London Review of Books*, 25 (2003), p. 11, 13-14.

29 TNA Home Office (HO) 213/287, 28 April 1937. Note of a telephone call to the Home Office from Wilfred Roberts, 28 April 1937.

organizations, were always another potential claim on the public purse. However, recent work on the psychosocial dimensions of state formation help to indicate the extent to which European states had also become emotional. In this work emotions are not attributed to sovereign individuals but to communities or regimes whose modes of feeling are learnt and communal and which have causal effects. Emotions, as is evidenced by the tangible fear for the Basque children, helped to constitute negotiating spaces where actors crossed organisations, sectors and nations. These actors troubled the categorical boundaries central to much historical explanation, between state and non-state actors for example, and they engaged in what Shona Hunter has called the «connective tissues of governance».³⁰ These tissues were the emotional registers or regimes felt by historical actors and deployed, in this case, to move the National Government to lay down conditions about both the financing of the evacuation plan for refugees and the selection of children for it. Even after having granted permission for the plan to go ahead the government vacillated. Officials from the Home Office, the Ministry of Health, and even Prime Minister Baldwin and Home Secretary Simon themselves, spent the first three weeks of May 1937 trying to persuade the NJC that the whole idea of evacuation was deeply flawed and not worth pursuing. In doing so they faithfully, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, followed the advice given to them by the Save the Children Fund.

Following an emergency council meeting to discuss the evacuation of children from Spain the SCF submitted a memorandum to the Home Office that set out its opposition to the scheme. This opposition was not based on finance or the possibilities of political propaganda although both are identified as matters for secondary consideration. Instead, the principal opposition for opposing the removal of children to England is presented as medical and scientific. Basque national character was more suited to France than to England, argued the General Secretary of the SCF Louis Golden in a memorandum for the Home Office, and the SCF urged that any evacuation should locate children in the French Basque country. «The psychological effect on the children would be far less harmful» because «climate of South West France approximates more to that of Northern Spain than the English climate».³¹ «Experience» had shown that «French food, close to that which

30 HUNTER, Shona. *Power, Politics and Emotions. Impossible Governance?* London: Routledge

31 TNA, HO 213/287 10 May 1937. Draft statement for consideration from the Save the Children Fund.

the Basque children are used to, has caused gastric troubles amongst Spanish children». It followed that the strangeness of English food would result in «increased health problems here». «Manners and customs» would also be less strange in France than in Britain and Golden held out the possibility that children could go to «households of their own people, living more or less in their own way, speaking the same language and practicing the same religion». In sum, removal from the Basque country to England would, Golden predicted, give rise to the «dire consequences associated with a state of refugeedom». Golden had already explained his personal objection to the scheme in more vernacular and emphatic terms when he telephoned the Home Office to offer a personal view that he would rather the children «die in their own land than rot slowly in exile where they deteriorate physically, morally and mentally».³²

This may seem surprising advice from a humanitarian agency. Yet charitable agencies were no less affected by the professionalization of welfare than the growing number of state services. Golden's advice reflected extant professional opinion of a male leader in a leadership position in a major international welfare organization.³³ It invoked, rather than explained, the psychological damage imposed by evacuation and exile it hinted at the possibilities of importing infectious diseases into the United Kingdom. Golden's emphatic opposition to the evacuation plan and his reference to the condition of refugeedom hints at a new social category underpinned by forms of knowledge and expertise possessed by those with experience of refugees in the field.³⁴ Reflecting its origins in refugee work conducted in the shadow of the First World War and in the collapse of the ethnically-mixed Ottoman and Habsburg empires, Golden's specialized knowledge was highly racialised. Human health and behaviour flourished in appropriate national territories and movement away from it is seen as necessarily negative. It is violation of a sense of belonging that individuals need, and only reified geographical territory can give. It is not difficult to detect here the influence of colonial

32 TNA HO 213/287, 4 May 1937. Note of a telephone call to the Home Office from Louis Golden.

33 Further work would be needed to establish whether this was a gendered view and that voices on the ground, particularly those of women, might have been very different. There is scattered evidence to suggest this was the case. See, for example, STORR, Katherine. *Excluded from the Record: Women, Refugees and Relief 1914-1929*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010.

