

*Resistance under Franco (1959-1975): Exploring the role of Basque clergy and their involvement with Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA)*



History - Integrative Exercise  
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“Humbly, we should recognize that we know nothing.

*Euskadi*, the Basque Country...occupies our minds

only when blood stains information.”<sup>1</sup> ~ Gregorio Morán

## **Introduction**

On July 31<sup>st</sup> 2010, I arrived in Vitoria-Gasteiz, capital of the Spanish Basque Country.<sup>2</sup> I was visiting my uncle, who is a Jesuit priest and robotics professor at the *Jesus Obrero* educational center. At lunchtime, I bizarrely found myself sitting in a dining hall with nine elderly priests, who were chatting jovially and serving themselves ample amounts of paella. When my uncle noticed my bewilderment at this festive occasion, he seemed astonished that I did not know it was my saint’s day. It turns out that July 31<sup>st</sup> is the feast day of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who is widely celebrated for being the founder of the Society of Jesus and patron saint of both Basques and soldiers. Coincidentally, it is also a very special day for Basque nationalism: the first Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco or PNV) was founded on July 31<sup>st</sup> 1895 and the radical nationalist liberation movement *Euskadi ta Askatasuna*<sup>3</sup> (ETA) was formed on July 31<sup>st</sup> 1959.

Most historians acknowledge that the PNV was intentionally created on Loyola’s feast day because the Basque patron saint adequately represented the highly religious

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<sup>1</sup> Gregorio Morán, *Los españoles que dejaron de serlo: Euskadi, 1937-1981*. (Barcelona, España: Editorial Planeta, 1982), 9.

<sup>2</sup> The Spanish Autonomous Community of the Basque Country encompasses the provinces of Álava, Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa. This first-level division of Spain into Autonomous Communities was established in the 1978 constitution, when Spain was transitioning into democracy and needed to define itself as a plurinational state to reconcile its citizens, who had been forced to abandon their regional identities during Francisco Franco’s dictatorship. *Euskal Herria*, on the other hand, is a historical region that encompasses the four north-western Spanish provinces of Alava, Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Navarra in addition to the French provinces of Labourd, Basse Navarre and Soule. Thus, many Basque nationalists and separatists consider that their country has been divided and occupied by Spain and France.

<sup>3</sup> *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* means ‘Basque Homeland and Freedom’ in the Basque language of *euskera*.



nationalist party.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, academics downplay the temporal significance of ETA's foundation on July 31<sup>st</sup> and underemphasize the influence that both Catholicism and the Basque clergy had on the organization. Political Scientist André Lecours, for instance, assumes that because ETA defined itself as aconfessional, religion no longer influenced its members' ideology and that despite tense relations with the clergy, they refrained from killing priests.<sup>5</sup> Due to these grave historical misconceptions, I shall demonstrate that religion was still highly influential on ETA members and that, apart from anticlericalism towards Francoist Bishops, ETA had a very intimate relationship with some members of the lower clergy.

Since ETA and a minority of Basque priests actively defied Francisco Franco's dictatorship, clerical resistance sometimes had indirect or direct support for ETA. Indirect support usually involved priests verbally criticizing the regime, whereas direct support required being in contact with ETA and collaborating with them. Through education, sermons, funerals, letters and workers' meetings, the clergy indirectly affected ETA. Other priests directly collaborated with ETA members by acting as intermediaries between ETA and new recruits, reconnecting divided commandos, acting as middlemen for ETA's internal communication, spreading nationalist pamphlets, hiding weapons and propaganda in Churches, allowing ETA to hold meetings within Church premises, giving refuge to fugitives, helping wounded members, driving getaway cars and possibly even participating in kidnappings and guerrilla training.

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<sup>4</sup> Cameron J. Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence: The Ideological and Intellectual Origins of ETA* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2007), 122.

<sup>5</sup> André Lecours, *Basque Nationalism and the Spanish State* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2007), 77.



Although it seems obvious that ETA and the Basque clergy were engaging in acts of resistance, sociologists Hollander and Einwohner astutely indicate that the term ‘resistance’ has been improperly defined by academics. It is used so ambiguously, that everything from hairstyles to revolutions has been called resistance.<sup>6</sup> Through a comparative analysis of definitions, they state that “virtually everyone would agree that resistance involves oppositional action, and that intentional action recognized by others would qualify as resistance.”<sup>7</sup> Where academics disagree is on the nature of recognition and intention. This paper will assume that acts of resistance that were not recognized by the dictatorship still counted as resistance and that speculation on clerical intentions, encompassed by their attitudes towards ETA’s means and goals, can help explain why they supported ETA.

While analyzing historical figures’ intentions is contentious, this paper shall demonstrate that most priests probably disapproved of ETA’s violent means, agreed with ETA’s peaceful means and shared the common goals of justice, human rights, democracy, and national liberty. Since ETA members were ideologically diverse, their ideas about means and goals were both vague and heterogeneous. For example, although the majority of members claimed that any means, including violence, could be used to attain national liberty, some favored Gandhi’s non-violence.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the idea of ‘national liberty’ was ambiguous, because there were some that wanted autonomy within Spain, while others desired complete independence. In fact, they were so ideologically complex, that “Christ, Che Guevara, Sartre and Mao seem to have been held in equal

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<sup>6</sup> Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner. “Conceptualizing Resistance,” *Sociological Forum*, 19.4 (December 2004): 534.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 546.

<sup>8</sup> Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, *A Rebellious People: Basques, Protests, and Politics*. (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 152.



respect”<sup>9</sup> by ETA members and also the population at large. Admittedly, the great ambiguities and differences between ETA members make it difficult to ascertain whether priests agreed with their means and goals.

In spite of these difficulties, what can be determined is that some priests helped ETA because: (a) they were universally charitable and ethically couldn't deny helping ETA (b) they were anti-Francoist, demanded human rights and were in favor of expressing Basque culture and language, which had been prohibited by the regime (c) they agreed with ETA's Basque nationalist/separatist ideology. Notably, priests' relationship with ETA is only a tiny subset of greater clerical resistance to the regime, so in many cases the priests resisted independently by removing Franco's portrait from their Church or criticizing the regime's violation of human rights. Rebellious Basque priests were willing to help all resistance movements, in spite of their individual ideologies.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, no matter what priests thought about ETA's means, they still supported them indirectly and directly because they were anti-Francoist and shared similar goals.

### **Historiography**

My father and his siblings grew up in the Basque Country during Franco's dictatorship and their generation suffered the social, political and cultural repression of the regime. Whenever I question them about the past, they would rather not talk about it. At first I thought this silence was particular to my family, but I have come to realize that most Spaniards are not willing to face the horrors of the Spanish Civil War or the thirty-

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<sup>9</sup> Paddy Woodworth, *Dirty war, clean hands: ETA, the GAL and Spanish democracy*. (Yale, USA: University Press, 2002), 37.

<sup>10</sup> Anabella Barroso, *Sacerdotes Bajo la Atenta Mirada del Régimen Franquista* (Bilbao, España: Editorial Desclée de Brouwer, 1995), 422.



six year authoritarian dictatorship that ensued. Many are silent because the trauma of the civil war has never healed and tension between those who supported and opposed the regime is ever-present.

Spain's past still remains "not just figuratively but legally cloaked in silence."<sup>11</sup> In May 2010, Baltasar Garzón, a famous Spanish judge who ordered the arrest and extradition of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet for crimes against humanity, was suspended by Spain's General Council of the Judiciary. He is currently been pressed with three judicial processes by the Spanish Supreme Court Penal Division. Surprisingly, his crime was to have launched an investigation in 2008 into the atrocities committed under Franco's reign. Garzón merely attempted to declare that over thirty Francoists, all of whom are dead, committed crimes against humanity. This prosecution exceeded his legal jurisdiction, because the 1977 amnesty protects everyone from being tried for crimes during the dictatorship.

Although steps have been taken to exhume mass graves and help victims of the regime, numerous legal scandals demonstrate societal tension concerning historical memory. The Garzón case has led to wider discussion about the dictatorship and new generations of Spaniards born after Franco's death are finally questioning twentieth-century history at a distance. Acknowledging Franco's crimes against humanity will allow people to analyze how organizations like ETA resisted the regime, rather than immediately labeling them as assassins and focusing on their present-day terrorist activities. Nevertheless, as long as ETA's active membership continues to instigate controversy, a more comprehensive analysis on the evolution of the organization from an

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<sup>11</sup> Dana Kennedy, "Crusading Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzón Is Indicted For Franco Probe," AOL News. April 8<sup>th</sup> 2010. <http://www.aolnews.com/2010/04/08/crusading-spanish-judge-is-indicted-for-franco-probe/> (February 20th 2010)



outgrowth of the PNV to a militarily active resistance movement to a terrorist organization is unfeasible.

Taking advantage of the historical silence on the relationship between ETA and Basque clergy, sensationalist writers have published politicized, un-sourced and unprofessional books like *ETA Nació en un Seminario*, *Los Cómplices de ETA*, and *Los Curas de ETA*, which portray Basque priests as villains with murderous intentions.<sup>12</sup> They claim that the Catholic Church gave birth to ETA and that priests have been avid supporters of violence and terrorism. Meanwhile, laymen's judgments are clouded by ETA's indiscriminate killings under democracy and the government's condemnation of ETA, making it difficult to comprehend the organizations evolution during the dictatorship. Professional historians, on the other hand, tend to underplay the role of religion and Basque priests because of a lack of source material and the controversial nature of the topic.

Although academics like Anabella Barroso, Paulo Iztueta, and Rafael Pérez have studied Church-State relations, they scarcely mention the relationship between clergy and ETA. Even though their books<sup>13</sup> are more pertinent than other secondary sources, this relationship is only analyzed in a superficial sentence or a paragraph. Rafael Pérez, for example, states that the clergy had some involvement in the "origins of ETA,"<sup>14</sup> but he does not elaborate. Even academics that have written extensively on ETA's origins, like Gurutz Jáuregui, merely state that "from the moment in which ETA was born, there were many priests that gave their support, up to the point of establishing a profound interaction

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix III for a caricature of these rumors.

<sup>13</sup> See *Sacerdotes Bajo la Atenta Mirada del Régimen Franquista*, *Sociología del Fenómeno Contestatario del Clero Vasco: 1940-1975* and *El Franquismo y la Iglesia*.

<sup>14</sup> Rafael Gómez Pérez, *El Franquismo y la Iglesia* (Madrid, España: Ediciones Rialp, 1986), 279.



between clerical rebellion and the Basque youth.”<sup>15</sup> Whenever the minority of ‘rebellious’ priests is mentioned, most authors have cautiously avoided analyzing the relationship with ETA in depth, mainly due to a lack of source material.

Professor Mikel Barreda’s Catalan article “L’Església Basca I ETA” and Bishop José María Setién’s book *Un Obispo Vasco Ante ETA* are the only two sources that deal with my topic exclusively. Barreda’s article is merely a cursory overview of the clergy’s indirect support for ETA and Bishop Setién’s book is a defensive explanation of why near the end of Franco’s dictatorship, he and a few other bishops criticized Franco’s regime when it sentenced ETA members to death. Unfortunately, neither source was particularly useful for this investigation. Very little has been written about this topic in other languages, but there certainly isn’t a source in English that deals solely with ETA-clergy relations. Due to the degree of confusion caused by disinformation, it is essential to break the historical silence with an initial analysis of clerical relations with ETA. Indeed, because this thesis is based primarily on clandestine sources, memoirs and an oral history, reliability is a serious concern. Bearing in mind the limitations to this paper in terms of depth of analysis and reliability, it is still of utmost importance to initiate historical research on a highly controversial topic.

## **Background**

During the Second Republic (1931-36), Basques had been given greater autonomy and José Antonio de Aguirre (party leader of the PNV) became the first *lehendakari* (president) of the Basque Government in 1936. That same year, the civil war

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<sup>15</sup> Gurutz Jáuregui, *Ideología y estrategia política de ETA: Análisis de su evolución entre 1959 y 1968* (Madrid, España: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1981), 131.



broke out and Aguirre knew that Basque autonomy would be short-lived if he did not support the Republicans. Aguirre organized a Basque army (*Euzko Gudarostea*) to maintain the Basque region as an anti-Francoist stronghold. In 1937 the Nazi Luftwaffe bombed the historic Basque capital of Gernika<sup>16</sup> and Bilbao fell to the Francoist insurgents soon afterwards. Within the next two months, hundreds of Basque civilians were rounded up and taken to mass graves, where they were murdered.<sup>17</sup> The Falange cut women's hair off to humiliate them,<sup>18</sup> thousands of people were sent to prison and executed by firing squad, and nearly 150,000 Basques went into exile.<sup>19</sup>

Although barbaric actions occurred all over Spain, the Basques suffered more than any other community during the regime. Throughout Spain all political parties and trade unions were banned, expressions of regionalist languages and cultures were prohibited, information was censored, strikes and public manifestations were banned, basic human rights were violated and people were repressed in every way imaginable. What made Basque repression more intense was the fact that they were extremely supportive of the Second Republic. Hence, Franco labeled Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya as "traitor provinces."<sup>20</sup> Also, half of the *estados de excepción*<sup>21</sup> between 1956-1975 took place solely in the Basque Provinces, as retaliation for ETA's actions.

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<sup>16</sup> The bombing of Gernika can be interpreted as a 'Basque Pearl Harbor'. Nationalists used Gernika's destruction as evidence that the Spaniards were a foreign enemy committing genocide and symbolically destroy their ancient *fueros*, which were associated with the Tree of Gernika. All of Franco's repressive actions bolstered Arana's depiction of *Euskadi* as an occupied territory.

<sup>17</sup> Robert P. Clark, *The Basques: The Franco Years and Beyond* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1979), 82.

<sup>18</sup> Iñaki Beobide, Rocío Satrustegui, Koldo San Sebastián, *La represión* (videorecording) in the series *Todavía Ayer* (España: Filmoteca Vasca y Filmoteca Española, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> Robert P. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents: ETA, 1952-1980* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 21.

<sup>20</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, 93.

<sup>21</sup> *Estados de excepción* suspended the Spanish Constitution for a certain period of time and officially legitimized practically any violation of human rights by the government.



After the Spanish Civil War, the Church positioned itself on the side of the victors and became the government's primary source of legitimacy. In Cardinal Enrique Plá y Deniel's pastoral letter '*Las Dos Ciudades*' (09/30/1939), he wrote that "the war in Spain wasn't merely a civil war, but also a true Crusade, for religion, for the homeland and for Christian civilization."<sup>22</sup> Even though the Catholic Church had created a dichotomy of good vs. evil and "prostituted itself by aiding and protecting General Franco's work,"<sup>23</sup> some members of the clergy were among Franco's victims. During the war, both Republicans and Falangists murdered priests, but neither the Vatican nor the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy condemned the murders committed by the Falange. In the Basque Country, sixteen priests were executed for being 'Basque nationalists', two hundred and fifty were imprisoned and many went into exile.<sup>24</sup> Undoubtedly, some Basque priests empathized with repressed Basque civilians because of their shared suffering.

