

From Bilbao to Merthyr: Basque Industrial Migration to Wales in the Late 19th, Early 20th Centuries*

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Dowlais-era (Wales) XX. mendearen lehendabiziko hamarkadan ailegatu ziren euskal langile taldeak, Dowlais Iron Works eta Sociedad de Altos Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao enpresen arteko akordio bategatik emigratu ziren. Lan honetan E. P. Martin, Dowlais Works-en manager nagusiaren lana azpimarratzen da, epe luzean euskal kolektibitate bat Dowlais-en finkatzeak ekarriko zituen abantailak nabaritu zuelako.

Giltza-Hitzak: Euskaldunak. Wales. Alboko migrazioa. Altzairua. Langile espezializatuak. Transnazonala.

Los trabajadores vascos que llegaron a Dowlais (Gales) en la primera década del siglo XX, sin embargo, lo hicieron como resultado de un convenio entre las compañías Dowlais Iron Works y la Sociedad de Altos Hornos de Bilbao, donde habían sido reclutados. Este trabajo destaca la actuación de E. P. Martin, el manager general de Dowlais Works, como una persona que vió los beneficios a largo plazo de construir una colectividad vasca en Dowlais.

Palabras Clave: Vascos. Gales. Migración lateral. Acero. Trabajadores especializados. Transnacional.

Cependant, la raison pour laquelle les travailleurs basques sont arrivés à Dowlais (Pays de Galles) pendant la première décennie du XXe siècle est la convention entre les sociétés Dowlais Iron Works et la Sociedad de Altos Hornos de Bilbao, où ils avaient été recrutés. Ce travail met en évidence la vie de E. P. Martin, le manager général de Dowlais Works, qui fut la personne qui comprit les bénéfices à long terme de la création d'une collectivité basque à Dowlais.

Mots-Clés : Basques. Galles. Migration latérale. Acier. Travailleurs spècialisés. Transnational.

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1. INTRODUCCIÓN

With the onset of industrialization in the second-half of the nineteenth century, the Bilbao river area (in the Basque region) was transformed into one of Spain's most industrial areas with steel and iron production being the principal heavy industries. The *Sociedad de Altos Hornos y Fábricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao* 'with 7,000 workers in its ironworks was the largest single concern in Spain.'¹ Simultaneously, the region witnessed intense demographic growth, the result of large-scale internal migration with the highest initial flow occurring during the industrial take-off (1876-1900). Most of the immigrants that arrived in the Bilbao area were young married couples with children.² The research considers a migratory process that took place from Biscay to Wales, some of the participants in which would have already migrated at least once within the Iberian Peninsula.

The classical model of the demand for labour is commonly referred to as a 'derived demand' as the labour demanded is only required for the profits it helps create for the company. The skilled and non-skilled Basque workers who came to Dowlais³ in the first decade of the twentieth century, however, came for a variety of reasons and the Dowlais management employed many of them, not just because of their potential contribution to profitability, but also as a result of the inter-organisational rapport that had built up between the Dowlais Iron Works' management⁴ and the *Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fábricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao*, the organisation that most of the

1. Raymond Carr, *Modern Spain: 1875-1980* (Oxford, 1980), p.55.

2. Manuel González Portilla and Rocío García Abad, 'Migraciones Interiores y Migraciones en Familia Durante El Ciclo Industrial Moderno. El Area Metropolitana de La Ría de Bilbao', *Revista Electronica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, Universidad de Barcelona, Vol. X, núm. 218 (67), 1 de agosto de 2006, p.1. For a wider discussion on both internal and external migration see Blanca, Sanchez-Alonso, 'Those Who Left and Those Who Stayed behind: Explaining Emigration from the Regions of Spain, 1880-1914', *The Journal of Economic History*, 60, 3 (2000), pp. 730-755.

3. Village and community of the county borough of Merthyr Tydfil, Wales.

4. "The Dowlais Iron Company was founded in 1759 when an agreement of co-operation was signed by 9 parties, to build a furnace for the production of iron. In its first year the primitive furnace produced 500 tons of iron. In 1763, another 22 acres of land was leased from Lady Windsor, which enabled the company to build more furnaces, mills, forges and housing for the growing workforce. In 1767 John Guest of Broseley, Shropshire, was appointed manager, and in 1782 he became a partner. By 1851, the Guest family had managed to buy out all the remaining partners until the company was brought under the sole ownership of Josiah John Guest. Under the management of the Guest family the company rapidly expanded in the wake of the railway boom of the 1820s and the 1830s. By 1842 over 5,000 people were employed by the company in 17 blast furnaces. By the end of the nineteenth century, local iron ore reserves were near exhaustion, and iron ore was imported from Spain. The import of raw materials precipitated a move to the coast and a new iron works was built on the East Moors at Cardiff Docks. Meanwhile the original iron works at Dowlais managed to consolidate its position as the most important iron works in south Wales, after it purchased the Penydarren works in 1859 and the Cyfartha works in 1898. In 1901 the end of Dowlais as an independent concern arrived when it became part of Guest, Keen and Company. In 1902, it became part of the Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds and Co. Ltd. The production of steel at Dowlais came to an end in 1930 when the steelworks closed." Taken from the description of the Dowlais Iron Company collection at the Archives of Wales, available at http://www.archiveswales.org.uk/anw/get_collection.php?inst_id=33&coll_id=78083&expand=

migrants had been recruited from⁵. The paper not only identifies examples of the favouritism that occurred but also presents a case for E. P Martin, the general manager of the Dowlais works at the time, as less of an opportunistic capitalist (an accusation which has been levied against him) and more of somebody who saw the long-term benefit of building a Basque community, an ideal that was certainly at odds with the classical model.

The topic has been the subject of varying degrees of interest in the academic community for some time.⁶ There seems to have been two classifications of Spanish immigrant to Wales in the period 1880-1930. The first were those who, unable to find gainful employment in their home country, decided to come to Wales to look for work and who found it in Merthyr Tydfil⁷ and other locations. This was not unique to Spanish industrial workers as “tramping,” loosely defined as the movement of labour from one geographic point to another, was a typical labour practice during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the majority of academic work on “tramping” assumes that the exclusive motive for that movement was the search for work.⁸ Economic considerations, however, are not and were not, the sole determinants of the number of potential movers, either as internal migrants or emigrants. Isaac suggests that the decision to move will only occur when the incentives to move (one of which is economic) have become so strong as to ‘overcome [the emigrants] natural disinclination to leave his old environment’.⁹ Johnson makes the point succinctly, in referring to nineteenth-century rural Ireland, by suggesting that during the Great Famine of the 1840s, the areas with the greatest economic distress did not necessarily show the greatest reduction in population, and that other forces both economic and social were present.¹⁰

5. Actually, this was not the first time when Dowlais Iron Works company had established contacts with its Basque counterparts. Back in the decade of 1870, some members of the Basque entrepreneur family Ybarra had settled an agreement with the Welsh company regarding its participation in the Biscayan mining industry through the Orconera railway company. *Archivo Foral de Bizkaia*, Bilbao, Familias, Ybarra 2087/001.

