

The Transformation of Political Behaviour in the Basque Country: Nationalism and Politics in Bermeo, 1898–1936

There is a town in Bizkaia where the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants — most of whom were fishermen — submitted to the leadership of a man of superior attainments. They were and are honest and incapable of certain misdeeds. They recognized themselves to be inferior in culture and knowledge, and they allowed themselves to be directed.

But a simple and terrible doctrine arrived there and they were told that they belonged to a superior race. And came to believe, I suppose, that the grossest of them was superior to the most intelligent of outsiders. That collective arrogance, the cheapest and most comfortable of all the kinds of arrogance, has brought them to lamentable extremes. Today that town is uninhabitable for anyone with judgement and an independent point of view. The stupidity has been proclaimed against 'belarrimotzak',¹ and there is evidence that some people have been attacked by gangs.

Miguel de Unamuno, '¿Por qué se emborrachan los vascos?', in *El Coitao*, No. 3, 9 February 1908 (Taken from J. Gonzalez de Durana, *El Coitao. Mal llamado* (Bilbao 1995))

The history of the formidable battles against *caciquismo* that nationalism has sustained over the last ten years in the district of Gernika is highly ennobling to the patriotic community. If the tree is known for its fruit, the excellence of the nationalist ideal is proved to the hilt by the life of abnegation and cruel fights that opposition to the brutal empire of the plutocracy demands in this beautiful region of the homeland, a life that the leaders of the struggle against *caciquismo* take for granted.

The painful but regenerative protest movement, and the perseverance in opposition to an apparently omnipotent power, arise from this holy ideal. As we indicated yesterday, nationalism projected a healthy light on to the public conscience, with which the humiliated and fatigued people could observe its sad collapse and resignation; and, with this light it has put in their hearts the heat and strength for the work of reconquering honour and lost freedom.

Exalting religious ideas and feelings, and with them, the virtues of citizenship, caused the victims of the plutocracy to recover from the shame of their fall. It also infused encouragement for rebelliousness and for the fight against

the power that ignores civic dignity, public prosperity and the enlargement of the homeland, showing the excellence of Euzkadi² and the sovereign rights and indescribable duties of its people.

'Burla sangrienta — Glorias del nacionalismo', in *Euzkadi*, 10 January 1914.

Introduction

The last years of the nineteenth century saw many changes in important Spanish provinces. The socio-economic transformations that happened in the estuary of the Nervión around Bilbao, and in the industries of Cataluña, have been broadly studied: the new labour relationships that they brought about, their great impact in creating new social formations (proletariat and bourgeoisie), the new forms of mobilization, with labour conflict (strikes, syndicalism etc.) as their central axis, and so forth. However, this was also a time of significant changes in another, very important but less studied sphere, that of politics.

The transformations mentioned above are founded on a change from political relationships based on deference and clientage, in which power is based on ascribed status and exchanges of 'favours' or resources, to others in which 'mass' parties seek the ideological adherence of groups drawn from all strata of the population. As with economic changes, these processes were limited to certain areas of Spain. This was a time when deferential relationships and *caciquismo* were in vogue, but it also saw the emergence of organizations such as the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), the *Lliga Regionalista* of Cataluña, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), and certain republican groupings which produced new images of Spanish politics at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With respect to these political parties, the reasons for their support are centred, not in the goods to be exchanged (as in a system of clientage), but in the defence of a series of ideas structured in a more or less coherent set of discourses.

These transformations were largely confined to certain urban areas of Spain, and Spanish historiography has tended to read off political change from the industrialization and urbanization processes, assuming that the latter straightforwardly produce the former.³ But the relationships between these processes have seldom been subjected to critical historical analysis. Economic

historians analyse the development of capitalist societies in minute detail, but political historians tend to consider that assigning actors to the working or middle class provides sufficient information in itself: some will be socialist, others republican, and all the elements of political 'modernity' can be readily located.

However, a look at the bibliography on the political development of major Spanish cities indicates that an intense urbanization process and a degree of economic development do not necessarily imply a deep political transformation. While in Barcelona or Valencia the *Lliga Regionalista* and the *blasquistas* (followers of the republican leader Blasco Ibáñez) definitively broke with the bipartisan system of the 1876 Restoration, and political allegiance and conflict came to be based on other parameters,⁴ in Madrid the dynastic Liberal and Conservative parties remained powerfully effective, in spite of the growth of the PSOE or the republicans by the first decades of the twentieth century. In Bilbao, where the city's economy was radically transformed, monarchist domination was ended in the early twentieth century,⁵ due to the important presence of socialists and republicans, and Catholic-traditionalist forces (Carlist, Catholic Integrist, Basque Nationalist and later *Mauristas*: followers of the monarchist Conservative leader Antonio Maura). Only when the followers of Alfonso XIII organized the Monarchic Action League did they recover part of their previous importance.⁶ Regarding Seville, the title of the most recent study on its politics and province is self-explanatory, with respect to its political mood ('The Politics of the Pact', in reference to the pacific alternation in government of Liberal and Conservative parties).⁷ The efforts of the Catholic forces in Seville to constitute a Catholic League enjoyed limited success except for their participation in coalitions with the dynastic organizations.⁸

The assumed linear relationship between urbanization, industrialization and politics is therefore too simple, as the complex variations between these Spanish cities demonstrate. Those who continue to make these assumptions neglect the problematic historiography which, if pursued, would help to provide broader explanations for these processes.

The notion, so widespread among Spanish historians, of a dichotomy in political behaviour between the urban and the rural environments is not helpful in this case.⁹ Such interpretations

assume that new political actors (bourgeoisie and proletariat) and political innovations are located in the cities, while the rural environment is the *cacique's* kingdom, where whole electorates are immobilized through relationships of deference and clientage. However, in this dichotomous vision the urban experience is based exclusively on the largest cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Bilbao), which were more dynamic and receptive to change. An entire category of provincial capitals must be differentiated from these, being defined as *Ciudad Levítica* ('frock-coated city') or 'of the interior',¹⁰ a label attached to these substantial towns which were more resistant to change. Recent descriptions of the atmosphere in which Pamplona or Vitoria developed¹¹ provide good examples of their character. For example, Javier Ugarte considers Pamplona to have been a city which followed its own path to modernization, keeping its peculiar marks of communitarian identity and elements which had been fundamental in the past, so that changes took place without the inhabitants being aware of them.¹²

A new assumption has emerged, arising from the differences observed in the political evolution of the greatest Spanish cities as compared with smaller provincial towns: the smaller the municipality, the less politically developed it is. Such preconceived ideas are common in studies of Restoration period political history. Although local historical studies are still too few to allow us to make generalizations, the exceptions that are observed should be kept in mind. At least we should avoid easy generalizations which at best limit and may even predetermine the analyses of historians. As studies of local and regional history based on a sufficiently rigorous methodology increase in number, we shall be able to observe the variety of aspects developed by Spanish political life at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While the substance of its dominant ideas may not have undergone transformation, its coloration nevertheless assumed more subtle tones. More allowance will accordingly be made for the variety of routes travelled by the politics of this period.

This article aims to challenge these assumptions that are widespread in Spanish historiography. First, a new element of analysis is presented, one which will help to form a more complex picture of the turn-of-the-century transition in Spanish political behaviour. Second, the article tries to define and qualify the simplistic dichotomy between big cities and smaller provincial

towns. In order to attain this objective, it focuses on the Basque fishing municipality of Bermeo.

Two of the distinctive features exhibited by the Basque country at the end of the nineteenth century were: rapid industrial development based on mining and metalworking, especially around the city of Bilbao whose rapid population growth depended heavily on in-migration; and the early development of both socialism and Basque nationalism among the new industrial working class, the middle classes, farmers and fishermen. The emergence of these political forces altered the pattern of political relationships in the region, notably by injecting a new and distinctive element, in the form of the nationalist movement (also apparent in Catalonia), into the existing conflicts within the Spanish state. The Basque nationalist movement can be considered a traditionalist response to the industrializing process. The PNV, created by Sabino Arana in 1895, became the organization that guided this movement.¹³

The municipality analysed in this article is the coastal town of Bermeo, in Biscay province (Vizcaya, Basque Bizkaia). During the period in question, Bermeo was a medium-sized town, increasing its population from 9000 in 1900 to almost 11,000 in 1930. Its coastal character deeply marked this municipality since its most important economic activity was (and still is) fishing, carried out using traditional methods. Although Bermeo did not experience significant economic transformations, it presents certain changes in political behaviour that allow us to locate it in the category of towns influenced by the political developments of these years: the extension of new ideologies (in this case nationalism) and a process of political mobilization which was both extensive and intense. Its most prominent political characteristic was the speed with which the Basque nationalist movement developed. In fact, between the municipal elections of 1889 and 1901, the Basque nationalists were able to take control of the town council. Bermeo was the first Basque municipality where the PNV achieved such preponderance.