No attempt was made to ease tensions with the vanquished. In fact, during the aftermath of the war, up to two hundred thousand Spaniards were killed and many more were tortured, imprisoned or repressed.<sup>25</sup> Franco's *coup d'état* and the authoritarian rule that followed were given legitimacy by the state ideology of *nacionalcatolicismo*. In 1953, Franco's Concordat with the Vatican made Catholicism the official state religion<sup>26</sup>, "restored state subsidies to the church, outlawed divorce, and granted the clergy control of education."<sup>27</sup> Additionally, while Franco was granted some degree of power in

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<sup>22</sup> Gonzalo Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia en España, 1931-1939: Tomo II - La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)*. (Madrid, España: Ediciones Rialp, 1993), 619.

<sup>23</sup> Teresa Berganza, 1979 Interview cited in: Jon Cowans (ed.), *Modern Spain: A Documentary History*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 276.

<sup>24</sup> José María Setién, *Un obispo vasco ante ETA* (Barcelona, España: Crítica, 2007), 50.

<sup>25</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 149.

<sup>26</sup> Izaskun Sáez de la Fuente Aldama, *El Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco: Una Religión de Sustitución* (Vizcaya, España: Editorial Desclée de Brouwer, 2002), 117.

<sup>27</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, 111.



choosing bishops, priests could not be arrested without the authorization of an ecclesiastical superior. Throughout the regime, some Basque priests resisted Franco by using their relative legal immunity to speak out against violations of human rights or support Basque nationalism.

In practice, clerical privileges were limited because Franco violated the Concordat; parochial houses were searched and many priests were arrested and imprisoned without the consent of bishops. Furthermore, those bishops that approved trials against priests either had no alternative, or did so willingly because they had been appointed by Franco and his ecclesiastical allies. Despite hundreds of priests being sent to the *carcel concordatoria* (concordatorial prison) of Zamora, and bishops mostly supporting Franco, the Basque clergy was still one of the most important sectors of resistance during the regime.

If the initial years of the dictatorship had been turbulent, the 1950s were relatively silent. The Spanish Maquis<sup>28</sup> had been eliminated and there was no resistance group strong enough to seriously challenge the regime. Thousands of clandestine publications were disseminated throughout Spain, but Franco remained unscathed.<sup>29</sup> He successfully wielded control by using the army, the Brigada Político Social<sup>30</sup> (BPS), Guardias Civiles, municipal police and a number of paramilitary groups. ETA was the first clandestine organization with sufficient firepower to confront the dictatorship. Even ETA was more effective at fostering Basque nationalism than it was at toppling the regime. Arguably,

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<sup>28</sup> The Spanish Maquis were guerilla troops that continued to fight Franco for decades after the end of the civil war. They also helped resist Vichy France and the Nazis during World War II. Franco's repression nearly wiped out the movement by 1952.

<sup>29</sup> José de Cora Paradela et al., *Panfletos y Prensa Antifranquista Clandestina* (Madrid, España: Ediciones 99, 1977), 9.

<sup>30</sup> The BPS were the Spanish secret police.



the one positive contribution that ETA had in ending the regime and allowing a transition to democracy was the killing of President Carrero Blanco in 1973, who would have been Franco's successor. In 1975, Franco died of natural causes, leaving behind a country that had only remained united by extreme force.

In the 1950s, Basques were either paralyzed by fear or complacently hooked on the "opium of soccer and cycling,"<sup>31</sup> as they waited for the PNV to act. Both the PNV and the Basque government had gone into exile in 1939 and they were ineffectively trying to convince foreign countries to recognize the Basques and denounce Franco. This strategy seemed reasonable, until 1951, when the United Nations lifted trade embargos on Spain and the United States reestablished diplomatic relations.<sup>32</sup> The United States had abandoned the Basque cause because under the Cold War, Franco would be a strong anti-communist ally and allow them to build military bases in Spain. Despite the Basques having been abandoned by the Vatican, the ecclesiastical hierarchy and foreign nations, the PNV stubbornly continued lobbying for assistance from Western democracies to try to exert political pressure from exile. The Basque youth was frustrated by the PNV's ineffective actions and felt that a conservative nationalist approach that was based on defining Basqueness by race and religion was too narrow-minded.

While the PNV was "fossilized, waiting to see if Franco would die,"<sup>33</sup> a group of students from the Universidad de Deusto created a youth organization called EGIN<sup>34</sup> in 1953, which later drew members from the PNV's youth division (EGI). Since any expression of Basque cultural/national identity was prohibited by Spain, EGIN worked on

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<sup>31</sup> Xabier Zumalde. "Re: Contactarme con Xabier Zumalde." E-mail to Julio Rodríguez (May 29<sup>th</sup> 2010)

<sup>32</sup> Alfonso Pérez-Agote, *The Social Roots of Basque Nationalism* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2006), 53.

<sup>33</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>34</sup> Ekin means 'to act' in *euskera*.



teaching themselves Basque history, culture and language. Many had to start practically from scratch, because people's fearful silence had left the youth ignorant about their communal Basque identity. Originally, EKIN was allied with the PNV and EGI, but their frustrations at the party's inaction led to the creation of ETA in 1959. In the 1960s, great numbers of immigrants entered the Basque country and in contrast with the PNV, ETA recruited and supported people who were not religious or ethnically Basque. ETA open-mindedly redefined Basqueness to include non-Catholics and immigrants, since they argued that to achieve national liberation, all that was necessary was a willingness to act.<sup>35</sup> Members who spoke the ancient Basque language of *euskera*<sup>36</sup> were favored, but many monolingual Spanish speakers were still incorporated into the organization.

Since nationalist sentiment in the Basque country had almost been extinguished, ETA's objective from 1959 to 1968 was to raise awareness that nationalism was still alive and that people were capable of resisting the regime. During this period, ETA graffitied walls, hung *ikurriñas*<sup>37</sup>, spread pamphlets, sabotaged telephone and electric wires, and trained individuals in guerrilla warfare. Contrary to popular assumption, ETA did not kill anyone until 1968. Between 1968 and 1972, only four people were killed: José Pardines (Guardia Civil), Melitón Manzananas (Commander of the BPS in San Sebastián), Fermín Monasterio (Taxi driver), and Eloy García (Municipal Policeman). Three of these deaths occurred during unexpected shootouts between ETA and the police. The only premeditated murder was the assassination of Melitón Manzananas, because he

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<sup>35</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 108.

<sup>36</sup> *Euskera* is the language of the Basques. It is the last remaining pre-Indo European language and possibly the oldest language of Europe. Its antiquity and uniqueness contribute to the theory that the Basques are the oldest people of Europe and deserve to have a separate nation.

<sup>37</sup> *Ikurriñas* are Basque flags.



was a notorious torturer of Basques.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, prior to 1972, most of ETA's actions during the dictatorship were non-violent.

In the final three years of the dictatorship, forty people were killed by ETA, probably due to radicalization within the organization and growing state-sponsored violence. For instance, descriptions from the clandestine publications in *Noticias del País Vasco* make the Basque Country sound like a war zone in 1975. Months before Franco's death, an *estado de excepción* was declared and hundreds of Basques were rounded up into Bilbao's bullfighting rings, where they were interrogated, tortured and arrested by the police.<sup>39</sup> An illegal paramilitary group called Anti-terrorismo ETA (ATE), was created by the Spanish government to terrorize the population and kill ETA members.<sup>40</sup> The armed mercenaries of ATE placed bombs in people's cars, burnt down houses and machine-gunned innocents who they believed were involved with ETA. This state-terrorism had no inhibitions and there were cases of women, children and priests being tortured. Imanol Oruamazaga (priest of Ondárroa) had his parochial house machine gunned, Jesús Arrien (priest of Canala) had his house and car burned, and Eustasio Erkicia (priest of Bilbao) was nearly beaten to death by the BPS.<sup>41</sup>

## Sources

I became interested in ETA last spring, when I came across the memoirs of Xabier Zumalde (first leader of ETA's Military Branch) and later established contact with him via email. Over the summer, I visited Zumalde and questioned him about interactions

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<sup>38</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, 105.

<sup>39</sup> Autores anónimos, *Noticias del País Vasco, Euskadi: El último estado de excepción de Franco*. (Francia: Editions Ruedo Ibérico, 1975), 36.

<sup>40</sup> Autores anónimos, *Noticias del País Vasco*, 71.

<sup>41</sup> Autores anónimos, *Noticias del País Vasco*, 43.



between ETA and the Basque clergy. My trip also gave me access to three archives<sup>42</sup>, which were indispensable for this project. Through a series of emails with a friend of Professor Joseba Zulaika, I was close to contacting a group of Basque priests who had some relation to ETA, but they were unwilling to fill out questionnaires, since information about their involvement with ETA could be easily misconstrued as ‘collaboration with terrorism’. My own uncle remains silent and has only admitted to answering the doorbell to ETA members and then denying giving them refuge from the police. This raises an important question: If most ETA members are either active, dead or in prison and the Basque clergy is unwilling to answer questions, how can historians elucidate the vital connection between the two? In this essay, interviews, memoirs, funeral homilies, sermons, letters and clandestine publications have been used to reconstruct the role of Basque clergy in resisting Franco’s regime and collaborating with ETA.

Due to a general lack of primary and secondary source material, this study depends greatly on a micro-historical analysis of Xabier Zumalde’s life and his numerous anecdotes about Basque priests. Oral histories are generally considered unreliable, but Zumalde’s is especially troubling because no other source can verify his statements. Essentially, Zumalde holds a position of power because he is the sole authoritative source of information in this historical field and is using me to disseminate his version of history. Although most of this thesis is based upon unverifiable anecdotes, it is at least an attempt to move away from rumors and try to approach the topic academically. Indeed, a comprehensive study of this topic cannot be achieved from one case study.

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<sup>42</sup> Archivo de los Benedictinos (Lazkao, España), Archivo del Nacionalismo: Fundación Sabino Arana, (Arteaga, España), Archivo Sancho el Sabio (Vitoria, España).



As stated previously, when dealing with large amounts of anecdotal and clandestine information, it is difficult to trace the veracity of Zumalde's statements. Although Zumalde's two volumes of memoirs were published in 2004, it is remarkable that there are no academic reviews. According to Zumalde, the publication of the third volume of his memoirs has been prohibited and the first two were "removed from the bookstores."<sup>43</sup> Via email, he is extremely ambiguous on whether the publishers or the government have censored him. Regardless, from the scarcity of his books and the lack of reviews, it appears that someone was displeased with Zumalde's historical account. Thus, although his information is highly useful, its reliability is questionable.

Another striking fact about these publications is that very few of ETA's original members have written about their experiences during the dictatorship. Why then, was the first leader of ETA's Military Branch willing to write over a thousand pages about his life during the 1960s and 70s? Why would he allow people to interview him? Zumalde has probably been motivated for three reasons: (a) He is taking advantage of the recent interest in Francoism to give historians source material and write about his life. On numerous occasions, he has expressed his distress that so little is known about ETA's early years under the dictatorship. He even mailed me primary source documents from his private collection. (b) He wants some degree of fame as a *gudari*. *Gudari* means 'soldier' in *euskera* and has been used by many to refer to ETA members, in addition to the Basque army during the civil war. Being considered a *gudari* is analogous to being a hero. Since he created the first operational military commando since 1937, he is probably frustrated that so few people know about him or recognize him as a hero of the Basque

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<sup>43</sup> Xabier Zumalde. "Re: Prohibidos? (Mi Lucha Clandestina En ETA y Las Botas de La Guerrilla)." E-mail to Julio Rodríguez (January 24th 2011).



nation. Zumalde, who was inspired by third-world revolutions, enjoys thinking of himself as a Basque Che Guevara.<sup>44</sup> (c) Most historians downplay his role within ETA. John Sullivan, a prominent ETA historian, claims that once Zumalde left ETA in 1966 and formed *Grupos Autónomos de ETA* (aka. *Los Cabras*), the very existence of Zumalde's new organization is "pretty much irrelevant for the history of ETA and the Basque Country."<sup>45</sup> Additionally, both Richard Clark and Francisco Letamendia, central ETA historians, knew so little about Zumalde that they confused Xabier with his brother Benito.<sup>46</sup> If Zumalde has been keeping track, historians seem to have forgotten about him.

Zumalde's memoirs include incredibly detailed passages on the significance of *Los Cabras* and his involvement with ETA. Photographs and primary source documents have been inserted to further persuade the reader. However, his narration includes descriptive details and dialogue that he could not possibly remember, which makes his account more unreliable. To romanticize his adventures further, he has inserted poetry dedicated to ETA martyrs, Basque mythology, the *ikurriña* and the beautiful Basque landscape. One passage that I nearly laughed at in disbelief described how when he was departing to train his guerrilla commando, his wife gave him a red rose and said "return with it."<sup>47</sup>

Besides, there is evidence which shows that Zumalde actually was not the first leader of ETA's 'Military Front.' While Zumalde joined the organization in 1965 and became military leader of the 'Activism Branch', Ignacio Irigaray was the leader of

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<sup>44</sup>Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 86.

<sup>45</sup>John Sullivan, *El Nacionalismo Vasco Radical: 1959-1986* (Madrid, España: Alianza Editorial, 1988), 83.

<sup>46</sup>Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 41. Francisco Letamendia, *Historia de Euskadi: El nacionalismo vasco y ETA* (Paris, France: Editions Ruedo Ibérico, 1975), 351.

<sup>47</sup>Zumalde, *Mi Lucha Clandestina en ETA*, 87.



ETA's 'Military Front' in 1962. Originally, ETA's Executive Committee<sup>48</sup> was divided into four subgroups: political, economic, military and cultural fronts. After ETA's 1<sup>st</sup> Assembly in 1962, the fronts were changed to: "internal publications and communications, cells and study groups, mass propaganda, legal actions (mass organizing), and military actions."<sup>49</sup> When the French police discovered Irigaray's stolen weapons, the original four ETA leaders were forced to go into exile in Belgium. Meanwhile, the more radical Iturrioz and Zalvide, had just left jail and basically took over the organization in Spain. During ETA's 4<sup>th</sup> Assembly in 1965, they reorganized the organization into *ramas* (branches) and Zumalde was elected as the first leader of the "Activism Branch."<sup>50</sup> In reality, the 'Activism Branch' seems synonymous with the 'Military Front' and Irigaray had not actually achieved much as military leader. Nevertheless, Zumalde's complete omission of Irigaray and his assertion of being first leader of the 'Military Front,' should make us skeptical about what other facts have been omitted or distorted.