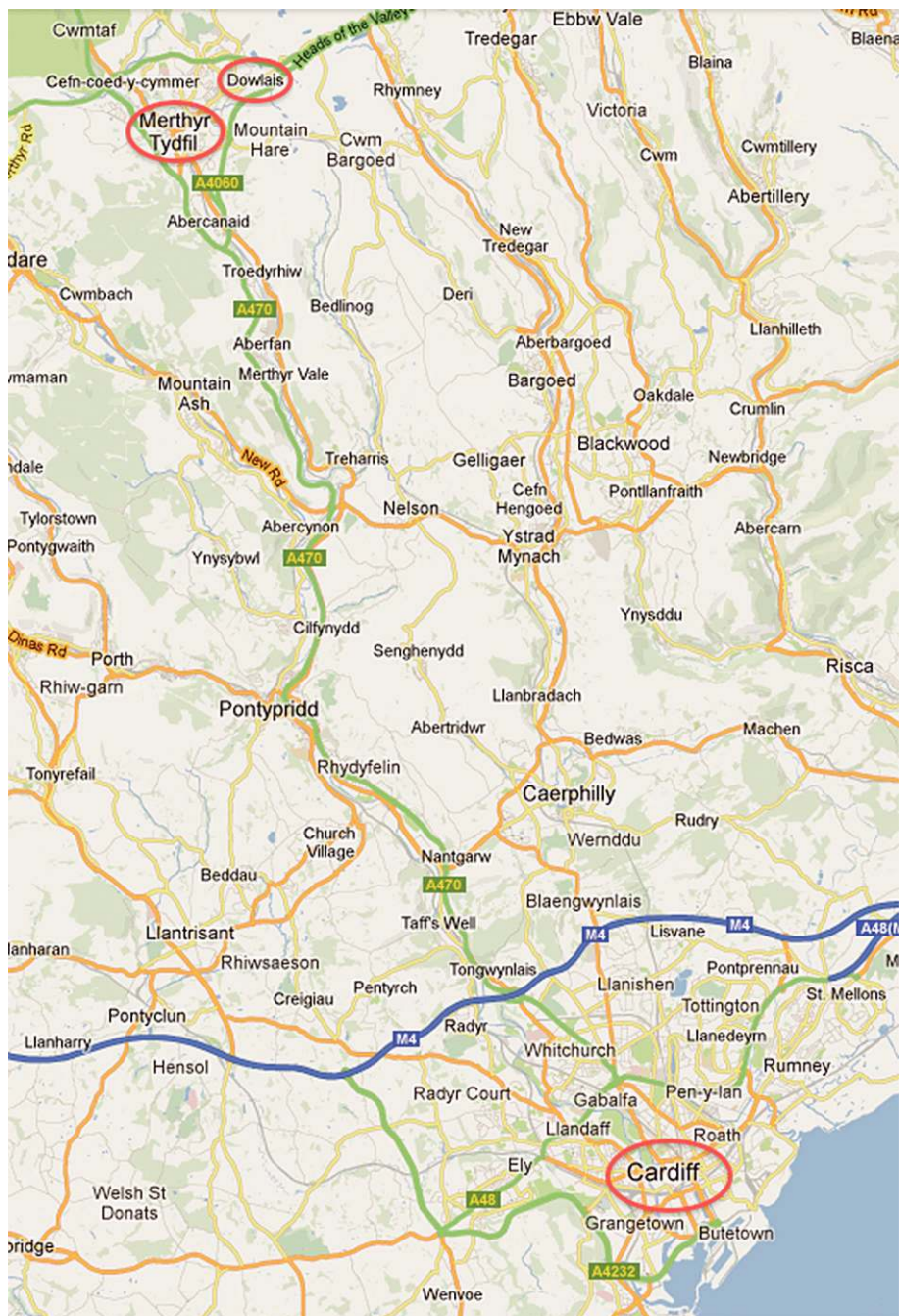
6. Examples include: Llewellyn, Carl, and Watkins, Hugh, *Los Desconocidos a L'Extranjero: Strangers in a Foreign Land* (Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society in Conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Central Library, 2001); Stradling R, *Wales and the Spanish Civil War: The Dragon's Dearest Cause?* (2004).

7. City and county borough in Southern Wales.

8. Examples include: E. J. Hobsbawm, ‘The Tramping Artisan’, *The Economic History Review*, 3 (1951), pp. 299-320. Southall, ‘The Tramping Artisan’, pp. 272-296. Alastair J. Reid, *United We Stand: A History of Britain's Trade Unions* (London, 2004), p. 33.

9. Julius Isaac, ‘European Migration Potential and Prospects’, *Population Studies*, 2 (1949), p. 379.

10. James H. Johnson, ‘The Context of Migration: The Example of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 15 (1990), p. 259.



Map 1: Location of Merthyr Tydfil and Dowlais in relation to the city of Cardiff, Southern Wales.

The second classification of Spanish immigrants to arrive in Merthyr came “to fill an industrial need” and were purposely recruited by the Dowlais Iron Company and, as Llewellyn and Watkins inform us, “In May 1900, these workers [twelve in total] sailed from Bilbao en route for Cardiff on one of the regular cargo boats which carried the Spanish iron ore.”¹¹

2. BASQUE EMIGRATION TO EUROPE: A PATH STILL NOT WALKED

The scientific research on the history and present-day evolution of the migratory movements from and into the Basque Country has mainly -if not exclusively- focused on the study of the so-called massive migrations, that is, the processes that involved or are involving significant amounts of people. Even though Basques were present from the beginning of the 16th century in remote places as the Americas or East Asia, usually as a result of internal movements of population within the Spanish and French colonial empires overseas, it was not until the third decade of the 19th century that the period known as “of massive emigration” started in the Basque Country, initially in the Northern, French side of the border, and since the 1840s, also from the Southern, Spanish Basque region. For more than one hundred years, up to the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, several American countries such as Argentina, Cuba, Uruguay, Mexico, United States and, lately, Venezuela received remarkable flows of Basque immigrants.¹² Although there is not a widely accepted quantification of them because of some problems derived from the lack of recognition of the category “Basques” in the international registries on migratory flows, it has been considered an estimate number of 200,000 Basque emigrants leaving Europe between 1830 and 1970 -quite a noteworthy amount, taking into account that the current population of the Basque Country is only about 3 million people.

The attractiveness of large numbers has indeed had an influence on the main lines of research; and thus, it has somehow hidden other migratory movements in which Basques were also participating during this time, in which may have been “less” but no least. They, simply, seem not to exist. As Moya states:

The concentration of scholarship on the United States and other receiving countries had obscured the fact that the single largest migratory stream in the world during that period [*between the middle of the nineteenth century and the World Depression of the 1930s*] took place within Europe rather than across the Atlantic. Indeed more than three times as many Europeans (105 million) moved long-distance across international and regional borders within the continent as

11. Llewellyn, Carl, and Watkins, Hugh, *Los Desconocidos a L'Extranjero: Strangers in a Foreign Land* (Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society in Conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Central Library, 2001).

12. Álvarez Gila, Óscar; “¿Una historiografía sobre un vacío? Dos décadas de estudios sobre el asociacionismo emigrante vasco”, paper presented at the *Congreso Internacional “El asociacionismo de la emigración española en el exterior: significación y vinculaciones”*, Zamora (Spain), 15-17 March 2012.

headed for the U.S. (32 million). And that number does not include short-distance moves to towns and cities.¹³

In contrast with the relatively large bibliography available on Basque migration to, for instance, Argentina or the United States, almost no study has been carried out on internal migration of Basques within Spain,¹⁴ or from the Basque Country to other places in Europe.¹⁵ Within this framework, the case of the Basque migration to Wales has remained practically non visible for the researchers until very recent times.

