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The Walloons in Sweden*

Bernt Douhan

At the beginning of the 17th century Amsterdam was the main trade and commercial center of Europe. The businessmen of that city had constructed a wide network of business contacts which gave them influence in the economic and political life of Europe. Persons such as Hans de Witte, Louis De Geer, Elias Trip, Pieter Spiering, Conrad van Klaenck, the Marcelis family, Jan Hoeffft, and many others (all Hollanders), were able, thanks to their social position and capital, to gain control over the industrial development of various countries as well as to function as the principal money lenders to these countries. Their economic interests also made it possible for them to gain political influence indirectly.¹

The two brothers-in-law, Elias Trip and Louis De Geer, were able during the first half of the 17th century to create a monopoly so far as control over the production of copper and saltpeter was concerned. These raw materials were of fundamental importance in the manufacture of cannon and gunpowder. The brothers-in-law were to become the most important money lenders to the Swedish Crown and the guarantee for these loans was Swedish copper. The Swedish debt to these two was of such magnitude that at the beginning of the 1630s Sweden was totally bankrupt. Later on Trip was to create a Dutch and German copper manufacturing company, whereas De Geer, alone, was to develop the Swedish interests. From the end of the 1610s, the Netherlands thus became the largest money lender and grantor of subsidies to Sweden. Despite this, Swedish interest groups sought to hinder De Geer from establishing a direct foothold in Sweden, but by buying up notes receivable, he was able to place such economic demands on Sweden that the resistance collapsed. Early in the century he had been in contact with a fellow Hollander, active in Sweden, Wellem de Besche, becoming the latter's guarantor, when de Besche in 1618 leased the Finspång manufacturing plant. De Geer was therefore able, as a result of this transaction, to establish for the first time, a direct relationship with Swedish industry.²

During the period that De Geer was developing his Swedish interests, the iron industry in the Walloon district of the Netherlands was wrestling with big production problems. The area in question was hit hard by both political and social unrest, due much to its geographical position, situated as it was between

* This is a slightly abridged version of an article, "Vallonerna i Sverige", published in *Fataburen* (Stockholm, 1981), pp. 66-90. The author is a well-known authority on the Walloons and has given his permission to have the article translated and published in *SAG*.

the Spanish and the free Netherlands. The problems raised by the warring factions were very unsettling, which together with the lack of raw materials were the direct reasons why the iron mills stood idle for long periods of time, thereby causing wide unemployment.³

The economic interest groups, first of all the businessmen of Amsterdam, thus began looking around for other acceptable production areas, which could be substituted for the lacking Dutch manufacture of war material and other manufactured goods. This resulted in de Witte's becoming the economic guarantor of General Albrecht Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland and Mecklenburg, and the Catholic powers which supported him. Jan Hoeffft was able to create a similar position for himself in France, while the Marcelis family concentrated on Denmark, Trip in the Netherlands and parts of Germany and De Geer in Sweden. All of these persons were Calvinists and Hollanders, but this fact did not stop them from taking service with states having a different religious point of view. The economic interests were the determining factors which resulted in a situation where they ended up on opposite sides in the religious conflict which during this period devastated large areas of Europe. This situation did not prevent them from selling war material to all of the belligerents. During this entire period, Amsterdam, together with Antwerp (where Trip was located) were the economic centers, with the exception of Prague, where de Witte was active.⁴

In order for De Geer to win support for his interests in Sweden, he had to find men within the country who were willing to aid him as well as to derive some benefits from this transaction for themselves. De Geer and his companions were capitalists, a new breed in Sweden. He and his friends made use of working capital, with the purpose in mind that this would increase as the profits, to a large extent, were reinvested in more working capital. Up to this point capital in Sweden had been handled in a rather static manner, mostly in the form of investments in real property. Only on a smaller scale had working capital been used for investments in manufacturing plants, and even in such instances, it was usually aimed at a limited production, of the kind that could service an estate or a manor. One exception to this was Jacob de la Gardie, who together with De Geer, were to be responsible for the development of the Swedish iron industry.⁵

Those in Sweden who at the outset supported De Geer were King Gustavus Adolphus and his chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna and the latter's relatives. It is therefore no accident that it was in the county (*län*) of the Oxenstierna interests, Östergötland, where De Geer was to begin his Swedish activities.⁶

The fact that made Sweden an interesting substitute country for the Netherlands was the availability of raw materials such as iron ore, forests and water power. In addition to his capital, De Geer also had access to the production techniques developed in the Netherlands and the possibilities of enlisting trained personnel among the unemployed Walloons. Also, Sweden was at this time a relatively stable country, whereby the risks of unrest on the labor market, due to wars and social conflict, were fairly minimal.

In the beginning phase of the economic expansion in Sweden, the foreign

interests headed by De Geer, de Besche, Lemmens, Depken and Vervier sought to increase their influence in Sweden by means of economic power. They were quickly assimilated into Swedish society. The majority of them were ennobled by the King and as time went on they were to influence directly the affairs of state both nationally as well as internationally. They made up the economic elite class of the immigrant Walloons, and their activities were to create a positive economic development in Sweden, based on the exports of malleable iron, copper and war material. Sweden thus was the country, which because of the Dutch initiatives, now became Europe's new arsenal and as time went on was to rise to the status of a big power in Europe of that era.