The second section of this article presents evidence supporting the argument that in Bermeo the political changes mentioned above were fully worked out, in this distinctive idiom. However, it is necessary first to analyse how that process took place. Research on Bermeo has demonstrated the necessity for new analytical tools, the usual approaches to the theme having failed

to provide satisfactory explanations. On the one hand, the town's socio-economic structure indicated that Bermeo was a 'traditional' municipality, while on the other, the dynamism and social extension of political activity demonstrated the inappropriateness of this epithet. The evidence did not support the assumption that economic transformation ran parallel with political evolution. In the search for an answer to this apparently paradoxical situation, the importance of political organizations stands out. The development of behaviour which is directed at achieving widespread popular participation in support of certain values is one (though not the only one) of the causes of the transformation of politics;¹⁴ although we do not seek to affirm that the mere existence of an organization (in this case a political party) is sufficient to explain that fact. However, as we build on this approach the importance of the PNV's impressive development in Bermeo is highlighted, since the PNV developed extensive popular political activity and brought about a series of changes (to be detailed later).

Once the importance of organization has been stressed, two more themes must be pursued. The first is the process of the PNV's development from its creation, its attainment of resources (money, headquarters, etc.), and recruitment of its first group of followers. (This is very important, since no form of political mobilization can exist without a minimum organization to take on the initial work of recruitment.¹⁵) The second is the organization's actual performance. Only after its constituents have been defined can it act on the wider society using the propaganda means at its command.

Political action such as that of the PNV can either leave the population indifferent or mobilize elements of it. In Bermeo the second of these possibilities materialized, and in a very remarkable fashion. This can be demonstrated in various ways. First, large attendances at public meetings and growing numbers of party members (though unfortunately the data on this is scant) show a positive reaction to nationalist ideas. Second, enough documentary evidence has been found to show that nationalist political militancy was extending to social sectors that were previously excluded, or absent from, political activity. Third, election results provide an obvious indicator of the party's development. In the case of the parties outside the Restoration system (nationalist, socialist etc.) voting behaviour and ideology

are clearly linked, because these new groupings lacked access to the patronage dispensed by the existing parties and therefore sought, and gained active support, out of conviction rather than material advantage.¹⁶ Fourth, the growth of collective action also indicates the extension of a new ideology and new forms of political behaviour among the population of Bermeo. In 1912 and 1931–32 there were several examples of this type of action in which the nationalists played an important role. In response to perceived injustice (the royal appointment of a mayor from the minority Liberal group, and suspension of the nationalist council which had won the local elections of April 1931), a strong popular opposition developed, resorting to violence when legal and peaceful channels did not achieve the result that the PNV sought. To a certain extent such reactions were even encouraged by the party itself.

Finally, the PNV's intervention in the processes under discussion connects with a current historiographical debate in Spain: whether nationalism is an influence predominantly in favour of or against modernization. That is to say, how should the nationalist movements that arose in Spain at the end of the nineteenth century be considered: as forces for progress or retrograde bastions? Divergent viewpoints can be perceived in recent articles by Luis Castells¹⁷ and Borja de Riquer,¹⁸ to mention only two examples. This article seeks to view this controversy from a novel perspective. In the first place, the term 'modernizing' is not considered useful when it comes to this type of process. The idea of change is necessary for historians, but 'modernization' is highly value-laden, usually being assumed to be something positive and progressive. To avoid this sense, the use of a word such as 'transformation' is considered more appropriate and more aseptic: in this case, to refer to those changes that took place in turn-of-the-century politics. In the second place, in historical studies it is not appropriate to assess the validity or otherwise of the ideological postulates of nationalism; better places for this probably exist.¹⁹ The fact that it existed and attracted political support is a sufficient reason for studying it here. Finally, it is considered that while the PNV's nationalist character was not transformative in itself, to the extent that its activity favoured the extension of political involvement across a whole society, its development favoured the rise of 'mass politics' in a 'mass society'.²⁰

Political Action of the PNV in Bermeo

In this section we analyse the various forms of PNV propaganda activity in Bermeo. Two different but complementary aspects of this are observed: the reception of the ideology created by Sabino Arana, and the initial development and performance of the nationalist organization that made possible the extension of, and popular support for, the issues that were stressed via that ideology. In fact, the party's successful efforts converted potential receptivity in the local population into active support.

Traditionally, most of the population had been excluded from politics, which was an élitist activity. The *censitario* suffrage system, based upon taxation levels and professional qualifications, limited the participation of a significant part of the population. Moreover, their role was further limited by the fact that their support or votes were not necessary to keep or to legitimate power. The existence of 'circles' or exclusive, members-only political *Casinos* emphasized the situation. These places brought together people who were involved in the political process to make decisions on their own account, and it was here that social leaders sustained their contact networks, always trying to distinguish themselves from the rest. This distinction was reinforced by the scorn expressed towards popular habits (leisure, traditions, manners and festivities) considered to reflect the limited culture and education of the 'populace'.

In opposition to the social isolation and condescension of the *Casinos*, the new ideology and organization rooted itself in those sectors of the population which had been excluded. Not only did the new movements seek the excluded sectors' support, they actually built the pillars of the new organization's ideology from the characteristics preserved by those social groups (language, race, culture, traditions and labour relationships). For this reason, it is understandable that part of the population became so receptive to an ideology and an organization which accorded them some social importance and even praise for reflecting the 'true Basque spirit'.²¹ The text by Miguel Unamuno reflects the process of how a community changes from being 'directed' to being considered 'superior', and how nationalism highlighted the characteristics of a certain social group as positive in order to secure its loyalty.

This circumstance does not in itself explain the success of

nationalism among the inhabitants of Bermeo, but it does show that the setting was favourable. However, similar circumstances can be found in other places where nationalism was less successful. In Bermeo, political organizations played an outstanding role in the growth of Basque nationalism, whose organization developed rather erratically in its first years, although it was finally able to create a broad structure that embraced all the hitherto marginal social groups (youth, women, sports²² and cultural associations).

The first years of the PNV in the town were confusing and complicated. The *Batzoki Bermiotarra* (Basque Nationalist Meeting House) was established in 1898. In the beginning, it was a rather heterogeneous organization since it included elements whose views were classifiable predominantly as Catholic and who were not represented by the Carlists because their strategy was to ally with the Liberals. Besides, the problems arising in the PNV over how to organize the movement after the death of Sabino Arana had their local effects in Bermeo. In 1904 the Basque Youth of Bermeo was inaugurated, and the branch organized a trip to Bilbao in celebration. At that point there were 120 members.²³ However, in 1907 attempts were made to re-establish the society, and although its promoters emphasized that it was in harmony with the *Batzoki*, it was eventually organized as a separate entity.²⁴ This evidence of a second attempt to found the same society indicates that the situation was not as favourable as the nationalists would have liked in these first years. Even so, and as we shall see, the nationalist organization continued to carry out activities in the municipality. But by 1907 the PNV was adopting a different *modus operandi* in Bermeo, which establishes another phase in the history of nationalism in the town.

The refoundation of the Basque Youth represents a very important landmark. It grew rapidly from its early beginnings, with 160 members when re-established in 1907.²⁵ But the most important point is that it brought together a new generation of political activists, whose youth has two implications in this case. As newcomers to politics, they had not assimilated the traditional political behaviour of the Restoration system; and, more importantly, nationalism's strong early opposition to *caciquismo* drew them away from traditional practices. The young recruits also demanded higher levels of activism. Such an outcome is not axiomatic, but developments in Bermeo after 1907 show an

obvious intensification of political activism linked to the growing role of young people. The nationalists of Bermeo organized their own propaganda activities, becoming independent from the Basque Youth of Bilbao, which indicates their increasing importance in the municipality.