3. THE MAGNET

One of the reasons why the new group may have been drawn to the Dowlais/Merthyr area was that since the 1880s the industrial depression, which had been a worldwide phenomenon, left south Wales relatively untouched due to its valuable coalfields and brought the first 'genuine' immigrants.¹⁶ However, the Spanish immigrants to Wales in the period 1900-1930 seem to have fallen into two categories. The first were those who, unable to find gainful employment in their home country, decided to come to Wales to look for work and found it in Merthyr Tydfil and other locations.¹⁷ This was not unique to Spanish industrial workers, however, as "tramping," loosely defined as the movement of labour from one geographic point to another, was a typical labour practice during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the majority of academic work on "tramping" assumes that the exclusive motive for that movement was the search for work.¹⁸ However, economic considerations are

13. Moya, José C., «Immigration, Development, and Assimilation in the United States in a Global Perspective, 1850-1930», *Studia Migracyjne*, XXXV/3 (Varsovia, 2009): 89-104, cit in p. 90.

14. On the contrary, Basque historiography has shown more interest in the research of the incoming migrations to the Basque Country, and specially to the Western provinces (the current Basque Autonomous Community), because of the vast consequences that the change in the demographical base of the region caused in the economy, and the cultural and political balance. See, among others, García-Sanz Marcotegui, Angel: "El origen geográfico de los inmigrantes y los inicios de la transición demográfica en el País Vasco (1877-1930). Contribución al estudio de sus interinfluencias", *Ekonomiaz*, Bilbao, nº 9-10 (1982), pp. 189-223. Also García Abad, Rocio: "El papel de las redes migratorias en las migraciones de corta y media distancia", *Scripta Nova. Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, Barcelona, nº 94 (2001), pp. 1-13.

15. The study of internal migration from the French side of the Basque Country to other regions of France, and particularly to Paris and its surroundings, can be considered the only remarkable exception.

16. Llewellyn, Carl, and Watkins, Hugh, *Los Desconocidos a L'Extranjero: Strangers in a Foreign Land* (Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society in Conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Central Library, 2001). Difficult to interpret what the authors meant by 'genuine' but one can only assume it was related to the time spent in the locale and/or if the immigrant came with his/her family.

17. One source reminds us that, 'Around this period [i.e.: the early twentieth century], Wales is the only country, apart from the USA, to register net immigration'[<http://bdaugherty.tripod.com/cymru/history.html>, accessed 20 September, 2011].

18. Examples include: E. J. Hobsbawm, 'The Tramping Artisan', *The Economic History Review*, 3, 3 (1951), pp. 299-320; Neville Southall, 'The Tramping Artisan Revisited: Labour Mobility and Economic Distress in Early Victorian England', *Economic History Review*, 44,2 (1991), pp. 272-296; Alastair J. Reid, *'United We Stand: A History of Britain's Trade Unions'*, (London, 2004), p. 33.

not, and were not, the sole determinants of the number of potential movers, either as internal migrants or emigrants. Isaac suggests that the decision to move will only occur when the incentives to move (one of which is economic) have become so strong as to 'overcome [the emigrant's] natural disinclination to leave his old environment.'¹⁹ Johnson makes the point succinctly, in referring to nineteenth-century rural Ireland, by suggesting that during the Great Famine of the 1840s, the areas with the greatest economic distress did not necessarily show the greatest reduction in population, and that other forces both economic and social were present.²⁰ Social and political factors may well have contributed to the decision to leave. Brooks points out:

Ever since the Treaty of Paris put an end to the one-sided conflict with the United States, Spain has been in a state of troublous unrest. Barely a week has gone by without its record of riots and random shootings, of violent strikes, of cities in a state of siege, of the constitutional guarantees suspended in province after province.²¹

4. THE MIGRANTS

The second category of Spanish immigrants to arrive in Merthyr was probably those who came "to fill an industrial need" and were purposely recruited by the Dowlais Iron Company. It wasn't just the Spanish who were recruited, however. In May 1900, the same month that the Spanish appeared, the *Western Mail* reported:

It would appear that the stream of Irish immigrants flowing into the Merthyr and Dowlais district is destined, like the Tennysonian book, to go "on forever." During the past few weeks some hundreds of big, braw...sons of the Emerald Isle have left their native shores to fill up the much depleted ranks of the employed at the Cyfarthfa and Dowlais Iron Works.²²

Interestingly, the article clearly identifies the fact that the new Irish recruits were not skilled workers: 'They are all of the labouring class, and have been distributed about the works.'²³ In addition to the Irish, several hundred Jews were present in Merthyr at the time and had found work at the Dowlais Iron Works. In September 1903 they were embroiled in altercations with the Irish and Bellany suggests that the cause may have been because the 'Jews

19. Julius Isaac, 'European Migration Potential and Prospects', *Population Studies*, 2, 4 (1949), p. 379.

20. James H. Johnson, 'The Context of Migration: The Example of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 15, 3 (1990), p. 259.

21. Sydney Brooks, 'The Situation in Spain', *The North American Review*, 174, 1 (1902), p. 641. The Treaty of Paris to which he refers was that which ended the Spanish-American War and was signed on December 10, 1898.

22. 'Irish Labourers for Wales', *Western Mail*, 25 May 1900. For a fuller account see Paul O'Leary (ed.) *Irish Migrants in Modern Wales* (Liverpool, 2004).

23. *Ibid.*

had been brought over to work for lower wages than those offered to Irish labourers, thus putting them out of work.²⁴ The friction certainly seemed to lead to a Jewish exodus from Merthyr but seemed limited to unskilled employees. The Spanish, on the other hand, were all skilled men and, although there is some evidence of local friction, it doesn't seem to have been sufficient enough to drive the Spanish diaspora from the area.

The paper defines the migrant workers to Wales as Basques. Part of the rationale for this is that to become a "skilled" worker, the migrant would have had to spend about five to seven years in the Iron industry in the Bilbao river area in order to acquire the necessary accreditation. It is not known how many of the Dowlais group were initially internal migrants from other regions of Spain or how many had been born in *País Vasco* but it is known that some of the group had Basque names. Furthermore, a recent oral history survey amongst the current descendants of the early migrants to Dowlais highlights Barakaldo as the sending location and the Orconera as the company the ancestors had worked for prior to their leaving to work in south Wales.²⁵

The Basque immigrants that arrived in Merthyr were probably those who came 'to fill an industrial need' and were purposely recruited by the Dowlais Iron Company. Llewellyn and Watkins inform us that, 'In May 1900, these workers [twelve in total] sailed from Bilbao en route for Cardiff on one of the regular cargo boats which carried the Spanish iron ore.' Moreover, the "twelve" 'were accompanied...by John Griffiths and Thomas Howard, who acted as interpreters employed by the Dowlais Company.'²⁶ Another source suggests that in the same year i.e.: 1900 'several hundred Spanish workers and their families were brought to Dowlais'. If this incredibly large influx did occur it would have had to have happened in the last six months of the year as the Llewellyn and Watkins work is generally accepted as identifying the

24. Wendy Bellany, 'A Vanished Community', *The Merthyr Historian*, 16 (2003), p.101-109.

25. For discussions on Basque identity see: Enric Porqueres i Gené, 'Kinship Language and the Dynamics of Race: The Basque Case' in Wade, Peter (ed.), *Race, Ethnicity and Nation: Perspectives from Kinship and Genetics* (Oxford, 2007) pp. 125-44; Alvarez-Gila, Óscar 'Old World, New Generations: Changes in Perception of "Ethnic" Identity after the End of Mass Migration, Paper presented at the Workshop, "New Perspectives on European Migration to America", Växjö Universitet, Sweden, October 2009; The oral history project is on-going. A recent conference paper provides a suitable summary of the project: Stephen Murray, 'The Assimilation and Acculturation of the Descendants of early Twentieth century Spanish Industrial Immigrants to Wales', International Workshop on Migration History: "Migration to and from Europe: Different Modes of Inclusion and Exclusion towards Migrants in the Receiving Societies during the 19th and 20th Century", University of Trier, Germany, 24-26th November 2011.