34 GATRELL, Peter. «Refugees—What's Wrong with History?». *Journal of Refugee Studies*, published online April 2016. URL: <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/30/2/170/2453244>

anthropology and a politics of define and rule that would eventually come to define the building of international institutions for refugee management.³⁵

Yet, as the eventual arrival of the children in England clearly indicates, this professional advice was not decisive. For while a racialised anthropology framed all interactions between humanitarian organizations and government the fact that the refugees were children, and widely regarded as Basque, enabled Roberts to reassure officials that the children were suitable candidates for exile in England. The NJC had not overlooked the question of climate or of certain habits of life and certain types of food, Roberts told Simon, but the climate of Bilbao differs little from that of London. The prolonged discussion of climatic conditions that followed was an important part of negotiations because they were widely assumed to play a crucial role in determining national characteristics. Richard Ellis, a pediatrician who worked with the Spanish Medical Aid Committee and who flew to Bilbao to examine children before evacuation also reassured the government that «The group is not strictly speaking exclusively Basque in origin though the majority are of an obviously different physical type from the Souther Spaniard. Many have light brown or even red hair and very few could be described as swarthy. Their facial colouring would usually pass for that of a sunburnt child».³⁶

The implicit message was that the Basques were not like the intemperate, lazy and violent Southern European races that George Orwell had been taught to hate at school.³⁷

If climatic conditions, and so national character, were similar in Britain and the Basque country then it followed, Roberts told Home Secretary Simon, that the Basques have a natural sense of affinity with Great Britain. There were longstanding trading links between Britain and the Basque country and, as John Walton has pointed out, the increasing number of tourists to San Sebastian were cultivated by a message political order, social moderation and civilization.³⁸ Basque Seaman, Roberts reminded Home Office officials had

35 FRANK, Matthew; REINISCH, Jessica. «Refugees and the Nation State in Europe 1919-59», *Journal of Contemporary History*, 49/ 3 (2014), p. 477-490. On anthropology see, for example, PELS, Peter; SALEMINK, Oscar (Ed). *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000; MAMDANI, Mahood. *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

36 LEGARETTA. *The Guernica Generation*, p. 100.

37 ORWELL, George. *Collected Essays*. Volume i, p. 473.

38 Walton, John K. «British Perceptions of Spain and their Impact on Attitudes to the Spanish Civil War», *Twentieth Century British History*, 5/3 (1994), p. 283-299.

supported the British war effort by ferrying iron ore to Britain despite the lethal threat posed by German submarines patrolling the Atlantic.

Yet while this sustained engagement with professional knowledge was important it was surely the media, and the proliferation of refugee images that they helped to ensure, which explains the eventual arrival of the children in England. The arrival in Southampton Harbour in May 1937 of 3,389 children, 219 women teachers and 15 priests as refugees from the Spanish Civil War was viewed by the local and national media as an event of considerable importance. Local and national newspapers devoted significant column inches to the arrival and settlement of the children, and both the BBC and the major newsreel companies had cameras covering disembarkation. Recognizing the opportunity for a good human story, Movietone, Gaumont and Paramount also had follow-up pieces. In addition to this already extensive coverage, a number of national and local films were produced in an attempt to raise funds to help care for the children. Arguably the most famous of these was Basil Wright's *Modern Orphans of the Storm* –shown nationally by way of a deal with Odeon Cinemas– but less well known were *Save Spanish Children* and an unknown number of films produced regionally.

The form and content of this media coverage has been analysed elsewhere so it is sufficient to simply note here it endlessly repeated the idea that the children were a pliant and homogeneous group of young Basque Catholics.³⁹ Using the label Basque was one implicit way of creating a set of refugees who were worthy of sympathy and support. Another was to simply emphasize, in text and images, the assumed vulnerability and innocence of the refugees as children. So, building on the sentimentalized notions of childhood current in Western Europe, newspapers described the children as «pitiable», «bewildered», «nerve racked tinies» and «poor little waifs from a stricken land».⁴⁰ The refugees were also typically photographed in a number of passive roles. One of the most popular of these images appears to have been a picture of one or two children with their belongings in transit.⁴¹ Others featured the children in receipt of some sort of aid, either being washed or receiving food

39 MYERS, Kevin. «The Ambiguities of aid and Agency», *Cultural and Social History*, 6/1 (2009), p. 29-46.

40 The quotations come from a number of local and national newspapers: *Hampshire Advertiser* and *Southampton Times*, 22 May 1937; *Daily Mail*, 24 May 1937; *Daily Mirror*, 24 May 1937

41 A sense of the style and content of this photography can be gauged by the pictures contained in the Hulton Getty archive: www.gettyone.com/source/hulton/ default.asp [accessed 7 August 2016].

and clothes in shots seemingly designed to play on the emotions of readers and viewers.⁴² As Caroline Brothers has argued in her analysis of refugee photographs published in France and Britain, «powerlessness, apoliticism and pathos were inscribed into almost all images».⁴³ The pathos of these images of refugee children was accompanied by rhetorical invocations of English peace, stability, toleration and humanity that stressed the therapeutic and disciplinary effects of camp life in England.

