

FORGING BASQUE AND CATALAN NATIONALISM IN THE NEW WORLD.

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I. INTRODUCTION.

One of the major transformations in the political landscape of Spain in the late 19th century was the emergence of two new forces, the Basque and Catalan nationalisms, that confronted the outcome of the process of Spanish nation-building, whose steady growth, specially after the defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American war (1898), has turned both nationalisms into the current, locally hegemonic political ideologies in the Basque Country and Catalonia. Even today Spanish national identity is confronted in both regions to the strong dominance of other national loyalties whose alternative discourses on the singularity and differentness of they own nations not only have permeated the *imaginaire* of their societies, but have also been benefited from the predominance of nationalistic parties in local politics since the recovery of home rule after the last transition to democracy in the decade of 1970.

During this time these regions, along with a massive process of internal mobility from other areas of Spain because of their quick industrialization, were also experiencing several migratory processes abroad, mainly to the Americas (Cuba, Argentina, Uruguay, and to a smaller extent, also Chile, Brazil, Mexico or the USA). The Basque and Catalan communities that were created in these host countries were also exposed to the permeation of the nationalistic ideas, and thus underwent the effervescence of ideological debates, clashes between the old and new national loyalties, and changes in the system of their diasporic institutional organizations. In this chapter, we will present a general overview of the means and procedures implemented by the promoters of Basque and Catalan nationalistic ideas to spread them into the diaspora and the struggle for turning these communities of migrants into bakers and apologists of the right of existence of the very same two nations-to-be they or their ancestors came from. First we will describe separately both cases, to finish with some comparative remarks on the similarities and differences between the two models.

II. BASQUE NATIONALISM IN THE AMERICAS.

1. On the origins of a new political identity.

The origin and first development of the Basque nationalism, as a political ideology that has turned into the axis of the political and party system in the Basque Country during the 20th century, is a well-known and better researched topic. Consensus in historiography puts the first steps of the new political movement in the aftermath of the last Spanish Carlist War, one of its consequences being in 1877 the suppression of the home rule system (*Fueros* and their particular governing bodies, the *Diputaciones* and *Juntas Generales*) that the Basque

provinces in Spain had enjoyed for centuries.¹ The shock provoked by the huge political and social changes at this moment -these were also the decades of industrialization in several areas within the Basque Country, specially in Biscay, with an unprecedented demographic growth because of huge flows of immigration from non-Basque areas of Spain- lead to the formation of several *foralist* parties and pressure groups, whose main purpose would be the “complete reintegration” of the old *Fueros*, and that would dominate Basque politics for the rest of the century. The appearance of the nationalism as a political ideology and party can be considered to a certain extent an evolution of some of the most politically radical postulates of the *foralist* movement.²

There is also a wide consensus about the discourse of the foundational protagonists and timing of Basque nationalism. It was actually identified from the beginning with one city, Bilbao; one party, the Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea or Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) in 1895; and one person, its founder and first president, Sabino Arana Goiri.³ The motto of the party abstracted into a few words the maximal aspiration of the movement: “Euzkadi (neologism coined by Arana to name the Basque Country) is the nation of the Basques.” Arana, during the last decade of the 19th century, not only gave birth to this new political organization, but was also able to bring it into the local and regional governing institutions at the beginning of the new century, soon before his premature death in 1903. By then the PNV had started its expansion, first across the province of Biscay where the new party had been born, and in the following decades to the rest of the Basque provinces in Spain (De Pablo, Mees and Rodríguez Ranz, 1999: 35ss). By the times of the Spanish Second Republic, in the decade of 1930, the PNV had become the hegemonic party in the actual territory of the Basque Autonomous Community and because of that a member of this party would be elected president of the first Basque Autonomous Government in 1937.⁴

Only six days after Arana’s decease -but possibly with no connexion whatsoever with it-, one of his early supporter that had recently migrated to Argentina, Nemesio Olariaga, started the publication of the first Basque nationalistic journal overseas, *Irrintzi* (“The Cry”). From 1903 to 1923, *Irrintzi* would be published bimonthly and distributed free of charge to anyone that would demand it. Nemesio Olariaga is also identified by the current historical memory of Basque Argentineans as the first man who displayed publicly the Basque national flag in the Americas, in the design of 1893 by Sabino Arana and his brother Luis, as well as the founder of the first, although non-official delegation of the PNV in the Americas.⁵ The

¹ The Basque territories of France had suffered a very similar process of termination of their customary home rule during the times of the French Revolution (end of the 18th century).

² On the origin of Basque nationalism, its precedents, the development of *foralism*, see among others Corcuera Atienza (1979); Molina Aparicio (2005). It is also very interesting the latest research on the development of the Basque identity, from a cultural/ethnic perspective into a political meaning; for instance: Aizpuru (2001); Rubio Pobes (2003).

³ Apart from the classical hagiographies written in the first half of the 20th century by members of the PNV, in the last decades there has been a renewed interest on the biography, historical context and ideological basis of the political thinking and symbolical meaning of Sabino Arana. We can highlight among others: De la Granja Sanz (2002, 2005, 2006, 2009). It is also very interesting, for understanding the process of creation and initial expansion of the Basque nationalism in the Basque Country, the first comprehensive history of the PNV, by De Pablo, Mees and Rodríguez Ranz (1999).

⁴ José Antonio Agirre Lekube, that was elected president of the Basque Autonomous Government on October 7, 1937, a few days after the Spanish Parliament approved the statute of Autonomy for the Basque region, during the first months of Civil War. By then most of the Basque territory was in the hand of the Francoist rebels, so this government only ruled *de facto* the province of Biscay for less than ten months. On Agirre Lekube, see Mees (2006).

⁵ Ezkerro (1997). Another “first” of the expansion of Arana’s Basque nationalism and the PNV among the communities of Basque expatriates took place in the Philippine Islands. By 1907, as De Borja states (2005:

very same year 1903 the editors of the oldest and most influential Basque journal of the Américas, *La Vasconia* (“Basque Land”) of Buenos Aires, decided to change its name to *La Baskonia*, making it closer to the orthographical proposal for writing Basque defended by Arana.⁶ One of the co-directors of the journal, Francisco Grandmontagne, explained in a letter to Miguel de Unamuno how “once Spain was defeated in the Cuban war, the *bizkaitarras* [Basque nationalists] started arriving in here, a few morons, more simpleminded than those of Bilbao.”⁷

In fact, most of the still few histories that have dealt with the expansion of Basque nationalism among migrants and expatriates, mainly in the American continent, have usually presented the same main lines about this process.⁸ According to the most widely accepted version, it would not be after the founder of the PNV passed away⁹ that this new ideology jumped into the other shore of the Atlantic and started spreading out among the newly created Basque communities and their web of associations, club and mutual aid institutions. The countries that hosted the larger communities were those that first attracted the efforts to get new militants and establish a local branch of the political party. The expansion of the so-called *Aranist* Basque nationalism in the Americas would then pass through successive stages of early implantation and initial failure in the decades of 1900 and 1910, a struggle against anti-nationalist for the control of Basque immigrant associations along with the creation of their own institutions in the mid-1910s and the 1920s, and the final “victory” and take-over of most of Basque associations in the late 1930s, a process apparently linked to the arrival of highly-politicized Basque exiles after the end of the Spanish Civil War.¹⁰ In addition, a minor ongoing debate is trying to deal with the question whether this expansion was intentional or a mere consequence of the process of immigration.¹¹

This discourse is mainly based in a total identification between “Basque” and “Aranist” nationalism, as if both terms were synonymously interchangeable with each other. This identification has, of course, strong historical bases, for it is true that for several decades the Aranist formulation of the Basque nationalistic identity was not only the dominant, but the only one in the political landscape of the Basque Country. It was not until the decades of 1920 and 1930 when new formulations appeared, but even in this case they were more the result of internal divisions within the Aranism with very small changes in the ideological foundations of the movement (De la Granja Sainz 1998). So to a certain extent it makes sense the focus on

108-109), it is recorded the first official birth registry worldwide using the system of Basque naming proposed by Arana.

⁶ Alvarez Gila (2000: 154). About the debates on the change of the orthography to a “more Basque” one, and the political background behind it, see Altuna de Martina and Alvarez Gila (2010). On Grandmontagne and his resistance against the first expansion of Basque nationalism from Europe in Argentina, see Ares (2004).