The subsequent creation of *Emakume Abertzale Batza* (Basque Nationalist Women's Association) in the 1930s completed this organizational development. Its success was remarkable, and more than a thousand women were affiliated in 1934. The later formation of this organization does not imply that women did not participate in the nationalist movement at an earlier stage. In fact, they participated very visibly in religious, charitable and educational activities.²⁶

After their organization had been established, nationalists began sustained propaganda activity. This term has to be understood in a very broad sense. All activities with ideological content, which were disseminated to the general public, are included under this term. In this sense, the public was approached not only through the usual meetings, political manifestos, etc., but also with talks or lectures on educational, cultural or historical themes not related directly to political issues; trips organized for the urban population to visit rural areas; group readings of newspaper articles to try to make those sources of information accessible to illiterate members of the population (a task carried out by the *Batzoki*²⁷); and performances of Basque theatre or Basque festivals (*Fiestas Vascas*).

The party's reactions to particular problems or difficulties are also relevant here. Finding a certain solution to a problem is always the result of a way of thinking and acting, and the Basque nationalist party tried to set an example itself and show the population the 'right' and 'wrong' ways. To diffuse its ideas the PNV used its own press, as did the rest of the political parties. In many of its articles it articulated the guidelines that the party leadership set out for general consumption. A multitude of letters received from many municipalities informed readers of local problems and responses, and denounced the activities of *caciquismo*. The extensive provision of local information in the press helped to spread knowledge of the party's activities, while denouncing acts carried out by rival political forces.

In the case of the nationalists, the sources show the use of all the means mentioned above; they even make an explicit

defence of this type of work. At the beginning of 1908, the PNV expressed awareness of the need to carry out constant organization and propaganda over and above the mere electoral struggle, in order to extend the nationalist system of thought among the population and develop the ability to fight against *caciquismo*.²⁸ Such ideas were still being expressed in 1913. Bermeo in March saw the nationalist candidate's victory in the elections for provincial deputies, after which the party urged that propaganda activity should continue unceasingly until the following elections, in order to make the population conscious of their civic duties as voters. This was considered the best means to fight against *caciquismo* and to remove it from the Basque country. In fact in those elections, voting on the basis of family relationships, friendships or money was rejected as contrary to the principled exercise of the franchise based on the defence of ideals, an attitude that the PNV had defended from its foundation. The defence of this option presents two significant aspects: the concern to defend an ideal, and the advocacy of a kind of political behaviour that went beyond the use of clientelistic relations to obtain power. The first does not require much explanation due to the explicit statement that is made in the documentary material presented later. Regarding the second, we do not wish to assert that 'ideological' behaviour and voting based on clientage are mutually exclusive, but that beyond those personal relationships which involve the trading of favours, there exists another agent binding the members of organizations: the defence of a common ideal. Moreover, the PNV being distant from the administration in its initial stages, it could not fall back on patronage to 'reward' its supporters, which was one of the foundations of *caciquismo*.²⁹

What were the dominant propaganda media used by the PNV in Bermeo? The most obvious was the political rally or mass meeting. In the case of Bermeo this was generally tied to election campaigns, serving as a means of presenting one's own candidate and disparaging the opposition's, besides defending the party's principles. Such activity took place in locations open to the public: these were not restricted meetings of candidates with prominent local personalities, as was the norm for the electoral banquets that were customary among the established parties during the Restoration period. Such activities had been common practice among the nationalists, in Bermeo as elsewhere, since 1904 (and some earlier examples can be found).

An extensive group of 'cultural' activities existed over and above the political rallies. They served the same purpose of extending nationalist principles. Cultural, historical and above all, ideological lectures were another medium used to spread an understanding of the life and politics of nationalism among the population. In 1915 the utilization of 'Basque Patriotic Conferences' as an effective means of propaganda was proposed, and each *Batzoki* was urged to organize its own winter cycle.³⁰ Although sprinkled through time, examples of such activities are found from 1908 onwards: in that year, Casimiro Baertel gave a lecture to celebrate the founder of nationalism on the fifth anniversary of his death.³¹

These were not the only activities to be considered as 'cultural'. Nationalists showed great interest in music. Numerous traditional Basque songs were sung, along with popular ones which contained strong political and grieving messages. In Bermeo's case, there are two specific examples: *Eta Tiro Baltzari*, sung in the early twentieth century and dedicated in a scornful mood to the local liberal rulers,³² and during the Second Republic the civil governor of Bizkaia, Amilibia, had his own.³³ But the importance of music was not limited to the militants' popular songs. Several choirs emerged within the organization, and musical evenings were offered as an appropriate form of leisure for the nationalists, in order to keep Basque traditions alive and to spread the movement's ideology, symbols, guidelines of social behaviour and so forth. For example, in this manner one of the first activities that the *Batzoki* of Bermeo carried out in 1899 was the organization of a choral society named *Juventud Bermeana* (The Youth from Bermeo).³⁴ Music also appeared in homages to Sabino Arana that took place on the anniversaries of his death, but it was religious music in this case. The religious festivity of St Agueda was an excuse to get together and sing in honour of the Virgin. A choral society of Basque popular music was practising from 1915 and was expected to conduct musical evenings in the *Batzoki* under the direction of Mr Errauzkin.³⁵ The *Bertsolaris* (improvisational poets) were also very successful among the nationalists. In Bermeo's case, Pedro Embeita 'Urretxindorra' ('the nightingale'), who participated in many of the PNV's rallies throughout the Basque Country, stands out.³⁶

The defence of the Basque language was not left aside either. The task was tackled in various ways. At the beginning of the

twentieth century there was more of a tendency to complain about the lack of attention to the Basque language in schools, church, or in the awarding of city council positions.³⁷ Later on, the newspaper *Euzkadi* campaigned for nationalists to give their newborn children Basque names.³⁸ The decision by the city council (when controlled by the nationalists) to force the School of the Carmelite Order to teach one daily writing and reading course in Basque for the children who were subsidized by the municipality, must also be framed inside this political policy.³⁹ In 1916, in the context of such controversy, a society *Euzkel-Laguntza* (Basque Help) was created with no partisan political purposes, but with the exclusive objective of raising funds for the advancement of the Basque language. With this objective, each associate promised to contribute five centimos a week in support of the society's goals.⁴⁰ Soon after, the formation of nineteen such groups in Bermeo was announced, with another five or six still being organized, which made Bermeo the municipality with the largest number of such groups after Bilbao itself.⁴¹ Reading and writing courses in Basque were to be taught on Sundays by Father Isaac Urrutia.⁴²

Another very important method of propaganda which brought together the other activities was the Basque Festivities, foregrounding the *Alderdi Eguna* (Political Party Day) or the *Aberri Eguna* (Basque Motherland Day) of the present day. These were used to conduct large demonstrations, for they gathered together nationalists from different parts of the Basque country. They were also important fraternizing acts for the entire Basque nationalist community and an appropriate place for the nationalists to inform the rest of the group of their experiences and problems in developing their political policy. Political rallies were intermingled with sporting, cultural and musical events and also provided a 'healthy' means of leisure for the participants (outside of the immoral dances, such as the *agarrao*, in which both genders intermingled). They tried to relate their activities to local Basque traditions. In order to do so, they picked up on vanishing customs and local craft industries from the host area, to recover their idiosyncrasy and distinctive identity.⁴³ For example, in Bermeo, people made fishing hooks by hand out of nails by hammering them and filing one side into a sharp point. However, when industrially produced hooks became cheaper, this task was no longer necessary. During the 1913 festivities, the organizers

held the *Amugiñes* contest to revive such a traditional craft. This act of revival needs to be seen as part of the greater picture of the gathering of traditions (songs, customs and games) as a means of propaganda, expressing an interest in the characteristics of the locality, and it was at the same time an effective way of preserving them for the future.⁴⁴ The programme of events from the 1913 celebration is an example of the types of activities that took place during such festivities.⁴⁵ The platform performance began with a dance called *Biribilketa*, followed at 9 a.m. by the onset of the *Euzkeriko* contest, which was an award in Basque writing and reading for children; later on a demonstration took place with the flags from all of the participating *Batzokis* present. A Mass was held by the Franciscans at 11 a.m., followed by the Basque Festival composed of a musical concert, *Espatadantzari* (sword-dancer) acts from the Basque Youth Group of Bilbao, a distribution of the awards from the *Euzkeriko* contest, the already-mentioned *Amugiñes* contest, and a regatta for small boats. At 2 p.m. a political rally was held, followed by a *bertsolari* performance; afterwards all of the participants marched to the *Atalaya* (watchtower) where they celebrated a Basque Party; and at 9 p.m. a lyrical-musical evening put an end to the show. In it, there was music from the hands of the *Alkartasuna* musical society of Bermeo, *bertsolaris* and theatre. As one can see, such festivities mixed political acts with traditional sporting events, and with the preservation of traditional Basque cultural characteristics such as the language. The first example of such festivities is found early in Bermeo: in 1899 the Basque Centre of Bilbao proposed to Bermeo's town hall that the *Fiestas Euskarianas* should be celebrated in the municipal building.⁴⁶ The last example before the Civil War is from the spring of 1936: the *Aberri Eguna* (Basque Motherland Day) was celebrated in Bermeo that year.⁴⁷