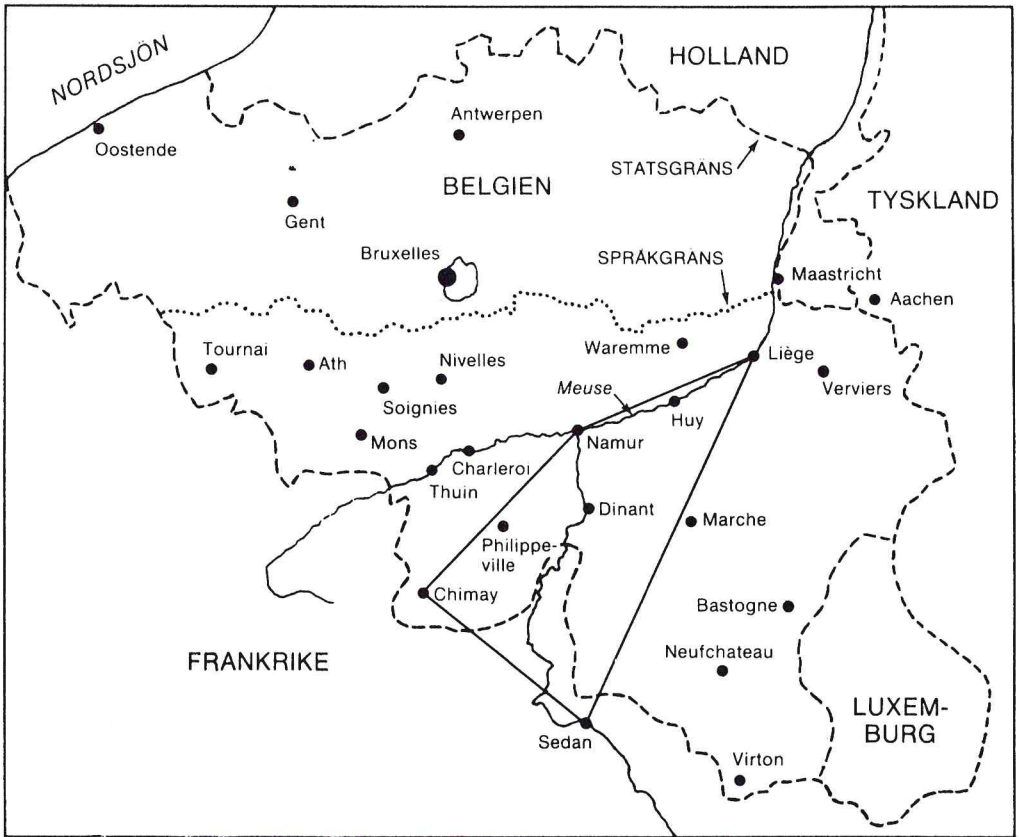
In order to succeed with the development outlined above, it was necessary to utilize the manpower of the Walloons. They possessed the technical capabilities which were necessary to transfer the Dutch manufacturing innovations to Sweden. They were a chosen elite of workers and artisans and were destined to fill the role of the founders of new production techniques in an expanding and economically profitable metal industry.

Wallonia

Wallonia is an area which consists of parts of the present-day France and Belgium, consisting of the provinces of Artois, Belgian and French Flanders, Cambrai, Tournai, Hainaut, Namur, Luxembourg and Liège. This is the principal area of settlement by the Walloons and is therefore called Wallonia. The people living here are considered to be a separate people, with a distinctive language and literature. The language is supposed to have had an influence on north French literary texts as far back as the Middle Ages, but it was not until the middle of the 17th century that a separate literature developed in the form of public plays and presentation of indigenous ballads. The language remains to this day one of the two major languages of Belgium (the other language is Flemish) and is usually referred to as "High French."

The origin of the people is not known. It is generally thought that the people came here at the time of the great migrations, probably via Switzerland. They settled along the Schelde, Meuse and Senne River valleys and in the forests of the Ardennes. Because of the location of their settlements, they were called the people of the valleys. (Etymologists believe that the word *Walloon* stems originally from the French *vallon*, going back to a Latin stem *Wallon*, which in turn is related to the Old Germanic **walkhaz*, meaning "foreign, Roman or Celtic." the same root as is to be found in the geographical name of Wales. In other words, the people settling in the river valleys were strangers and foreigners, hence Walloons. — Ed.).

Nationalism has always been strong among the Walloons, which has caused them countless problems in the past, as for instance during World War II, when several Walloon legions were organized in order to fight on the side of Nazism. The idea was of course to set up an independent Wallonia, but instead the



Map of Wallonia, showing where the majority of Walloons came from.

conflict between the two major population groups in Belgium, the Flemish and the Walloons, has worsened, particularly in the area of the language struggle.

In Sweden the name Walloon came to be used to describe the workers, artisans, clerks and merchants, who were to migrate and settle in Sweden during the 17th century. This group consisted for the most part of those people who hailed from Wallonia, but it also included people who migrated with them, Flemings, Germans, Hollanders and Frenchmen, but these categories were, in contrast to the number of Walloons, definitely in the minority. This presentation deals with all of the segments of this migration.

The Walloons came chiefly from two main areas, the cities of Sedan and Liège, together with their satellite communities.

Sedan is located in present-day France and was at that time surrounded by a number of iron working communities. The migrants to Sweden came from no less than 27 different towns surrounding Sedan, such as Balaives, St. Menges, Haraucourt, Pour-aux-Bois, Floing, Franceval, Givonne, Saponge, Vendresse, Montregny, Boulzicourt and Omont. All of these places can be found on a modern map quite easily. Sedan was responsible for the migration during an

early period, from about 1610 to 1625. The Walloons from this part of Wallonia represented a number of occupations which specifically dealt with lumbering and the manufacture of wood products. Sedan had direct contact with the city of Liège via the Meuse River.