Despite all these issues concerning Zumalde's reliability, I am inclined to believe his stories about the Basque clergy. During the interview, he sincerely claimed that he had never met "any priest who was violent. In other words, they didn't want to kill or blow up barracks...because, in the end, religion weighed on them deeply."<sup>51</sup> However, he was not protecting the priests because he told many controversial stories, including clerical involvement with a kidnapping. Thus, he took a moderate stance by neither glorifying nor slandering the priests. And yet, we must be incredibly careful not to

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<sup>48</sup> The Executive Committee was the central governing body of ETA. ETA's leaders would meet during Assemblies in order to determine the policies, ideology and structure of the organization.

<sup>49</sup> Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 37.

<sup>50</sup> Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 41.

<sup>51</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.



believe everything he says. Likewise, many of the clandestine documents, clerical letters and sermons cannot be taken at face value. Due to the constraints of this essay, their reliability will only be put into question if there is contrary evidence.

Before incorporating Zumalde's anecdotes, it is important to get a basic overview of his life.<sup>52</sup> Zumalde came from a highly religious Republican family and worked as a mechanic at a metallurgical factory. He eventually got involved with a Church movement called *Juventudes Obreras Católicas* (JOC), which organized and educated workers to demand their rights and go on strike. Zumalde also had a very close relationship with the town priest, Pedro Berrio Atehortua (aka. Petrus), who taught him about religion, human rights and Basque nationalism. Inspired by Petrus' teachings, Zumalde demanded working rights at the factory and was unjustly fired when they discovered he was stirring up the workers. One night, the police arrested Zumalde and tortured him for allegedly being a Basque nationalist. After this injustice, he asked Petrus if he could put him in contact with ETA. In 1965, Zumalde was elected to be leader of ETA's Military Branch, but he only accepted the position after consulting Petrus, who advised him to do it. While in ETA, he trained commandos for guerilla warfare, but also participated in more peaceful activities, such as hanging *ikurriñas* from high-voltage electric wires or writing 'ETA' on walls. Although he left the organization after only a year, due to fears of being discovered by the police, he created his own group, called *Grupos Autónomos de ETA* (aka. *Los Cabras*) and continued resisting the regime. After Franco died, he abandoned guerrilla training and was given amnesty by the democratic government.

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix II for a detailed timeline of his life from 1938-1978.



## Catholicism and ETA

It is unsurprising that both the PNV and ETA chose to create their organizations on Loyola's feast day (July 31<sup>st</sup>) because Basque identity has been intricately tied to Catholicism and the Basque clergy for hundreds of years. In the eighteenth century, a Jesuit priest named Manuel Larramendi wrote extensively about Basque culture and the uniqueness of *euskera*. One century afterwards, Sabino Arana, founder of the PNV, was inspired by Larramendi's ideas and single-handedly constructed the entire Basque nationalist repertoire. In other words, he created the neologism of *Euskadi* to describe the Basque country, designed the *ikurriña* (Basque flag), composed the Basque national anthem *Gora ta Gora* and created the Basque national holiday of *Aberri Eguna*, which celebrates his nationalist revelation.<sup>53</sup>

Arana's romanticized nationalism was based upon nostalgia for the ancient Basque *fueros*<sup>54</sup> (foral laws) and an interpretation of Basque history as a constant struggle against foreign invaders. Although the Basques had managed to not be completely conquered by the Romans, Visigoths, Franks, Normans and Moslems, Arana claimed that Spain and France had occupied and divided *Euskal Herria*<sup>55</sup>. According to Professor Diego Muro, Arana represented the "frustrations of a Catholic traditionalist class,"<sup>56</sup> that was deeply concerned with rapid industrialization and the immigration of Spaniards into

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<sup>53</sup> In nationalist lore, Sabino's brother was on a train when he realized that the Basques used to have more privileges than other Spaniards because they actually weren't Spanish. This revelation converted him from Carlism (traditionalism) to nationalism. He later convinced Sabino that Carlism was a lost cause and that the Basques must seek independence. Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*. (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1997), 56.

<sup>54</sup> Basque *fueros* were local medieval statutes that recognized the Basque people's regional customs and guaranteed greater provincial autonomy within Spain. Due to the Second Carlist War, the *fueros* were eliminated by Spain in 1876. Arana's nationalism interpreted their loss as the elimination of Basque autonomy.

<sup>55</sup> *Euskal Herria* refers to the four Basque provinces in Spain and the three Basque provinces in France.

<sup>56</sup> Diego Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism*. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 54.



the Basque country. Arana created a series of publications that focused on immemorial Basque history and the three pillars of his nationalist ideology: (a) religious fundamentalism (b) Basque racial purity (c) the uniqueness of *euskera*.

Practically every element of Arana's nationalism was religious. The *ikurriña* is similar to the British Union Jack, but the red background represents the people, the green cross represents the historical Tree of Gernika<sup>57</sup> (and the *fueros*), and the white cross in the foreground represents the supremacy of Christianity. Furthermore, the PNV's national anthem mention both the 'holy cross' and the 'good Lord'. Arana's *Aberri Eguna* (Fatherland Day), is not only the day of his nationalist revelation, but also coincides with Easter Sunday. Undoubtedly, a direct association between the resurrection of Christ and Basque nationalism suggested that the prehistoric Basque region would rise again one day.<sup>58</sup> Finally, Arana stated that "to love God is necessary to be a patriot, and to be a patriot it is necessary to love God."<sup>59</sup> Thus, historians agree that the creation of the PNV on the day of the Basques' patron saint was yet another way of consolidating the link between nationalism and religion.

The reasoning behind ETA's foundation on the patron saint's day is less obvious because even though many of its initial members had come from the youth division (EGI) of the highly religious PNV, ETA defined itself as an aconfessional organization. Confusion surrounding ETA's aconfessionalism led academics to assume that religion no longer had an influence on ETA members' ideologies. However, ETA's attempt to

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<sup>57</sup> Gernika is the historical capital of the Basque Country and is of special importance because in medieval times, public assemblies were held under a famous oak tree. Afterwards, it became customary for the kings of Castilla to swear an oath under the tree, promising to uphold the Basque *fueros*.

<sup>58</sup> *Euskal Herria* has never existed as a separate country. Nevertheless, in 905 AD, King Sancho Garcés' creation of the Kingdom of Navarra has been interpreted as the first political expression of Basque ethnicity.

<sup>59</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, 62.



secularize nationalism was not due to a dislike of religion, but actually a critique of the PNV's conservative nationalist ideology, which excluded non-Catholics and other ethnicities. Although it is impossible to ascertain an ideology that all members agreed with, ETA had tried to combine some of Arana's ideas with Federico Krutwig's book *Vasconia* (1963). Krutwig's book was strongly against the Catholic Church because he felt that it was another form of foreign oppression whose objective was to "enslave the Basque spirit."<sup>60</sup> ETA shared this belief because the hierarchy of the Spanish Church and the Vatican had legitimized Franco's tyrannical regime. ETA adopted Krutwig's dislike for the Church and for Arana's racism, but in a 1960s manual, they showed their support for Catholicism by stating that the Basque people have always been "traditionally anticlerical and profoundly religious."<sup>61</sup>

I agree with Gurutz Jáuregui, that it is precisely the religiosity of ETA members which made them aconfessional.<sup>62</sup> Basques that were truly committed to religious doctrine were morally obligated to denounce the Spanish government's violation of human rights, in addition to the silence and complicity of Spanish Bishops and the Vatican. Thus, having established that ETA members, many of whom came from the PNV, did not lose their religious faith from one day to the next, the organization was probably created on Loyola's Saint's day for three reasons: (a) ETA was implying that they were the new face of Basque nationalism and had come to replace the PNV; since most members of the PNV were in exile, people criticized it for being inactive, indifferent and close-minded during the 1950s. (b) Loyola is the patron saint of Basques

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<sup>60</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 108.

<sup>61</sup> Pérez-Agote, *The Social Roots*, 84.

<sup>62</sup> Gurutz Jáuregui, *Ideología y estrategia política de ETA: Análisis de su evolución entre 1959 y 1968* (Madrid, España: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1981), 133.



and soldiers, so ETA's ideology of national liberation through revolutionary violence is personified by this historical figure (c) ETA was making a religious statement, even though they did not want to be constrained by the Church's disapproval of violence.

Clearly, ETA was highly influenced by religion and the Catholic Church. Moreover, having denied allegiance to the ecclesiastical hierarchy did not inhibit their relation to the lower clergy. Not only was ETA influenced by clerical teachings about human rights and Basque nationalism, and given direct support by priests, but they also constantly legitimized their organization by writing about the clergy in their official nationalist publication *Zutik* (Standing). Although their publication usually applauded priests' acts of resistance, they were not afraid to call a group of nuns "servants of genocide,"<sup>63</sup> for telling children to speak Spanish in church if the priest preached in *euskera*. By constantly referring to the righteous goals of human rights, justice, democracy and liberty, in addition to showing that priests were on their side, ETA made its conception of morality widely accepted by the Basque population. Also, increased state violence de-legitimized the government and increased support for ETA.

### **INDIRECT SUPPORT FOR ETA ~ Demanding Human Rights**

#### **Language and Education**

To understand the impact of religion on ETA, we must first appreciate its prominence in the Basque Country. Although people were becoming more secularized during the 1960s and 70s, in 1972, 71.3% of people attended Sunday mass in the Basque

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<sup>63</sup> Zutik, N. 44, Caracas, Archivo Sancho el Sabio, Vitoria, Spain. August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010.



Provinces, while only 34.6% attended in the rest of Spain.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, many religious people did not go to mass because they disagreed with the Church's Francoist hierarchy. Another way of judging Catholic influence on the population was through education. Between 1967 and 1968, 45.4% of high-school students in the four Basque Provinces were educated in Church Centers, whilst in the rest of Spain, only 32.2% went to these institutions.<sup>65</sup> The number of students who got advanced education from Church Centers from 1974-1975 was even higher: 49% of Basque students who got post-secondary education went to Church Centers, while only 3.7% of students in the rest of Spain were educated in this manner.<sup>66</sup> The majority of Spain was religious and the 1953 Concordat gave the Catholic Church immense control over education, but the percentages of religious students were always higher in the Basque Country.

After the civil war, particularly in rural areas, “the only opportunity to pursue an education beyond the most basic level for those from families of low or medium social levels was offered by either schools attached to novitiates or by the novitiates and seminaries themselves. Consequently, it is easy to see why those centers affiliated with religious orders and seminaries were so important for reproducing Basque nationalist consciousness.”<sup>67</sup> It appears that Zumalde quit school at age twelve because of economic reasons and he never learned to speak *euskera*. Nevertheless, even when not affected by priests in school, Zumalde learned about Basque culture, nationalism, and human rights from his many interactions with the town priest, Petrus. Zumalde's experiences as an altar boy must have been crucial for developing nationalism and social awareness.

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<sup>64</sup> Luis C Nuñez Astrain, *La Sociedad Vasca Actual* (San Sebastián, España: Editorial Txertoa, 1977), 65.

<sup>65</sup> Pérez-Agote, *The Social Roots*, 106.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.



It is also notable that when one did not learn about Basque consciousness from priests at school, negative reinforcement made it sink in. Many students had their Basque identity bolstered through emotional and physical abuse caused by Francoist teachers. This was the case when Zumalde's friend was kicked for asking what *Euskadi* meant. An anonymous ETA member also recalls that: "My problem with Basque is that until I was six or seven years old I couldn't speak Spanish, and then I spoke it very badly. I remember, when I was at my first nuns' school, the taunts and humiliation I received when the teacher laughed at the way I spoke Spanish. This was a normal situation. Everything Basque was completely ridiculed."<sup>68</sup>

From the seventeenth century onward, Basque clergy played a vital role in preserving *euskera*, mainly through sermons and literary production.<sup>69</sup> Since Franco prohibited *euskera*, some of the Basque clergy made it their mission to protect the language. During the 1960s, the percentage of clerical writers in *euskera* grew immensely. According to Pablo Iztueta, in the rural zones of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, 82% of the clergy spoke *euskera*.<sup>70</sup> Parents who spoke *euskera* used varied strategies in preventing their children from speaking it in front of authority figures. Sometimes it became a language used strictly at home, but many parents chose not to teach their children the language because they were afraid of their children speaking it in public.<sup>71</sup> Thus, an "associative world"<sup>72</sup> was created, whereby language, Basque identity, religion and secrecy were interconnected. The new semantic meaning of *euskera* was formed: it

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>70</sup> Francisco Letamendia, *Historia de Euskadi: El nacionalismo vasco y ETA*. France (Paris): Editions Ruedo Ibérico, 1975), 250.

<sup>71</sup> Pérez-Agote, *The Social Roots*, 81.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 110.



epitomized Basque resistance in a Church environment. Since the right of assembly was denied, people used the Church as a place of socialization and refuge. Here, they developed nationalist identities as a form of resistance to the regime.

When students did not learn *euskera* at home or at the church, they only had one other place to learn it: the *ikastola*. *Ikastolas* were schools that taught *euskera* and subjects in Basque. Although *ikastolas* were banned by the regime, they began operating clandestinely in 1960.<sup>73</sup> In 1963 there were only eight *ikastolas*, but by 1975, seventy one had been created.<sup>74</sup> Also, the number of students grew from 520 pupils in 1964, to 17,971 in 1974.<sup>75</sup> The schools were financed by parents, priests, and other organizations, including ETA. Although Sullivan states that the clergy sustained the schools, with the aid of the PNV and ETA, the ex-ETA member Txillardegui, believed that most *ikastolas* were created by ETA.<sup>76</sup> Regardless, both ETA and priests clearly supported the education of *euskera* and they both acted to resist Franco's regime. In some cases, priests even taught at the *ikastolas*. Father Eustasio Erkipia, for example, was an *ikastola* professor at the Santuchu neighborhood in Bilbao. When people went to *ikastolas* or were taught by priests, they not only acquired basic knowledge in the Basque language, culture and history, but they also gained the "nationalist faith."<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the Church acted as an "originator, an instigator, and a maintainer of a large part of this associative world, especially in youth circles."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>76</sup> Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations: Class, Politics, and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 156.

<sup>77</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, 111.

<sup>78</sup> Pérez-Agote, *The Social Roots*, 106.