26. Carl Llewellyn and Hugh Watkins, *Los Desconocidos a L'Extranjero: Strangers in a Foreign Land* (Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society in Conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Central Library, 2001). The subject has been of varying degrees of interest in the academic community for some time. This would include: Robert Stradling, *Wales and the Spanish Civil War: The Dragon's Dearest Cause?* (2004) and, more recently, Hywel Davies, *Fleeing Franco: How Wales Gave Shelter to Refugee Children from the Basque Country During the Spanish Civil War* (Cardiff, 2011). Professor Stradling's work is brief and in the context of recruitment amongst the immigrants for the Spanish Civil War; Davies's contribution is in the context of the contribution the Merthyr (Basque) community made to aid the Basque child evacuees.

timing of the first migration i.e.: nothing before May 1900.²⁷ These May pioneers to Dowlais can easily be referred to as 'lateral migrants' i.e.: ones who wished to practice the same trade as they had in the sending country just as late nineteenth-century steelworkers from Western Europe chose Philadelphia or Pittsburgh in the USA.²⁸

5. THE RATIONALE

Suggestions that E.P Martin was a classic capitalist of his time come from the perception, by some, that he saw labour as just another factor of production: 'he introduced labour-saving machinery whenever possible, incorporating many ideas gained from visits to America,' the underlying motive being, as with any profit-minded entrepreneur, to cut labour costs (and labour strife) by automation. Yet evidence exists that, at least with the Basque immigrants, he was prepared to consider accommodating more than that required purely to satisfy the 'short-term profit maximization' motive.

Since writing you last I find that I promised two men to come to Dowlais and told them to prepare for the voyage, they have given up their work and sold their furniture and on Sunday the[y] came and said they were ready. They are bringing on their wives, I take it for granted that two wont make much difference and will send them on this week when I will wire you, but I shall not make arrangements with any more till I hear from you. ²⁹

The term 'bringing on the wives' suggests the wives were to follow and this was indeed the case: 'Two men left Friday Trafalgar Swansea arrive Sunday night.' Scrawled on the reverse was the addition, 'You will notice these are coming to Swansea I think their wives are coming with them' H. Worton. 1 Sept'.³⁰ A group had already arrived before this date however: 'Some of those who had gone over to Spain some few weeks ago returned and brought their wives and families with them.' It is not known how many families travelled together but, referring to early twentieth-century Canary islander migration to Cuba and Puerto Rico, Parsons suggests 'not more than eight per cent of male emigrants were being accompanied by wives and families at this time.'³¹ E. P. Martin must have been able to provide these families

27. Anon- Given the figures referred to later in the article the 'several hundred' would seem to be somewhat of an exaggeration. See footnotes 35 and 36 below.

28. Bruce M. Stave, John F. Sutherland and Aldo Salerno, *From The Old Country: An Oral History of European Migration to America* (New York, 1994).

29. 'Post Office Telegraphs', from H. Worton, Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao, to E.P Martin, Dowlais Iron Works, 28 August 1900, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DG/A/1/737.

30. It highlights the link between South Wales and Biscay at the time. On 5 May the *Trafalgar* arrived at Swansea from Bilbao, 'Shipping Intelligence', *Western Mail*, 7 May, 1900 and on 8 May went to La Rochelle before returning to Bilbao, 'Shipping Intelligence', *Western Mail*, 9 May, 1900.

31. James J. Parsons, 'The Migration of Canary Islanders to the Americas: An Unbroken Current Since Columbus', *The Americas*, 39, 4 (1983), p. 477. The data referred to the year 1900.

with something they were unable to get in Spain, that is, the opportunity of a new improved life.³²

A further accusation levied against Martin was that he didn't approve of workers' rights, since he was principally a free marketer : '[he was chairman] of the South Wales Iron and Steel Workers' Sliding-Scale Board, an institution which was credited [by any legal means possible] with keeping the district free from labour disputes.'³³ The scheme was very much market-led, 'The sliding-scale, as it is called, [is a system] by which wages may almost be said to regulate themselves automatically in accordance with fluctuations in [the] price [of the finished product].'³⁴ Furthermore, the Iron and Steel Industry was not alone in using it: 'The sliding-scale method of determining wages was in effective operation after 1880...so that there is throughout a very close correlation between the variations in the wage percentage and the price of large coal.'³⁵ Yet for all his commitment to *laissez-faire* principles it was he, Martin that had recruited Fermín Urlezaga, vice president of *Sociedad de Obreros de la Región Vizcaína*, a strong labour association, together with another eleven men 'all firm Trades Unionists.'³⁶ There were several trade unions starting with the name "Sociedad de Obreros," the strongest one being the "Sociedad de Obreros del Hierro," based in Barakaldo, with one of its members Facundo Perezagua, the famous trade union leader. This association was in fact one of the foundation stones of the Unión General de Trabajadores, the socialist trade union, that gave birth to the Spanish Socialist Party, today's PSOE. So it makes sense to think that Urlezaga and the rest of his [group] were actually members of this specific Sociedad de Obreros del Hierro. Similarly, Melchor Esteban was recruited during the time of Martin's stewardship and was a well-known anarchist and atheist before he migrated to Wales.³⁷ Anarchist sympathies amongst the Basque group didn't stop on arrival in Wales either. Lloyds Bank records of the early 1900s show payments made to the *Director de Tierra y Libertad* from its Dowlais branch. Furthermore, Francis suggests that, it was 'the existence of Spanish colonies at Dowlais and Abercrave [that] brought [the Civil War]...in Spain closer and acted as a spur to many of their neighbouring communities.' It would seem Martin's enthusiasm to employ ski-

32. 'More Spaniards', *Merthyr Express*, 11 August 1900, p.4.

33. Engineering Heritage Biographies, Edward P. Martin [<http://heritage.imeche.org/Biographies/EdwardMartin>], accessed 1 May 2012].

34. L. L. F. R Price, 'Sliding Scales and Other Methods of Wage-Arrangements in the North of England', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 50, 1 (1887), p.7.

35. Brinley Thomas, 'The Migration of Labour into the Glamorganshire Coalfield: 1861-1911', *Economica*, 30, Nov (1930), p.282.

36. 'A Spanish Colony in Dowlais: Their Life and Labour Methods. A Reinforcement expected shortly', *Western Mail*, 2 June 1900.

37. Hywel Francis, 'Welsh Miners and the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5, 3 (1970), p.183. This comment is not directly attributable to Francis. The author, however, knows from his own research that Melchor Esteban was the father of Victoriano Esteban to whom Hywel Francis does refer.

lled Basque workmen overcame his natural inclination towards an unfettered labour market.³⁸

6. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Repatriation of earnings to family and friends has been, and still is, a normal course of action for emigrants generally. The company in Bilbao, and its counterpart in Dowlais, seemed to take a direct role in this repatriation however, at least for the first group that came over; the agent being the Orconera's London office. It was another example of the closeness between the two organisations:

I am in receipt of your favour of yesterday enclosing draft per £20 and list of names with amount (represented in English money) due to each relative and to be paid to E. Fernandez, to be distributed by him, as arranged by the Spanish workmen in your employ. I now have the pleasure to say that I have requested our Luchana House to pay to E. Fernandez the equivalent of £20 in accordance with the said arrangement.³⁹

The rationale for recruiting the skilled workmen from Spain, a point that no writer on the subject seems to dispute, is that they were brought over as part of a recruitment policy to replace the men who had volunteered for the Boer conflict.⁴⁰ Wales and Dowlais in particular, was an obvious place for them to come as they were 'lateral migrants' namely, ones who wished to practice the same trade as they had in the sending country.⁴¹ However, Hywel Davies's position is that Martin recruited 'under the deeply misguided impression that the Spaniards might be more biddable than local labour and could be used to undercut earnings and established work practices.'⁴² Given this close association with the trade union movement it seems unlikely that the new group would have deliberately put themselves in the industrial firing line. Support for this position comes from another source: 'if the idea was to

38. Bank statements provided by Carl Llewellyn, 2012. The Director to whom the remittances were sent was most probably Federico Urales aka Juan Montseny Carret. Born Reus 1864 died Salon (France) 1942. Described as, 'A champion of anarchism plain and simple', Miguel Iñiguez, *Extracts from a Historical Encyclopaedia of Spanish Anarchism*, [<http://www.christiebooks.com>, accessed 29 April 2012]. The newspaper was banned in 1919; Francis, 'Welsh miners', p.183.