During the 16th century Liège had developed into one of the chief centers in Europe for the iron working industry. Iron mines, water power and forestry products from the Ardennes had created a natural basis for this development. New production methods and innovations were brought in to upgrade the production. Specifically this meant that when a new blast furnace was developed, it had a longer life and was considerably larger than previous types used and could therefore produce more iron. When it came to charcoal burning, a new type of coal kiln had been developed which gave a higher quality coke, which was necessary in the new Walloon forges. This progress was a most important event, for it gave a malleable steel of a new type and with a toughness which broadened its usefulness.

During the early period of migration to Sweden Liège remained neutral in the face of the warring operations which had smashed the remainder of Dutch steel production. The area was in fact passing through an era of relative prosperity, but the military events soon caught up with the city, and when Liège was cordoned off from the outside world and it became more and more difficult to get raw materials and supply the markets, the city saw its production slide catastrophically. To add misery to a bad situation, hordes of unemployed workers streamed into the city from other areas hit hard by the war.

When the war flared up between the United Netherlands and Spain in 1621, Liège was drawn into the conflict and its industrial production soon stopped. At the various iron and steel manufacturing centers around the city industrial life came to a halt and the employed had no other choice but to join the rest of the unemployed in Wallonia. This area, therefore, became the main supplier of migrants who were to arrive in Sweden during the period 1625–1655. They came from thirteen towns in addition to Liège, places like Aubley, Plainevaux, Franchimont, Durbuy and Manhay.

In addition to these two chief areas, there was an additional third, which was also responsible for a larger part of the migrants, who departed for Sweden, namely the area around Chimay. Because of its geographical location and its great distance from Liège, it was entirely independent of that city. Eleven communities surrounding Chimay contributed migrants to the move northward. Some of these towns were Forgè, Couvin, Virelles, Momignes, Baileux and Boutenville. Additionally a few migrants also came from three larger cities, one from Dordrecht, two from Aachen and 45 from Amsterdam. The latter group was probably made up of migrants from Wallonia, but since the contracts were signed in Amsterdam, they carry this name and we have no knowledge as to the migrants' original place of residence. Thus we have seen that during the early period of migration the majority came from the area around Sedan, while during the latter part of the period from the Liège and Chimay districts.⁷

Early immigration

Already during the reign of Gustavus Vasa (1521–1560) and his sons, smiths, and other artisans had been called to Sweden for the purpose of working the iron ore, which heretofore had been exported, and which because of the lack of a domestic industry had been imported into Sweden as finished iron and steel products at prices several times that of the export price of the ore. Hence Germans had been brought into Sweden during the last half of the 16th century and were responsible for what was called the "German" method.⁸

Mester Wellem de Wijk moved from Antwerp to Sweden and became active in the iron industry. In 1580 he was asked to develop these possibilities for the Swedish Crown. Two letters from the Royal administration regulating this task were given to de Wijk in Linköping during the spring of 1580.⁹

De Wijk was specifically asked to bring into Sweden experienced craftsmen from Germany, which at this time also included among other countries the Netherlands. During the 1580s Walloons (Frenchmen), well grounded in the techniques of working iron, were brought into Sweden. This migration was quite small and consisted mostly of master smiths who could supervise the native work force and develop the German art of forging iron. A specialty group among these were the iron founders.¹⁰

Wellem de Besche left Liège in 1595 and settled in Nyköping in 1597. He succeeded in enlisting several Walloons during the years after his coming and thus a small colony of Walloons was established at a fairly early time in Södermanland.¹¹

De Besche was thus to become responsible for an activity in Sweden which made him the connecting link between Wellem de Wijk and Louis De Geer. The threesome can thus be seen as the founders of the Swedish iron and steel industry.¹²

De Besche had had earlier connections with De Geer and used the latter's ships for freight shipments between Amsterdam and Sweden, but it was not until 1618, when De Geer decided to become the financial backer for de Besche's leasing of the plant at Finspång, that the actual cooperation began. De Besche had made an agreement with the Swedish Crown that he would develop the Swedish iron industry and in order to fulfill that promise he began to secure Walloons for the first period of Walloon emigration to Sweden. This is also the period of the earliest contracts. As the 1620s dawn, however, Louis De Geer became engaged in the Swedish iron industry in the ore rich county of Östergötland, particularly at Finspång and Norrköping. De Geer expanded the iron industry at Finspång to a degree heretofore unknown in Sweden, and the flow of Walloons into Sweden began to increase.

An additional early migration of Walloons to Sweden should also be noted. Paschilius Dionysis Chenon arrived in Sweden at the beginning of the century and was active at Nykroppa in the county of Värmland in 1601.¹³ In 1608 he was given the mandate to secure Walloons for the iron working districts in Värmland,

particularly the districts of Karlskoga and Färnebo and by 1609 the Walloons were arriving there.¹⁴

The number of Walloons who came to Sweden in this early period was not large and they were probably younger persons, who had not yet established families, but were fully trained within their special fields, and who, through their move to Sweden, could achieve the status of a master's position rapidly. The occupations varied widely and included, among others, armor smiths, cannon ball founders, nail smiths, pipe smiths, brass founders, smith's helpers, chain makers and carpenters as well as masons. It was solely at Nyköping that de Besche established the traditional collection of iron workers consisting of Walloons.¹⁵

The desire of the Swedish Crown to develop the iron industry by establishing mills and factories could only be fulfilled by bringing in professional people from Germany and the Netherlands. Up to this point the country had been ill prepared and the foreigners working there had only been able to make marginal contributions. Neither was there continuous production throughout the year. The mistakes were many and the iron produced was often of a poor quality.¹⁶ A change occurred when de Besche entered the Swedish market, but it was only with the entry of De Geer that the expansive development began to take place.