Due to this ecclesiastical monopoly on education, many ETA members studied in seminaries and some trained to become priests. Eustakio Mendizabal (Txikia), was training to become a Benedictine monk, Jose Luis Pagazartundua (Jon) was an ex-seminarian and Angel Iruretagoiena (Piru) was a student in the “seminary of Arantzazu, where he remained for four years.”<sup>79</sup> Among the sixteen ETA members accused of murder during the famous Burgos trials of 1970, “two were priests and two had been educated in seminaries.”<sup>80</sup> This does not mean that all ETA members were training to become priests, but it indicates that religious education had a great influence on many of them and that they were in constant contact with the clergy. In some cases, priests even joined ETA, though they didn’t necessarily participate in violent activities.<sup>81</sup> The priests that educated ETA members probably did not support ETA’s violence, but considering that most of ETA’s actions were non-violent, it wouldn’t be controversial if they supported their means. Certainly, the priests played a vital role in shaping ETA members’ worldviews through education and therefore agreed with the common goals of human rights and national liberty.

### **Sermons and Funeral Homilies**

As previously stated, Basques attended mass more regularly than Spaniards did. Such was their religious dedication, that ETA members even chose to be given daily mass in prison.<sup>82</sup> Zumalde claims that when he and his commando were in the vicinity of Arantzazu, they asked two patriotic Franciscan priests by the names of Agirretxe and

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<sup>79</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Euskadi Ala Hil* (Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Francia: Editions Euskal-Elkargoa, 1976), 19, 21, 55.

<sup>80</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, 112.

<sup>81</sup> Mikel Barreda, “L’Església Basca I ETA,” *L’Avenç: revista d’Història*, 191 (Apr. 1995), 16.

<sup>82</sup> Juan Antonio Matesanz, *Personal Interview*, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Madrid, España.



Goitia to give them Sunday mass in the mountains where they were hiding.<sup>83</sup> This is revealing, because many ‘seditious’ priests were tried by the Tribunal del Orden Público<sup>84</sup> (TOP) and imprisoned simply for demanding human rights, denouncing injustices, teaching nationalist ideas or speaking in *euskera*. Going out into the mountains to give private sermons to ETA guerrilla members was very risky and could have been gravely punished. It clearly demonstrates that some priests were very supportive of ETA’s resistance to the regime.

When asked if regular Church sermons were nationalist, Zumalde responded: “No...There were Basque songs, but they’re cultural songs. In other words, they weren’t about nationalism or independence. And singing in *euskera* was prohibited. Same with names...You always had to give people Spanish names. The Church was the first that started registering names in *euskera*. Whenever they can, they’ve tried to speak in *euskera* in the churches.”<sup>85</sup> Here, Zumalde makes a great distinction between language, culture and nationalism.

Under the dictatorship, anyone who expressed any element of Basque identity was labeled a ‘nationalist’ or a ‘separatist’. However, most times sermons weren’t about a specific political position, but actually about ethical, linguistic or cultural concerns. Many ETA members used this knowledge to further their nationalist ideas, whilst the priests felt they were just doing their job by taking care of their flock.<sup>86</sup> The Spanish Government and the majority of Francoist Bishops wished the priests would focus solely on spiritual aspects, and not deal with ‘temporal’, ‘social’ or ‘political’ issues. Sometimes, when

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<sup>83</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>84</sup> The TOP was military tribunal used against people that had committed ‘political crimes’. Most sources indicate that these trials were notoriously unjust.

<sup>85</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>86</sup> José María Setién, *Un obispo vasco ante ETA* (Barcelona, España: Crítica, 2007), 20.



Petrus was giving a sermon about injustices and political prisoners in Spain, the sermon was being recorded<sup>87</sup> and the Francoist parish priest would rip the microphone out of his hand.<sup>88</sup>

Zumalde also remembers how one day he was on a guerrilla training mission and the police were searching for his commando. He arrived at a small town called Artaun, and they stopped at a bar to dry off from the rain. The people there spoke to them in *euskera*, claiming that they knew they were ETA members and had weapons with them, but that they could leave them in the bar and could go to Sunday mass. The townspeople said they would keep an eye on their weapons and be on the lookout for the police. The commando decided to go to mass and then get out of town. Zumalde claims that the support he got was due to the “bond of the resistance. There’s something you can’t explain. The people were awakening [from complacency]. Later, the Guardia Civil arrived and beat everyone up. And what does that do? It makes us more united.”<sup>89</sup> This example shows that Basque civilians, ETA and the clergy were strongly allied by anti-Francoism.

Although most sermons were not about ETA, during the 1975 *estado de excepción*, a sermon criticized the Spanish government for condemning two ETA members (Garmendia and Otaegui) to death. In addition to claiming that Catholicism was morally positioned against the death penalty, the priests stated that both ETA and the Spanish state had been violent. Usually, the Church condemns violence, wherever it may come from, but in this case, priests said that Spain’s prolonged institutionalized violence

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<sup>87</sup> Unknown author, “Breve Informe de los Hechos” in Xabier Zumalde’s Personal Collection

<sup>88</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>89</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.



should be condemned more forcefully than ETA's counter-violence.<sup>90</sup> Even though most priests were against violence, in this case they were morally legitimizing ETA's actions against the repressive regime. However, there were plenty of other cases where priests made no comment about ETA's actions, but believed it was their ethical duty to criticize the State's repressive measures towards ETA members and Basque civilians.<sup>91</sup>

Another way in which priests resisted the regime was by giving sermons for the ETA members that were killed by the police. Funeral homilies are a special kind of sermon because their purpose is to memorialize someone's life. Because nationalist funerals attracted many people, they are often interpreted as public manifestations against Francoism. Additionally, the homilies mentioned that ETA members' had sacrificed their lives for the nation and were Christ-like martyrs that gave their lives for the community. All of Zumalde's books and ETA's nationalist propaganda highlight the importance of martyrdom, since there are always a few pages dedicated to the fallen *gudaris* (soldiers). Martyrdom was especially evident when at the end of funerals, the Republican anthem of the Basque Army during the civil war (*Eusko Gudariak*), was sung.<sup>92</sup>

Many nationalist funerals took place in Sokoia, right on the other side of the Spanish border. The way priests thought about ETA is reflected in the Piarres Larzabal's funeral homily for Eustaquio Mendizabal, who died in a shootout in 1973. Larzabal begins by saying that the civil war never ended, because Franco never declared an armistice with the Basque Government. Thus, he considers Mendizabal to be a victim of

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<sup>90</sup> "Homilía dirigida a nuestro pueblo por un grupo de sacerdotes de las cuatro diócesis vascas sobre el estado de excepción", 1975, un-cataloged, in Archivo de los Benedictinos, Lazkao, España. August 9th, 2010.

<sup>91</sup> Letamendia, *Historia de Euskadi*, 299.

<sup>92</sup> Begoña Aretxaga, *Los Funerales en el Nacionalismo Radical Vasco* (San Sebastián, España: La Primitiva Casa Baroja, 1988), 51.



a foreign country's oppression and as a fallen *gudari*. According to Larzabal, the Basque country was divided, alienated and suppressed, but it yearned for nothing more than peace, liberty, justice, truth and fraternity. Spain was unjust, censored information and violated basic human rights. Mendizabal, on the other hand, had a "tender heart"<sup>93</sup> and "knowing that they were going to kill him, he was outraged at the idea of killing anyone."<sup>94</sup> Larzabal also states that "We know that Christian doctrine condemns violence. But let us not confuse violence with the response to violence...If we condemn his attitude, wouldn't it imply the condemnation of all resisters in the world that fought yesterday and fight today for the liberation of their homeland?"<sup>95</sup> Finally, he believes that the only way Basques will enjoy personal freedom is if they collectively are free from the oppression of Spain and France. Unmistakably, this priest is a radical nationalist, but he is also trying to defend basic human rights. This juxtaposition between ethics, rights, justice, nationalism and violence demonstrates how priests indirectly supported ETA by giving them moral legitimacy, speaking about human rights and fostering Basque nationalism.

### **Defiant Letters**

During the 1940s-1950s, the Basque clergy resisted Franco mainly by preaching, publishing the clandestine Basque journal *Egiz* (Truly) and writing a few collective letters to the ecclesiastical authorities. However, their opposition to Franco wasn't visible until May 30<sup>th</sup> 1960, when 339 priests wrote a collective letter to the Bishops of Vitoria, San

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<sup>93</sup> Piarres Larzabal, Funeral Homily for Eustaquio Mendizábal, (Sokoa, 1973), xvi. Xabier Zumalde, Personal Collection.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., xvii-xviii.



Sebastián, Bilbao and Pamplona. In their letter, they accused the Spanish state of violating human rights. The letter states that censorship is a violation of the natural order of the world, established by God. In addition to saying that the dictatorship is unjust and that people are tortured or live in fear, the rhetoric is that people should have individual and collective liberties restored (including freedom of political parties and trade unions). They also defended the right to “self-determination of all people, of every ethnic group.”<sup>96</sup> In the final section, the priests specifically address the Basque situation and say that *euskera* is “necessary for the evangelization and culture of the Basque people.”<sup>97</sup>

Soon afterwards, Franco and the Nuncio personally criticized the letter for its political contents. The government decided not to punish very many priests, because the Concordat made it difficult to do so legally. Instead, the bishops moved priests away from their parishes and publicly condemned the letter for its “evident falsities and political character.”<sup>98</sup> In response to these accusations, twelve thousand Basques signed a letter supporting the 339 priests.<sup>99</sup> In ETA’s official clandestine publication, *Zutik*, they symbolically added ETA’s signature and the signatures of the thousands of clandestine readers of the nationalist periodical.<sup>100</sup> By pledging their support for the priests, ETA legitimized its means and goals under the framework of Catholicism, morality and human rights. Throughout the 1960s, some clerical letters were more nationalist than others, but all criticized Franco’s violation of human rights. In order to legitimize itself, ETA leapt at

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<sup>96</sup> “Escrito presentado a los Exmos Srs. Obispos de Vitoria, San Sebastián, Bilbao y Pamplona con las firmas de 339 sacerdotes de dichas diócesis, el día 30 de Mayo de 1960,” un-cataloged, in Archivo de los Benedictinos, Lazkao, España. August 9th, 2010, 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>98</sup> Various authors, *Euskadi eta askatasuna. Euskal Herria y la libertad, Tomo I: 1952-1965. De Ekin a ETA*. (Tafalla, España: Txalaparta, 1993), 43.

<sup>99</sup> Francisco Letamendia, *Historia del nacionalismo vasco y de ETA: Introducción a la historia del País Vasco, ETA en el Franquismo, 1951–1976*. (Donosita-San Sebastián, España: Ediciones R&B, 1994), 251.

<sup>100</sup> *Zutik*, N.5, Caracas, Archivo Sancho el Sabio, Vitoria, Spain. August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010.



the opportunity of applauding clerical resistance or referring to the Second Vatican Council of 1962, which talked about ethnic rights and the need to preserve minorities' unique cultures and languages.

### **Juventudes Obreras Católicas (JOC)**

Juventudes Obreras Católicas, was a religious ministry/department that acted as a “school for training young workers, a service to them and a representative body before society and before public organizations.”<sup>101</sup> In Francoist Spain, it acted in lieu of trade unions, because all except for the fascist ‘vertical syndicate’ had been prohibited. According to Zumalde, the JOC was “a Christian movement that was very loose because...the Church was controlled by the State.”<sup>102</sup> Although the priests of the organization could not demand better working rights or confront injustices directly, these meetings were one of the main ways in which Basques began informing themselves about Basque culture and violations to workers’ rights. According to Zumalde, it was only inside the JOC that he began informing himself about the existence of Basque nationalism, the Church’s social program, workers movements, strikes and clandestine syndicates. Even his initial knowledge of ETA came from talking to an unnamed nationalist member of the JOC.

They had “meetings every week and the method of the JOC was to “see, judge and act.”<sup>103</sup> Although the meetings were useful at analyzing injustices in the workplace, the JOC had limited agency because it was still up to the people to raise awareness in

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<sup>101</sup> José Castaño Colomer, *La JOC en España (1946-1970)*. (Salamanca, España: Ediciones Sígueme, 1978), 15.

<sup>102</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*



factories or organize strikes. At first, Zumalde enthusiastically intervened in his factory by protesting the poor working conditions, low wages and violation of the *vertical syndicate's* regulations. He used Petrus' rudimentary printing machine ('Vietnamita') to publish clandestine flyers against the factory he worked in.<sup>104</sup> Zumalde secretly organized strikes and many of the workers' demands were accepted, until the factory discovered he was behind everything and he was fired.

Because none of the workers or clandestine syndicates protested his unjust sacking, Zumalde felt disillusioned with the JOC. He adds that the "Church's catholic doctrine about workers' rights was very well written, but in practice it was useless because the parish priest was [a Spanish] nationalist."<sup>105</sup> Workers who demanded better working conditions were on their own and they were afraid of what could happen to them. The only advantage of being with the JOC was that it gave its members certain privileges. For instance, when Zumalde was being tortured, the Church intervened to get the police to release him. Therefore, the JOC was a way for priests to educate people about Basque nationalism and protect them in dire situations. Once Zumalde joined ETA, he admits having recruited some new members from the JOC.

Due to State prohibition of public associations and clubs, Zumalde created an illegal youth organization called 'Club Alegría' above the room where the JOC met.<sup>106</sup> The Church gave shelter to the club, allowing a sector of the youth to associate freely. They engaged in youthful activities like judo and jiu-jitsu and published a clandestine

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<sup>104</sup> See appendix III.

<sup>105</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>106</sup> See Appendix III.



periodical. Once Zumalde joined ETA, he recruited people from his club. Petrus was aware of all of this, and his own niece, Puri, joined ETA through Zumalde's club.<sup>107</sup>

### **DIRECT SUPPORT FOR ETA ~ Active Collaboration**

#### **Intermediaries**

Throughout the 1960s, the clergy acted as liaisons between ETA and Basques. Not only was the Church environment ideal for meeting nationalists, but in the case of Zumalde, all he needed to do was ask. He asserts: "Petrus was not surprised when I asked him to get in contact with ETA. He told me that he also was an *abertzale*, even though he was a member of no organization. He knew how to get to the *etarras* [ETA members]."<sup>108</sup>

Petrus was always there to give him "moral, doctrinal and informational support,"<sup>109</sup> in addition to everyday advice. In fact, Zumalde refers to Petrus as a "friend,"<sup>110</sup> which was common in a time where you could have a drink with the priest in a bar and speak to him about politics, because most Basques agreed with the clergy on the main issues concerning injustice and repression.<sup>111</sup>

When Zumalde was offered to become the leader of ETA's Military Branch, he was uncertain, so he went to ask Petrus for advice. During my interview with Zumalde, he said that Petrus had told him to accept, "because if you don't, it's going to be worse."<sup>112</sup> In Zumalde's memoir, he claims that even though Petrus "didn't encourage

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<sup>107</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 80.

<sup>108</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 71.

<sup>109</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>110</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> Pérez-Agote, *The Social Roots*, 86.