⁷ “(..) perdida la guerra [*de Cuba*], surgieron aquí los *bizkaitarras*, cuatro tontos que superan en idiotismo a los de Bilbao.” Published in Tellechea Idigoras (1991: 11).

⁸ On the lack of research about the overseas expansion of the PNV, see De Pablo, Mees and Rodríguez Ranz (1999: 79 and 103).

⁹ Some authors have mentioned the refusal of Sabino Arana against Basque migration to the Americas, because he considered it a threat for the racial integrity of the nation. Eyara (1999: 333).

¹⁰ Among others Totoricaguena (2004). This timing fits with the evolution in the Basque community of Argentina (Ezkerro 1997) and, to a great extent, to the rest of the “oldest” and largest Basque immigrant communities in Latin America, specially Uruguay, Chile and Cuba. In other host countries the process, although quite similar in its development, was performed with a delay in comparison with the earliest cases; for instance in Mexico or Venezuela it did not start until the arrival of flows of Basque nationalist exiles in the beginning of the 1940s (Alvarez Gila 1995: 303-304; Alvarez Gila 2010: 74).

¹¹ Totoricaguena (2004: 84), for instance, defends the latter version when she states that “people who did emigrate left the Basque Country with political ideas importantly different from their precursors, and they critically impacted the Basque immigrant communities that they joined.”

understanding the expansion of nationalistic ideas among Basque expatriates as an unidirectional process from the homeland to the colonies.

But, although this is still a not-well known topic, there are several reasons that make us deduce that, from the beginning of the 1880s, some of the most prominent leaders of the Basque diasporic communities in countries like Argentina, Uruguay or even Cuba were developing their own, locally conceived discourses that can be defined as nationalistic, long before the Europe-born version of Basque nationalism by Sabino Arana was not only spread out into the Basque diasporic communities, but even first formulated. Some recent approaches to the topic, from the study of ethnic leadership, of journalism (Altuna & Alvarez Gila 2010) and even of symbology used by the Basque in the Americas (Alvarez Gila 2012), have hypothesized the early creation of a set of discourses on Basque identity born and evolved in the diaspora whose content had a clear political meaning.

We can therefore identify the existence of two different stages on the process of “nationalization” of Basque identity among New World’s Basque communities - understanding this term (“nationalization”) as the process of turning the previous conception of Basqueness as a regional variation within other, bigger political nations (Spain, but also France), into a new perception of the whole Basque Country as a nation by itself, and therefore, both as an exclusive identity (competing with the Spanish and the French ones) and a subject of political rights. In the first one, during the last quarter of the 19th century, we will mainly focus on the creation of some nationalistic-like discourses and practices in the diaspora; in the second one, during the first third of the 20th century, the main debate lies on the questions about the ways of expansion, the resistance from the non-nationalistic sectors of the diaspora, and the final acceptance of the core ideological elements of the Basque nationalism imported from the homeland.

2. *A nationalism avant le date: Basque national expressions in the Americas, 1880-1900.*

Basque identity is not an invention of the 19th century. Basques, as any other ethnic community in Europe, were present in the mosaic of “peoples” that composed the continent, with their own particularities and, to a certain extent, a recognizable, collective image from outside. The most visible features like the ownership of a very specific language, not related to any other language of its immediate vicinity, had contributed since very early times to the creation of a particular stereotype¹² of “being a Basque.” For instance, all along the Spanish empire, throughout which Basques had spread from the very first moment of the conquest of the American territories, they were referred to as a separate group named “vizcaínos” or “vascongados” (Pérez Vejo 2007). Basque settlers used to create their own ethnic communities and institutions in most of the biggest cities they migrated to, as early as from the end of the 16th century: Madrid, Seville, Cadiz in Europe, or Lima, Mexico, Santiago, Buenos Aires, Manila in the colonies overseas, witnessed during the Colonial age the creation of half ethnic/half religious associations called *cofradías* or *congregaciones*, generally under the protection of a Basque saint or virgin (Arantzazu or Saint Ignace de Loyola), with the aim of “protecting the rights and privileges” of the Basque people living there, as well as of “organizing, regulating and guarding the[ir] religious activities.”¹³

¹² Understood in a context of ethnic identity as “images that simply reproduce commonplaces.” (Navarro Martínez 2009: 4).

¹³ From the rules of the “Hermandad de los Vizcaínos” of Seville, created by the end of the 15th century. On these associations, and as a whole on the conceptual limits of the creation of a “Basque identity” in the diasporic communities during the Colonial age, see our Álvarez Gila and Angulo Morales (2014: 5-7).

To a certain extent, most of the reasons that brought into the emergence of this early Basque identity were prolonged long after the end of the Colonial age, the independence of the Americas, and the renovation of the inter-Atlantic migratory movements into the so-called period of “mass migration,” in which Basques from both sides of the Spanish-French border participated. The traditional Basque identity had nonetheless to be redefined in the context, not only of the political changes that were spreading in the Western societies with the arrival and predominance of a new concept, the “nation”, that had evolved from a cultural to a political definition; but also within the peculiar multinational environment of the host societies, in which ethnic identity became one of the key elements of identification of individuals. (Mörner 1992; Maalouf 2002). One of the most visible outcomes of this process of “ethnicization” of societies was the emergence of a new set of national stereotypes applied to different groups of immigrants (like the *tano* [Italian], *turco* [Eastern Mediterranean], *gallego* [Spanish] or *vasco* [Basque] in Argentina).¹⁴ But it was the coincidence of Basques from both Spain or France, united by sharing a common language (Alvarez Gila 2010), one of the most relevant elements in this redefinition of identity. Unlike in previous centuries of intra-imperial migration, the migratory currents departing from the Spanish and the French sides of the Basque Country concurred to the very same places of destination in this new stage of the mass migrations. In fact, the most remarkable features of the process of creation and institutionalization of the Basque immigrant communities in the Americas during the 19th century was the progressive construction of the idea of an unified, sole Basque identity, departing from the initial situation in which Basques belonged to two separate identity communities: Spanish-Basques and French-Basques. By 1883, for instance, Jose de Umaran, a Biscayan immigrant to Uruguay that had participated actively in the creation of the first Basque club of Montevideo in 1876, stated that:

We are now witnesses of the reconstruction of old and powerful races, after being broken because of ambition and conquest.

The disgregation of the Basque people was not its fault: they have been disgregated, conquered with excuses by France and Spain; therefore, they have been subjected to the barbaric principle of force, the desmembration of a dream.

Both reason and natural instincts propel Men into blood links; on the other hand, Basques have managed to preserve with nobility and honesty the traditions inherited from their ancestors, so there are not grounds for believing that the sons of the Basque Country will not join together, preferring the sacred principles of humanity instead of the ominous imposition that had divided them.¹⁵

Both the language and tone of this declaration -similar to others that the Basque intelligentsia of the most numerous diasporic communities in the Americas- can be easily linked to a nationalistic interpretation of Basqueness. In addition to the priority given to the Basque “race” in comparison with the other identities that could be used by the Basques, there is also a clearly political derivation of this priority, with a verbatim rejection of the possibility of making it compatible to adhere to a “double belongingness” (Basque-Spanish or Basque-French). “I don’t know who and why said we Basques are either some of us French or the rest of us Spanish; when someone comes to me asking if I am French or Spanish I use to say: see my friend, I am totally Basque from head to toe, only Basque, here and everywhere”¹⁶ - declared an unknown Basque priest living in Buenos Aires, probably of French origin- in a sermon pronounced by the end of the decade of 1890. By the same moment Florencio de

¹⁴ On ethnic stereotyping of immigrants in Argentina, see Parola (2006). On the Basques, see Laera (2006).

¹⁵ “Euskaldun Guziak Bat”, *Laurak Bat*, Montevideo, 21 June 1883. Irigoyen Artetxe (2010).

¹⁶ “Notas locales”, *La Baskonia*, Buenos Aires, XIII, 434 (20 October 1905), p. 33.