The Migrants

One requirement for securing unemployed Walloons for temporary or permanent employment in Sweden was that the Dutch authorities would not oppose such action. They did not until 1652 when a law was promulgated that forbade persons to leave the Netherlands, but by that time the migration had virtually ceased. The traditional view that the migrants fled from the Netherlands for various and sundry reasons is erroneous. During the entire period of migration those that availed themselves of the opportunity to take employment were all domiciled in the Netherlands. Many left their families at home, in order to send for them at a later date, which demonstrates that the entire procedure of securing employees was done with the consent of the Dutch authorities.

Migration to Sweden and several other countries took place within a relatively short time span, during the years 1620–1655. It is true that Walloons had moved to Sweden, both before and after this time, but the numbers were small. During the 1620s the Walloons became active at the iron mills and forges in Södermanland and Östergötland and it was first in 1626 when De Geer leased the iron mills in the province of Uppland that an increased migration took place there, creating what has been known in that province as the "Walloon" smithies and the "Walloon" method of working iron.¹⁷

At the beginning it was de Besche who via De Geer employed the necessary work force, but from the beginning of the 1620s it became the sole responsibility of De Geer. The managers of the Swedish furnaces asked for the necessary personnel to modernize their plants and to upgrade their products. The agents of De Geer, who were responsible for the activity at the De Geer offices in Liège,

Namur, Chimay and Vervier, could then, armed with the requirements from Sweden handpick the workers from the ranks of unemployed Walloons. The enlistment of workers was conducted either by the agents going to the minor iron and steel communities, in order to enroll workers on the spot, or by unemployed workers going to the larger communities, where they visited the De Geer offices, in order to secure employment.¹⁸

Those accepted were told to appear at the main office, where the official employment contract was written and then signed in the presence of a government approved notary public. This was necessary inasmuch as many of those hired were neither able to read nor write. The contracts often mention the presence of some relative at the time of signing, such as a father or a wife.¹⁹

The contracts contained exact information concerning the length of employment, the occupation of the person hired, his experience in his occupation, as well as information concerning the money paid him in advance for travel costs and wages in Sweden. The employers guaranteed via the agents in the home communities that the families left behind would receive a part of the wages paid the employee. If the family wished to accompany the employee at the time the contract was written or wished to follow later, the employer promised to pay the travel costs. When the period of the contract was over the employee was guaranteed return transportation to his home community. If he did not wish to renew the contract he had to return to the Netherlands, since he was forbidden to enter into a new contract with another mill owner in Sweden. This regulation was aimed at maintaining a monopoly of the Walloon methods among the foreign interests operating in Sweden. Many workers made the rule ineffectual, however, by absconding from their employers, or by skirting the regulations, they returned home in order to sign a contract with a new employer and then return to Sweden immediately.²⁰

When the contracts had been signed the employee had to make his own way to Amsterdam. Sometimes the agents gathered up a number of Walloons so that they could travel together. They generally followed the Meuse River to the coast and then via the city of Utrecht arrived in Amsterdam. Upon arrival at De Geer's office, a contract renewal was made or an affirmation of a signed contract was witnessed. The employees received compensation for the costs of staying in the city until onward travel could be arranged to Sweden. The stay in Amsterdam was short, usually only a few days, or at the most a week, until accommodations could be found on an available ship. At first travel went to Nyköping, where the employees were sent on to such furnaces as Nyköping, Fada or Bränn-Ekeby, but when De Geer established himself in Sweden, Norrköping became the first port of call, since this city as well as Finspång were the most active of the De Geer manufacturing sites. Travels to Sweden were usually undramatic, and it is very seldom that one reads that "Walloons were lost at sea."²¹

The Walloon constituent at the various Swedish iron manufacturing places varied according to the conditions prevailing at the time. Those mills, which

already were well established and which had a full work force, might need only a master or two to improve the production and give fresh impulses to the labor force employed there. At newly established furnaces, such as at Lövsta in Uppland, there was a need for a full complement of workers and artisans. At lesser mills such as Åkerby, Strömsberg and Hillebola in Uppland the Walloons were used only for master positions or more advanced occupations, while Swedish personnel had to carry out all other duties. During the entire migration period a large number of charcoal burners were employed, who were active at the mills, but who were allowed to settle within the agricultural sectors of the mill itself, where they could instruct the rural population how to build a charcoal kiln of the vertical kind, rather than the horizontal German kiln.²²

The foreign furnace owners who had moved to Sweden were very careful not to allow the knowledge of the new manufacturing processes to be made known to persons outside their own narrow circle. By adhering to this formula they were able to retain a monopoly of the Walloon methods, a state of affairs which they sought to maintain at all costs. One method of accomplishing this was to segregate the Walloons from the rest of Swedish society outside the borders of the plant itself, something which they were successful in accomplishing during the major part of the 17th century.