39. Letter to E.P Martin, Dowlais Iron Co. from The Orconera Iron Ore Company, 2 Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, 6 June 1900, Incoming Letters 1900, N-O, DG/A/1/732, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff.

40. It is not known how many Dowlais men returned to their jobs after the conflict but the army co-operated with such a provision: December 15, 1900, CIVIL EMPLOYMENT A, 'Notification to employers of the return to civil life of soldiers whose former situations are being kept open for them'. Private Sullivan, 38 Bridge Street, Merthyr, a former employee of Dowlais, was one such person, Letters (Various) 1900, DG/A/1/737, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff.

41. Stave, Sutherland and Salerno, *From The Old Country*, in Stephen Murray, 'Nineteenth-Century Trade Union Sponsored Migration To and From North America c. 1850-1885' (PhD, Warwick University, 2010), p.155.

42. Davies, *Fleeing Franco*, p.14.

undercut the Welsh workers, it was a bad plan as most of those who came to South Wales were socialist or anarchist workers who had themselves been victimised for activity in Spain. They joined the local unions straight away.⁴³ Llewellyn and Watkins are under no doubt about Martin's motives, however, 'Fortuitously for Dowlais, at the same time [as the shortage of labour due to the Boer War] the Steel Workers of Basque Spain were on strike. The manager of Dowlais, with his eye to the main chance, went to Bilbao to recruit men from amongst the strikers.'⁴⁴ Telegrams at the time do confirm Martin's presence in Bilbao: 'Martin arrived Bilbao Monday-Orconera,' and the industrial conflict, 'Obregon Strike assumed large proportions and become general all over the district-Orconera.' Letters between Bilbao and Dowlais, however, do not identify Martin's motives for being there, but do suggest that the strike would not be long-lasting, 'Strike Obregon continues but signs of terminating, have informed Mr. Martin- Orconera.'⁴⁵ The idea, however, that the Basques were brought in order to get involved in a wage conflict seems a little at odds with the available evidence. This argument is endorsed by a *Western Mail* article at the time:

As the working staff has been so very much reduced by departures for the front and the embodiment of the Reservists and the Militia forces, it is certain that the fresh arrivals will be very acceptable at the present juncture and in view of the healthy and prosperous state of the iron and steel market.⁴⁶

It could be argued, of course, that Mr H. Worton, the Dowlais contact in Bilbao, deliberately recruited the left wing element in order to get rid of the problem, particularly since there was an industrial dispute at the time in Bilbao. Worton, however, was not a senior manager at the *Sociedad de Alto Hornos* and surely would not have jeopardised his own position by employing such tactics since the Basque company was a subsidiary of the Dowlais Iron Works, had been since 1873, and Martin was his boss.

The worker may have been more likely to stay in Dowlais if the whole family was encouraged to come. Pollard suggests that 'many workers were "transient, marginal and deviant," or were described as "volatile."' He goes on to suggest 'it was not necessarily the better [worker] but the stable one who was worth the most to the manufacturer.' The Dowlais management may have taken this longer term view on recruitment, rather than the classic short-term profit maximization one, and saw stability as a fundamental factor

43. Francis, 'Welsh Miners', p.183.

44. Comment Carl Llewellyn, 21 November 2011.

45. Telegram 24 April, Telegram 22 May, Telegram 23 May, Incoming Letters, N-O, DG/A/1/732, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff. An earlier telegram also reflects Martin's managerial status, Telegram 18 April, 'Please write us... Mr Martin's address after he leaves Paris don't forget to secure seats in the dining car from Calais to Paris', Incoming Letters, N-O, DG/A/1/732, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff.

46. 'Irish Labourers for Wales', *Western Mail*, 25 May 1900.

to the company's long-term success.⁴⁷ Martin was not so philanthropic as to pay for the workers' passages however:

I have paid the passage money of the following men who came over here to bring their families, with the understanding that the money which I have paid will be deducted from their wages: Lazero Prieto, wife and family, Servando Duenas, wife and family, The wife and family Juan González. These people left on Sunday by the S.S. Cyfarthfa for Cardiff + will arrive on Wednesday night. In all I paid £7 10. 0. Which they agreed to be deducted.⁴⁸

There is some confusion over the migration history of the Duenas family however. Julián Macho suggests that, 'The families sailed from Bilbao as had their husbands 2 years earlier [referring to 1900] Servando Duenas included, his wife Corina Duenas Echevabria and his four children Eulogio, Ramana, Juanita and Valentina.' However, Snr Duenas and his wife Corina are both recorded on the 1901 Census but none of his children. One of the children Emilio, not identified above, unfortunately died in December 1900 during the Merthyr smallpox epidemic of that year.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Senora Corina Duenas Echevabria is also identified in the 31 March 1901 Census as being employed by the Dowlais Works as a "Core Boy" in the "Steel Foundry." This would probably make her one of the first Basque women to be employed there. Whatever the truth of the family migration, Martin subsequently reimbursed the Basque subsidiary: 'On the fifteenth of this month I despatched Candido Gonzalez and family the last of the Spanish families for which I paid four pounds, he agreeing to have the money deducted from his earnings. I also send your account and all receipts of all the passage monies I have expended.'

47. Sidney Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution', *The Economic History Review*, 16, 2 (1963), pp. 254-255.

48. The phrasing suggests that Juan Gonzalez may already have been present in Dowlais and it was his family that were transported. 'Chain, or family, migration does seem evident in many cases, from wives and children reuniting with husbands and fathers to adult emigrants bringing out parents, couples going to join the wife's family, as well as young people going out to uncles', Charlotte Erickson, *Leaving England: Essays on British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* (Cornell, 1994), p. 233. Although Erickson was referring to Lancastrian emigrants in the second half of the twentieth century, chain emigration was very much the norm at the time from Spain also: Blanca Sanchez-Alonso, 'Those Who Left and Those Who Stayed behind: Explaining Emigration from the Regions of Spain, 1880-1914', *The Journal of Economic History*, 60, 3 (2000), p. 737; Letter from H. Worton, Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao, to E.PMartin, Dowlais Iron Works, 16 September 1900, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DG/A/1/737.

49. J. Macho, 'The Immigration of Spanish Migrants to Industrial Wales in the Early 20th Century and their Subsequent Assimilation into the Society', Dissertation, City of London Polytechnic, 1989, Swansea University, Miners' Library Dissertations, HM8>MAC, p. 14; The name is probably Dueñas instead of Duenas, and Echevarria instead of Echevabria. [It is possibly] the way they are spelt in the Census. It is interesting to note mistakes made by Welsh officials in [recording] Basque names; something quite usual in these migratory contexts. Similarly, the names of the first two children should be Eulogio and Ramona.