In other words, the emerging mass media reproduced refugee children as passive recipients of aid who were also subject to regimes of control and regulation. Innocence and passivity was ascribed to children, partly to maximise the fund raising opportunities offered by the ideology of childhood but also as a method for stressing the superior and therapeutic properties of British civilisation. Recent research, including by the authors, as made clear how these mass media images silenced alternative, and educationally progressive, portrayals captured in films of colonies in Spain. In those films children are shown participating in labour projects and in collective decision making. They are, argues Roberts, «representing the place that children could play in the evolution of a different and new world. A sense of active agency is conferred upon the children, who are represented as individual actors in their own right, contributing to the relief effort on a practical level through growing food and taking responsibility for their own care and that of younger children, and on an ideological level through their participation in the formulation of a new way of collective living».⁴⁴ The children were physically safe from bombs but, in the process, they had been transformed into objects of pity that confirmed and elaborated racialised notions of national identity.

4. REFUGEE PEDAGOGY

The dominance in the literature on policy-making and the provision of relief has resulted in a dearth of work that investigates and explores the agency of refugees. Yet a range of historical, literary and sociological studies, suggest

42 *Daily Mail*, 24 May 1937.

43 BROTHERS, Caroline. *War and Photography*, p. 143.

44 ROBERTS, Siân. «Activism, agency and archive: British activists and the representation of educational colonies in Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War», *Paedagogica Historica*, 49/6 (2013), p. 796-812.

that artistic and educational creativity have long been associated with the experience of exile.⁴⁵ Already by the turn of the century, for example, Georg Simmel identified the figure of the stranger as a «trader, an intermediary between cultures», who brought new qualities to society and existed in a condition of «unbelonging».⁴⁶ John Berger's concept of «transient anonymity» and James Clifford's notion of 'travelling cultures' have similarly sought to capture the experiential and creative consequences occurring through rupture with kinship, locality, occupation and nation.⁴⁷ Perhaps most celebrated of all, and specifically concerned with the quality of exile and with the «the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place and between the self and its true home», was Said's work on the essential sadness of exile.⁴⁸ This sadness of exiles has become almost proverbial in literary studies and, as Said notes, a celebrated part of the modern Western canon. Less celebrated, and certainly less elitist, has been the expression of that creativity in ruthless «investigations of the self», a kind of «scrupulous subjectivity», which could be translated into educational practices that championed both individual and collective transformations.⁴⁹ In fact, the tentative proposal here is that a set of educational practices emerged in the first half of the twentieth century at, taken together, formed a distinctive refugee pedagogy.

What were the dimensions of this pedagogy? It can be defined heuristically using the tradition of work associated with American philosophical pragmatism, and in the contemporary work of philosopher Gert Biesta, where education is defined as a «coming into the world» in a process that has distinct experiential, reflective and interactive features. Refugee pedagogy began from an experience of discrimination, forced migration and exile, and from an understanding of the emotional dimensions and consequences of those processes. Refugees, and refugee educators, had particular reasons for seeing

45 For some examples see COHEN, Susan. *Rescue the perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the refugees*. Valentine and Mitchell, 2010; O'NEILL, Maggie. «Walking, well-being and community: racialized mothers building cultural citizenship using participatory arts and participatory action research», *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41/1 (2018), p. 73-97.

46 MAROTTA, Vince. «Georg Simmel, the Stranger and the Sociology of Knowledge», *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 33/6 (2012), p. 675-689.

47 CLIFFORD, James. «Travelling Cultures in Lawrence Grossberg». NELSON, Cary; TREICHLER, Paula A. (Ed.). *Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 1992; BERGER, John; MOHR, Jean. *A Seventh Man*. Viking, 1975.