<sup>112</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.



me, he let me understand that morally I could take that decision; as a result I accepted the post.”<sup>113</sup> In both instances, Zumalde invokes the idea that the clergy morally approved of the Military Branch, but had the best interests in mind, because the reason for Zumalde’s leadership was to ensure there were fewer casualties. It seemed that Petrus acknowledged that there wasn’t anything he could do to stop ETA having a Military Branch, so he may as well persuade Zumalde to be its leader.

Other ways that the clergy acted as a middleman included: (a) reconnecting ETA commandos that had been dismembered by the police (b) acting as a drop-off point for messages exchanged between ETA members (c) they had recommendations about people ETA could recruit.<sup>114</sup> These actions highlight that the clergy were indispensable to ETA members and acted as central contacts within ETA’s organization and with society as a whole.

### **Protecting and Supporting Outlaws**

An internal document from the Spanish police states that Don Juan Echave Garitacelaya, a parish priest at the Church of Acitaín, was notorious because of:

“[his] homilies against the regime, distributing propaganda...He gave refuge in his house to Maria Luisa Ruiz Arana, considered to be an ETA member related to the assassination of the Guardia Civil de Tráfico, Mr. Pardines...In July of 1968 he left his car to Joaquin Gorostidi Artola and Donrrosoro Ceberro, both of them leaders of ETA, so that they could use it for their activities....[and was involved

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<sup>113</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 98.

<sup>114</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.



in organizing meetings about] ‘Human Rights’, which were used as part of a great propaganda campaign in favor of Basque separatism and against the regime.”<sup>115</sup>

Even though a Francoist police statement cannot be trusted, these kinds of priestly actions have also been mentioned by Zumalde. Petrus actually gave Zumalde his first rudimentary printing machine (‘Vietnamita’) and he began producing nationalist propaganda within the Church of Amorebieta. Zumalde states that “they gave us a lot of information, supported us...acted as contacts, gave us books, gave out flyers, spread propaganda material and especially hid a lot of propaganda material.”<sup>116</sup>

Priests were very supportive of ETA’s propagandistic actions, but Zumalde stated that Petrus disapproved of weapons being hidden in Church premises, “although he would never ask.”<sup>117</sup> Hence, without Petrus’ knowledge, Zumalde hid weapons inside “the Virgen Mary’s knickers [He is referring to hiding them inside the dress of a statue].” Moreover, Zumalde states that some priests may have known about hidden weapons, but done nothing about it. In many cases, ETA members would just say “can you hide this backpack for me? Can you hide this box for me? Maybe they’re weapons. They wouldn’t ask you.”<sup>118</sup> The passive hiding of weapons shows that even though the clergy were opposed to violence, they may have grudgingly accepted the possibility that they were hiding weapons and done so because they opposed the regime.

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<sup>115</sup> Juez instructor del juzgado militar eventual, “Asunto: Informando de D. Enrique Guesalaca Larreta y de Don Juan Echave Garitacelaya,” Ministerio de la Gobernación, Dirección General de Seguridad, Comisaría del Cuerpo General de Policía. (Letter: Eibar, June 12th 1969), un-cataloged, in Archivo de los Benedictinos, Lazkao, España. August 9th, 2010.

<sup>116</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*



Priests protected and supported ETA members in numerous ways. When ETA members were escaping from the police, they would hide them in Church premises. The Spanish Government was aware of this, so after ETA's killing of Melitón Manzanas in 1968, the "Guardia Civil surrounded the Benedictine Abbey of Lazcano, Guipuzcoa, and searched the area in the belief that the monks were giving sanctuary to members of ETA sought by the police."<sup>119</sup> Priests would also "look for flats when you escaped, search for refuge homes."<sup>120</sup> On one occasion, three days after a shootout with the police, Petrus drove a getaway car to help Zumalde escape.<sup>121</sup> Another time, Zumalde had wounded his leg and a priest by the name of Gotxon, found him a doctor.<sup>122</sup> Sometimes, priests would even leave the door of the Church intentionally unlocked so that ETA members could put *ikurriñas* inside, the day before some important Spanish authority was arriving.<sup>123</sup> Finally, ETA's 4<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in which all important ETA leaders met, occurred in the Monasterio de Loyola.<sup>124</sup> Due to Zumalde's lack of details, in these cases it is not worth speculating on clerical intentions. Evidently, they directly collaborated with ETA.

### **Zabala's Zulo**

In 1972 some factory workers went on strike to demand higher wages and as a consequence, they were all fired. ETA wanted to demonstrate its commitment to the Basque working class, so they kidnapped the industrialist Lorenzo Zabala and demanded that the factory raise wages, rehire the workers, pay for the wages they had lost while on

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<sup>119</sup> Milton M. da Silva, "Modernization and Ethnic Conflict: The Case of the Basques," *Comparative Politics*, 7, 2 (January 1975): 234.

<sup>120</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>121</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 118.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 445.

<sup>123</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España.

<sup>124</sup> Zumalde, *Mi Lucha clandestina en ETA*, 73.



strike, and recognize a workers' committee to negotiate wage settlements.<sup>125</sup> This was a major turning point for ETA, because it demonstrated that they were willing to kidnap an ethnic Basque, who also spoke *euskera*. One week later, the company met the demands and ETA released Zabala unharmed.

Both Conversi and Clark tell this narrative, but historians do not seem to know where Zabala was taken when he was kidnapped. Zumalde didn't reveal how he knows this, but he claims that Txomin Arteche Amuriza, a priest from the small town of Ibárruri (near Gernika) "allegedly"<sup>126</sup> allowed ETA members to hide the kidnapped man in a *zulo*<sup>127</sup> underneath his parochial house. Zumalde claimed that the priest had hidden the kidnapped man, together with two important ETA members: Txomin Iturbe and Argala. Although the reliability of these actions is highly questionable, if they are correct, some priests must have agreed entirely with ETA's means and goals, or were at least willing to collaborate to the fullest extent.<sup>128</sup>

### **Armed Priests**

ETA's first three killings, and especially the premeditated murder of Melitón Manzananas in 1969, led to numerous *estados de excepción* and increased repression across the Basque Country. At the famous *Proceso de Burgos* of 1970, fourteen ETA members and two priests were put on trial for involvement with these crimes. Due to the court's violation of the 1953 Concordat and reported use of torture against prisoners, Spanish Bishops and the Pope intervened when six ETA members were sentenced to death. Since

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<sup>125</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 105.

<sup>126</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Collection*. See Appendix III.

<sup>127</sup> Zulo literally means 'hole', but it's used to describe hideouts for ETA members, weapons or the kidnapped.

<sup>128</sup> See Appendix III



most Basques were fed up with Spain's repression, and believed that ETA was morally justified in its actions, there were massive strikes and demonstrations of solidarity for the prisoners.<sup>129</sup> To avoid controversy and appease the Spanish Church, Franco pardoned their death sentences, but not their time in prison. Furthermore, the two priests were also sentenced to prison: Juan Etxabe Garitacelaya (parish priest of Acitaín) was sentenced to fifty years and Julián Calzada Ugalde (coadjutor of Yurreta) was given twelve years.<sup>130</sup>

At the trial, father Juan Etxabe was accused of being an ETA member, being in charge of propaganda, and participating in acts of terrorism. The transcript of the trial reveals that he declared: "ETA is totally linked to the people and a priest is also a man for the people; therefore, to find oneself in contact with ETA is the most normal thing for a priest...I have used a gun since more or less October of 1968...[We would go on] excursions in the mountains for shooting exercises."<sup>131</sup> Despite this incriminating statement, an anonymous clandestine document signed by Juan Etxabe claims that he was tortured and that he "said and signed everything that the police wanted."<sup>132</sup>

This example of direct involvement with ETA highlights the problematic nature of using unreliable Francoist trial transcripts and clandestine documents. Unmistakably, the clergy collaborated with ETA members, but it is highly unlikely that they actually used weaponry. Zumalde very clearly stated that ETA would hide weapons in churches without the clergy's knowledge and that he knew no violent priests.<sup>133</sup> Further

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<sup>129</sup> Joseba Zulaika, *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament* (Nevada, USA: University of Nevada Press, 1988), 333.

<sup>130</sup> Nicola Rooney, "A prison for priests in a Catholic State: The 'Carcel Concordatoria' in Zamora during the Franco Dictatorship," *Journal of Postgraduate Research*, 5 (2006): 36.

<sup>131</sup> Federico de Arteaga, *ETA y el proceso de Burgos: la quimera separatista* (Madrid, España: Editorial E. Aguado: 1971), 322.

<sup>132</sup> *Untitled clandestine document signed by Juan Etxabe*, un-cataloged, in Archivo de los Benedictinos, Lazkao, España. August 9th, 2010.

<sup>133</sup> Xabier Zumalde, *Personal Interview*, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Artea, España .



investigation is needed to ascertain the controversial claims about armed priests and priests who helped during kidnappings. However, it is likely that no written documentation exists, which would mean that additional oral histories of historical ETA members would need to be conducted. Until incriminating evidence is found, I am unwilling to believe that priests used weapons, although it is possible that they participated in Zabala's kidnapping.

### **Conclusion**

We must not forget that underneath every priest's cassock, there are individual men. These men, much like us, have had their lives shaped by circumstance. During Franco's dictatorship, all Basques were greatly repressed, so priests and ETA members shared similar life experiences. Since ETA declared itself as aconfessional out of a sincere commitment to Catholic doctrine and a desire to oppose the unjust regime, they actually shared even more in common with rebellious Basque priests, who felt abandoned by their ecclesiastical superiors. Obviously, both groups also shared a common Basque culture, language and national identity, all of which were under attack. These bonds helped solidify their joint resistance against the regime. On some occasions, priests and ETA members would see each other on a day-to-day basis and collaborated together against the regime. Otherwise, clerical sermons or letters about human rights and/or nationalism would indirectly support ETA. The priests' intentions for helping ETA varied widely, because they didn't always agree with ETA's means and goals. Nevertheless, anti-Francoism was the unifying feature, which allowed clergy to support ETA regardless of their thoughts about the organization. This investigation has started to uncover the



mysteries of ETA's relationship with the clergy under Franco's regime, but is greatly limited by issues of reliability. Historians should conduct further oral histories of ETA members and Basque priests to discover to what extent they actually supported each other.



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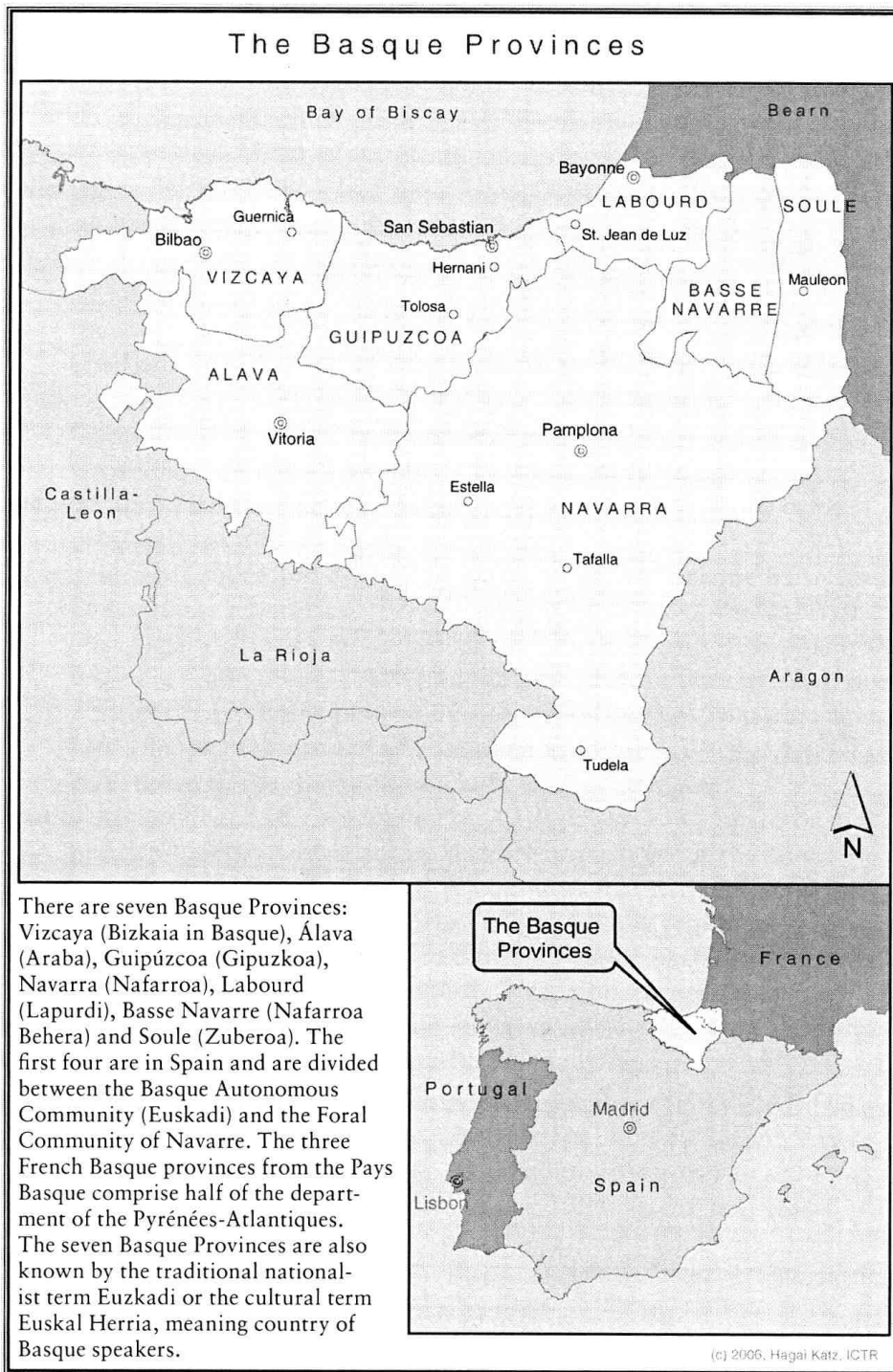
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*Appendix I ~ Background Knowledge*



*Map of the Basque Provinces*

Euskal Herria.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, xxvi.



Table 10.1 *States of Exception in Spain, 1956–75*

DATE OF DECLARATION	MONTHS DURATION	AREA AFFECTED
February 10, 1956	3	All Spanish territory
March 14, 1958	4	Asturias
May 4, 1962	3	Asturias, Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa
June 8, 1962	24	All Spanish territory
April 21, 1967	3	Vizcaya
August 3, 1968	3	Guipúzcoa
October 31, 1968	3	Guipúzcoa
January 24, 1969	2	All Spanish territory
December 4, 1970	3	Guipúzcoa
December 14, 1970	6	All Spanish territory
April 25, 1975	3	Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa
August 22, 1975	3	All Spanish territory

Source: Luis C.-Nuñez Astrain, *La sociedad vasca actual* (San Sebastián: Editorial Txertoa, 1977), p. 126, table 49.