	£	s.	d.
S.S. Ragusa.....	11	0	0
S.S. Trafalgar.....	2	10	0
S.S. Reggio.....	7	10	0
S.S. Earl of Dumfries.....	4	0	0
Telegrams.....		15	
Boat hire.....	3	0	0
Sum	28	15	0

Source: Letter from H. Worton, Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao, to E.P Martin, Dowlais Iron Works, 31 October 1900, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DG/A/1/737.

Further evidence exists of favouritism between the two companies, in their recruitment, to the point that jobs may well have been ‘created’ for some:

I have a friend (a Spaniard) who would like to get his son into your office, the boy is seventeen years of age, well-educated and intelligent, he only speaks very little English but being young would soon pick it up and make you a good interpreter. If you could do this without any inconvenience I should feel greatly obliged.⁵⁰

The young man, sponsored by Worton, was subsequently given a position. Others were not so fortunate. On 4 October, a Snr. Torquera wrote to E.P Martin directly: ‘As your business is principally the exportation of coal and castings and the importation of Iron Ore, I beg to say that my knowledge of these is very varied... if you can give me a place it will be an easy matter for me to come from Cartagena with the ore boats. For salary I would ask you to give me at least the sum of 20 to 25/- per week.’ Mr. Torquera’s unsponsored application was not successful.⁵¹

Additionally, not all applicants, even if they were sponsored by H. Worton, were able to get exactly the job they wanted. On 2 September 1900, a Snr. Tapico wrote: ‘...y si U tiene plaza de laminador’ (translation: ‘and if you have a position as a roller.’) Writing on behalf of E. P Martin, Dowlais wrote: ‘we regret that we have at present no place open as a plate roller... If, however, you take your risk of coming over we would undertake to find you something to do at 3/6 a day until an opening occurred.’⁵² Others have endorsed the point that the Dowlais management rated the Basque workers highly:

50. AS above. The letter seems to reflect the rapport between the two men.

51. Letter from Snr. Adra Torquera at Circulo Agricola y Mercantil de Almeria, 4 October 1900, Incoming Letters ‘T’, DG/A/1/736, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff. There was also a substantial Iron industry in south-eastern Spain in the province of Murcia. Cartagena was one of the principal locations. It could well be the case that Mr Torquera was not chosen as he wasn’t an Orconera man.

52. Letter from Snr. Leonardo Tapico, 13 Calle Murrieta, Desierto, Bilbao, 2 September 1900, Incoming Letters ‘T’, DG/A/1/736, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff. The letter had ‘refer Worton’ scribbled on the reverse. It is not known if Snr. Tapico took up the offer but he doesn’t appear on either the 1901 or 1911 censuses.

I have seen everything. Welsh people have always been kind to the Spanish people, in spite that in some cases jobs were given to them when there were no jobs going. Spanish people done their best to do their work that should have been done. And I think the firm were quite happy about the people they employed.⁵³

Martin would have been aware that immigrant social networks, which Walker describes as 'remarkably effective in funnelling immigrants from specific locales in the sending countries to specific workplaces and neighbourhoods' in the receiving country, would 'set in motion "chains of migration" that would keep the supply of labour to Dowlais 'well-stocked.'⁵⁴ Worton confirmed the availability of men who wished to come to Dowlais, 'I have plenty more men on hand when you require.'⁵⁵

Worton may have had more men available but many, it would seem, took it upon themselves to come. The *Western Mail*, for instance, report in June 1900 that 'a fresh contingent of some 30 or so immigrants is said to be now "on the water" and, with the number of settlers running into the fifties, the establishment of a Spanish quarter in the place [Dowlais] may be expected to follow in due course.'⁵⁶ Worton confirmed as much in a letter to Martin on 16 September of that year, 'I believe there are several men who are coming out on their own responsibility.' They were again all skilled men and very welcome at the Dowlais Works.⁵⁷

Around the 1900s people were flooding into the valleys with job opportunities existing for skilled and unskilled alike. Martin really had his choice of employees at the time yet even when incidents occurred that cast doubts on the character of the immigrant Basques he still kept faith with them and still maintained the rapport he had with his Basque counterpart Mr Worton.

Whenever two disparate cultures are brought together the potential for friction is increased and being accepted into the receiving community is probably the greatest obstacle new immigrants have to face. As Cohen suggests, 'Immigrants are often feared; they are perceived as a potent economic threat, as competitors for housing, education, welfare benefits and jobs, and as bearers of an alien culture and religion which undermines the sense of security,

53. Oral testimony of Esteban Peña recorded by his nephew Joe Arriaga c. 1958 at Dowlais. The recordings were kindly lent to the author by Joe Arriaga's daughters, Mrs Pat Fearn and Mrs Jean Coombes, in 2011.

54. Richard Walker, 'California's Collision of Race and Class', *Representations*, 55 (1996), p.173.

55. Letter from H. Worton, Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao, to E.P.Martin, Dowlais Iron Works, 16 September 1900, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DG/A/1/737.

56. 'A Spanish Colony in Dowlais: Their Life and Labour Methods. A Reinforcement expected shortly', *Western Mail*, 2 June 1900.

57. 'At first around 1900, it [The Dowlais Works] was concerned in recruiting skilled labour but by 1907 it started to recruit labourers as well', Macho, 'The Immigration of Spanish Migrants', p.4; Letter from H. Worton, Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao, to E.P Martin, Dowlais Iron Works, 16 September 1900, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DG/A/1/737.

well-being and identity of the indigenous population.⁵⁸ It wasn't ethnic conflict which caused E. P. Martin to be concerned however. Martinez Savada and Gregorio Lasuen, both spare-hand founders, who had come to Dowlais with the first batch of Spaniards got embroiled in their own personal conflict and it was probably this that Mr Worton was referring to when he wrote to E. P. Martin in August 1900, barely three months after the first arrivals: 'I am in receipt of your letters of the 4th + 17th August and am sorry to hear that you have had trouble with the Spaniards, but I hope it will soon blow over.' Blowing over was not a possibility since Snr Savada was killed in the drunken incident and Snr Lasuen was subsequently charged with his manslaughter.⁵⁹ The incident, however, seemed to generate some degree of hostility towards the diaspora amongst the local Dowlais community:

They thought we were dangerous people to bother with. They said we carried knives, and were only too glad to use them...The story started because of something that happened in Dowlais just before my family came over...Now that knife was *not* a knife...But you can't stop a story once it is started. In the end, the people of Dowlais found that we were a happy people.⁶⁰

Even this appalling event didn't seem to affect E. P. Martin's enthusiasm for employing skilled Basque workers, 'I am not able to give you a list of the men in the various vessels except the last one, named Candido Gonzalez and family for whom I paid four pounds but as you suggest in future I shall send a full list of names.'⁶¹

Stability, enhanced by the presence of a worker's family, was just one of the attributes that E. P. Martin seemed to look for in his Basque employees. With stability comes reliability and there are strong indications of this characteristic amongst the new employees. Hywel Davies suggests that the twelve pioneers, who came over in May 1900, 'came over to work as boilermakers [and] joined the unions straight away.'⁶² If the twelve were boilermakers the most likely union they would have joined would have been the United Society of Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders which had been founded in 1834 and was the principal union of boilermakers at the time.⁶³ It is known that there were fifty-five Dowlais branch members, in that union, for the year in 1900 and the only members iden-

58. Robin Cohen, 'Introduction' in Cohen, R. (ed.) *Theories of Migration. The International Library of Studies on Migration* (Vol.1). (Cheltenham, 1996), p.xvi in Karen O'Reilly, *The British on the Costa Del Sol: Transnational Identities and Local Communities* (London, 2000), p.149.