Finally, other events that stand out are the theatrical evenings that later became the Basque Theatre. These plays did not essentially look for artistic beauty, but for firmly-grounded social and ideological values. In fact, the question of whether the theatre should be 'good' or 'artistic', or an adequate means of nationalistic propaganda instead, arose in the Basque Country.⁴⁸ In opposition to those who defended political theatre, which promoted nationalism and created more patriots, were others who believed that the theatre had to be a form of art, strictly reflecting Basque life. By doing art it was possible to create real Basque National

Theatre, which 'Tirians' and 'Trojans' could savour, and which could contribute strongly to the goal of everyone being able to get a taste for Basque culture; and the spirit of the race could be assimilated unconsciously, for it had almost been lost in the larger villages of the country.⁴⁹ The following excerpts from the nationalist press indicate the main purpose of such plays:

The most outstanding scenes from Basque life can pass by the Batzoki's modest stage, such as characteristic customs, the traditional types of people, dances, games, proverbs, and the most transcendental native problems. The spectators, without noticing, will become saturated with the ideas presented in the play, and amongst laughter and artistic appreciation they will sympathise with the norms and customs that are emphasized.⁵⁰

Make the art descend to the people; let it knit together with them, by doing so assuring them an intellectual, moral and physical, vigorous and firm life . . . go ahead, jeltkides (party members) of Bermeo: cultivate the native scenic art . . . Put Basque theatre on the stage, to give an example of patriotism and culture, and also to work for the salvation of the punished nations . . . As time goes by, you will feel the unequal intimate satisfaction of fulfilment, and you will experience the great miracle of opinion, a miracle brought about by yourselves, thanks to your sleepless nights and current sacrifices.⁵¹

The second gathering ought to have a very special charm: the premiere of a comedy with a highly patriotic ending, in which the patriotism of the Basque woman is glorified.⁵²

These quoted fragments require no further comment as to their basic objective. The plays themselves displayed their fundamental loyalties at their heart, and most of them defended nationalist ideology. Thus artistic creation was adapted to specific political purposes. Conducting a study of Basque theatre, as a whole, is beyond the scope of this article, but some evidence demonstrating its loyalty to nationalist values can be presented. The titles of plays such as *¡Gora Euzkadi!*⁵³ (*Long Live the Basque Country*); *Alma Vasca* (*Basque Soul*), by Nicolas de Viar;⁵⁴ and *Patriota*⁵⁵ (*Patriot*) already demonstrate this without a doubt. The plot of the last-named play can be summarized here. It is based on the love that unites Luci, a young woman devoted to the JEL (Jaungoikoa Eta Lege Zarra: 'God and the Old Laws', the Basque Nationalist Party slogan), and Ramiro, a young nationalist and propagandist for the ideal. Joaquín, who arrives from America with his safe full of money, with which happiness cannot be bought, and which instead distances him from the tender love that was present during his childhood, his town, his

brothers, and his homeland, tries to break that love between them.⁵⁶ The following review of a play called *Jaunchuba (Little Lord)* is also available:

This play, brimful of difficult situations, sometimes deep and at other times comical, entirely pleasant and full of patriotic teachings, and intensely popular, has been without a doubt one of the best received plays in this town.⁵⁷

We can thus point to the importance of such a propaganda medium, which was increased due to the large numbers of people who came to these social gatherings and made them commercially successful. The insertion of theatre into the general leisure activities of the population had very significant results, which the nationalists of Bermeo themselves pointed out. They emphasized the politically heterogeneous audience that came to see these dramas, which is all the more important when we consider that the objective of this type of theatre, as mentioned earlier, was propagandistic. A 1911 news item said that

distinguished people from rival factions, which in local political slang are classified as being of 'up' and 'down', having forgotten the differences between them to go and cheer the charming initiative of our youth' [referring to the members of the local Basque Youth group who organised the function] have been seen gathered in partnership during such events.⁵⁸

Towards the end of 1914, these events stopped being held at the *Batzoki* due to the need for a larger room in order to fit the interested public. Nevertheless, in order to please the entire attending public, not all of the plays in the new room were presented in the Basque language. This condition motivated the complaints of a militant opposing the bilingual social events.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, he was told that it was a good way to reach a larger group of people. To which it must be added that, although the nationalistic character of these plays was not explicitly mentioned, they always contained a Basque message in order to draw those who were not yet nationalists toward the right path (*Euzkotasuna*). These people were trained, little by little, as they came to watch the plays: '*Guk antzeztuten doguzan antzerki gustijak dauke ba, zeozer behintzat euzkatarrei dagokijon bidia, ta bateri baño geyagori bijotzian kututeko suba; erderazkotan au.*'⁶⁰

The first nationalist theatrical evening reported in Bermeo dates from 1905. In it, *Lehenago-il (Rather Die)*, a play written by Sabino Arana was represented.⁶¹ From then on, such theatrical representations were regular events in the town. During the

Second Republic, from 1931 onwards, new ways of delivering the political message to the population can be found. Although the references being presented do not arise from a comprehensive study, they do identify the first cases of its use in Bermeo. This example refers to posters favouring the Basque Statute⁶² which were stuck on the walls of the village, or the use of graffiti slogans.⁶³ Regarding the use of radio to create propaganda, there are no examples of its incidence in the town, but its importance cannot be rejected, for the government itself felt the need to regulate it in addition to the prohibition of propaganda carried out by passing planes.⁶⁴

Finally, the *Giras Nacionalistas* (Nationalist Tours), which followed in the tradition initiated by the *mendigoizales* (mountain hiking group), are mentioned. During this period, ostentatious use was made of processions of motor vehicles for countryside excursions. Due to the sympathy its colourfulness created, this kind of event was considered very important.⁶⁵ Finally — although a stronger term should probably be used to designate it — sources mention the importance of internal coherence in the behaviour of an organization during its difficult formative years as itself constituting a ‘means of propaganda’. As time passes by, this behaviour creates an image throughout the population, presenting some behavioural guidelines consistent with the movement’s ideology. Every event reflects some ideological code; the act of choosing one event over another implies some selection criteria, which are shaped by the party’s ideology. For example, this circumstance is observed in the clear anti-*caciquista* behaviour that developed in the PNV from the time of its foundation in the town, up to the point when the nationalists controlled the municipal administration. Such acts against *caciquismo*, because of the observed coherence in nationalist behaviour over time, give society the impression (reinforced by public oratory) that the organization is genuinely anti-caciquist. Moreover, it indicates the correct path to follow in the battle against that ‘evil’. The same thing could be said about the political policy defending religion and the Basque language, or about the interests of the fishermen facing the problem of trawling. If the party’s acts maintain group coherence over time, and its members take on collective responsibility, this would tend to favour the diffusion of their ideology, because the organization defending it builds a ‘positive image’ within society.

The New Political Behaviour and its Characteristics

The previous section introduced the most relevant means of propaganda. They have been highlighted because of the important role in the political transformation that is analysed in this article. In the second section, the facts that indicate that such a transformation did, in fact, occur are presented.