As time went on, the Swedish authorities thought it a little peculiar that no legal cases had been brought before the Swedish law courts from the various mill towns and they asked the owners why this was so. The mill owners answered by saying that the Walloons, because of their language difficulties, could not communicate with the Swedish authorities. What the owners did not say was that there existed at the various furnaces a type of local justice, which meant in reality that no cases were brought forward from the mills. The authorities did not accept this statement and forced the mill owners instead to allow representatives of the Walloons to appear before the mining court at Dannemora in Uppland, with the result that it was demonstrated that the Walloons could indeed communicate very well with the judges and the staffs of the court. The employees had a number of complaints to bring before these bodies, demonstrating that the mill owners had wished to keep the Walloons from having any contacts with the Swedish authorities.²³

The justice practice in the milltowns was very effective. In minor cases it was the mill manager himself who determined the type of punishment to be meted out to the offender. In more serious cases it was the mill owner together with the oldest masters, who determined the punishment. The worst sentence that could be given an offender was to be ostracized by his team or work force at the mill. Within his own team or shift, the master had the sole power to admonish the culprit. Despite the efforts of the Swedish authorities to see to it that those employed at the various furnaces were brought into the Swedish system of justice, it took a long time before it actually became a reality. When it came to serious cases, such as murder and similar crimes, these were obviously tried before Swedish courts, but such crimes were rare indeed. By the end of the 17th

century and onward, the Walloons were increasingly using Swedish justice to adjudicate their complaints.²⁴

Upon arrival in Sweden the Walloons were assured certain basic rights. They were exempt from paying the annual tax and were free from being drafted for military service. They were assured freedom of worship and had the right to bring with them their own clergy. The employers guaranteed them annual wine money and they had the right to visit the German Church in Stockholm on an annual basis.²⁵

Traditionally it has been said that the Walloons as well as De Geer fled from their homes in the Netherlands because of religious persecution. Now it is clear that the Walloons fled from widespread unemployment. During the first generation in Sweden their Calvinistic belief was their religious base, but already by the middle of the 1600s, it is evident from the parish church records that they had had themselves registered in the State Church. Soon after this, prominent Walloons can be found in leading positions within the Swedish Church. They also began to pay considerable sums to the parish churches for pew rentals, which in turn caused numerous conflicts, resulting in court suits going all the way up to the county assizes. By the end of the 1600s the first Walloon to study for the Lutheran ministry was ordained to serve in the Lena Parish in Uppland. Swedish clergymen usually noted in the parish death records when some immigrant Walloon had died as an adherent to the Calvinistic faith, and in Uppland this was true only in a few instances during the 17th century. This shows that the religious question did not loom large for the Walloons when assimilating into Swedish society.²⁶

For many of the Walloons taking employment in Sweden, the original idea must have been to return to the Netherlands at such time as the Dutch steel mills would be in production again. About 20 percent returned, therefore, after the termination of their first contract, but for the majority the move was to become permanent. The total number of migrants who arrived in Sweden was not remarkably large but they were a well chosen group of workers and artisans. It is estimated that the entire number of immigrants can be placed at between 1,000 and 1,200 family units, including individuals without families at the time of arrival in Sweden. Uppland, the province which during the later period, 1626–1655, was to receive the larger share of the migrants, had during the period 1620–1740 approximately 2,500 males working at the various furnaces and plants, sometimes spanning as many as four generations.

It was in the milieu of the iron furnaces and forges that the Walloons created their closely knit family units and developed social contact patterns mutually, which meant that the practices and customs which they brought to Sweden have continued to be maintained even until modern times. This, their social relation pattern, was aimed to secure for the families their social position as well as the influence within the employment sector. The mill owner sought to maintain a monopoly so far as the production of iron and steel was concerned and similarly the Walloons sought to secure for themselves a monopoly within the job sector

at the various blast furnaces. The mutual exchange pattern was initiated by certain Walloon families, who, having high ranking positions within the job area at the mills, would attempt to secure these for the next generation by arranging for marriage partners within the clan or the Walloon population. By this method they could be sure to control the employment opportunities within the mill. The result of this policy was that a few families could pretty well dominate the job market at the furnace. It was impossible to break this pattern. A person from the outside might through marriage break into the circle, or if there were no Walloon descendant of the proper age available the outsider might also have a chance to crash the barrier. This mutual exchange pattern still pertains at some of the Walloon plants and has disappeared only with the financial collapse of most of the small iron and steel mills during the middle of the 1850s and the beginning of this century. At those places, which were able to overcome the economic crisis, one can today find Walloon families, who, on a continuing basis have been in charge of the steel production since their forefathers immigrated to Sweden.²⁷

At the smaller mills, where the Walloons were responsible only for the most prestigious share of the work teams, the mutual relation pattern developed, but often in close harmony with the Swedish part of the labor force. Walloon families sought to have their children married off to relatives employed at the larger plants, but this was quite unusual. Instead it was necessary to work out a compromise with the Swedish part of the labor force, so as to be able to monopolize the job opportunities. In Uppland, where the smaller mills (Ullfors, Strömsberg, Wessland and Hillebola) were located but a short distance from each other, the Walloons were able to develop a relational pattern with their own kind, but not quite as effectively as at the larger mills. At the smaller furnaces, which were responsible for the production for some of the larger companies, as for instance Åkerby, Tobo (Lövsta) and Wattholma (Österby), they could usually integrate with the exchange pattern of the larger mills so that the master jobs at these mills sometimes were held at certain periods of time by the masters from the larger units. Finally, when mill owners in Uppland decided to establish new plants in Norrland, in northern Sweden, and transferred certain Walloon families from the Uppland furnaces, the Walloons were able to develop the same mutual exchange pattern in the northern mills, although they continued to a certain extent to maintain a trade-off with the traditional pattern at the original Uppland site. It thus happened that by maintaining this mutual exchange pattern, they were sometimes able to return to their original furnace in Uppland.