59. 'Tragedy at Dowlais', *Western Mail*, August 17, 1900; Letter from H. Worton, Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao, to E.P. Martin, Dowlais Iron Works, 26 November 1900, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DG/A/1/737.

60. Felipe Serrano, 'Spanish Roots', *Wales on the Wireless: A Broadcasting Anthology*, 1938, pp. 47-48.

61. Letter from H. Worton, Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fabricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao, to E.P. Martin, Dowlais Iron Works, 16 September 1900, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, DG/A/1/737.

62. Davies, *Fleeing Franco*, p.14.

63. Warwick University, Modern Records Centre, United Society of Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders, Historical Note.

tified by name in the Monthly Reports would have been those who were claiming benefits from the union: sickness or unemployment for example, or who had been excluded from the union for non-payment of arrears. There is no evidence of any of the Basque group being identified by name and would possibly suggest a number of things including: a strong work ethic, a good constitution and a willingness to meet their financial obligations to the union.⁶⁴

The first twelve were initially accommodated in a variety of places in the Iron Works' sheds and subsequently in local pubs in large single rooms which housed eleven or twelve people. This was obviously not a satisfactory state of affairs and the company could not hope to retain skilled men under these circumstances, particularly since it was their intention to start a new life in south Wales with their families who were still in the Basque country. Macho endorses this point:

It became evident to the owners [that they could not] hope to hold their employ as the men had no intention of sending for their families in these circumstances and thus had no reason to stay in South Wales. To stop this return of their skilled workers [the company] started to build in Pen-y-wern, Dowlais a street to allow the [Basques] to move out of the works and send for their families.⁶⁵

Skilled iron workers were very much in demand at the time not only in South Wales, but in England and the industries of Europe and the United States. Martin realised he had to provide for this group and their families or risk losing them and so undertook the building of accommodation. The first tranche of six houses, Alfonso Street, was completed on 8 January 1901 and the second by October of that year. The building of those houses was particularly significant as it emphasized how valued the Basque workers were to Martin, particularly since there is no evidence of him doing the same for any of the other nationalities represented at the Dowlais Works.

The recruitment of Basques, of course, probably had nothing to do with their nationality *per se* but rather with the skills they possessed. In the first two decades of the twentieth century it was popular 'in key industries [for] management [to recruit] specific skills from overseas' and '[to provide] them with housing.'⁶⁶ However, reciprocity was certainly evident between the Dowlais and Bilbao companies since, in the same way as Alfonso Street was built for the Basques by the Dowlais Iron Works, it would appear that from 1891, the *Sociedad de Alto Hornos y Fábricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao*, built houses for some British employees in Alameda Serralta at Luchana, west of the Río Nervión and downstream from Bilbao. Mr H. Worton was one of those employees.⁶⁷

64. Warwick University, Modern Records Centre, MSS.192/BM/4/1/28, p. 137.

65. J. Macho, 'The Immigration of Spanish Migrants to Industrial Wales in the Early 20th Century and Their Subsequent Assimilation into the Society', Dissertation, City of London Polytechnic, 1989, Swansea University, Miners' Library Dissertations, HM8>MAC, p. 14.

66. Greg Patmore, 'Localism and Labour: Lithgow 1869-1932', *Labour History*, 78 (2000), p.60.

67. The houses were built for white-collar workers at the Basque company, so doesn't warrant direct comparison. Luchana in Basque is spelt Lutzana and is to be found on the opposite side of the river Nervion from Barakaldo where the *Sociedad de Alto Hornos* was located.

7. ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION OF THE BASQUE AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

This part of the research focuses on that strand of migration research concerned with the twin areas of assimilation and acculturation and involves an oral history project designed to investigate the extent to which current descendants retain elements of their Hispanic or Basque heritage. Specifically, the chosen sample is predominantly, but not exclusively, limited to the descendants of those immigrants who came to work in the Dowlais Iron foundry in Merthyr.

Acculturation is defined by Kottack as, 'the exchange of cultural features that results when groups come into continuous firsthand contact; the original cultural patterns of either or both groups may be altered, but the groups remain distinct.' Cultural assimilation is 'an intense process of consistent integration whereby members of an ethno-cultural group (such as immigrants) are "absorbed" into an established, generally larger community. This presumes a loss of many characteristics of the absorbed group.'⁶⁸ Gans endorses this and suggests that by the time the third generation comes along descendants are 'almost entirely' assimilated and show no interest in their origins.⁶⁹ Writing in 2001, one reviewer of the Llewellyn and Watkins work suggests:

The Spanish colony in Dowlais...added their own language, customs and traditions to the rich mix that is the culture of South Wales. Their descendants continue to contribute a great deal to community life in Merthyr and Dowlais. They played an important part in forging the cosmopolitan, outgoing, tolerant outlook those of us privileged to be born in the area inherited.⁷⁰

Although it is a decade since this suggestion was made, part of the extract seems to suggest that it is the "Spanishness" or even "Basqueness" within the descendants that allowed them to contribute so positively to community life. To take this premise a stage further it seems implicit, therefore, that the authors are suggesting that a degree of "Foreignness" still exists within Merthyr's Spanish community and that the assimilation process is still not yet complete. It is this latter element that is the focus of the current research in Merthyr. The research does not concern itself with factors that motivated the emigrants to migrate but rather with individual legacies in terms of the aspects of "Spanishness" that remain within the focus group, and the memories the group members may still have of their ancestors. As Gibson suggests, 'the more you know about a person's past, the more likely you are to understand why they are as they are in the present.'⁷¹ Hirschman

68. Conrad Phillip Kottack, *Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity* (10th edn, Boston, 2004).

69. Herbert J. Gans, 'Toward a Reconciliation of "Assimilation" and "Pluralism": The Interplay of Acculturation and Ethnic Retention', *International Migration Review*, 31 (1997), p. 877.

70. Studying the Past to Understand the Present, *The Free Library*, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Studying+the+past+to+understand+the+present.-a080503188> (26 May, 2011).

71. Faith Gibson, *Reminiscence and Recall: A Guide to Good Practice* (London, 1994), p. 69.

sees this as a valid exercise, feeling that 'the full impact of immigration on [society] is obscured by short-term problems of immigrant adjustment' and that one of the areas that modern migration research should concentrate on is 'the socio-economic roles of the children of immigrants.'⁷² Foner feels there is need for more research into the extent to which 'distinctive ethnic cultural patterns will persist among the second, third, and later-generation descendants of the immigrant arrivals.' He suggests that, 'the cultural understandings, meanings and symbols they bring with them influence a broad range of behaviour and social practices, from what they eat and what they wear to family roles, work patterns, and the creation of particular kinds of organisations and institutions.'⁷³ It is this idea of the extent of the persistence of distinctive cultural patterns among these later generations of immigrant arrivals that is the focus of the Merthyr Tydfil exercise.

For this research, the catalyst was references made by Stradling to Basque-Spanish immigration to Wales.⁷⁴ Little work has been undertaken on the topic, the exception being Llewellyn and Watkins which considers principally Dowlais Spanish immigration as a chronology of activities in which immigrants participated e.g.: choir, social and football club membership, church attendance, the iron foundry etc.⁷⁵ Unlike the Llewellyn and Watkins work, however, this work is not a genealogical study (although the discipline will ultimately play a part) but rather an investigation into the extent of assimilation and acculturation of current descendants.