The most significant evidence involves the intense mobilization of the population of Bermeo. The sources cited already show that a considerable part of the population took part in the different political acts discussed previously. Not only were numerous activities organized: they were also well attended. Although we do not know the exact number of participants at many of them, they often filled their venues to capacity. Moreover, the mobilizing process has another outstanding characteristic: the nationalistic ideology reached out to the poorest local social strata, especially the fishermen. This is shown by comparing the social backgrounds of the initial followers of nationalism in Bizkaia (within which there are some from Bermeo) and members of the *Bermeoko Eusko Gastegija* (Nationalist Youth of Bermeo) from 1912.⁶⁶ While the members of the first group were people of distinguished social and economic position in the town,⁶⁷ the Basque Youth members also included a large number of fishermen, with 35.8 per cent of the 67 known members belonging to this occupational group. Mariners ranked second, at 16.4 per cent. Next came farmers and students (as is logical in a youth organization) at 8.9 per cent each. People dedicated to craft industries, such as basketmakers, coopers, carpenters or blacksmiths only added up to 7.4 per cent. There was clearly an important social transition in the composition of this organization when compared to the founders of nationalist activity: it has become significantly more 'popular'.

The importance of fishermen among its affiliates made the PNV move towards defending their interests, when they were put in jeopardy by the issue of trawling or the prohibition of fresh fish exports to other countries. Yet, the party's membership was made up of components from other socio-professional groups that gave it a heterogeneous character, demonstrating once again that Basque nationalism recruited from all social strata at this time.

The different socio-economic origin of the 1912 nationalists is

also noticeable when comparing the previous listing with the members of the *Círculo Liberal Democrático de Bermeo* (Liberal Democratic Society of Bermeo) from the same year. In it, fishing boat skippers represented 18.9 per cent of the membership. This term implies that they were possibly fishermen and owners at the same time. They were closely followed by white-collar workers (16.2 per cent) and craftsmen (machinists, tinsmiths, carpenters and basketmakers) (16.2 per cent). After them come the bakers (8.1 per cent), bricklayers (5.4 per cent), and teachers (5.4 per cent). Next, there is another group of higher status than the rest, made up of proprietors and landlords (5.4 per cent), preserved foods manufacturers (4 per cent), and merchants (4 per cent). Fishermen and farmers only make up a combined 4 per cent, only three people in total. Thus the organization reached middle and upper class economic sectors, whose importance was amplified by the social influence that teachers, proprietors, shipbuilders and shipowners had upon the remaining population.

Clearly, nationalism searched for and obtained its expansion among the most popular social strata, previously excluded from political participation. Nationalist rhetoric was aimed at securing active participation from these groups. In fact, the entire nationalist network was an open space for the participation of all the Basque social sectors; that is, for those who were considered Basque by themselves or by the rest of the nationalists.

The expansion of nationalism can also be verified through municipal election results. First, Figure 1 shows the percentage of nationalistic voters out of the total number of voters is shown.⁶⁸

Except for the one time when the Bermeo monarchist Venacio Nardiz presented himself at the general elections of 1920, the PNV obtained more than half of the votes, usually more than or close to 60 per cent. This shows that there was nothing ephemeral about the nationalist presence. It reflected the solid foundations that nationalism achieved within this electorate, and not even Primo de Rivera's dictatorship was able to diminish its importance. The forty years of Franco's regime were also insufficient to suppress nationalism in Bermeo; and since the transition to democracy, the municipality has always leaned towards the nationalist parties.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of nationalist voters compared to that of the other political groups and those who abstained from

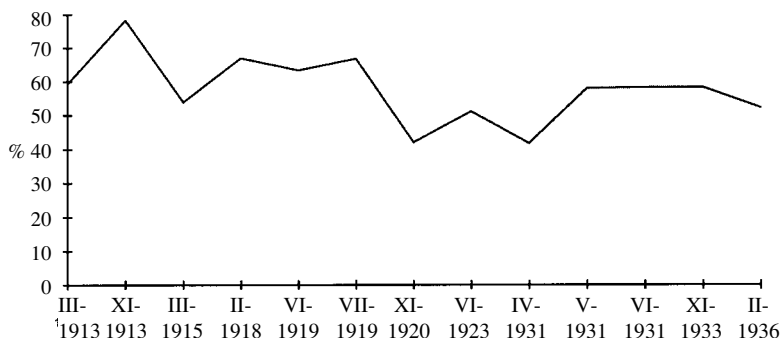


Figure 1
Average Number of Voters for PNV from the Total of Voters

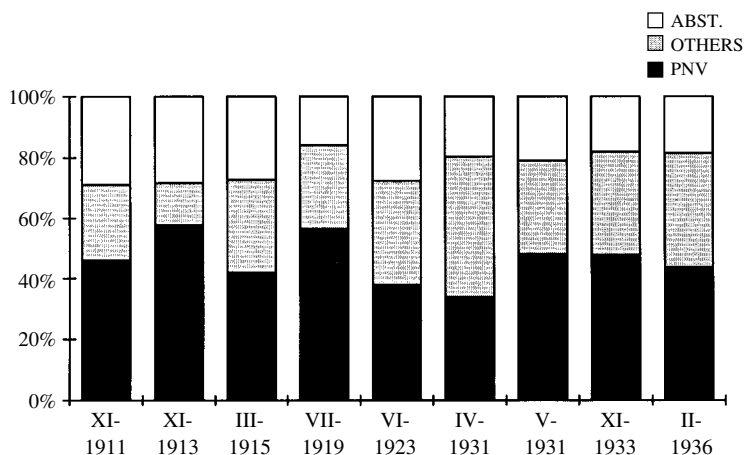


Figure 2
Average Number of Voters and Abstention of the Total of Electorate

voting. In it, the continued importance of the PNV is also visible. Its share of the electorate was never less than 30 per cent, not even when internal divisions reduced its impact, and it usually maintained itself at several points above 40 per cent. Only during the 1931 elections did the rest of the opposing parties combined receive more votes than the PNV. Even when it was internally divided, nationalism remained the dominant force in the municipality.

These electoral results indicate that the way of understanding the world proposed by the nationalists had outstanding, and more importantly, long lasting success. An example of significant changes in popular values can be seen in attitudes towards *caciquismo*. During the last third of the nineteenth century this system, which was based on interpersonal relations and the exchange of favours, was almost universal in Spain and was seen as necessary to the functioning of the political system during the Restoration. The system went effectively unchallenged from below; indeed, attempts to gain as much as possible from it were prevalent (rewards for recruitment, votes selling, etc.). Yet, when the PNV introduced opposition to *caciquismo* as a central plank in its political platform, it managed to disseminate the idea that *caciquismo* was a canker on the body politic that must be removed. As the nationalist vision of reality spreads, any action that is considered 'caciquist' will be rejected with force and by all available means. The text quoted from the PNV press at the beginning of this article was produced during the switch of belief systems. It claims that the nationalists' battle against 'caciquismo . . . projected a respectful beam over the public conscience', which instilled a 'rebellious strength' in the battle against 'the brutal empire of the plutocracy'. In other words, it disseminated a new way to understand the workings of the political system within which the electorate had to operate.⁶⁹

A final effect of the Bermeo PNV's intense propagandistic efforts is the emergence of the type of collective action being observed currently. Many studies consider that the modernization of society at the end of the nineteenth century brought along new methods of collective action: a transition from those considered pre-industrial (including the examples which run parallel to the ones presented in E.P. Thompson's famous study about the moral economy of the eighteenth-century English crowd⁷⁰), to more contemporary ones: strikes and all other forms of industrial action. Yet, in highly-politicized environments such as that of Bermeo, it is possible to find another type of collective action which can turn violent. Here, issues related to the municipality's political life play a primary role, rather than those such as the high cost of living, taxation or labour relations. The methods of these actions can still retain some of the older repertoire and style (together with some newer ones such as demonstrations and political rallies), but their demands are completely new. This also

differentiates them from the new political developments already examined.

In Bermeo, various examples of this type of conflict can be found throughout the period being analysed. The first major episode took place in 1912, with others between 1931 and 1932.⁷¹ Decisions by central government precipitated all these incidents.

In the first case, the government of Canalejas nominated one of the two Liberal town councillors as mayor by royal order. This group was a small minority set against the anti-caciquist coalition, which was made up of fourteen councillors, including nationalists and other local Catholic conservatives. When he went to take up his post, the Liberal mayor came across a group of people before the town hall who were ready to use all possible means to block him. He needed a strong police presence to take up the mayoralty a few days later. After a large demonstration against this mayor (between 8000 and 10,000 people of both sexes and all ages) and the refusal to grant someone from the majority coalition this position, a group of 3000 people stormed the town hall while a meeting was taking place: they manhandled the Liberal mayor out of the building and all the way to his house, hurling punches and insults. Although the mayor suffered nothing worse than bruising, at times there were fears for his life. Finally, a tacit agreement was reached between all of the contending groups. The mayor claimed illness to excuse his absence during municipal sessions, so that he could be replaced by an anti-caciquista, and this restored peace to the municipality.