48 SAID, Edward. *Reflections on Exile: and other literary and cultural essays*. London: Granta, 2000, p. 180.

49 SAID, Edward. *Reflections on Exile*, p. 189.

education as neither a process of imposing control, nor of celebrating freedom. Instead, refugee educators worked to champion a notion of education which equipped individuals and groups to live peacefully with what and whom was other. It was, therefore, also distinctively reflective and creative. It made particular use of creative arts, expression and drama to work through, in the Freudian inspired language of the period, the troubled emotions that exile entailed.⁵⁰ Finally, this commitment to expression was also indicated by the focus on interactive learning, on being with and learning from, others.

Our initial research has identified a remarkable number of refugees who not only forged careers in the field of education but also committed themselves to promoting peaceful human relations. These educators worked in different fields, institutions and they had diverse specialisms. Some were primarily research scientists, some were administrators and policymakers and others were principally practitioners. Yet the common theme that unites their work is an interest and commitment to transforming education in search of peaceful human relations. These refugee educators were innovators, developing new concepts, categories and practices as they sought greater understanding of humans, their emotions and their relationships, in the search for peace and security. A preliminary list of those who practiced this refugee pedagogy, gleaned from both secondary reading and archival research, includes the Viennese art educator and therapist Marie Paneth (1895-1986); child-centred pedagogue Hilde Jarecki (1911-1995); social psychologist and anti-racist campaigner Henri Tajfel (1919-1982); psychologist, social researcher and campaigner for children's rights Mia Kellmer Pringle (1920-1983) and psychiatric social worker and educator Ilse Westheimer (1921-2004).

This refugee pedagogy is, to be sure, elusive. It has often been overshadowed by accounts of educational progressivism but there may be sufficient preliminary evidence to suggest that it existed in, and contributed to, a range of diverse practices and institutions. The questions this evidence raises are primarily empirical and they invite further research that engages with existing

50 ROITH, Christian. *They still draw pictures: The Spanish Civil War seen with children's eyes*, Universidad de Almería, p. 1-20. Web, 12 January 2019. URL: <http://www.ual.es/~chroith/pdf/CDCW.pdf>; HEYWOOD, Colin. «Children's Drawings of the Spanish Civil War», *Children and Youth in History*, Item #387, URL: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/items/show/387> [accessed February 18, 2019]; PADRÓS TUNEU, Núria; CARRILLO FLORES, Isabel; CASANOVAS PRAT, Josep; PRAT VIÑOLAS, Pilar; TORT BARDOLET, Antoni; GÓMEZ MUNDÓ, Anna. «The Spanish Civil War as seen through children's drawings of the time», *Pedagogica Historica*, 51/4 (2015), p. 478-495.

historiographical traditions but which allows the possibility for a transformed understanding based on the centrality, rather than the marginality, of refugees.

5. CONCLUSION

Movements of refugee children were contingent on developing ideologies of childhood and aid that were central components of state formation and the accompanying professionalization of welfare. This welfare often claimed an internationalist outlook but it necessarily developed out of, and operated within, national contexts. Humanitarian welfare was not separate from but bound up with the processes through which European nation-states developed both a new diplomatic language, and new bureaucratic procedures, to describe and deal with both aliens and refugees, whose number rose astronomically as nations and nationalism became increasingly exclusivist. Further work might be required to understand how this professionalised humanitarianism facilitated specific kinds of population movement and control. Yet what can be said is that it was also a crucial part of the emotional regimes of nation states.

In psychosocial studies of state formation and governance emotions are allocated a causal role in motivating actors and in generating and strengthening commitments and identifications. Emotions bring actors and objects together in a relational politics in which actors negotiate the space between themselves and the social order. This focus on the emotions has the potential to enhance the historical study of childhood, education and migration because it allows for the richness and complexity of human relationships. Fear and compassion are thus important explanatory factors in the interwar story of refugee children. This is not only because they help explain the evacuation and reception of refugee children but also because the same emotions conditioned the iconography of refugees. This iconography, especially around refugee children and women, imposed a passivity that profoundly affected their experiences. Whether these experiences were the same, and whether forms of representation made material differences to the experience of being a refugee, await further comparative research. So too, does our suggestion, no more than tentatively sketched here that the emotions associated with refugees, and especially refugee children, stimulated a distinctive form of pedagogy, with particularly strong experiential, reflective and interactive elements, that

would have significant educational legacies for the remainder of the twentieth century.



Kesten, Herman. *Die Kinder Von Gernika* (1939).



Guernica on display at the International Exhibition by Pablo Picasso, 30 June 1937.
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