Basaldúa, a renowned writer, politician and active leader of the Argentinian Basque community, was even clearer in the political implications of such radical affiliation to the Basque identity:

For us, and for any truly Basque heart, the border that divides France from Spain is not located in the Pyrenean mountains. No! Never! Because the Basque Nation has its home in both sides of this granitic massif, like the eagles. (..)

That region is the Basqueland, the homeland of our parents, of our children. If by chance someone ask us about our nationality when we are abroad, do we ever say we are Spanish or French? I am Basque!, we will answer, I am Basque and nothing else.¹⁷

Even though the differences between the both sides of the frontier would never disappear totally -even those that presented a more radical view of predominance of the Basque identity did never break completely the ties with Spain/France, a situation defined by Mehats as the period of “ambivalent identity”¹⁸, the geographical and political borders of the Basque identity as defined in the American immigrant communities was broader than the ones that were being contemporarily defined in the homeland, in which the inclusion of Basques “from the other side” of the border was not so usual. In the Spanish Basque Country, for example, Rubio Pobes admits that during the 19th century a “code of collective identity” was built in which they were included “Biscayans, Guipuzcoans, Alavans, very often also Navarreses, and only in a very few moments French-Basques” (Rubio Pobes 2002: 59).

Under this new meaning, Basques could no longer be seen only as a mere “regional” variety of Spanish or French. These changes operated not only from outside but also within the new community on the making. The first visible expression of this change actually took place in the process of institutionalization, when Basques started creating their own associations (“centros vascos” or “Basque clubs”).¹⁹ In fact, the first three Basque clubs implemented during the decade of 1870 in Montevideo, Buenos Aires and Havana were baptized -or, in the latter case, had the motto- “Laurak Bat” (Basque for “The Four are One”), in reference to their limited geographical scope of the idea of Basqueness: it was a verbatim reference to the four provinces of the Spanish Basque Country, putting aside the Basques from the other side of the border.²⁰ But soon after some voices inside and outside the new associations started asking for the inclusion of French Basques. During the following decade, different paths toward integration were experienced, ranging from a) the early inclusion of French Basques in the previous association without any change of its name but also without any kind of rejection (like it was the case of Havana),²¹ to b) a huge internal debate that led

¹⁷ “Claudio de Otaegui”, *Laurak Bat*, Montevideo, 21 June 1894. Regini (2008).

¹⁸ Mehats (2008). There is a tendency in part of the literature to present an oversimplified image of the evolution of the Basque immigrant communities abroad, with regard to questions related to identity and politics, mainly derived from a presentist vision on the topic. Even when we present the main tendency of each moment, we cannot forget the debates that arose internally in the communities on occasion around these questions. Álvarez Gila (2000:15). Also Ruiz Deschamps (2011: 208).

¹⁹ Lately there has been a tendency in literature on Basque migration and Basque diaspora to refer to these web of associations as “euskal etxeak” (Basque for “Basque houses”).

²⁰ “Laurak Bat” of Montevideo (1876); “Laurak Bat” of Buenos Aires (1877) and Asociación Vasco-Navarra de Beneficencia” of Havana. See respectively: Irigoyen Artetxe (1999); Ezkerro (2003); Ramos Martínez (2010b).

²¹ According to Ramos Martínez (2010d), French Basques were accepted as members of the association even from its beginning. Actually, in the ceremonies in honor of the Virgin of Begoña, protector of the association, French Basques were also represented in the procession that crossed the city center of Havana from the premises of the club to the Church of Belén, in which they attended a holy mass. In this procession, “French-Basques” marched with their own standard, in company with the standards of the other four Spanish-Basque provinces. These ceremonies, that constituted the most relevant annual day of celebration of Basque identity

to a division and the appearance of several associations, either inclusive or exclusive ones, like in Buenos Aires; passing through c) the example of Montevideo, in which the debate ended up in the decision of changing both the rules and the name of the club (to “Euskaldun Guziak Bat”, or “All the Basques United”) to include Basques from any side of the French-Spanish border.²²

The case of Buenos Aires is particularly interesting. After unsuccessful attempts of some prominent member of the French-Basque elite to join the Laurak Bat -rejection based in the rule that only accepted Spanish members-, they will decide to create their own association, the “Centro Vasco-Francés” in 1895. But it did not stop the trials for the unification of the Basque community. During the commemoration of the first anniversary of the “Vasco-Francés,” Jose R. de Uriarte -by then the director of the journal *La Vasconia*- gave a public speech in which he asked for the merge of all the Basque clubs into a “Denak Bat” (“All Together”). One year later, Elpidio Lasarte, member of Laurak Bat, wrote a letter to the directing board of the society speaking about the necessity of change the rules of membership to “accept all the Basques without distinction, from the Adour to the Ebro.”²³ The organization of the society of mutual aid and education “Euskal Echea” in Argentina, 1895, that soon became the most successful initiative ever tried by Basque immigrants abroad, was to a great extent the consequence of these efforts, and it also established the basic rules of membership that most of the following Basque clubs overseas, after stating that:

A new Basque institution is therefore established in the city of Buenos Aires, with the name of Euskal Echea, whose members will be natives from the provinces of Navarre, Biscay, Álava, Guipúzcoa, Lapurdi, Zuberoa and Benabarre, this is, all the Basques coming from both Northside and Southside of the Pyrenees.²⁴

This debate was also played in the field of symbology. By then Basques had not got any kind of recognizably common sign of displaying the idea of “Basque identity” or “Basque nation.” Each of the historical Basque territories had their own flag and coat-of-arms, but there was not a similar symbol that could be unanimously accepted to represent the Basque Country as a whole. It is commonly agreed that it would not be until 1893 that the founder of the PNV, Sabino Arana, along with his brother Luis, would draw the first design of the *ikurriña*, that would be accepted as the “real” Basque flag since it was officially adopted as such by the first Basque Autonomous Government.²⁵ But other previous designs of Basque flags were also attempted since the middle of the century; and actually one of them, the so-

in Cuba, started by the beginning of the 1880s.

²² Irujo Ametzaga and Irigoyen Artetxe (2007: 26). The refounded Basque club of Montevideo changed the first article of its constitutions to admit the membership of “vascongados de ambas vertientes de los Pirineos y sus descendientes que residan en el país.” Nonetheless, even in Montevideo- whose Basque community seems to be the one that showed more unanimity for the unification of French and Spanish Basques- there were some discordant voices against it. In January 30, 1896 the Spanish journal of the city, *El Correo Español*, informed that a group of Basques had gathered a few days earlier in order to create “in this capital city a social club composed only of Spanish Basques.”

²³ These two rivers mark the Northernmost and Southernmost boundaries of the Basque Country in Europe.

²⁴ Article #1 of the Statutes of the Basque Society for Confraternity Euskal Echea (“The Basque House”), 1905. According to Ezkerro (1997), some prominent early members of the PNV in Argentina also participated in the creation of Euskal Echea, among others Nemesio Olariaga.

²⁵ Firstly designed as flag of Biscay, it was publicly displayed for the first time in July 14, 1894 in Bilbao. Corcuera Atienza (1979: 219). De Pablo, Mees and Rodríguez Ranz (1999: 112). The neologism “ikurriña” was coined by Arana himself several years later. The use of the Basque flag by the first Basque Autonomous Government and its prohibition after the Spanish Civil War contributed to its popularity (Casquete and De la Granja 2012: 509).

called “bandera vasco-navarra” of 1881, obtained a great success among the Basque expatriates (see Fig#1). Created under the common initiative of the four *Diputaciones* (provincial governments) of the Spanish Basque Country, supposedly to be displayed in the joined stand they would install in the premises of the World Fair of Paris, 1882, its history in the homeland is short and obscure, until Rubio Pobes “rediscovered” the existence of this flag. (Rubio Pobes 2004) But unlike in the Basque Country, this flag was rapidly opted for by Basque-Americans as the veritable visual depiction of the Basque Country, in a similar way other countries had their own flags. The new flag was formally introduced to the community, displayed in top of buildings and fields on every occasion Basques met for celebrating their ethnicity, and was even reproduced in the journals these Basque clubs published as a complement for their activity. For almost two decades, this design of 1881 acted like the factual Basque flag everywhere but in the Basque Country.²⁶



Fig #1: First design of the Basque flag of 1881. Rubio Pobes (2004).