The Millworkers

The newly arrived families received a parcel of land on which they could build a dwelling as well as a structure for the cow and pig. Before the house was constructed, the families resided in the company barracks, where they also had the opportunity to keep their animals. The land granted to them also contained a small field, on which they could grow fodder for the cattle and a certain amount

of vegetables for the family. The lumber was purchased from the mill owner at a subsidized price and was paid for from the credit built up from employment.²⁸ All of the household needs were picked up at the company store and were recorded in a certain cash credit account. The employees thus never had to use cash, but could depend upon the company store to keep supplies on hand. The major items handled by the stores were groceries and foodstuffs but sometimes they also carried such items as textiles and shoes.

At the various iron mills the production activities were split up into work shifts or teams and these teams (*lag*) were responsible for the performance of the principal labor categories. These were usually three.

1. The smiths, which consisted of the blast furnace workers and the two different smith combinations, the smelters and those at the forge.
2. The forestry personnel, consisting of lumberjacks, charcoal burners and teamsters.
3. Craftsmen and artisans, who together were responsible for the service categories, so that the production could be maintained without interruption. Within this group were such crafts as the masons, carpenters, wheelwrights, farriers, bellows makers, wagon manufacturers, blacksmiths and millers.

In addition to these three main categories there were others who played an important role, namely the various clerks. They never constituted a large part of the mill's personnel, but their jobs were of the kind that in many ways they were the most important, and it was from this class that the future mill managers emerged. In addition there was at many furnace establishments an agrarian element, which meant the employment of agricultural workers, but these functioned usually outside of the steel plant itself. Within this sector there were many mill laborers who were responsible for the chores that had to be done. These day laborers were aided occasionally by women and children.²⁹

The iron mill usually consisted of a center, where the production of steel took place, and then the agrarian sector, whose Swedish population was responsible for the production of agricultural products. In the long run these were also producers of some forestry products, the foremost of these being charcoal, a very important ingredient in the production of steel. Within the agrarian sector the Walloon charcoal burners were quite active with their own charcoal manufacturing, but they also had a mandate to impart the knowledge of charcoal burning to the Swedish portion of the population.

Worker Categories

The blast furnace workers were made up of teams or (*lag*) for each furnace with a master, a second man, usually a journeyman, an ore crusher and an ore charger at the top. These were usually of Walloon origin and were responsible for the introduction into Sweden of the "French" type of blast furnace. This new type of furnace produced a product which was superior to the iron produced earlier in the "German" type furnace and was first introduced into Sweden by

the foreign mill owners. In addition to the jobs mentioned above, there were those who crushed the ore, not to be confused with the person at the blast furnace who placed the crushed ore into the furnace, ore transporters, etc., but in no case, so far as it has been observed for the 17th century, were Walloons used for these more menial tasks. They were usually performed by the members of the farm population or by day laborers.³⁰ Blast furnaces were to be found in all parts of the Uppland mining areas and in addition to the furnaces to be found at the steel mills themselves, use was also made of furnaces in other places. Thus Lövsta used the smaller furnaces at Tobo and the Lövsta farm blast furnace, Österby made use of the Wattholma (old Kungstomt) and the furnaces at Berklinge. At these places the Walloons were settled, but they belonged in principle to the personnel of the mother plant and conducted the exchange pattern with Walloons at the major mill.

Within the Walloon smithies, two teams worked at each hammer forge, spelling each other every four hours. A smelter force worked and reworked the iron ingot in a special blast smelter, where the iron was enriched with carbon, thus making it malleable and more easily worked. The smelter team consisted of a master, an assistant and two apprentices. The smelters handed over the molten charge to the hammer smiths at the forge, who stretched the clump of iron into bars, which were then sent to other factories for further refinishing. The hammer smith team consisted of a master, two apprentices and two coke boys, whose main job was to fire up the smelter hearth. The Walloons were responsible for the top jobs at the larger furnaces in Uppland. At the smaller furnaces the older system of manufacturing "German" iron continued during the major part of the 17th century, and when the Walloons were active in these places, they usually produced the "German" variant.³¹

During the early period of migration a number of Walloon forestry workers were brought to Sweden, mostly to become active in the mining areas of Östergötland. They were instrumental in assuring that improvements in the production techniques could be brought about. They introduced the typical vertical charcoal kiln from Wallonia, which produced charcoal of a much better quality than the so called "German" horizontal kiln. This was of great importance for the production at the blast furnaces as well as for the finished product. Even during the latter part of the migration the Walloons continued to be the charcoal experts and a number of furnaces in Uppland had on their rosters Walloon employees who were responsible for charcoal burning at the mill itself. This was in addition to the Walloons residing in the agrarian sector. The latter assimilated with the Swedish farm population and thus integrated their social pattern with the Swedes. These are the Walloons which are most difficult to trace, since their Walloon origin only can be deduced from their physical appearance. These were also the Walloons who were the victims of racial slurs by the Swedish population because of their physical characteristics. There existed many a charcoal burner's croft, whose inhabitant had a south European physiognomy. This sector of the Walloon migration was soon swallowed up in the Swedish population and slowly

took Swedish names as well as adopting ordinary patronymics. Names such as Filipsson, Danielsson and Bengtsson may possibly go back to an original Walloon name, which was adjusted to conform to Swedish family name usage. On the other hand, many families were able to retain their original Walloon names because they lived in close proximity to the Walloon furnaces, families with names like Pagard, Mony, etc.³²

