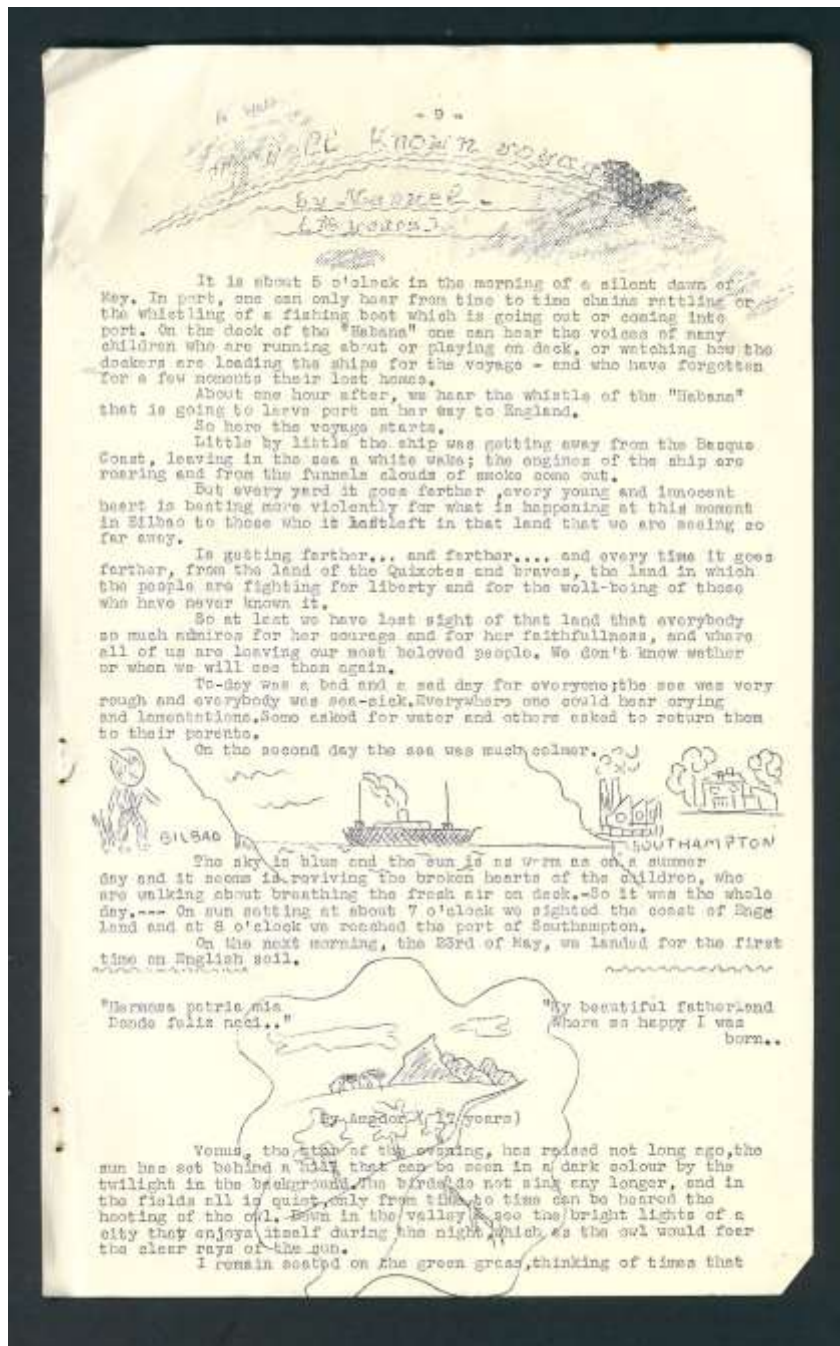


**Telling our stories – writings of the Basque child refugees:
 (7c) “A well known story” by Manuel aged 16 years, in the
Periodico de los chicos espanoles en Inglaterra (Magazine of the
 Spanish boys in England) No 1, 23 May 1940**



“It is about 5 o'clock in the morning of a silent dawn of May. In port, one can only hear from time to time chains rattling or the whistling of a fishing boat which is going out or coming into port. On the deck of the ‘Habana’ one can hear the voices of many children who are running about or playing on deck, or watching how the dockers are

loading the ships for the voyage – and who have forgotten for a few moments their lost homes.

About one hour after, we hear the whistle of the ‘Habana’ that is going to leave port on her way to England.

So here the voyage starts.

Little by little the ship was getting away from the Basque coast, leaving in the sea a white wake; the engines of the ship are roaring and from the funnels clouds of smoke come out.

But every yard it goes further, every young and innocent heart is beating more violently for what is happening at this moment in Bilbao to those who have left in that land that we are seeing so far away.

Is getting farther ... and farther ... and every time it goes farther, from the land of the Quixotes and braves, the land in which the people are fighting for liberty and for the well-being of those who have never known it.

So at last we have lost sight of that land that everybody so much admires for her courage and for her faithfulness, and where all of us are leaving our most beloved people. We don’t know whether or when we will see them again.

To-day was a bad and a sad day for everyone; the sea was very rough and everybody was sea-sick. Everywhere one could hear crying and lamentations. Some asked for water and others asked to return them to their parents.

On the second day the sea was much calmer.

The sky is blue and sun is as warm as on a summer day and it seems to be reviving the broken hearts of the children, who are walking about breathing the fresh air on deck. So it was the whole day... On sun setting about 7 o’clock we sighted the coast of England and at 8 o’clock we reached the port of Southampton.

On the next morning, the 23rd of May, we landed for the first time on English soil.”