Even though we cannot find among the Basque-American nationalistic discourses of this moment anything similar to an unified corpus of political doctrine, most of them coincided in one main element, that differentiated this particular expression of Basque nationalism in comparison with the developed by Sabino Arana by the end of the century: The focus on the Basque language and culture, and not in the “race”, as the main marker of identity for the Basque nation. If, as we have postulated before, (Alvarez Gila, 2010) it was the sharing of the same language one of the most relevant element that helped merging both Basque communities into one, it makes sense to find in this cultural feature the main skeleton

²⁶ The design of this flag, as described in Alvarez Gila (2012), was also based in the number four, because all its symbology was derived from the representation of the four Spanish-Basque territories. It was divided into two halves, one representing Navarra (in red) and the other the provinces of Alava, Biscay and Guipúzcoa (in white). It had four golden stars in the corners, plus a coat of arms divided into four quadrants with the heads of four moorish kings.

to build their common identity. Because of this, it is easy to find texts produced in the diaspora during the last decades of the 19th century and beginnings of the 20th that not only defend the idea of putting the Basque language in the front line of identity-building, but also *started using* it to spread ideas, both in written and oral contexts, by journalists, columnists and some literary figures of the Basque cultural world:

Yes, the Basque language has been so far the main element of differentiation of Basque people from other people, and because of it, the regions in France and Spain where the Basques live constitute a whole, distinct nation, that we call Basque Country.²⁷

However, we must never forget that most of these discourses were a product of -and, to a certain extent, confined to- a very tiny part of the communities of Basque expatriates. Ezkerro (2002) has graphically defined this group, for the case of the River Plate countries, as “the sancta sanctorum of the Basque cultural elite or Argentina and Uruguay in the last quarter of the 19th century.” All of them were known “ethnic leaders” like Antonio M. de Apellániz, Florencio Basaldúa, Daniel Lizarralde, (Altonaga 2009) Tomás de Otaegui²⁸ and Martin Errecaborde in Buenos Aires, or Regino Galdós,²⁹ Hermenegildo Aramendia³⁰ and José de Umaran in Montevideo. (González Mendilaharsu 2003: 41) In fact, it is very difficult for us to determine to which extent all this evolution towards the definition of a common identity, the integration of Basques of all regions into the same community, regardless the nationality reflected on their passports, and the formulation of a politically nationalistic definition of Basqueness, actually crossed over into the commonality of Basque immigrants. The revival of the *Spanishness* among the Basque expatriates on occasion of the Spanish-American War (1898) shows the weakness of this process of “nationalization” of the common immigrant and the limits of the influence of the elite. Something similar can be said, a few years latter, with the French-Basques and the start of the World War I, not to forget the reactions -and, in some cases, rejection- that a not so small part of the community would present against the expansion of the *aranist* nationalism in the first decades of the 20th century.

But the main frailty of this diasporic formulation of nationalism did not lie in the presumed incapacity of its proponents to get the favor of the immigrants, but in their impossibility to transcend the limits imposed by the distance and to spread it in the homeland. Unlike other nationalistic movements in which the diasporic elite could join -and thus disseminate- some of the ideologic, symbolic and organizational elements of the nationalistic formulations created “in the emigration,” the Basque diasporic elite was mainly unable to get

²⁷ B de. Londaitz, director of the French Basque journal of Buenos Aires, *Euskal Herria*, 1898. Quoted by Mehats (2005: 291).

²⁸ Born in Pergamino (Argentina) in 1870, his family was originary from Zegama (Gipuzkoa). Because of the economic success of his family, he was able to study at the Faculty of Law in Madrid. After his return to Argentina, he soon became a leader of the local Basque community of Buenos Aires. He wrote some works on the history and peculiarities of the Basque Foral Law. In the decade of 1920 he joined the Argentinean delegation of the PNV. He died in 1932. See Arrondo (2006).

²⁹ Born in Villabona, Guipúzcoa. When he died in 1937, the Basque writer Esteban Urkiaga “Lauaxeta” wrote his eulogy in the Basque journal *Gudari* of Bilbao. Lauaxeta had met him in a visit he paid to the Basque club of Montevideo, and he expressed that “se había sorprendido gratamente al conocer los sentimientos vasquistas del anciano fundador de esta institución”. Irujo Ametzaga and Irigoyen Artetxe (2007: 27).

³⁰ Born in Itsasondo, Guipúzcoa (1837-1916). Both in the Basque Country and in Uruguay he worked as barber and “cirujano menor” (surgeon for minor injuries). The journalist Bozas Urrutia told about him, in a biography he wrote in 1912, that “con hombres como ése, fácil sería levantar nuestra euskaria sobre los altares de la más grande libertad de pensar, uniendo nuestra raza para la raza misma hasta concretar en viviente realidad aquel grandioso pensamiento: ‘Nosotros para Euskadi y Euskadi para el mundo’. Eman da zabal zazu, munduban frutuba”. Irigoyen Artetxe (2003).

its position recognized by the elite of the Basque Country itself. Not to mention that the elements that composed the diasporic formulation of nationalism, and specially the focus on the language, seemed to be less adequate to suit the specific social, political and ideological conditions of the Basque Country, and specially the Basque Autonomous Community, than the proposal of Sabino Arana.

3. The laborious implantation of the Basque nationalism from Europe.

This original evolution had no or few effect on the Basque Country itself, where the impact of the loss of the home rule after the end of the Carlist War led to a new formulation of Basqueness as a political nation with the creation of the Basque Nationalist Party (1894) by Sabino Arana. As we have already quoted, unlike the American variants of Basque nationalism, Arana proposed a close relationship between Basque identity and Catholicism; and because of the specific situation of the city the nationalism was created -the industrial surroundings of Bilbao- put the accent in the supposed racial features of the Basques, instead of culture or language, as the main element of definition of (and belonging to) the Basque nation.³¹

From the beginning, the early proponents of an expansion of the party and the spread of the nationalistic ideal throughout overseas Basque communities were confident in one element: the favorable reception they supposed Basque-Americans would offer to them, because of the knowledge they had about these nationalistic discourses we have mentioned before. At the same time, their main expectation was linked to a comparison with other nationalistic movements in Europe, specially the Irish, and the role played by the diasporic communities for supporting and financing the fight for a free, independent Ireland.³² But reality was not as expected. In the one hand, the attempt to take over the directorship of the already established Basque clubs and associations, all along the Americas, ended up in a bitter failure. By then, it is true that there were some members and sympathizers of the PNV that had arrived as economic immigrants, but there were still few. Felix Ortiz y San Pelayo, who was a notable leader of the Basque community in representation of those opposed to the nationalistic evolution, and was several times during the first decade of the 20th century the president of Laurak Bat of Buenos Aires, remembers how:

while the nationalism was becoming stronger in the Basque Country, some young people that lived here [in Argentina], helped by a very few (three or four) former members of the Laurak-Bat, none of them from the first promoters of the club, tried to convince people to join the new party; and because of this the troubles -that already existed- became deeper. (Ortiz y San Pelayo, 1915: 105)

To a certain extent, the timing of this arrival was the worst possible. After the revival of the Spanish identity among the commonalty of Basque immigrants because of the two wars

³¹ De la Granja Sainz (2006b). Basque natives from Bilbao, like in most of the urban areas of the Basque Country, were usually not Basque speakers, because of a long-standing situation of diglossia within the Basque society, in which Basque was usually regarded as the “low language,” not suitable for any formal, official or cultural use. So it could not be the language the main element of difference between the locals and the newcomers, as they both were native Spanish speakers. Even though Sabino Arana did not coin himself the derogatory term “maketo” to refer to Spanish immigrants into Biscay, he actually gave this word a highly politicized meaning: the attack to the presence and “bad influence” of *maketos* for the moral and racial integrity of the Basques was a recurrent topic in the political propaganda of the first Basque nationalism.

³² As Toticaguena states (2004: 84), with regard to the first expansion of Basque nationalistic associations in Argentina, “Basques cheered Irish nationalism and, as in Euskal Herria, paralleled their demands with those of Ireland. The first public act of the Rosario Basque Nationalist Committee in 1911 was to demonstrate solidarity with the Irish community and its desired self-government in the delayed Home Rule Act.”