Something similar occurred in 1931. In this case, an order by the republican government annulled the April elections of that year (the elections in which the Republican regime was proclaimed). The order made use of a bill from the provisional government of the Second Republic, which allowed all protested elections to be suspended. Significantly, the protests had originated from members of the right wing candidatures (League of Monarchic Action and Patriotic Union, who were a minority in Bermeo), and not the PNV. Yet, anticipating the arrival of a republican regime, members of the Anti-Monarchic Alliance (republicans, socialists and left-wing nationalists) had considered this to be the right moment to extend their power within the municipality, knowing that such a change could attract more voters. For the PNV this decision was clearly unfair, because Bermeo was the second Basque municipality in which the Second

Republic had been declared, and instead of being rewarded for it by the new government, as was Eibar, they were 'punished' in this manner, cancelling an act of popular sovereignty. A committee of management was established while the final elections were being held in order to run the town hall. When its members went to fill their positions, a belligerent group of people prevented those members of the committee, who had not been elected councillors during the April elections, from reaching the town hall. The governor himself, when visiting the town a few days later to take control of the situation, was confronted by a large number of women (the men were fishing at that time) who would not allow him to arrive at his meeting with the people concerned. However, his relaxed demeanour allowed him to solve the problem without causing major disturbances.

The same thing happened to the Civil Governor of Bizkaia, José Maria Amilibia.⁷² He suspended the nationalist municipal government towards the end of 1932, during a time of intense confrontation between nationalists and parties defending the Republic. The nationalist mayor was reprimanded because he failed to appear at a ceremony where the republican grouping gave a flag to the *Guardia Civil* (Military Guard). After making this decision, the governor visited Bermeo where he experienced, at first hand, the effects of a large group requesting justice for the mayor. This demonstration of strength was the reason for the suspension of the entire municipal government.

These examples, briefly summarized, show the existence of motives for mobilization which are centred exclusively in political aspects. Nevertheless, they are not the only collective actions (sometimes violent) that can be found in this town. The second type to be described also had its origins in the intensification of local political life. This being a bitter struggle, every organization tried to take control over the most important socio-economic institution in a fishing town: the Fishermen's Guild. Although the guild originated in medieval times, it remained almost unaltered in Bermeo until the twentieth century. Its functions were identical to those of a classic guild: to control the fishing process and labour relations, to sell the fish jointly so as to avoid competition between the fishermen themselves, and so forth. The fight for control caused a division within the guild, which split along party lines, with builders, owners, and fishermen all dividing on an ideological basis. Although the division in itself did not cause

any problems, it arose when time came to share out the goods and real state property of the most important guild in town amongst the now separated groups of associates. Consequently, the confrontations that followed involved the most important groups in the municipality, and these often turned violent due to both parties' intransigence when having to reach agreement. Examples of such situations can be found in 1907, 1913 and 1932.

Conclusions

This article has analysed the political transformation experienced by the fishing town of Bermeo at the turn of the century. In order to do so, the importance of the propagandistic action developed by the PNV since its creation in 1898 and up to 1936 has been highlighted. It is not my intention to claim that this was the only cause of the political changes pointed out, but it can be considered one of the agents in triggering them.

In a period of rapid social change, Basque society between 1880 and 1910 was at the forefront. Intense capitalist development had created new social groups within the urban environment. Even the more traditional urban areas were influenced because the development in cities such as Bilbao, or medium-sized urban areas such as Bermeo or Durango, promoted economic change that was aimed at satisfying urban market demands. Moreover, the mental and social universe of the people was altered considerably: new ideologies, new leisure activities, sports, cinema, more accessible and cheaper means of communication. Without a doubt, there were different paces of change and in some cases the traditional existed side by side with the new. But generally speaking, one can say that the turn of the century was a period of important and general transformations.⁷³

As part of these transformations, the changes that took place in the political world must also be considered. This is where the work of certain political parties of the masses⁷⁴ played an important role. First, because of direct influence over their militants and followers and secondly, because they forced the rest of the parties to adapt to a more competitive environment.⁷⁵ This article leans on the idea that in Bermeo, this change took place at the political level even though the new developments were not as evident in other aspects. The political behaviour that spread in

this town during the first third of the twentieth century is considered 'new' because of the change from a situation that was characteristic of the Restoration (the predominance of *caciquismo* or faction fighting)⁷⁶ to another in which the fundamental features were markedly different. This new behaviour has two aspects to it. On the one hand it goes beyond what has been defined as *caciquist* and clientelist⁷⁷ in the existing historiography of the Restoration political system, and goes on to defend an ideology and use of propaganda in various idioms (political rallies, demonstrations, journalistic campaigns, theatre, etc.) to promote itself amongst the entire population. On the other hand, through their political actions, the organizations searched for general popular support for certain principles. In so doing, they enabled politics to escape from the stronghold of the *notables* in which it had been confined. Here lie the origins of the PNV as a 'mass' party.

The importance of actions by parties such as the PNV in this political transformation has been highlighted; and the PNV itself sought to disseminate its ideology⁷⁸ amongst the population of Bermeo through all of the propaganda devices presented in this article. This evidence suggests that the PNV achieved its objectives. In addition to the numerical increase of nationalist militants, the PNV was able to recruit widely from other sectors and social groups that were previously distant from politics (especially fishermen and women). Success in attracting and keeping popular support is indicated by the nationalists' sustained electoral success, and also in the demonstrations and other collective action described above.

In all of these examples of effects caused by nationalism, the continued movement away from the traditional way of understanding politics can be observed, in a more 'democratic' direction. First, this occurred because the PNV advocated the population's general participation, with the results being noticeable in the open character of the organization, the important attendance achieved by propaganda events and the large scale of collective action. Secondly, because greater political involvement by the majority of society, and the preponderance of political sovereignty as a shaping and legitimizing component of the political game, was promoted through anti-*caciquist* propaganda and other forms of collective action, and was made effective. The frontal opposition of the nationalists (and others) against

caciquismo, which was seen as the first principle of the Restoration's political system, and denied participation and representation of interests from a wide variety of social groups, can be interpreted along the same lines. Therefore, political life was clearly democratized as part of a deeper transformation of political behaviour.⁷⁹

Clearly, the intention is not to wish away the profound contradictions in Sabino Arana's ideology. It displays democratizing aspects, but these are combined with clear examples of racism and cultural xenophobia. An effort has been made to present this contradiction through the excerpts quoted at the beginning of this article: the irrational exaltation of the social group that one belongs to, and the defence of increased democracy and higher participation in an unrepresentative (despite universal male suffrage) political system. Both are a part of the same picture, although one may occasionally be more prominent than the other.

Notes

My thanks go to Luis Castells and John K. Walton for their help, and to my translators, Aitziber Legarza and Christian Mintegia. Most of the documentation used in this article was consulted thanks to a grant from the city council of Bermeo (Vizcaya) between 1994–97.

1. Pejorative Basque name for immigrants.
2. Nationalist name for the Basque Country.
3. S. Forner, ed., *Democracia, elecciones y modernización en Europa. Siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid 1997), 244–5, is a good example.
4. B. Riquer, 'Modernitat i pluralitat, dos elements basics par entendre i analitzar el catalanisme', in Various Authors, *El catalanisme conservador* (Girona 1996), 7–23.
5. J. Moreno Luzón, 'El poder público hecho cisco. Clientelismo e instituciones políticas en la España de la Restauración', in A. Robles Egea, ed., *Política en penumbra* (Madrid 1998), 169–90.
6. J. Real Cuesta, *Partidos, elecciones y bloques de poder en el País Vasco* (Bilbao 1991).
7. M. Sierra, *La política del pacto* (Sevilla 1996).
8. J.L. Ruiz Sánchez, 'Los católicos servillanos en la crisis de la Restauración', *Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, No. 7 (1996), 103–27.
9. Again, the above-cited collective work by Forner et al. provides an example. The dichotomy does not appear to be exclusive to Spanish historiography. Similar opinions are expressed with regard to France: see the critique by Nancy Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-

Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (1992), 55–95.