The academic basis of the project is ethnography. It is concerned with the second of two different strands of migration research identified by Baubock and Rundell, that concerned with the understanding of migration; more specifically, the two elements of assimilation and acculturation, from the migrants' descendants' point of view.⁷⁶

Researchers on assimilation and acculturation have had difficulty measuring the extent to which immigrants have assimilated or adhered to their own culture. Modern researchers attempt to do this by looking at 'modes of incorporation' in order to 'understand the divergent outcomes of the adaptation of immigrant groups.' However, at least with US immigration, some suggest neither assimilation nor cultural pluralism happened.⁷⁷ Gans suggests 'by... the third generation descendants are almost entirely American and show no

72. Charles Hirschman, 'Immigration and the American Century', *Demography*, 42 (2005), p. 595. The author assumes that this is meant to relate not just to children but also to grandchildren.

73. Nancy Foner, 'Beyond the Melting Pot Three Decades Later: Recent Immigrants and New York's New Ethnic Mixture', *International Migration Review*, 34 (2000), p. 258.

74. Robert Stradling, *Wales and the Spanish Civil War* (2004).

75. Carl Llewellyn and Hugh Watkins, 'Los Desconocidos a l'extranjero': *The Spanish Immigration to Dowlais*, Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society (2000).

76. R. Baubock and J. Rundell, *Blurred Boundaries: Migration, Ethnicity, Citizenship* (Aldershot, 1998).

77. Alejandro Portes, 'An Enduring Vision', *International Migration Review*, 34 (2000), pp. 243-244; Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, 1970).

interest in their origins'.⁷⁸ Ascertaining the extent of the assimilation/accluturation of Spanish immigrants' descendants is the prime consideration in this work.

The use of a focus group will be a major methodological element. The Hispanic Focus Group (HFG) in statistical terms is defined as a 'Non-probability judgement sample'.⁷⁹ The biggest problem initially will be constructing a suitable framework, specifically what aspects of assimilation/accluturation to pursue from Cook and Crang's 'web of personal reflections, adjustments, reactions and repercussions' in order to elicit what individual legacies, in terms of Hispanic aspects, remain within the focus group, and memories the group members may still have of their ancestors in relation to those aspects.⁸⁰ Gibson suggests, 'the more you know about a person's past, the more likely you are to understand why they are as they are in the present.'⁸¹ Hirschman endorses this, feeling that 'the full impact of immigration on...society...is obscured by short-term problems of immigrant adjustment' and that one area modern migration research should concentrate on is 'the socio-economic roles of the children of immigrants.'⁸²

In a previous piece of ethnographic research undertaken by one of the authors, respondents were accessed via newspaper articles, close contact with local history centres and other interested parties and, of course, word-of-mouth. We intend using this method again, and have built up a list of contacts including Carl Llewellyn.⁸³ Again, in a previous work, e-mail contact from individuals responding to the newspaper articles proved very useful prior to the oral interviews; this allowed for the identification of recurring themes and the formation of a checklist of "model" questions.⁸⁴

Potential participants will be assembled to familiarize them with the exercise and allow for an open forum. Secondly, all members will be supplied with the checklist of areas for investigation. Thirdly, e-mail correspondence will be encouraged within the group (including the researcher) after the face-to-face element of the project, and comments utilised in the research. Group mem-

78. Herbert J. Gans, 'Toward a Reconciliation of "Assimilation" and "Pluralism"', *International Migration Review*, 31 (1997), p. 877.

79. George Argyrous, *Statistics for Research* (London, 2005). 'Judgement' is used as the researcher selects population members who are good prospects for accurate information. The author suggests, 'the method is particularly useful when [researching] populations whose exact size and composition cannot be known in advance', p. 205. The HFG satisfies these criteria.

80. Cook and Crang, *Concepts and Techniques*, p. 12; There have been attempts to measure 'Hispanicness': Humberto Valencia, 'Developing an Index to Measure "Hispanicness"', *Advances in Consumer Research*, 12 (1985), pp.118-121. The article is limited in terms of this project.

81. Faith Gibson, *Reminiscence and Recall: A Guide to Good Practice* (London, 1994), p. 69.

82. Charles Hirschman, 'Immigration and the American Century', *Demography*, 42 (2005), p. 595.

83. Llewellyn and Watkins, 'Los Desconocidos'.

84. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 296.

bers will, subsequently, be interviewed independently; the most important element of the research as it will allow for individual testimonies.

The HFG should comprise two sets of respondents- not mutually exclusive. A first from those responding to the newspaper articles, and another from individuals wishing to be part of the exercise but unable to attend an oral interview. Testimonies from these individuals will be taken by e-mail both before and after the oral projects take place as will e-mail responses from individuals contacted by friends and/or relatives who see the articles.

To elicit better quality responses, an informal, conversational approach will be adopted as opposed to a more structured questionnaire. This allows more flexibility to accommodate the differing themes the respondent might wish to pursue. At the start, however, a short questionnaire will be issued for the purpose of identifying the respondents' 'place' in their family history and as an '*aide-memoir*' for the researcher.

Lastly, we have recently (Nov 2011) been given possession of a set of audio cassette tapes made by one of the Spanish Merthyr Diaspora in the late 1950s. The recordings are of many first generation members of the community and should prove invaluable to the project particularly for comparison purposes with the testimonies of the current generation.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The recruitment of company personnel has nearly always been undertaken, at least in the private sector, to complement the economic needs of the organisation. The paper does not attempt to suggest that these motives were in some way compromised or even discarded by the Dowlais Iron Works in their recruitment of the first Basque immigrants from its Orconera counterpart. In addition, the preference given to the new group probably did have a lot to do with the fact that the two organisations had been associated with each other since 1873. Nevertheless, there seems to have been, at least in 1900, a *rapport* between the Dowlais general manager E. P. Martin and his counterpart at the Orconera, H. Worton that seems to have contributed to the recruitment of skilled Basque workmen on a basis other than a purely economic rationale. Correspondence between the two individuals suggests a working but cordial relationship, and requests by Worton of Martin to accommodate him re: potential employees and their families seem plentiful. Furthermore, sufficient evidence exists that Martin was prepared to ignore potential employees' political leanings in order to acquire the services of men whose skill as iron workers he seemed to place such a high value upon and who came supported by H. Worton. Finally, by providing accommodation exclusively for the Basque group, Martin seemed to be making a statement that he was intent on the recruitment of the men (and women) of Biscay on a long-term basis. This policy the Dowlais Works maintained until its closure in 1936.

The link between current descendants and their ancestors will be traced although, since a number of oral testimonies have already been undertaken, it is already known that most of the original emigrants migrated internally within Spain before spending some time in the industrial north, specifically around the area of Barakaldo. In order to underpin the evidence already gathered, it is hoped that archives in Spain will yield further demographic data relating to the emigrants. Finally, part of the testimonies taken will involve ascertaining the socio-economic roles of the immigrant descendants in contemporary Wales.⁸⁵ This parallels a recommendation by Foner that 'there is need for more research into the extent to which 'distinctive ethnic cultural patterns will persist among the second, third, and later-generation descendants of the immigrant arrivals.'⁸⁶

Finally, although the paper focuses on a very small element of migration, which between 1815 and 1930 saw more than 50 million people directly involved in the process globally, it contributes to the request that Dudley Baines makes, that 'to know more about European migration we must disaggregate' for a fuller understanding of the process.⁸⁷

85. Charles Hirschman, 'Immigration and the American Century', *Demography*, 42 (2005). It is assumed that this is meant to relate not just to children but also to grandchildren.

86. Nancy Foner, 'Beyond the Melting Pot Three Decades Later: Recent Immigrants and New York's New Ethnic Mixture', *International Migration Review*, 34 (2000).

87. Dudley Baines, *Emigration From Europe: 1815-1930* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 25.