Spain participated in -and lost- from 1895, even the most radical nationalists of the local Basque elites had tempered their previous discourses of disapproval and rejection of the “double belongingness.” Basques could also be Spanish, or French, and most of them actually were, in spite of the content of most of the elitist discourses of previous decades. Moreover, on the other hand, it seems that these attempts were still not part of a collective effort promoted from the Basque Country, but just the consequence of the personal, pioneering activity of some well-motivated “apostles” of nationalism.

The situation started changing during the decade of 1910. The center of activity -and fight- for the diffusion of the PNV’s nationalism was at the beginning Argentina, because this country hosted by then the largest, most active and richest Basque community abroad. Learning from the early failures, the main lines of attack included not only the introduction into the Basque clubs, but also the creation of particular institutions -political associations, delegations of the PNV, journals...- with the aim of disseminate the writings, thinking and political ideas of Sabino Arana and his followers. On July 1911 Pio de Oricain, a Capuchin friar that had been sent “to the missions” because of his nationalistic ideology, arrived to Argentina with the manuscripts of several of the most important books of the early nationalism, starting by *Defensa de un inocente*, the account of the trial that sent Sabino Arana to prison by the end of his life. With the help of Sebastián de Amorrortu, a personal friend of Arana, that had started a business of printing in Buenos Aires, soon these books were published. By 1914, for the first time the nationalists had obtained some seats in the directing board of Laurak Bat. The process culminated in 1921 with the election of the first nationalist president.

The process was quite similar, although with some delay, in almost the rest of the Basque communities in the Americas. Tiny minorities of supporters of the nationalism firstly got introduced, secondly started the dissemination of the ideology and symbological corpus of the doctrine of Arana, to finish with the take-over of the institutions after years or even decades, turning nationalism into the predominant vision of Basque identity -a process that got reinforced with the arrival of exiles, mostly nationalists, after the victory of Francoist army in the Spanish civil war. The second wave of creation of Basque diasporic institutions, that started in mid-1940s and the beginning of the 1950s all along the Americas, was therefore mainly in the hands of these exiles, that imprinted a more marked nationalistic identity to their definition of Basqueness, in a context of virtual cessation of the massive period of Basque emigration overseas.

III. CATALAN NATIONALISM IN THE NEW WORLD

1. The roots of catalanism in America

Along the past one hundred and fifty years, a certainty has been taking form amongst an extensive proportion of the Catalonia’s population: that they are part of a nation different from Spain. This certainty would be based upon their own language and territory, a long history that goes back to Medieval times, governmental institutions that were autonomous for a long time, certain characteristics of their civil law and a great part of their cultural heritage (Llobera 2000:13-16). In the 19th century, the process of industrialization that began to change the city of Barcelona and its surroundings emphasized the differences in relation to a mainly rural Spain. It was at that moment when a slow recovery of the will to stand up for the

historical liberties of the Catalonians began, and also the will to recover the Catalan cultural features that were lethargic or had been left in the background due to Castilian influence.³³

In this process, different aspects of Catalanian nationalism, or catalanism, would take form. As this movement was contemporary to the period of great emigration to American countries, Catalanian communities established in the latter would perform an important role in the diffusion and definition of this nationalism. On the other hand, these communities welcomed and integrated many political refugees in times of persecution and repression in Spain and Portugal, as it happened, for instance, between 1923 and 1930, during General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, and still more after 1939, when the pro-fascists forces of General Francisco Franco were victorious in the Spanish Civil War. These dictatorships erased all traces of self-government in Catalonia and the second banned the public use of Catalanian language and national symbols. As we shall see, the arrival of the emigrants had different effects according to the reception countries but, generally speaking, it contributed to the renovation of catalanism in America.

Along most of the period analyzed, the main focal points of Catalanian nationalism in America were located in Havana and Buenos Aires. In both cities there were associations that, since mid-19th century, integrated Catalanian emigrants who arrived mainly through social networks of relatives and fellow countrymen (Yáñez 1995; Moya 2004:73-81). The colloquial use of the Catalanian language, the devotion for the Virgin of Montserrat, the concentration of these emigrants in certain districts of the host cities and their close relationship with commercial activities contributed to community cohesion. Other important centres of catalanism gradually appeared in Santiago and Camagüey (Cuba), Montevideo (Uruguay), Rosario, Mendoza and Bahía Blanca (Argentina) and Santiago de Chile. The city of Mexico joined to this list after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), due to the presence of a considerable group of Republican exiles.

The conscience of a Catalanian identity as different from the Spanish one was gradually forged in the American countries mainly through voluntary associations, and the newspapers and magazines of the community. In the middle of the 19th century, two institutions which defined themselves as Catalanian appeared in the field of medical and pharmaceutical assistance: the *Sociedad de Beneficencia de Naturales de Cataluña*, in Havana (1840), and the *Montepío de Montserrat*, in Buenos Aires (1857). The early founding of these entities could probably be explained because mutual societies of workers were much more developed in Barcelona than in other Spanish cities. Nevertheless, both in La Habana and Buenos Aires, these Catalanian societies included not only manual workers but also shopkeepers, practitioners and employees.³⁴ For many years, the *Sociedad de Beneficencia* and the *Montepío* were open only for the integration of Catalanian immigrants in a broad sense, that is to say, including Valencians and Balearics. This was possible because both organizations had a very professional and thorough administration of medical and pharmaceutical services, which allowed them to accumulate strong savings to invest in the real estate market.

³³ "Catalunya és una pàtria lenta" said the historian Antoni Rovira i Virgili in 1936, as he referred to the formation, growth, decay and resurgence of the Catalanian nation. In fact, the intent to recover Catalan as a literary and cultural language in the second half of the 19th century, by means of the movement known as *Renaixença*, preceded by several decades the configuration of political catalanism. See Rovira i Virgili (2013:42-44).

³⁴ In the case of Havana, it was not only a mutual society but also an association of beneficence. That is to say, that contributions and donations of the rich families from Havana and even from Barcelona added to the dues which the associates paid in exchange for medical services. These wealthy sectors exerted a certain degree of control over the management of the Society. Cf. Segura i Más and Solé i Sabaté (2000:17-21).

The features of Catalanian identity in these associations were not only found in the list of their associates, but also in the recruitment inside the community of practitioners who worked in them, in the cult of the Virgin of Montserrat –appointed in 1881 as patroness of Catalonia by the Pope Leo XIII- and in the celebrations they organized, in which cuisine, music and dances from the native region were present.³⁵ In case of death, the members of these societies had the right to be buried in a mausoleum for the exclusive use of Catalanian people in the cemeteries of both cities, with the participation of their fellow associates in the funeral procession, which expressed the solidarity that relieved the pain of dying far from the homeland. The sense of belonging to the community was also encouraged by the authorities, who appealed to the old mutualist traditions of the craft guilds from Barcelona and the patriotism of the Catalanian people abroad.³⁶

The Sociedad de Beneficencia of the Catalanian people in Havana was the first in its type among the associations regionally based that were created in the island. On the other hand, as the latter was a Spanish colony up to the end of the 19th century, there were not any Spanish associations there as had arisen in other immigration countries of that origin, as Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Mexico or Brazil. In Buenos Aires, where the associations which defined themselves as Spanish, as the *Sociedad Española de Beneficencia*, the *Asociación Española de Socorros Mutuos* and the *Hospital Español*, were really powerful, the Montepío de Montserrat used to hold a relationship of mutual cooperation with them. In this way, mutual aid reinforced cohesion within the Catalanian community, but also made exchange and common initiative easier in the Spanish environment of the city.