10. See A. Rivera Blanco, *La Ciudad Levítica. Continuidad y cambio en una ciudad del interior (Vitoria, 1876–1936)* (Vitoria 1992), 16. Rivera considers them capitals of provinces that are stable, cohesive and notoriously different from those previously mentioned.

11. Rivera Blanco, *La Ciudad Levítica*.

12. Javier Ugarte, *La Nueva Covadonga insurgente. Orígenes sociales y culturales de la sublevación de 1936 en Navarra y el País Vasco* (Madrid 1998), 166–74.

13. An appropriate description of this series of changes appears in L. Castells and J.K. Walton, 'Contrasting Identities: North-West England and the Basque Country, 1840–1936', in E. Royle, ed., *Issues of Regional Identity* (Manchester 1998), 61–70.

14. This focus of analysis is linked with the theory known as 'resource mobilization' formulated in the 1970s, which attempted to explain the formation of social movements. Among the supporters of the theory were such scholars as Charles Tilly, J.C. Jenkins and A. Oberchal, and perhaps most notably the sociologists John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald: see their 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', in M.N. Zald and J.D. McCarthy, eds, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society. Collected Essays* (New Jersey 1987), 15–42. Against the structural explanation that argued for 'sudden increases in short-term grievances motivated by structural tensions typical of rapid social change', they contended that those grievances were maintained as relatively constant. In this manner social movements 'arise from long term changes in the resources of the group, both in its organization and in opportunities to develop collective forms of behaviour' (J.C. Jenkins, 'La teoría de la movilización de recursos y el estudio de los movimientos sociales', in *Zona Abierta*, No. 69 (1994), 5–49.)

While McCarthy and Zald were not the actual founders of this focus of study, they were the first to use the term 'resource mobilization' in 1977 (J. Casquette, *Política, cultura y movimientos sociales* (Bilbao 1998), 63.) They took a slightly different path from those preceding by emphasizing the accessibility and management of resources from the side of 'social management organizations', in the face of the other problems mentioned by both Jenkins and Casquette (63, 69). In spite of the criticism it has received over the years, resource mobilization continues to contribute a general idea and an interesting field of analysis for the study of political processes (see, for example, M.M. Ferree, 'El contexto político de la racionalidad: las teorías de la elección racional y la movilización de recursos', in E. Laraña and J. Gusfield, eds, *Los nuevos movimientos sociales* (Madrid 1994), 151–82; B. Klandermans, 'Mobilization and participation: social-psychological expansions of resource mobilization theory', *American Sociological Review*, No. 49 (1984), 583–600.

15. R. Inglehart, 'Valores, ideología y movilización cognitiva en los nuevos movimientos sociales', in R.J. Dalton and M. Kuechler, *Los nuevos movimientos sociales* (Valencia 1992), 71–99; B. Tejerina, J.M. Fernández Sobrado and X. Aierdi, *Sociedad civil, protesta y movimientos sociales en el País Vasco. Los límites de la teoría de la movilización de recursos* (Vitoria 1995), 26.

16. In the example of Bermeo, a dual situation has been observed. On the one hand, the control that the PNV exercised in the city council and the Diputación

Provincial in the 1910s made it possible to superimpose upon the aforementioned ideological discourse a selective allocation of resources and administrative favours from the institutions which it controlled. On the other hand, when the monarchic forces lost control (that had dominated the Diputación and the city council to the First World War, and which had been able to establish clientelistic networks based on their rule), they began to organize more traditional forms of operation combined with other ways of extending their ideological postulates along the lines of those which the non-monarchist forces had already been developing. In this sense, during the Second Republic in Bermeo, whoever voted for the forces of the right did so from conviction, and rather than it benefitting him it did just the opposite.

17. L. Castells, 'El nacionalismo vasco (1890-1923) ¿una ideología modernizadora?', *Ayer*, Vol. 28 (1997), 27-162.

18. Riquer, op. cit.

19. This is not to deny the pernicious effects of many ideologies, nazism being only the most obvious example. But the object of historical study must be to discover why ideologies have (or have not) attracted a following. A. Pérez-Agote, 'Hacia una concepción sociológica de la nación', A. Pérez-Agote (ed.), *Sociología del nacionalismo*, 177-92 (Bilbao 1989), has likewise argued that what must interest the sociologist is not the truth or falsity of ideologies, but their social success, the mechanisms, context and so forth, in which this occurs, and the influence of these factors upon the behaviour of social actors.

20. There is no suggestion that it is organization that causes change, in as much as organization is one of several factors at work. Along with economic transformations, improvements in transportation and communication (i.e. the movement of both people and information), an increase in the information reaching individuals, demographic changes, urbanization, changes in leisure patterns, etc., in other words, it forms part of the overall transformation of contemporary society.

In this sense, in Basque historiography the twentieth-century role of Carlism as a mass movement, always overshadowed by Basque nationalism and socialism, has not been seriously studied. (In the rural and coastal areas of Biscay, republicanism was very marginal.) Its importance elsewhere has already been pointed out: see, for example, Jordi Canal, 'Sociedades políticas en la España de la Restauración: el carlismo y los círculos tradicionalistas', *Historia Social*, Vol. 15 (1993), 29-47. In fact, the Carlists' extensive organization, their propagandistic activity and their traditionalist 'circles' (comparable with the *Batzokis* or nationalist centres, or the socialists' *Casas del Pueblo*), earn Carlism an 'actor's' role comparable to that used here for nationalism. However, in Bermeo the Carlists' presence was insignificant. This article is centred on the PNV because of its central role in the municipality.

21. It might be thought that Carlism could also have taken advantage of this situation. However, two things indicate that this was not possible. First, Carlist ideology placed emphasis upon tradition and, within that, upon jurisdictions (V. Garmendia, *La ideología carlista (1868-1876). En los orígenes del nacionalismo vasco* (San Sebastián 1985)), rather than, as with nationalism, stressing human community and its characteristics — as reflected in M. Unamuno ('¿Por qué se emborrachan los vascos?', *El Coitao*, No. 3, 9 February 1908. Taken from J. Gonzalez de Durana, *El Coitao. Mal llamado* (Bilbao 1995)). Nationalism spoke more directly than Carlism.

Second, the Carlists' electoral strategy in the district of Gernika (Biscay), and more concretely in Bermeo, was contradictory: from the late 1890s the Carlists reached electoral agreements with the district's Liberals. This alliance strategy lost them support in towns such as Bermeo, where the radicalism of the local Liberals accentuated the minority character of Carlism. This circumstance accentuated the contradictory character of the Carlist-Liberal alliance, and facilitated a shift of political support to other, more traditionalist and Catholic organizations, eager and able to differentiate themselves from the Carlists, against whom they were given a powerful argument.

22. The nationalists of Bermeo had their own mountain group or mendigoizale from 1921 onwards, but even allowing for the PNV split of that year, their propagandistic importance was not outstanding.

23. *La Gaceta del Norte*, 10 and 13 September 1904; *La Patria*, 17 September 1904.

24. *Euskalduna*, 22 and 28 June 1907, 10 August 1907.

25. *Aberri*, 6 July 1907.

26. For more details about feminine participation in the nationalist movement, see M. Ugalde, *Mujeres y nacionalismo vasco. Génesis y desarrollo de Emakume Abertzale Batza. 1906-1936* (Bilbao 1993).

27. L. Mees, *Nacionalismo vasco, movimiento obrero y cuestión social (1903-1923)* (Bilbao 1992), 67, mentions the importance of these political centres in setting up lecture and discussion circles concerning the Basque press.

28. *Aberri*, 25 January 1908.

29. J. Romero Maura, 'El caciquismo: una tentativa de conceptualización', *Revista de Occidente*, No. 127 (1973), 24-5. It would be necessary to know the attitude of the PNV when it controlled the *Diputación* of Biscay, since its action would not differ much from that of other parties.

30. *Euzkadi*, 2 September 1915.

31. *Aberri*, 28 September 1908.

32. M.X. Aizpuru, *Eta tiro baltzari* (Bilbao 1990).

33. Part of the song's lyrics have this to say:

'Askatasuna eskatuko tzagu / gure herriko alkateari / eta berak ezpadosku emoten / eskatuko tzagu don Gineseri.' ['We will demand liberty / from the mayor of our town / and if he does not give it to us / we will ask Mr. Ginesi for it.']. . . Amilibia, Amilibia, ya te lo desia yo / que el asunto de Bermeo iba a ser tu perdision / justisia señor alcalde, yo, yo! / que somos nasionalistas yo, yo! / y si no se hase justisia la tomaremos con el yo yo.' [' . . . Amilibia, Amilibia, see what I told you / that the issue of Bermeo would be your ruin / justice Mr. Mayor, yo, yo! / because we are nationalists yo, yo! / and if justice is not put into practice we will take it with the yo, yo.']