The craftsmen were basically responsible for the introduction of certain production innovations into Sweden. Within all areas of production these new ideas were of great importance. Such trades as wheelwrights, saddlers, bellows makers had as great a share in this development as the smiths and other employees. They settled at the mills and became a part of the labor force. Sometimes, however, the craftsmen travelled from furnace to furnace in order to construct and manufacture new units, as well as repair old ones. This was particularly so in places where it had not been possible to recruit the technicians in the Netherlands. This applied mostly to such categories as bellows makers, masons and carpenters.³³

Scribes and bookkeepers were in several cases Walloons, but there also existed a group of Flemish scribes from Amsterdam. The clergymen were in general Walloons. They served their constituencies during the early period, usually staying in Sweden but a short time. They were first of all responsible for the spiritual needs of the migrants, but their most important function was as teachers to the Walloon children. Because of this instruction the children achieved an educational platform which was unique in Swedish society at that time, and gave them the opportunity to move up the social ladder. As time went on it was therefore not unusual to see the sons of master craftsmen getting employment in the mill office, advancing gradually to scribes, bookkeepers and even as high as mill managers.

Of the greatest importance was the fact that this educational experience made it possible for children of furnace workers to enter the burger classes, and a number of Walloons thus were able to advance to positions within the Swedish bureaucracy. They were also able to forge ahead in the private sector as merchants, entrepreneurs and craftsmen. The education received by these youngsters also gave them the opportunity to leave the mills, where they often could not get employment on the local level. This is also one of the reasons so many Walloon families have prospered in Sweden.³⁴

As stated earlier, the assimilation of the Walloons into Swedish society was accomplished without serious dislocations, due to the fact that they arrived in Sweden as an accepted group of elite workers. They had not been disowned by their homeland and they were accepted in Sweden. There were exceptions, as has been noted, particularly in the agrarian sector, but these exceptions were rare in comparison with the acceptance of the entire group. The Walloons constituted a group of people who in many ways reached a positive position in Swedish society.

The assimilation into Swedish society also meant that Sweden could expect

the Walloons to fulfill their duties as good citizens. Already by the middle of the 1600s Walloon youths were drafted into the Swedish army and by the end of the century the employees at various mills were assigned to the regiments quartered in the mining regions. By the end of the century the Walloons were beginning to pay annual taxes and by 1671, when the census lists began appearing in Sweden, the Walloons were registered as were all other Swedes.

The Women

In the migration families the women were a specially marked group. If the husband had left for Sweden alone, it was the wife who had to provide for the family. It is true that she received a part of her husband's wages, but she was alone in raising the children. If the husband chose to remain in Sweden after the first contract period, he could return to the Netherlands to fetch the family, but it could also happen that the wife had to assume the responsibility of bringing over the children to Sweden.

At the furnaces it was the women who bore the heaviest load. A household in those days cannot be compared with a modern family situation. Most of the members of a master's team (*lag*) lived with the master and the master's household thereby became an economic and social unit for the members of the team. The wife of the master had the responsibility for the management of this large household, and it was her duty to see that the team members fulfilled their job requirements. She had to take care of the animals and tend the vegetable garden. Another heavy duty for her was to care for the laundering of the smiths' clothing. Members of the team worked in white smiths' shirts, the only article of clothing the smiths wore in the hot smithy, except for the leather apron and the long smiths' stockings.

When the team members went to the furnace they had to be provided with food packages, which were to supply the smiths with victuals for the coming 24 hours. Because of the dirty work, the smiths did not wish to return to their homes dirty but stayed in the "labby", an alcove in the smithy, during their hours off. One of the children in the household was therefore dispatched daily to the smithy with fresh food for the workers. When the smiths returned home by the end of the week it was the women who scrubbed them and bathed them. This meant, of course, that the wife was left alone with the children during the week and had to be responsible for raising them.

The master's wife was helped in the household by one or more female servants, who were either daughters or hired outside help. Often it could be the daughter-in-law. Together they were responsible for running the menage. If a daughter married and left the family, it created an additional burden for the mother, unless a younger daughter could step in and shoulder the responsibility. If this were not possible, it became necessary to hire an outside girl and if this were not economically feasible, the remainder of the women in the household would have to shoulder the extra work.

It was customary that daughters and sons after their marriage stayed in the parental home for a while with their partners. Usually they attempted to create their own households, and if the young husband became a master, this became a necessity. There are cases where a married son remained in the parental home during his entire adulthood, and when the father no longer could remain at his job, the son took over, not only the master's job, but also the household, in which case the daughter-in-law became responsible for the running of the household. The same conditions could also apply to a son-in-law.

Both women and children took part in the daily chores and could thereby augment the family income. If the family was in debt, the extra wages were of special import, since it then became possible to pay off the indebtedness, but it also meant that the women had to participate in the chores, which at times were both taxing and burdensome, in addition to running the household. Children also participated in the daily work, and this could start at an early age. Child labor was nothing unusual and sons at the age of twelve could be used as apprentices and errand boys in the mill.