Additionally, Catalanian mutual associations tried to keep a neutral standpoint when political nationalism began to clearly define itself within Latin American communities at the beginning of the 20th century. These associations maintained that their purpose was to offer their services to all the members of these communities and to promote fraternity among them, without taking into consideration their political opinions. These could be, in their eyes, a source of argument, and should be expressed in other spheres of associationism.³⁷ This pragmatism would prove fruitful, as the associations managed to survive the successive economic crises of the destination countries and to other difficulties that made Catalanian immigration decrease. Towards 1930, even the more politicized *casals* recognized that their efforts to create their own mutualist sections had failed in face of the prestige and experience of the associations that had been dealing with these tasks for several decades.³⁸

Catalonian immigration to America increased during the last third of the 19th century, a period when the mother tongue started to be more used in the press, literature and theatre. The Catalanian language had remained the most spoken language in Catalonia along the century, but its academic and official use was limited, a situation that is defined as diglossia (Gimeno Ugalde 2010). In 1859, the first modern *Jocs Florals* took place in Barcelona, a literary contest in which compositions written in Catalanian language competed. In the following decade, this language was adopted in journalism, and this situation had an immediate effect on the American communities. Already in 1869, the bilingual Sunday newspaper *La Gresca* appeared in Santiago de Cuba, and in 1876 the same situation took place in Buenos Aires with

³⁵ The ability of Catalanian doctors and pharmacists in Buenos Aires were widely renowned, as it can be seen in the presence of several of them in the staff of the Hospital Español since its founding. See Sociedad Española de Beneficencia, *Memoria correspondiente al año 1886*, Buenos Aires, 1887, pp.8-9.

³⁶ An example of this can be seen in the President of the Montepío de Montserrat's speech, as recorded in Societat Catalana de Socors Mutuos, *Memoria que la Comissió Directiva del Monte-Pío presenta á sos consocios*, 12 de marzo de 1882, pp.3-5.

³⁷ See, for example, the *Memoria* of the Montepío, December 31st, 1923, p. 5.

³⁸ Other Catalanian associations emerged in Cuba after 1870 (Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Cárdenas, Santiago).

L'aureneta (Balcells 1988). These papers included news about Catalanian immigration and highlighted Catalanian linguistic, historical and legal characteristics within Spain, but without questioning the political unity of the latter. Thus, for instance, the motto for *L'aureneta* was “Tot per Catalunya, tot per Espanya” (Everything for Catalonia, everything for Spain).

The *Jocs Florals* also spread in America as a way of recovering the literary use of Catalanian language and enhancing its social prestige. Its emergence was very much related to the foundation of the first centres (*casals*) in the cities of Montevideo, La Habana and Buenos Aires, during the decade of 1880. These organizations tried to spread Catalanian literature, choral music and theatre and to create a sphere of sociability and recreation for immigrants of that origin. Their leaders considered the *Jocs Florals* as a means to reinforce the cohesion of the Catalanian community, in an environment where the use of the Castilian language was also predominant.³⁹ However, the first celebration of these literary contests, which took place in Montevideo in 1887, was not organized by the *Centre Català* of the city, but by the *Rat Penat*, an association that had splitted from it. This separation took place a short time after the Centre was founded, because some of the associates considered that it did not advocate efficiently in favour of the principles of catalanism (Solé i Caballé 1997). This conflict announced others that occurred later in the Catalanian associations, concerning two positions. On one hand, those who tried to spread the Catalanian language and culture within the American communities, without assuming political positions that could question Spanish unity; on the other hand, the ones who considered that it was also necessary to support Catalonia confronting Spanish centralism and fighting for the recovery of its historical institutions.⁴⁰

In their daily work, the Catalanian centres also used to cooperate with the existing Spanish societies in every country, a situation that tended to undermine the Catalanian convictions budding in those days. This cooperation was emphasized between 1895 and 1898, during the Cuban independence war. The Spanish communities in the South American countries (especially those in Argentina and Uruguay), firmly supported the Spanish government in the conflict, confronting the public opinion of the host countries, which was mainly supportive of Cuban insurgents. The *Asociación Patriótica Española* was founded in Buenos Aires, as a kind of federation of the hispanic institutions already existing. One of the most spectacular initiatives of this association was the great fundraising, which included not only the inland but also the bordering countries, in order to buy a warship for the Spanish army. Their public meetings took place in a warmonger atmosphere of hispanic exaltation and frequent incidents with young natives (García 1988).

By then, the *Centre Català* of Buenos Aires and the *Montepío de Montserrat* practically monopolized the representation of American catalanism in the face of war, as, outside Cuba, they were the only significant institutions that had managed to survive. Although there were differences of opinion, both associations supported the *Asociación Patriótica*, and even the Centre joined the board of directors through their president, Antoni de Padua Aleu. It is interesting to emphasize that this lawyer was one of the main ideologists and

³⁹ See the considerations around this subject in Rocamora (1992:135-149). The author of this work was an exile from the post-Civil Spanish War, who after his arrival in Buenos Aires in 1940 would become, in a few years, the president of the *Casal de Catalunya*. The book has an obvious evocative and Catalanistic-praise tone, but it is nevertheless very valuable due to the information it contains about the community established in Argentina.

⁴⁰ Since the beginning of the decade of 1880, Valentí Almirall, a Republican disillusioned with the federalist attempts, developed a political project based upon the recovery of self-government for Catalonia –lost in the beginning of the 18th century- and in the acceptance of the different reality of this one in relation to Spain. In 1886, he published *Lo catalanisme*, a book which summarized the doctrine of liberal Catalanism and had immediate diffusion in America. See Pich i Mitjana (2006:27-37), Termes (2000:86-90).

diffuser of catalanism in the Río de la Plata and as time passed, he would be highly respected even in the most nationalist circles.⁴¹ This proves that the movement had not still acquired the political tenor that would take it, in a short time, to reject any cooperation with hispanic initiatives.⁴²

2. Political identities and their conflicts

The outcome of the Cuban independence war meant a hard blow to the expectations of preserving Spanish unity above regional identities, among the communities of emigrants. As Villares points out (2009:233), “the catharsis of colonial defeat opens the door to a conversion of regionalist tradition into a national alternative project, with its political organizations and its ‘invention’ of identity symbols (anthem, flags, memory places...)” What was expressed up to that time, in the Catalonian case, through the activities of associations mostly directed towards the founding of libraries, the participation in plays, choral societies and the regular celebration of *Jocs Florals*, began to incline towards the constitution of *casals* or smaller groups with a defined nationalist political tendency. On other occasions, the existing organizations and publications assimilated the political influence coming from Catalonia, and redefined their positions regarding hispanism.

One of the major transformations took place precisely in the Catalonian community in Cuba. This community renewed itself after 1898 due to the return to Spain of some of its leaders and the arrival of others who had discovered in Barcelona the new reality of political catalanism.⁴³ The most evident signs of hispanism erased slowly in the atmosphere of the pro-independence euphoria prevailing in the island, in which several Catalonian groups took part. In 1902, Tomás Estrada Palma, the first President of the Republic, attended a public event in the new *Centre Català* in Santiago where only Cuban and Catalonian flags waved, something that caused strong rejection in the Hispanic media.⁴⁴ The changes produced in the Centre of Havana were still deeper, especially the ones brought about by Josep Conangla Fontanilles, an ex-soldier who arrived in Cuba in 1895 to take part in the war and afterwards remained in the island working as a businessman. Conangla, one of the most important activists in favour of Catalonian nationalism, published in 1916 the book *La ciudadanía adoptiva*, in which he urged his fellow countrymen to adopt Cuban citizenship as a rejection of the Spanish one (Castells 1986:69-70). This proposition would have its followers among the most radical nationalists in the Southern Cone.

At the same time, small groups of activists arose, generally within the organizations, and sided more clearly with radical nationalism or even supported Catalonian separation from Spain, as the *Grop Nacionalista Radical* in Santiago (1907) or the *Blok Nacionalista*

⁴¹Short biographies of Aleu could be found in Comissió Catalana del Cinque Centenari (1988:41) and in Roca i Roca (1917: 5-19).

⁴² Another proof of this can be found in the book *España y Norteamérica*, published in Buenos Aires by Ricardo Monner Sans, also a leader of the Centre, the same as Aleu. Although this author had written in previous years several biographies of distinguished Catalonians who had contributed to the independence and progress of Argentina, he assumed a hispanophilic position, leaving aside the catalanism published during the war (Biagini 1995:89-92).

⁴³ The *Lliga Regionalista* was founded in Barcelona in 1901. It was the first political party to demand Catalonian self-government, although it did so from a conservative, monarchic position. After several electoral victories, the Lliga became part of the *Solidaritat Catalana* (1906) with other groups, some of them Republican. See Balcells (2004:71-85).

