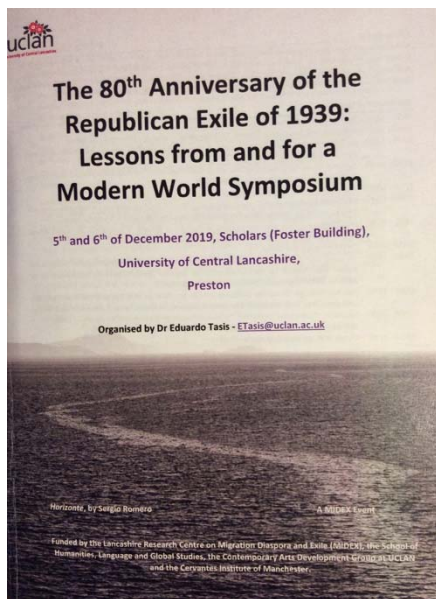


**The 80th Anniversary of the Republican Exile of 1939:
Lessons from and for a Modern World Symposium.**

5th and 6th December 2019, University of Central Lancashire, Preston.

***Threads of Exile. The Basque Children Evacuated from Bilbao to Southampton on 23 May 1937:
Solo por tres meses (Only for three months).***

A talk by Simon Martinez, report on the Symposium by Barbara Coombs.



**Symposium programme cover – Dr Eduardo Tasis,
University of Central Lancashire.**



Simon Martinez – BCA'37UK.

The year 1939 marked the end of three years of conflict that led to the 'defeated', those who managed to cross the border, into a long journey of exile. This journey should have taught the world many lessons, but history always seems to repeat itself. Today the origins of conflict may be rooted in different places (Myanmar, Syria, North Korea), but the result is the same: an exile that perpetually repeats itself.

Only a transdisciplinary approach would allow us to understand such a complex matter. With this in mind, papers will examine the artistic expressions of this exile (cinema, literature, art), as well as the general concepts of exile, migration and diaspora from a variety of perspectives: cultural, artistic, philosophical, political and sociological. Moreover, current local organisations and refugees will converse about their experiences with the aim of establishing a dialogue between the past and the present: what are the lessons learnt from the Spanish Republican diaspora that might help us understand and deal with the current migration crisis? And how can the lessons that we are learning on a daily basis shed light on the Republican diaspora?

Eduardo Tasis Moratinos, UCLan Symposium Programme, p3, 2019.

In a packed two days 10 contributions on the exile - papers, film, dance and song, and a Q&A session - were given which together discussed the cultural, political and historical context of exile identity for the many exiles who went to Mexico and Uruguay, and the 4000 or so child evacuees who had left Bilbao on the 21 May 1937 for Britain and the 400 of this 4000 who became exiles in Britain on the 1 April 1939 – the day of the final surrender of the Spanish Republic following the second *coup d'état* against the elected Republican Government of Juan Negrín. A further three

presentations were given by refugee support organisations working in Lancashire, Manchester and South London.

Most moving was the video interview, reading of her work, and Q&A with Angelina Muñiz Huberman who travelled out of Spain with her parents as a child and became a second generation exile in Mexico in 1942. Her life in Mexico amongst the Republican Diaspora was one of great artistic and political discourse and she described the interplay of this most unusual context with her development of new genres of pseudomemories, poetic reason and poems and fiction of exile. In her interview with Eduardo Tasis and through the questions from the audience she developed her understanding of Poetic Reason – something combining experience and mysticism, arriving and starting, and exile from the viewpoint of a child. The distortion of fact by thoughts and desires necessary for an exile to build an identity was illustrated by the metaphor of the exile having a packed suitcase under their bed. Angelina is of Jewish descent so the packed suitcase of the Jew fleeing perennial program, is one of readiness for flight from persecution. But it becomes in her narrative a suitcase packed in readiness to rush back to Spain to rebuild a Republican Democratic Country which had been destroyed by the Dictator Franco. In the first suitcase is a deeply pessimistic and fearful view of life. In the second suitcase is a very optimistic and hopeful view which was dashed to pieces in 1945 by the failure of the Allies to overthrow Franco.

Simon Martinez's talk about the Basque Children was well received by the audience made up of young Spanish academics and post grad students, and two other second generation *Niños Vascos* and members of their families.

The Symposium ended with songs performed by David Pérez Rodríguez accompanied by John Goggins on piano. The performance of popular songs like Sevillanas and songs from popular opera genre Zarzuela served as a connection for the exiles to their lost homeland. The lyrics of these traditional songs became through *poetic reason* the language and emotion of coping with exile and in turn these lyrics were transmitted back into Spain during the long years of the dictatorship.

The BCA'37UK thanks Dr Tasis for his invitation to join in the conversation about the Spanish Republican Exile. And thanks are due to MIDEX (Lancashire Research Centre on Migration Diaspora and Exile (UCLan), SHLGS (School of Humanities, Language and Global Studies (UCLan), CADG (Contemporary Arts Development Group (UCLan), and Instituto Cervantes de Mánchester for funding the event.