The social structure within the mill area specified that the men married at the time when they had fulfilled their apprentice years, usually in the middle twenties. The women married somewhat earlier. If a woman became a widow, it was probable that one of the unmarried team members married her. As a result, many brothers-in-law married their sisters-in-law, when a brother died.

The possibilities of the women working at a trade, outside of the household, except for the daily chores, were very slim. The foremost job would be as a servant at a nearby estate or within the mill's agrarian sector. The social exchange pattern within the mill community gave the women, as well as the men, opportunities for finding marriage partners and it was as a wife within the framework of a household that most of the women found their employment. As in the case of the men, the women could also, thanks to the educational base they received at the mill, move into town or a nearby city to gain employment. The usual occupation for them was that of a servant.

The importance of the input which the Walloon women did at the various mills cannot be evaluated highly enough. Often they had to be responsible for a work burden within the household, which was not appreciated in the same manner as the input of their marriage partners.

¹ M. J. Kitch, *Capitalism and the Reformation* (London, 1967); C. M. Cipolla (Ed.), *The Fontana Economic History of Europe* (London, 1973), Vol. II, pp. 354-589, plus map on p. 550.

² E. W. Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer 1587-1652*, I-II (Stockholm, 1923).

³ E. W. Griffes, *The Story of the Walloons* (London, 1923).

⁴ See note 1.

⁵ Björn Helmfrid, *Norrköpings stads historia 1568-1719* (Stockholm, 1963), I, p. 280.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ See the migrants' contracts in the Lövsta Archives in *Riksarkivet* (The National Archives), Stockholm.

⁸ Bertil Boëthius, *Gruvornas, hyttornas och hamrarnas folk* (Stockholm, 1951); Sten Carlsson, "Tyska invandrare i Sverige" *Fataburen*, 1981, pp. 9-31.

⁹ See Helmfrid, *Norrköpings stads historia*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

- ¹¹ De Besche's name is noted for the first time in Swedish sources Sept. 12, 1597.
- ¹² The exact relationship between De Geer and de Besche is uncertain. It is fairly certain that De Geer used de Besche as his first contact in Sweden. Later in the 17th century the cooperative effort seems to have ceased and de Besche became responsible for his own iron mill at Forsmark in Uppland.
- ¹³ It seems that several Walloons arrived in Chenon's company. One of them was Nils Gilliusson het Deproz, who became the first mayor of Filipstad.
- ¹⁴ Chenon recruited eleven French speaking workers on his travels 1608–1609, who were present in Stockholm June 22, 1609.
- ¹⁵ See K. Lindblom's article on the early Walloons in Sweden in *Vallonättlingen*, 1977, No. 1–3.
- ¹⁶ In order to be assured good production it was not only necessary to employ good workers, but it was also important that the mill management was in the hands of experienced and well trained operatives. Unfortunately these responsibilities were often given to untrained persons, interested only in their positions being used as a power base. At times the production at Österby and Finspång came to a standstill because of the abuse of power.
- ¹⁷ It was at the furnaces in Uppland where the Walloons were in the majority of the workers. The Walloons created enclaves which had restricted access to Swedish society.
- ¹⁸ See Dahlgren, *Louis de Geer*.
- ¹⁹ The contracts to be found in the Lövsta Archives show the presence of kinfolk at the time of the signing.
- ²⁰ The source materials show that while absconding from the mills was unusual, it did happen from time to time.
- ²¹ See the Lövsta Archives.
- ²² The furnaces only used a limited number of charcoal burners at the mill itself. Most of the Walloons who were charcoal burners settled in the agrarian sector. Their assimilation went much faster than that at the mills. By the end of the 17th century it is difficult to find them in the official source material.
- ²³ The facts surrounding this statement can be found in the court records of the Dannemora Mining Court.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ The right to visit the German Church in Stockholm was from the beginning an important privilege. As time went on, however, these visits became more symbolical and toward the end of the 17th century they were considered more as a pilgrimage, to be done once in one's lifetime.
- ²⁶ The religious question was for a long time considered to be the reason for emigrating to Sweden, according to several authors. E. W. Dahlgren in his biography of Louis De Geer showed, however, that this was not the case.
- ²⁷ The social exchange pattern referred to here was based upon the old feudal society's system with its static relation pattern. By means of this exchange pattern one could be certain of retaining both social and economic positions.
- ²⁸ In the account books of the various mills one can see when an employee became indebted to the company for lumber received to construct a dwelling. There are also registers of the various apartments at the mill, showing who was living where.
- ²⁹ The Walloons were not required to do the daily chores in the beginning, but as they began paying taxes they also had to assume this responsibility. A day's labor was given a certain monetary value, and by doing more than was obligatory, the workers could earn extra income. Usually it was not the men who did the extra days, but the women and children. Often the same individuals were responsible for the same chores — particularly in the bakery, the laundry and during the time of harvest.
- ³⁰ The blast furnace workers were occupied about half of the time with the furnaces. The rest of the year they were doing various chores around the plant.
- ³¹ A relatively large proportion of the Walloons who came to Sweden had as their function to develop the "German" type of iron forging.
- ³² Erik Appelgren, *Vallonernas namn* (Stockholm, 1968).
- ³³ During the early migration these craftsmen moved between the various furnaces, but a decade later they were for the most part settled at a larger mill, even if they continued to service the smaller units from time to time.
- ³⁴ The importance of education received can be seen in the fact that in the case where there was lack of qualified work, the Walloon youths did not have to do the more menial chores, which the farm population had been doing, but could enter a trade in one of the nearby towns.