Songs to be sung in group (Bermeo n.d.).

34. J. Corcuera and Y. Oribe, *Historia del nacionalismo vasco en sus documentos*, 4 Vols (Bilbao 1991), Vol. 3, 63.

35. *Euzkadi*, 20 November 1915.

36. *Ibid.*, 11 November 1915. This *Bertsolari* was in great demand for PNV rallies during the Restoration period.

37. *La Patria*, 25 May and 14 September 1902.

38. *Euzkadi*, 16 December 1914.

39. *Ibid.*, 26 February 1916.

40. Mees, 201.
41. *Euzkadi*, 28 May 1916.
42. *Ibid.*, 23 March 1916.
43. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1913.
44. *Ibid.*, 24 November 1915.
45. *Ibid.*, 11 September 1913.
46. Corcuera and Oribe, *Historia*, 64.
47. *Euzkadi*, 30 May 1936.
48. *Ibid.*, 31 January 1914.
49. *Ibid.*, 3 February 1914.
50. *Ibid.*, 24 November 1915.
51. *Ibid.*, 10 January 1914.
52. *Ibid.*, 15 January 1914.
53. *Bizkaitarra*, 23 February 1909.
54. *Ibid.*, 10 January 1917.
55. *Euzkadi*, 3 February 1914.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*, 12 January 1917. Other descriptions of nationalistic plays can be found in J. Juaristi, *El chimbo expiatorio. La invención de la tradición bilbaína, 1876–1939* (Bilbao 1994).
58. *La Gaceta del Norte*, 10 January 1911.
59. *Euzkadi*, 16 January 1915.
60. 'All of the plays we act out have something within them that shows the path for the Basque people, and that will light a spark for the homeland in the hearts of many others; this is the case for those done in Spanish.' (Author's translation.) *Euzkadi*, 25 January 1915.
61. *La Patria*, 11 February 1905.
62. *El Pueblo Vasco*, 19 June 1932.
63. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1934.
64. *Ibid.*, 8 November 1933.
65. *Euzkadi*, 27 July 1935.
66. This comparison, and the results that might be derived from it, must be considered as merely an opening approach to the issue, since the lists of one entire organization are analysed together with those of the youth sector of another. The results from the latter accordingly should not be considered directly applicable to the entire PNV. Nevertheless they do reflect that 'popularization' of politics which is under discussion here. For data on the Basque Youth of Bermeo, *Archivo Histórico de la Diócesis de Bilbao, Sta. María de Bermeo*, microfilm A-076–41.
67. The range of the first known nationalists extended from small local merchants (bakers, for example) to sailors and even a lawyer. Social significance in this fishing town increases when the precarious economic situation of the majority of fishermen is borne in mind.
68. The two graphs shown are my own work, based on facts from the election section of the Archivo de la Diputación de Bizkaia. The data begin in 1913 because until then the PNV had always entered the elections as part of a local anti-*caciquista* coalition. This is the first year in which it fought alone so that its real importance can be noticed. The elections of March 1913, March 1915, July 1919, and June 1923 were provincial elections; those of February 1918, June 1919, December 1920, June 1931 (for the Republican constituent Cortes),

November 1933 and February 1936 were general elections. (The nationalists did not participate in 1923.) Those of November 1913 and of April and May 1931 (those of May 1931 being a repetition of the April ones which were suspended) were municipal elections. In the municipal elections following those of 1915 and down to the Second Republic, no contests took place because the various electoral groups reached agreements, in 1917 this put into effect Article 29 of the Electoral Law which declared the holding of elections unnecessary where the number of candidates was equal to the number of positions to be filled. The second graph is based only on those elections of which complete results are known.

69. By exclusively mentioning the PNV in these paragraphs, I do not want to suggest that this was the only party that used anti-*caciquismo* as a fundamental element within its political discourse. The PSOE and the republican groups undeniably used it as well. Yet, as mentioned earlier, the nationalists were the only ones to use it in Bermeo, where the socialists and republicans expanded much later.

70. E.P. Thompson, 'La economía "moral" de la multitud en la Inglaterra del siglo XVIII', *Revista de Occidente*, No. 133 (April 1974), 54–120.

71. A. Delgado, *Bermeo en el siglo XX. Política y conflicto en un municipio pesquero vizcaíno, (1912–1955)* (San Sebastián 1998).

72. To whom the song in note 33 was dedicated.

73. An interesting contribution concerning this series of changes appears in L. Castells and A. Rivera, 'Vida cotidiana y nuevos comportamientos sociales (El País Vasco, 1876–1923)', *Ayer*, Vol. 19 (1995), 135–63.

74. G. Sartori, *Partidos y sistemas de partidos* (Madrid 1992), 295. Sartori's ideas are used to define a mass party. He considered it a party that was open to all and/or followed by all. The concept embraces a shift from a 'personalised perception' of party to an 'abstract perception'. While not only the PNV but also the PSOE and the Traditionalist Communion can be viewed in this way, in Bermeo's case it is nationalism, due to its majority status, that ranks highest as an agent of political change. J.L. de la Granja, for his part, states that the PNV can be considered as an example of a community party with a totalizing vocation, because in addition to mere recruitment, it extends its activities to all human events (culture, sports, leisure, etc.). That is, it transcends even the concept of 'masses' with a yet more 'totalizing' concept (J.L. Granja Sainz, *El nacionalismo vasco: un siglo de historia* (Madrid 1995)).

75. The dynastic parties, which had developed a mode of behaviour based on clientelistic relations and massive vote buying, were the ones most affected by this situation. Facing the risk of becoming a minority group, they reacted by creating a political organization more adequate to the times in order to try to mobilize the electorate, as the other parties did (PNV, PSOE and the Carlists). The creation of the League of Monarchic Action can be regarded in this light.

76. M.X. Aizpuru considers Bermeo's politics during the Restoration period to have been based on a 'gang-fight' dynamic whereby a stable core group of followers expanded in special circumstances to embrace wider social groups. See Aizpuru, *op. cit.* and 'Bandos y caciques en el País Vasco durante la Restauración', in *Estudios de Historia Social*, Vol. 54–5 (1991), 469–508.

77. Moreno Luzón offers a general definition of the concept of clientelism: it refers to the non-institutionalized and long-lasting exchange of unequal resources between two types of actors, patrons and clients, that form vertical associations with different objectives. J. Moreno Luzón, 'El poder público hecho cisco.

Clientelismo e instituciones políticas en la España de la Restauración', in A. Robles Egea, ed., *Política en penumbra* (Madrid 1996), 169.

78. The intention is not to launch a discussion on whether nationalism is a totally structured and rationalized strategy, a religious politics, a gloomy narrative, a belief system, or a set of values. By using the term, reference is made to a more general concept involving a 'nationalistic vision of the world'.

79. B. Jenkins and S.A. Sofos suggest that nationalism is linked to certain democratic ideas: not bourgeois or liberal democracy but rather a radical popular sovereignty. This does not necessarily imply the existence of a democratic project within all nationalist movements, so much as an imaginary popular sovereignty resulting from the modern problem of state legitimacy in an age of mass politics. Nationalism chooses the 'population' as the legitimizing agent of its various propositions. B. Jenkins and S.A. Sofos, 'Nation and Nationalism in Contemporary Europe: A Theoretical Perspective', in B. Jenkins and S.A. Sofos, eds, *Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe* (London 1996), 13. Moreno Luzón ('El poder público', 190) highlights the importance of *caciquismo* during the delegitimizing of the Spanish Liberal state during the Restoration. A.F. Canales Serrano relates the emergence of Basque and Catalan nationalism to a growing distrust towards liberalism's viability as a system laying the foundations for political legitimacy. These movements are seen to have emerged as an anti-Liberal response to a potential democratic solution of the 1898 crisis. A.F. Canales Serrano, 'Catalanisme, nacionalismo basc i nova dreita (1898–1917)', in Various Authors, *El catalanisme conservador*, 137–67.

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