⁴⁴ The conflict around the use of Catalan or Spanish flags was very common from the beginning of the century, even in countries where the Catalonian community was small. For the case of Costa Rica, for instance, see Serrano Jarne (2003:82-85).

Catalònia in Guantánamo (1911). Concerning journalism, in 1908 appeared *La Nova Catalunya*, a magazine that turned gradually towards the defense of separatism. The contacts between Cuba and Catalonia were always very close, which explains the constant presence of exiles that found shelter on the island and would contribute to the development of catalanism. Moreover, it was in Havana where some of the symbols of separatism would be created, as for instance, the flag with the lone star or the first constitution designed for an future independent Catalonia, in 1928. This was favoured by a more tolerant attitude towards Catalonian nationalism adopted by the leaders of the new Cuban republic, whose confrontation with Spain was recent, unlike the situation given in the continent.

Another example of gradual politicization is given by the Catalonian community in Chile, a country where immigration reached low but constant records since the last third of 19th century. This community was quite concentrated in the central region of the country, especially in the city of Santiago, with small extensions in the north. Precisely there, the Centre Català was founded as a neutral space, detached from every ideology and with the sole purpose of keeping the spirit of catalanism alive in that land. It admitted Catalonian, Valencian and Balearic natives as members (that is, the people of Catalonia in a broad sense) and also those who could speak the language (Jensen 2008:136-138). Its main activities were the choral society (*orfeón*) –which became famous beyond the community-, the library, the theatre group and the Sant Jordi evening events (*veladas*). After 1910 it also incorporated a mutualist section, although cultural activities remained the most important.

In 1912, the magazine *Germanor* started to appear, and it practically acted as a representative of the Centre, defining itself at the beginning as “apolitical” (Blaya Alende 1922:69-70). However, in the following year the association expressed its support to the *Unió Catalanista* of Barcelona and sent there a representative. Since then, both the Centre and *Germanor* assumed a more activist position within catalanism. This situation led them to increase their criticism towards other Spanish groups resident in Chile and strengthen their contacts with the nationalist centres in Argentina, particularly with the one in the neighbouring city of Mendoza. At the same time, *Germanor* devoted more space in its pages to the examination of the persecution that the Catalonian language and institutions had suffered at the hands of Spanish rule, a position that agreed with the ideas of *Ressorgiment* of Buenos Aires (Castells 1986:82-83).

In the case of the Río de la Plata, the challenge implied in the new nationalist discourses arrived from Spain took place in the decade and half before the First World War, that is to say, when immigration reached its highest numbers (Duarte 2004:181-182). In Montevideo, for instance, Catalonian associationism revived with the new *Centre Català* founded in 1908. The fast increase of immigration of that origin at the beginning of the century made the development of the association easier. However, there was a break up already in 1910, when the nationalist groups expressed their criticism towards the recreational character that most of the associates wanted for the Centre (Paris de Oddone 1960:26-28). In 1926, this separation would become deeper with the foundation of the ultimate *Casal Català*. Something similar occurred with the paper which publicized social activities, *L'Eco del Centre Català*, replaced in 1914 by *Foc Nou*, a media that expressed the new political tendencies from the peninsula.

The echoes of catalanism reached even Asunción del Paraguay, where the community was very small, although it was prominent in trade and the food industry of the city. At the beginning of the century, there arrived some young men who tried to avoid military service in Spain and also an important exile leader, Pere Mars Anglès, after being reprieved by Alfonso XIII. This nucleus, along with some other practitioners and artists who lived in the city since

the beginning of the century, would be the starting point for the *Centre Català* in 1914 and the newspaper *Catalunya* in 1919, both of which maintained a strong relationship with the associative and journalistic world in Buenos Aires (Segura i Más and Solé i Sabaté 2008:55-56).

The arrival of new immigrants at the beginning of the century was also crucial to bring about the break-up of the Centre in the Argentine capital city. In 1908, the more nationalist groups became detached from it, led by the educator Josep Lleonart Nart, and founded a new association: the *Casal Català*. The forms of sociability in this association were more austere than those of the Centre, since gaming, carnival celebrations and alcoholic beverages were forbidden. The annual celebration of the association, on September 11th, was devoted to an “evening necrology event” of Catalanian liberties, in which the theatre group performed plays of highly patriotic content. The plays in Spanish, on the other hand, were excluded from the performances, as it happened with poems and prose texts which took part in the competition in their *Jocs Florals*.

After the First World War, the Casal started to express some more determined positions in the field of politics. By the end of 1918, its board of directors sent a letter to the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, congratulating him on his Fourteen Points Program to ensure peace and requesting him to include Catalonia among the nations with a right to opt for its independence. In the following years, the Casal turned several times to the Irish example to propose the road that the Catalanians should eventually pursue (Fernández 2011). The tendency towards a separation from Spain raised several internal conflicts, like the one in 1921, when a number of prominent members were expelled.⁴⁵ However, the organization which expressed radical catalanism in the best way was not the Casal, but the *Comité Llibertat*, founded in 1922, whose chairman was Pere Seras Isern, a small entrepreneur from the toy industry (Lucci 2008). The Comité was a minute political centre that held close connections with the separatists from Havana and Barcelona. Until 1936, at least, their influence upon the community was limited. Their most outstanding activity took place in 1928, when the Catalanian leader Francesc Macià arrived in Buenos Aires for an almost clandestine visit which the Comité contributed to organize.

In the field of journalism, this course of action was supported by the magazine *Ressorgiment*, published in 1916 to encourage the renovation of political catalanism. The contributions of journalists who worked in similar media, like *Germanor* of Santiago de Chile or *Foc Nou* of Montevideo, were included in its pages. The magazine, which had remarkable editorial quality and a print run that reached 1500 copies, was also distributed in Catalonia. Its great author was Hipòlit Nadal Mallol, a man from Girona who emigrated to Argentina in 1912 to avoid military service. Besides regularly writing the editorial columns, he was also the author of several anonymous or not signed articles.

The nationalist fervor prevailing in the period led the Centre to modify its attitude. By the end of 1923, they strongly criticized Primo de Rivera’s measures to restrict Catalanian rights, its political institutions and, above all, the use of its language. As Antònia Pallach (2000:112-113) has remarked, language is the most intimate manifestation of catalanism, so the attacks against it generally trigger new ways of national cohesion. On a small scale, this was what happened when the Dictadura banned the use of Catalanian language in schools. One of the actions undertaken by the Centre to recover the original course of action was the creation of *Catalònia*, a monthly magazine with a literary bias, by the end of 1927. The publication, which reviewed institutional activities, also referred to Catalanian history and

⁴⁵ The trajectory of two catalanistic leaders who rejected the orientation towards independence supported by the Casal can be followed in Duarte-García Sebastiani (2010), Dedeu (1919).

geography. Already in the days of the Second Republic, the Centre gave its support to the statute of self-government approved in 1932. It is also true that some pro-centralist, conservative groups remained within the association, but this was not the predominant position. Although the Centre was never so active as the Casal or the *Comité Llibertat* in the collections to send money to the Generalitat during the civil war, it frequently expressed its solidarity and organized events together with the Casal with the purpose of fundraising, which would pave the way for the subsequent fusion of both associations.

The magazine, in turn, followed its own path, considering that by the middle of 1930 the Centre could not continue financing it. Since then, it counted on the patronage of a businessman, a native from Barcelona who lived in Argentina. Its name then changed for *Catalunya*, as it would be known up to its disappearance in 1964 (Fernández 2010). Two of the main contributors of the magazine, its editorial secretary Ramón Escarrà and the columnist Manuel Serra i Moret, had chosen to exile in Buenos Aires during Primo de Rivera's Dictadura. The case of these two leading figures anticipates what would happen later, after the civil war, when the integration of Catalanian exiles to the editorial department of the magazines published in Buenos Aires would become part of a more extensive movement, with other epicentres in the cities of Mexico, Havana, Montevideo and Santiago de Chile (Balcells 1988).