Half of the states of exception in Spain between 1956–1975 took place solely in Basque provinces. Apart from a state of exception in Asturias, the rest affected the Basque region.<sup>135</sup>

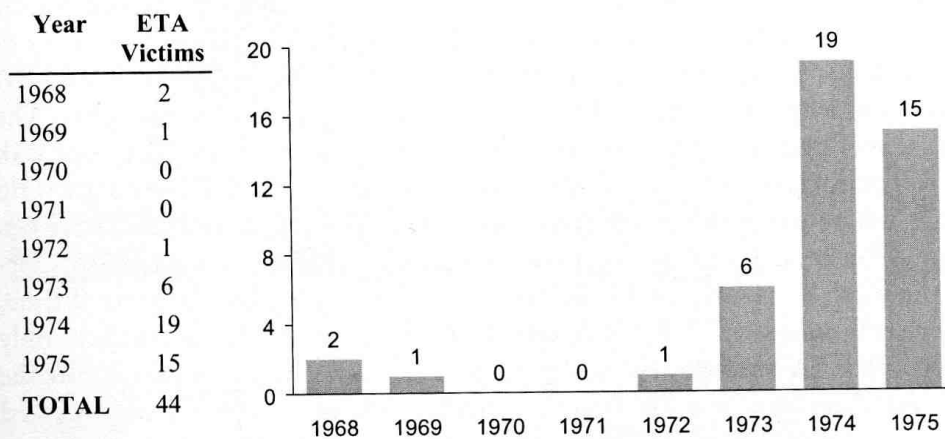


Figure 4.2 ETA victims, 1968–1975.

Source: Calleja & Sánchez-Cuenca 2006: 151

From 1959–1967, ETA had murdered no one. In the next five years, only four people were killed. During the last three years of Franco’s dictatorship, state terrorism and ETA’s radicalization led to escalating violence. Most of ETA’s killings actually occurred under democracy.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 241.

<sup>136</sup> Muro, *Ethnicity and Violence*, 107.



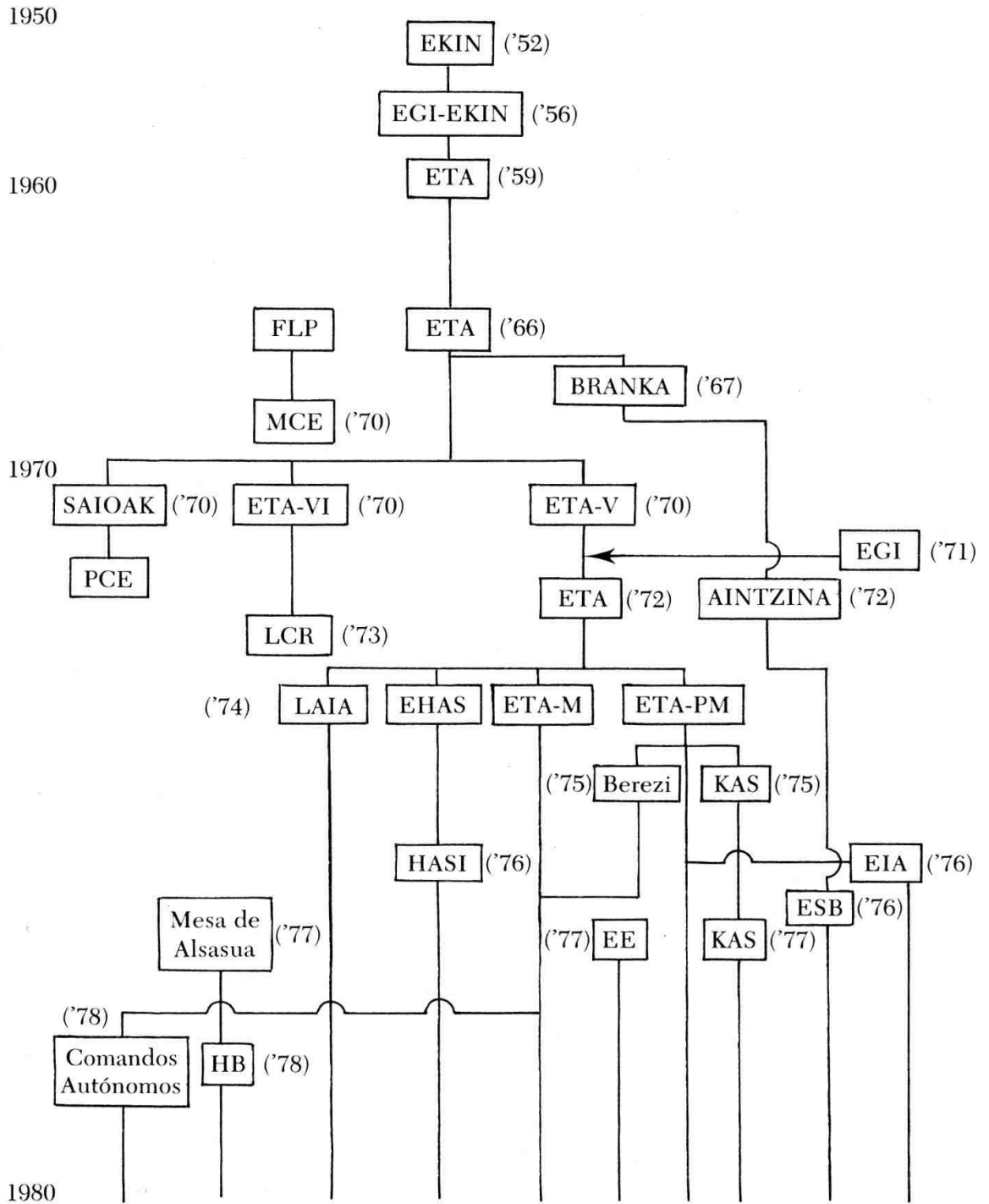
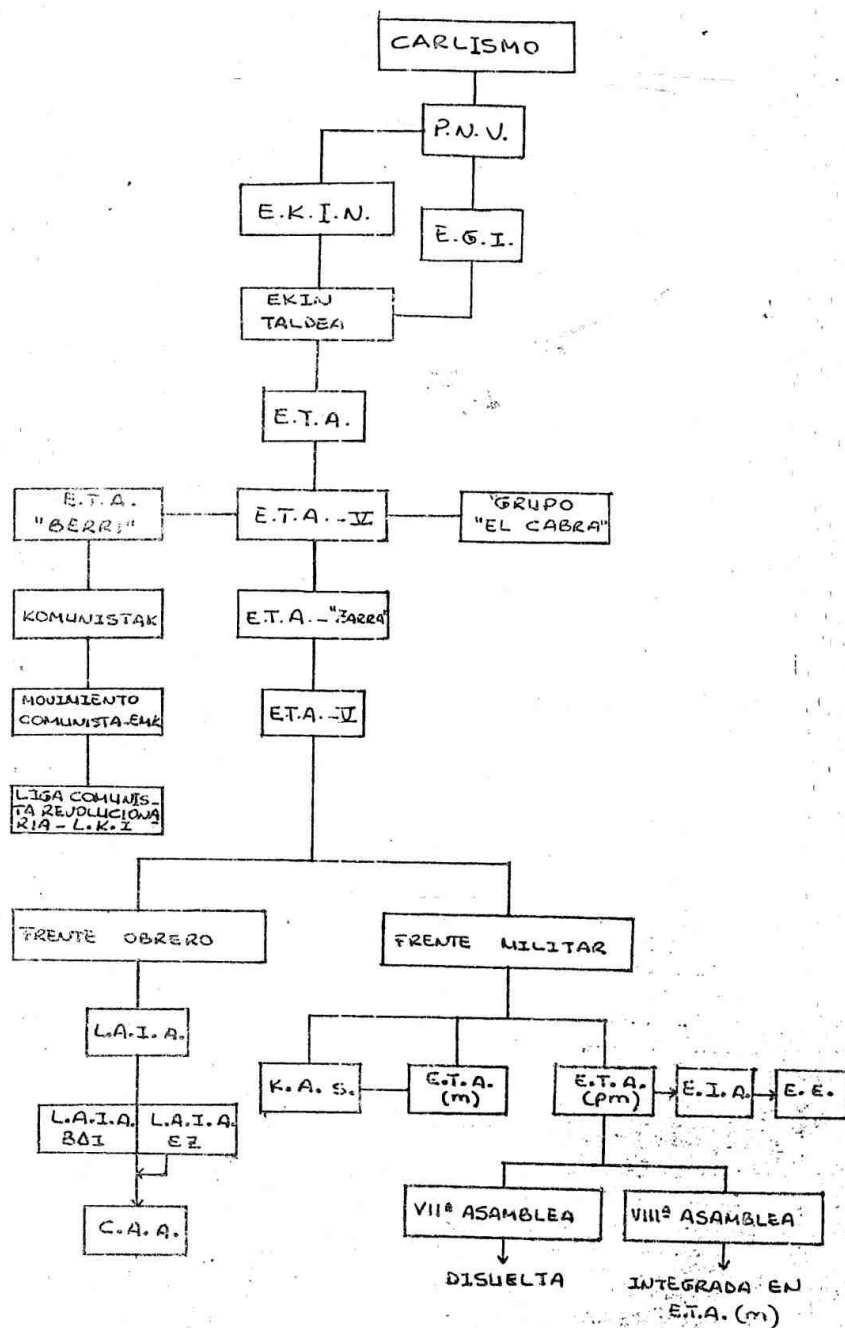


Figure 2.1. Organizational Development of ETA, 1952–80.

A diagram of ETA's historical schisms.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, 36.





This anonymous diagram, probably drawn by a member of the BPS, includes Zumalde's schism with ETA in 1966, which led to the creation of *Los Cabras*. Clearly, the history of ETA during the 1960s and 1970s involved many ideological disagreements. Although every historian conceptualizes the schisms differently, general confusion can be avoided if we note that ETA members were basically either revolutionary *third-worldists* or communist *workerists*.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Gabriel Carrión, *ETA en los archivos secretos de la policía política de Franco: 1952-1969* (España: Editorial Agua Clara, 2002), 69.



## ***Appendix II ~ Approximate Timeline of Xabier Zumalde's life from 1938-1978***

**1938** – He was born in Amorebieta, Vizcaya. Two of his brothers died of hunger in Bilbao during the Civil War. Like most Spaniards, he remembers being hungry throughout most of his childhood. In school, he witnessed his friend being kicked by the teacher for having asked what *Euskadi* meant. Zumalde's parents were deeply Catholic and Republican. He was also an altar boy.

**1950** - At age twelve, Zumalde left school and began working for his father (a stone mason).

**1952** - When he turned fourteen, Zumalde started working as a mechanic's apprentice at a metallurgical factory called IZAR, S.A. The apprenticeship violated the regulations of the only state-controlled *vertical syndicate*, which was called *Organización Sindical Española* (OSE); instead of learning skills, he did backbreaking labor.

**1954** - At sixteen, Zumalde was invited to join the *Falanges Juveniles de Franco* (*Frente de Juventudes*). This fascist youth group was similar to the Hitler Youth. He quickly resigned, because he disliked the experience.

**1956** - Turning eighteen, Zumalde voluntarily signed up for 20 months of service in the Spanish Army. While the soldiers spent their time with prostitutes, he asked for permission to look at weaponry in the armory. This was due to his great interest in mechanics.

**1958** - He got himself licensed as a mechanic and went back to work at IZAR, S.A. Later, he joined the *Juventudes Obreras Católicas* (JOC), which was a Catholic organization that gave support to workers. Under Francoism, only the fascist *vertical syndicate* was legal, so workers didn't have trade unions where they could demand their rights. While in the JOC, he learned the "social doctrine of the Church"<sup>139</sup> from the town priest, Pedro Berrio Atehortua (aka. Petrus). Petrus also taught him about "worker's movements, social rights, strikes and clandestine syndicates."<sup>140</sup>

**1960** - At the factory, he began demanding better treatment, criticized the *vertical syndicate*, organized committees, and even fostered the first strikes. He used Petrus' rudimentary printing machine, called a 'Vietnamita', to print flyers and pamphlets to stir up the workers. All the demands were legal, because the *vertical syndicate* was not fulfilling its own regulations. For instance, they didn't provide basic healthcare equipment for jobs that were highly toxic. Many of the demands were satisfied, but when they discovered he was behind the worker's movement, they fired him on February 20<sup>th</sup> 1960.

**1961** - Since all youth organizations outside of the Falange were prohibited, he asked Petrus if he could build some floors inside the tower of the Church and create a youth group. Zumalde built the compartments within the tower of the Church and created a group called 'Club Alegría'. The club practiced judo, jiu-jitsu, gymnastics, spelunking, theater and even published a clandestine newspaper. To legalize the club, they called it 'Obra Apostólica Recreativa' and incorporated it within the religious ministry of Acción Católica.

**c.1962-1965** - Zumalde believes someone from the factory reported him to the police

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<sup>139</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 46.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.



for having caused trouble with the workers. One night, the police arrested and tortured him for no apparent reason. He was severely beaten, even having some teeth knocked out. They claimed he was a separatist and that his father was an *abertzale*. Zumalde didn't even know that *abertzale* meant 'Basque patriot' because he did not speak *euskera*. After being tortured, however, "an abertzale was born."<sup>141</sup> The police only released him when they got a call from the bishopric, informing them that Zumalde was a member of the JOC.

**1965a** - Zumalde asked Petrus if he could put him in touch with ETA. The priest admitted to being an *abertzale*, even though he wasn't a member of any organization. Thus, Petrus put Zumalde in contact with an ETA liaison.

**1965b** - Zumalde was very unimpressed when he was invited to ETA's 4<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The members were of a higher socio-economic class and seemed overly concerned with ideological matters. Since Zumalde was from a working-class background and was distrustful of both politics and ideology, he felt like an outsider. Notably, the Assembly was held in the Monasterio de Loyola, probably with the approval of the local clergy. Due to fears that the police were on their heels, the Assembly was disbanded. When they reconvened on a different day, Zumalde didn't want to participate because he was disillusioned with ETA. They sent a liaison to inform Zumalde that he had been elected to be on the Executive Committee's as leader of the Military Branch. He turned down the offer, but when he was asked to reconsider, Zumalde decided to consult Petrus. He claims that although the priest "didn't encourage me, he let me understand that morally I could take that decision; as a result I accepted the post."<sup>142</sup> While he participated in ETA, he also had a wife, children and a job.

