

Childhood and humanitarian mobilisations in historical perspective

Roundtable around Célia Keren's new book *La cause des enfants. Humanitaire et politique pendant la guerre d'Espagne (1936-1939)* [The children's cause. The politics of humanitarianism during the Spanish Civil War]

Wednesday 29 April 2026, 11.00 – 16.15

Roscoe 3.3



Postcard, available at <https://cartoliste.ficcdl.info/article4551.html?lang=fr>

Célia Keren (Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, UVSQ).

A former student at ENS-Ulm, Célia Keren is Senior Lecturer at the Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (UVSQ). She has published extensively on the history of humanitarianism and the evacuation of Spanish children in France.

11.00 – 12.30 – ‘New research on the history of children and humanitarianism’

Chaired by Célia Keren.

Eilidh Hornigold (Lancaster University) The mind-body connection: health outcomes for child refugees during and after the Spanish Civil War (1937-2026)

Eilidh holds a MA in Spanish and Italian from the University of Edinburgh and a MLitt in Comparative Literature from the University of St Andrews. She is a second year NWCDTP funded PhD Researcher at Lancaster University, working in collaboration with Carlisle Archive Centre.

Nerea Wachter (Manchester Metropolitan University) The Limits of Humanitarianism? Caring for Tuberculous Refugee Children in France

Nerea Wachter is in the second year of their NWCDTP-funded PhD at Manchester Metropolitan University and is part of the Safe and Sound PhD Team. Their research focuses on the relationship between humanitarianism, child evacuations and medical borders.

Charlie Gibbs (University of Manchester) 'Manchester's response to Chernobyl? The Chernobyl Children's Project, anti-nuclear advocacy and grassroots humanitarianism'.

Charlie Gibbs holds a BA in History and Sociology and a MA in History of Science, Technology and Medicine from the University of Manchester. In September 2026, he will start his ESRC-funded PhD at the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute and the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine in collaboration with the Chernobyl Children's Project.

12.30 – 14.00 – Lunch at Christie's

14.15 – 16.15 Roundtable on Célia Keren's *La cause des enfants*.

Chaired by Ana Carden-Coyne (Director of the Centre for the Cultural History of War, Manchester)

This roundtable will centre around Célia Keren's new book on the making of a humanitarian cause around Spanish children, which involved a constellation of very diverse and often rival actors, including trade-unionists, Catholic intellectuals, representatives of the Vatican and feminist activists. In her book, Keren argues that aid to children offered a way to act while sidestepping the dilemmas posed by the war and European politics at a time framed by clear dichotomies: pacifism or anti-fascism? Security or solidarity? Freedom or submission to the Pope? Keren's book raises important questions about humanitarianism and politics and about how to incorporate local dynamics into broader global and transnational histories. It offers valuable insights on humanitarian mobilisation and child protection at a time when, according to UNICEF, more than one in six children globally now live in areas affected by conflict. It also sheds necessary light on a war that still shapes Spanish and European politics.

Antoine Burgard (University of Manchester).

Antoine Burgard is Senior Lecturer in contemporary history of humanitarianism at the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute. His research focuses on children in modern situations of war and displacement. His doctoral thesis was a transnational analysis of the resettlement of a group of young Holocaust survivors from Europe to Canada.



Jo Laycock (University of Manchester)

Jo Laycock is a Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Manchester. She is a historian of refugees, migration and humanitarianism in the modern world. Her work focuses on Armenia and its diasporas.

Stephanie Wright (Lancaster University)

Stephanie Wright is a lecturer in Modern European History at Lancaster University. She is a historian of Spain, with a particular interest in the history of health, disability, gender, and sexuality from the Spanish Civil War to the transition to democracy. Her research has been published in outlets such as *Past and Present*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, and *Social History of Medicine*, and her first monograph on war disability after the Spanish Civil War is under contract with Oxford University Press.