3. *The post-war exile and the limits of its influence*

After the Civil Spanish War (1936-1939), the main novelty in the Catalanian communities living in America was the significant growth of the one established in México, due to the arrival of the exiles. The attitude of the government of President Cárdenas, who was favourably disposed to the Spanish Republic, and the creation of organizations commissioned to the transfer of the exiles, are the two factors that explain this change. In the Catalanian case, a small community made up by the old economic immigration, was significantly enlarged with the arrival of the exiles. In 1906, these immigrants had founded the *Orfeó Català*, an organization which had approximately 200 associates and functioned as a club, with theatrical and musical evening performances, hiking activities and a small library (Martí i Soler 1989:16). During the war, the *Orfeó* adopted a position of apolitical neutrality, as most of the Spanish associations in the country did. But once the conflict was over with the victory of Franco, the association changed its behavior and generously opened its doors to Catalanian exiles. Nevertheless, as the political parties had been very influential in the transfer of exiles to México, their conflicts affected the *Orfeó*. In this way, while the supporters of Catalanian nationalism, who belonged to *Esquerra Republicana* and *Acció Catalana*, remained in the association, the Communists splitted apart and founded the *Casal Català* (Pla Brugat 1999:251-253).

On the other hand, Catalanian exiles published literature in their own language and produced a number of magazines that circulated in other American countries. The ones that reached continuity were *Quaderns de l'Exili* (1943-47), *Pont Blau* (1952-54) and *Xaloc* (1964-81) (Manent 1989:72-83). These publications intended to reflect the originality of Catalanian exile in the Spanish ensemble and the attempts of supporting from a distance the efforts to create Catalanian self-government, considering that the legality of the Republic had become extinct. The rejection manifested towards the Spanish state was also connected to the rejection of communism, which was accused of trampling upon Catalanian civil liberties during the final phase of the Civil War (Díaz Esculies 1991:31-32). These opinions were in tune with the efforts of the *Consell Nacional de Catalunya*, established in London in 1940,

which was set on the purpose of reinvigorating the network of catalanism among the communities established in America.

Other Latin American countries which showed –at least in the beginning- an attitude of openness towards exiles were Chile, Uruguay and the Dominican Republic.⁴⁶ A *Club Català*, which practically did not contribute in the definition of a Catalanistic ideology, was founded in this last mentioned country in 1940. This was so because they had to concentrate their efforts to get contributions for their fellow countrymen seriously affected by scarcity in the rural areas where they had been assigned by dictator Trujillo's government. In spite of the small number of its associates, the Club splitted apart in 1942, when the left-wing supporters broke away to establish the *Casal Català*. In any case, the influence of these exiles was rather limited because a great number of Catalonians soon emigrated to other countries as México, due to the difficulties they met to survive in the Dominican Republic (Segura i Más and Solé i Sabaté 2008:166-168).

On the other hand, there had been a *Centre Català* for decades in Santiago de Chile, which had a favourable attitude towards exiles and did not split apart after they arrived (Lemus 2002:163). The position of the Popular Front government was also auspicious, especially concerning the exiles that belonged to the Socialist and Communist Left (Rubio 1977: I, 182-183). The first important group, which arrived in the steamboat *Winnipeg*, was characterized by a great number of artists, writers and journalists who contributed to invigorate with their presence the social life and the press of the Catalonian community (Pla Brugat 2007:265-266). Nevertheless, as the magazine *Germanor* reported later, this same occupational characterization of the exiles served as an excuse for the growing opposition of significant segments of Chilean politics, who argued that the country needed colonists and workmen instead of intellectuals and writers. Another important association in Santiago was the *Agrupació Patriòtica Catalana*, established during the war to counteract the pro-Franco propaganda and send assistance to the native country. After 1939, this association continued to perform relevant work in the field of nationalism and even supported the publishing of *Germanor*, along with the Centre.

The influence of exile upon the activity of the Casal Català in Montevideo was less significant. In the first place, because their nationalist orientation was firm before the war and also because after 1939, their fluent relationship with the association of the same name in Buenos Aires allowed them to share initiatives that remained faithful to that tradition, like the poetry contests since 1941. The decision to adhere to the Consell Nacional in London, also supported from the Argentine capital by the magazine *Ressorgiment*, raised internal conflict in the Casal among those who were in favour of sustaining catalanism without factions, and those who maintained that the aspiration of supporting separatism hid behind this position (Castells 2005: 133-134).

In the case of Cuba, the exiles arrived in small numbers due to the restrictions imposed by the government. Even so, they managed to control the Centre in La Habana and thereupon decided the acknowledgment of the Consell Nacional in London. Since 1942 they published the magazine *La Nova Catalunya*, which opposed to *Per Catalunya*, written by the Communists, a situation that partly repeated what had happened in México. The Centre had had an important role in sending assistance during the war, especially for the associations of Catalonian nationalism. However, it is beyond doubt that the loss of importance of Cuba in the global perspective of Catalonian immigration reduced even more the influence of the radical core of the catalanism of the island over the rest of the countries, mainly in

⁴⁶ A detail account of the Latin American destinies of Catalonian exile can be seen in Díaz Esculies (1991:30-34). For the Chilean case, Lemus (1998).

comparison with the inter-war period. Besides, the old Sociedad de Beneficencia that the Catalonians had contributed to found in La Habana a century before played an important role in the assistance of refugees, although they maintained their neutral position in political matters.

The exiles that settled in Argentina were small in number if compared with México and did not include the main Catalanian leaders. Most of their members arrived in the country owing to personal contacts with previous immigrants (Schwarzstein 2001; Rocamora 1995). Both the Centre Català and the Casal Català of Buenos Aires had supported the government of the Generalitat since 1931, but during the war, anti-fascist demonstrations had been more lively in the second association, sometimes in cooperation with others, as the *Acción Nacionalista Vasca*. The 1939 defeat and the fear awakened by the Francoist dictatorship made easier an understanding in which the qualities of both associations tried to combine: the institutional and recreational structure of the Centre and the Catalanist active practice of the Casal. In this way, the Casal de Catalunya arose in 1940, an association in which the exiles performed an important role. In 1946, one of them was elected president, a situation that would be repeated several times during the following two decades.

On the other hand, the two main Catalanian magazines showed a different trajectory concerning the integration of exiles. *Ressorgiment* maintained its radical positions and its contacts with similar publications from Chile, Uruguay and México. But there was a scarce inclusion of exiles in its editorial department. The impact of the exile should nevertheless be evaluated in a different way, and this is its frequency as a central issue for the magazine. The call for unity to the Catalonians forced to live abroad was permanent, as it was the support to the associations which tried to put this purpose in practice, such as the Consell Nacional in London.

Catalunya, on the other hand, was a magazine with a more heterogeneous political orientation, as it included federal Republicans, autonomist Liberals and a minority of radical Nationalists in their editorial board. Since 1939 some of the exiles acted as columnists for cultural issues and writers of political articles. Most of them had a prevailing line of dialogue with the rest of the Spanish exiles, even though they insisted upon the peculiarity of the Catalanian situation. In 1948 the publication had to be cancelled due to financial difficulties, when at the same time the Catalanian government in the exile was dissolved (Morales Montoya, 2007:86-90). The edition restarted between 1954 and 1964, a period during which the director of *Catalunya* and most of their editorial board were exiles. The editorial viewpoint in this second period continued to be oriented towards the defense of Catalanian liberties in the face of Francoist oppression, but at the same time, they were open to the problems of the future Spanish democracy.

IV. CONCLUSION.

The conflict between competing national identities, and mainly between the Spanish, on the one hand, and the Basque and Catalan ones in the other hand, has been one of the key lines of the historical development of Spain during the last century and a half, as it can be noticed because of the persistence of the debates on the social, cultural and political meaning of the existence of these identities within the same political body. As a result of this, Basque and Catalan nationalisms have managed to gain a hegemonic position in their own local political party systems. Traditionally, the study of the inception, ideological bases and evolution of Basque and Catalan nationalism had been limited to what was happening in the mainland, without taking into account the role played by communities of Basque and Catalan

emigrants abroad, that were quite numerous during the first decades of evolution and growth of the nationalistic movements in both regions. Introducing a diasporic view on the topic may serve to enhance their knowledge and interpretation: even though these communities of emigrants were located geographically in the periphery of their cultural worlds, their participation in the debates and changes on the meaning of their particular identities from a cultural regionalism to a political nationalism was close and intense, with a double sided movement in which the Basque- and Catalan-American colonies were not only recipients but only providers of symbols, ideas and elements of debate into this process.

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