**1965-1966** - During his time in ETA, he devised a mechanism to hang *ikurriñas* from high voltage electric wires, graffitied walls, distributed pamphlets, sabotaged telephone and electric wires, practiced guerrilla warfare (with no casualties) and trained commandos. These actions were part of the revolutionary *third-worldist* tactics of 'acción-represión-reacción'<sup>143</sup> (action-repression-reaction), used to taunt the government into repressing Basques and hence awakening even more Basque nationalist sentiment. Many of the *estados de excepción* were in retaliation of ETA's actions. The excessive repression of common citizens backfired by fueling and legitimizing ETA.

**1966** - Due to worries of a security breach, in 1966 Zumalde abandoned ETA and created 'Grupos Autónomos de ETA' (aka. *Los Cabras*), which was supposed to continue ETA's revolutionary ideas, but without fear of having the organization dismantled by the police. In 1968, after an *estado de excepción* that greatly weakened ETA and *Los Cabras*, Zumalde went into exile in France and continued operations from there.

**1978** - Subsequent to Franco's death in 1975, the Basque people accepted the new constitution. As a result, Zumalde abandoned his guerrilla training and his planned revolutionary insurgency. The government of Spain gave him amnesty in 1978.

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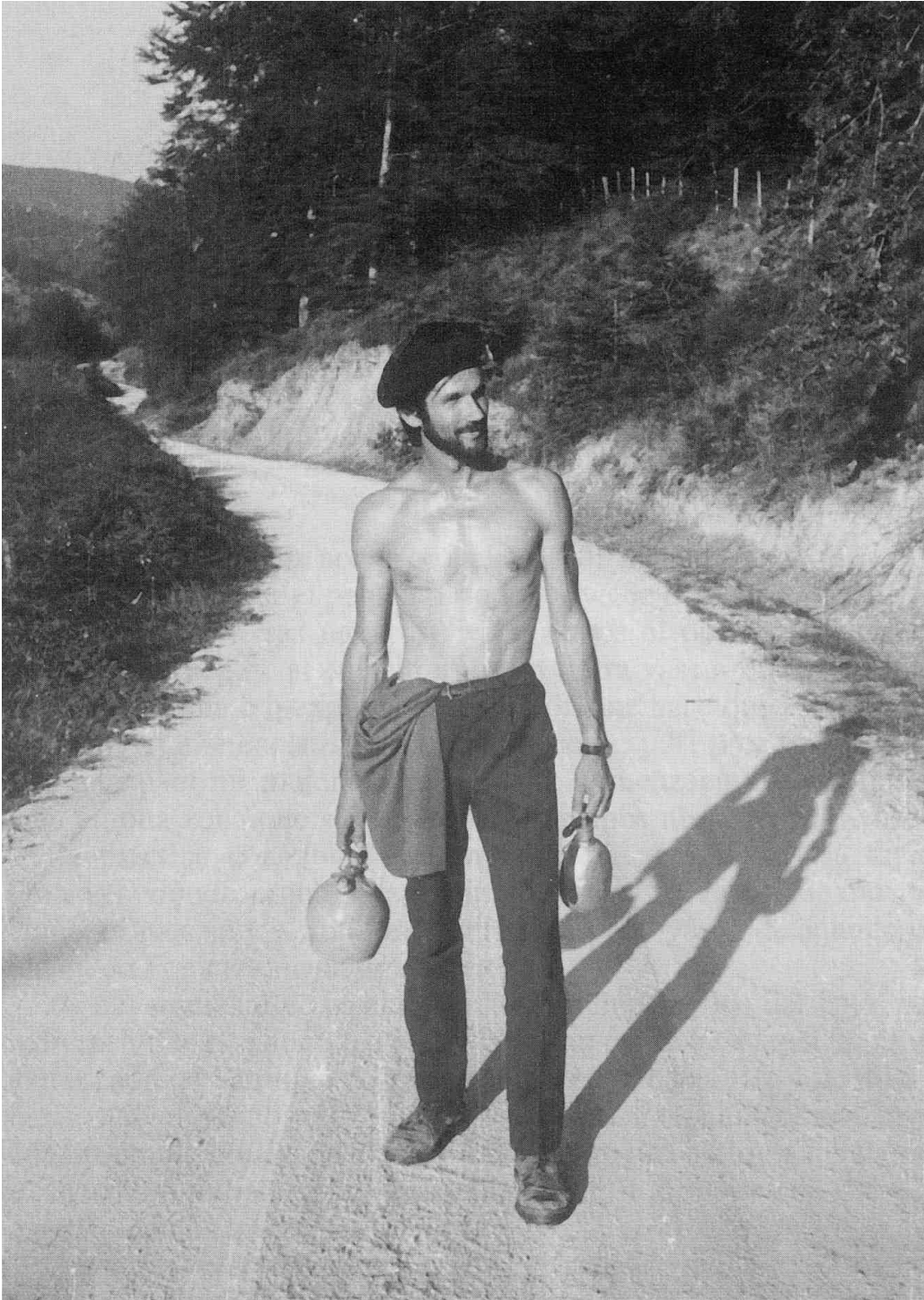
<sup>141</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 68.

<sup>142</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 98.

<sup>143</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 19.



*Appendix III ~ Photographs and Documents*



Xabier Zumalde, near Alsasua (Navarra) in September 1968.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Zumalde, *Las botas de la guerrilla*, 33.



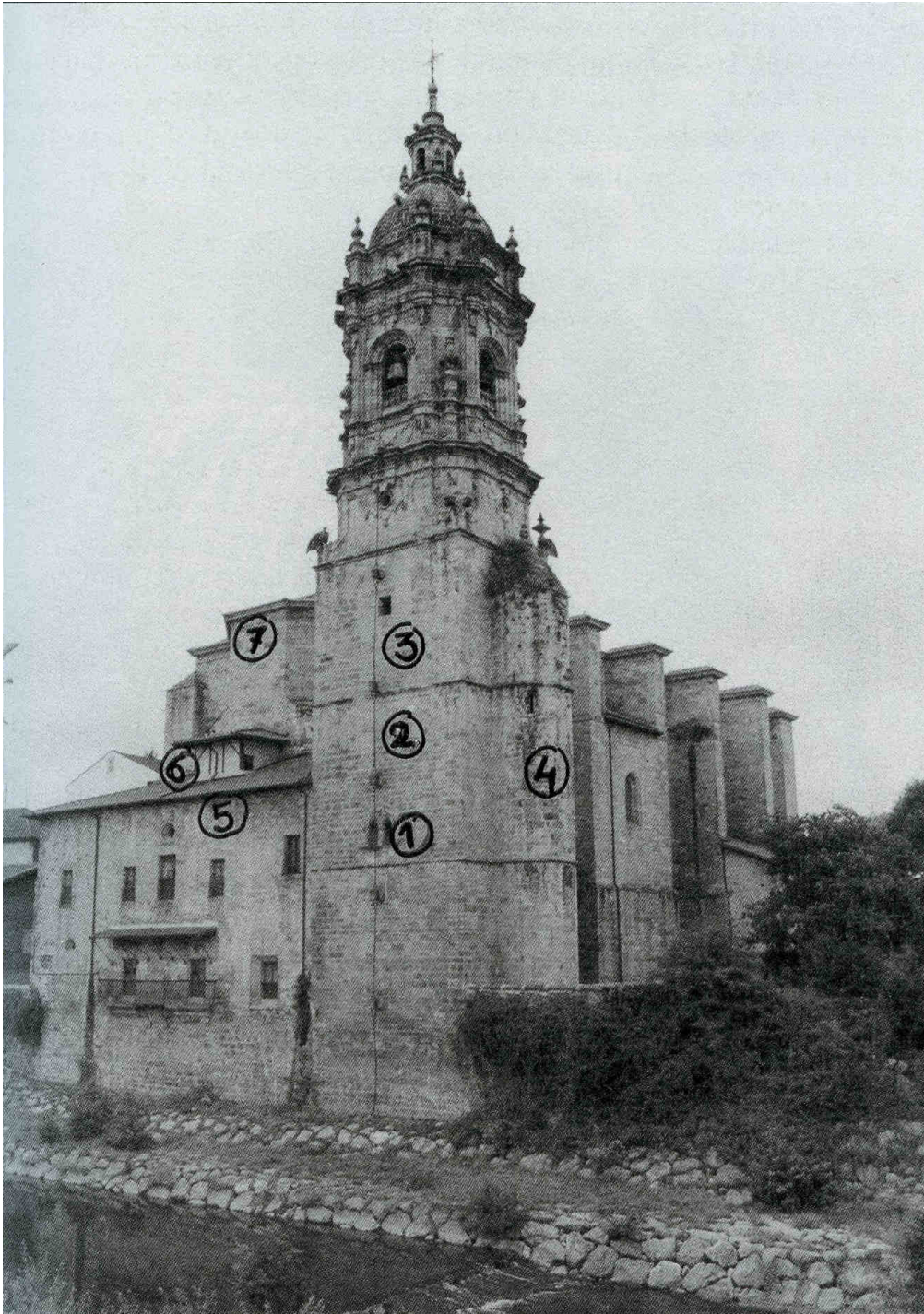


This is a photo I took of Xabier Zumalde in August 2010. He is showing me one of the hooks he designed, which were used for hanging Basque flags from high-voltage electric wires.



Xabier Zumalde currently manages an Eco-Museum on the Basque *caseñío* (traditional country house) in Artea, Vizcaya. This sculpture is meant to show a direct link between present-day Basques and their Cro-Magnon ancestors. Historians have found cave drawings made by Cro-Magnon men over 20,000 years ago in the Basque region. Coupled with the antiquity of *euskera*, nationalists have used this conception of an immemorial past to bolster Basque nationalism.

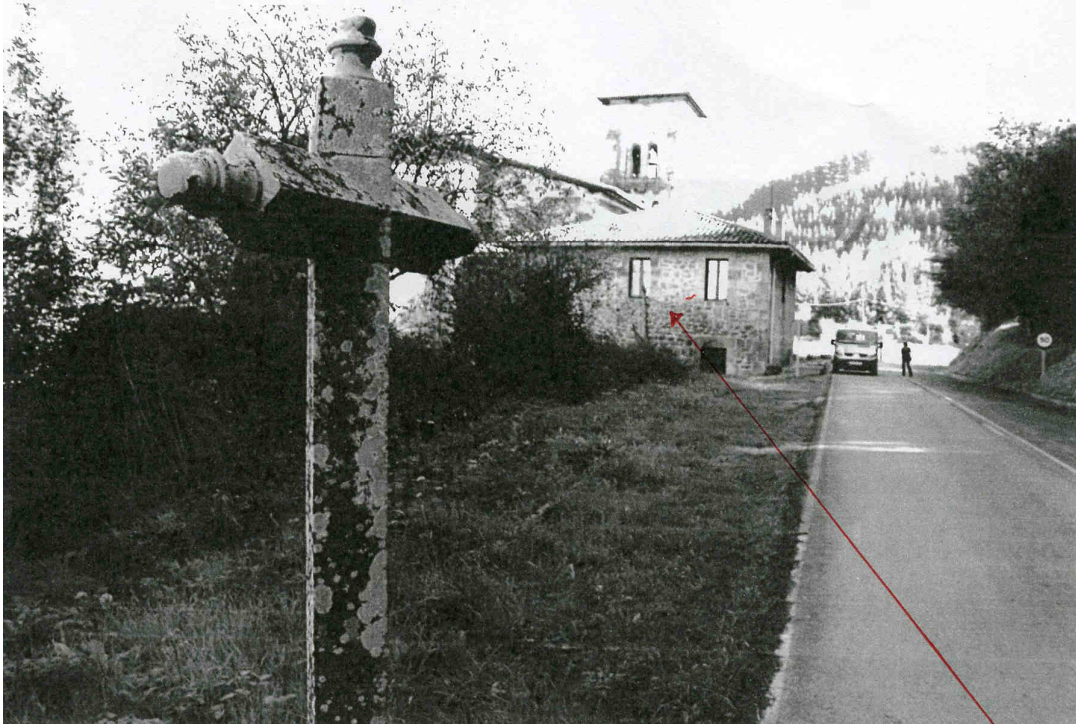




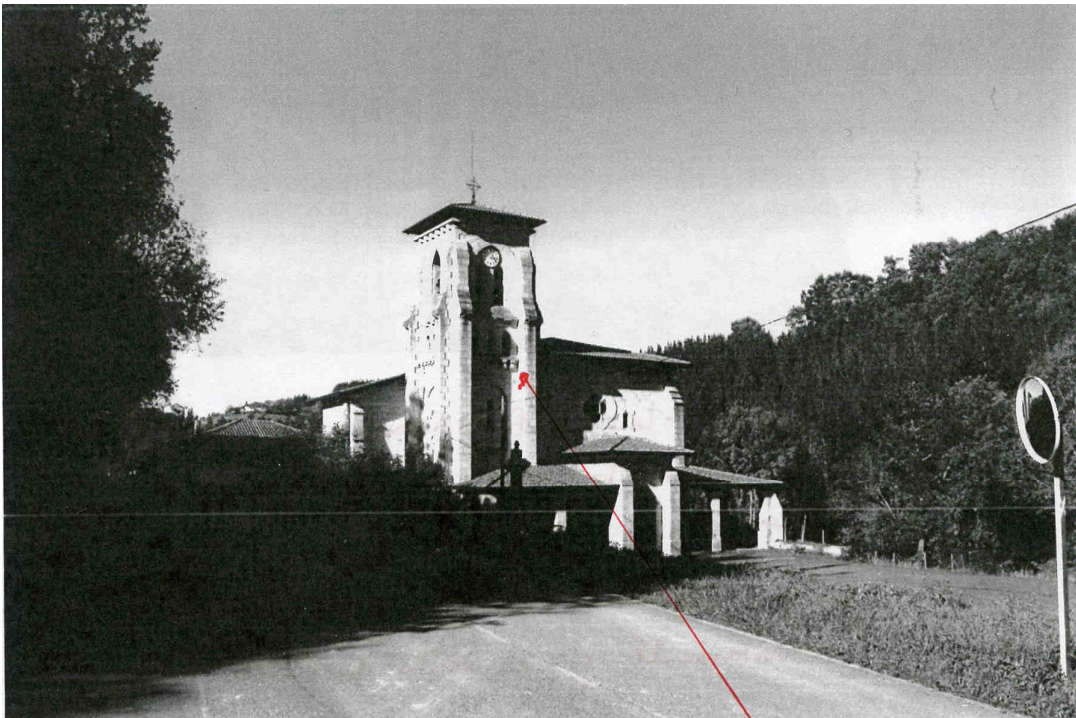
“The tower of the church of Amorebieta was the headquarters of Club Alegría and subsequently the first operative base of ETA. 1. First floor: JOC — HOAC; 2. Second floor: working room of Club Alegría; 3. Third floor: gymnasium room of Club Alegría; 4. Stairwell; 5. Meeting room; 6. Niche behind the Virgin — *zulo*; 7. Valut — *zulo* of weapons and propaganda.”<sup>145</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 55.





“The parochial house of the priest of Ibárruri (Vizcaya), where the kidnapped Zabala was supposedly hidden”<sup>146</sup> — Xabier Zumalde’s caption



“The church of Ibárruri, near Gernika (Vizcaya)”<sup>147</sup> — Xabier Zumalde’s caption

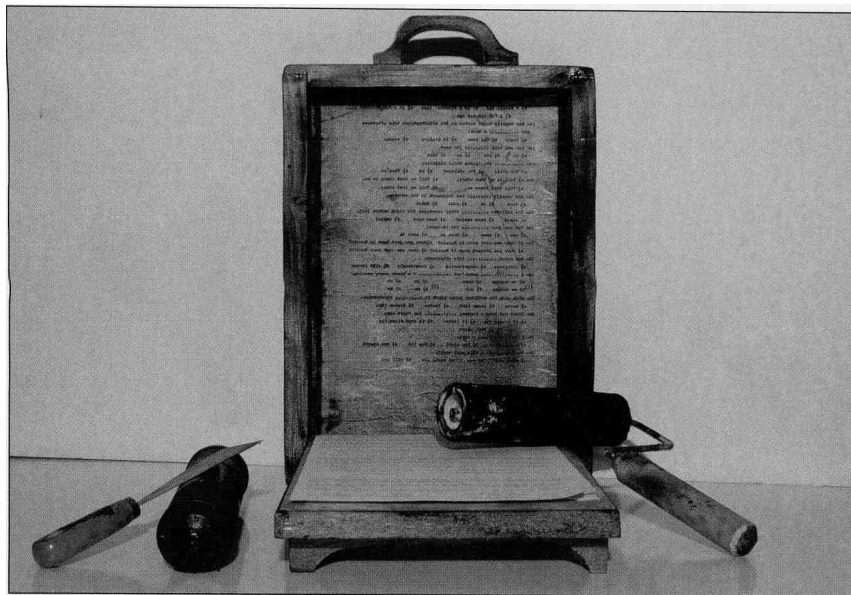
<sup>146</sup> Zumalde, Personal Collection.

<sup>147</sup> Zumalde, Personal Collection.





“Txomin Arceche Amuriza - priest of the town of Ibárruri, where supposedly the kidnapped Zabala was kept. Txomin was arrested and imprisoned, for ‘allegedly’ collaborating with ETA”<sup>148</sup> — Xabier Zumalde’s caption

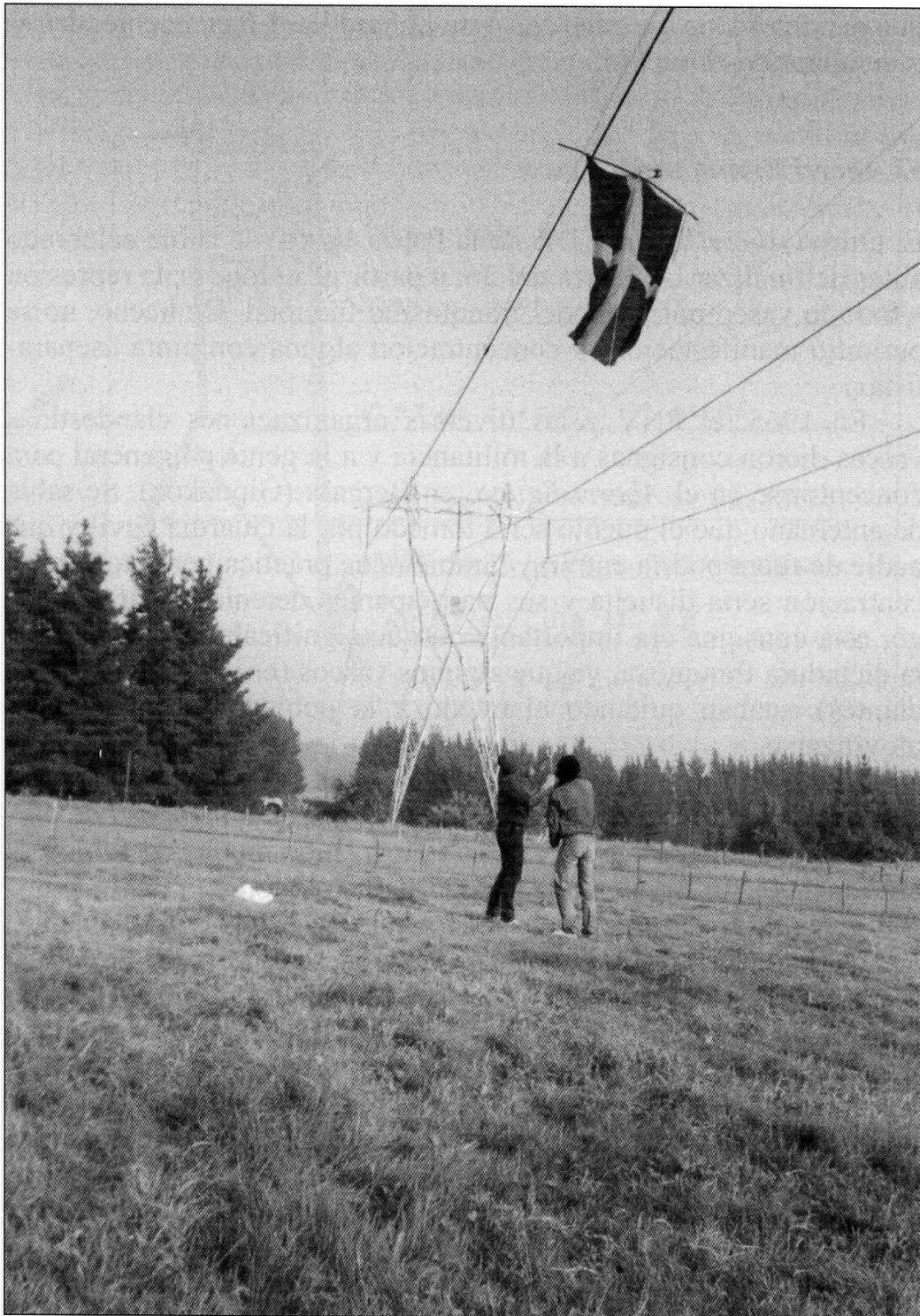


This rudimentary printing machine is called a ‘Vietnamita’ and was used to print thousands of flyers of ETA’s nationalist propaganda. Zumalde was given his first ‘Vietnamita’ by Petrus, the local priest. Zumalde used this model to build another fifty duplicating machines.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Zumalde, Personal Collection.

<sup>149</sup> Zumalde, *Las botas de la guerrilla*, 503.





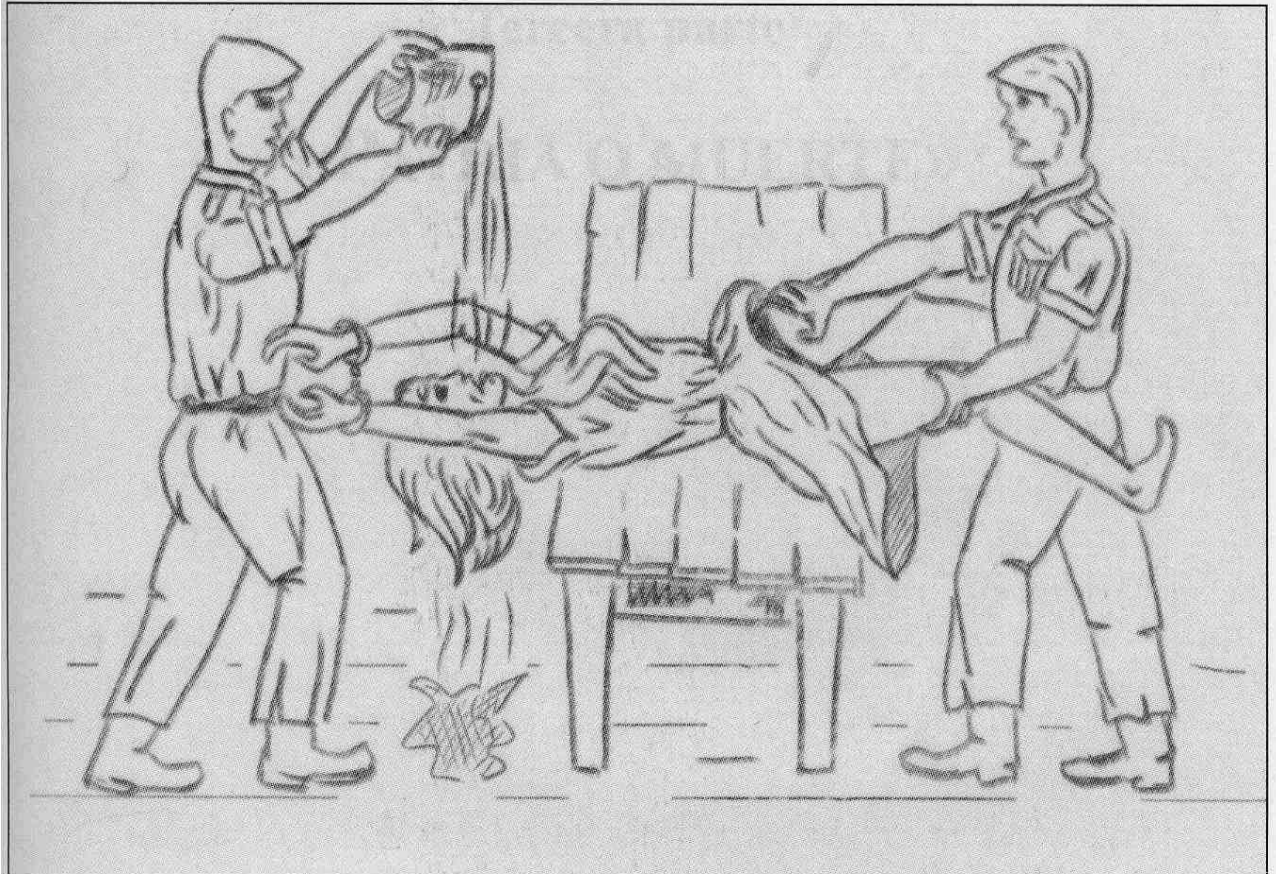
Using a system of ropes and hooks, designed by Xabier Zumalde, *Los Cabras* was able to hang *ikurriñas* (Basque flags) from high voltage electric wires.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 303.



**«El quirófano» (2), método de tortura empleado en la Comisaría de la Brigada Político Social de Bilbao**

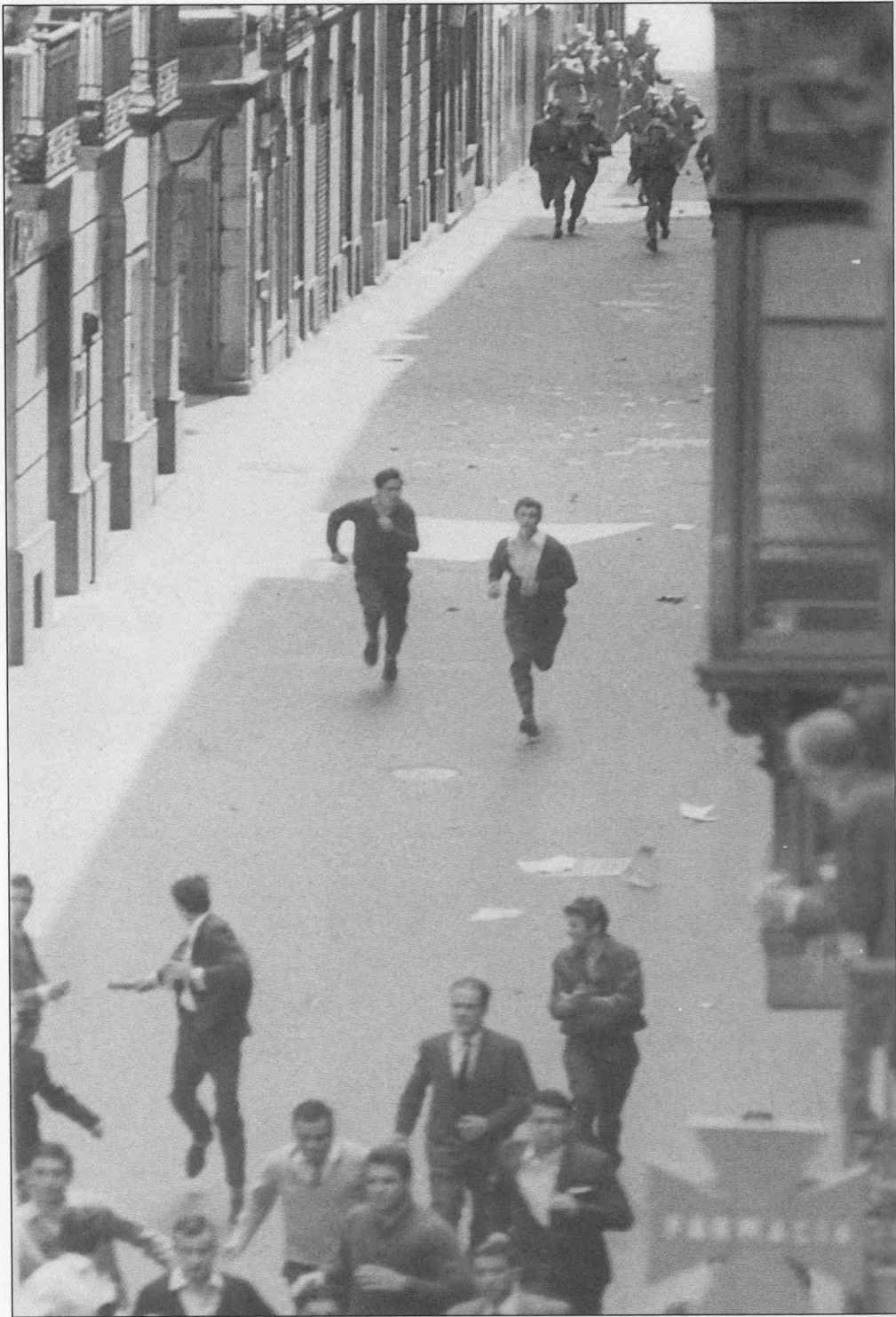


*Informe del 21 de diciembre de 1969*

This drawing depicts one of the many torture methods used by the BPS during Franco's regime. The document was created clandestinely by ETA and disseminated throughout the population in 1969 to inform people of Franco's repression. Numerous primary sources, including *Noticias del País Vasco*, *Euskadi: El último estado de excepción de Franco*, describe this specific form of torture recurrently.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 161.



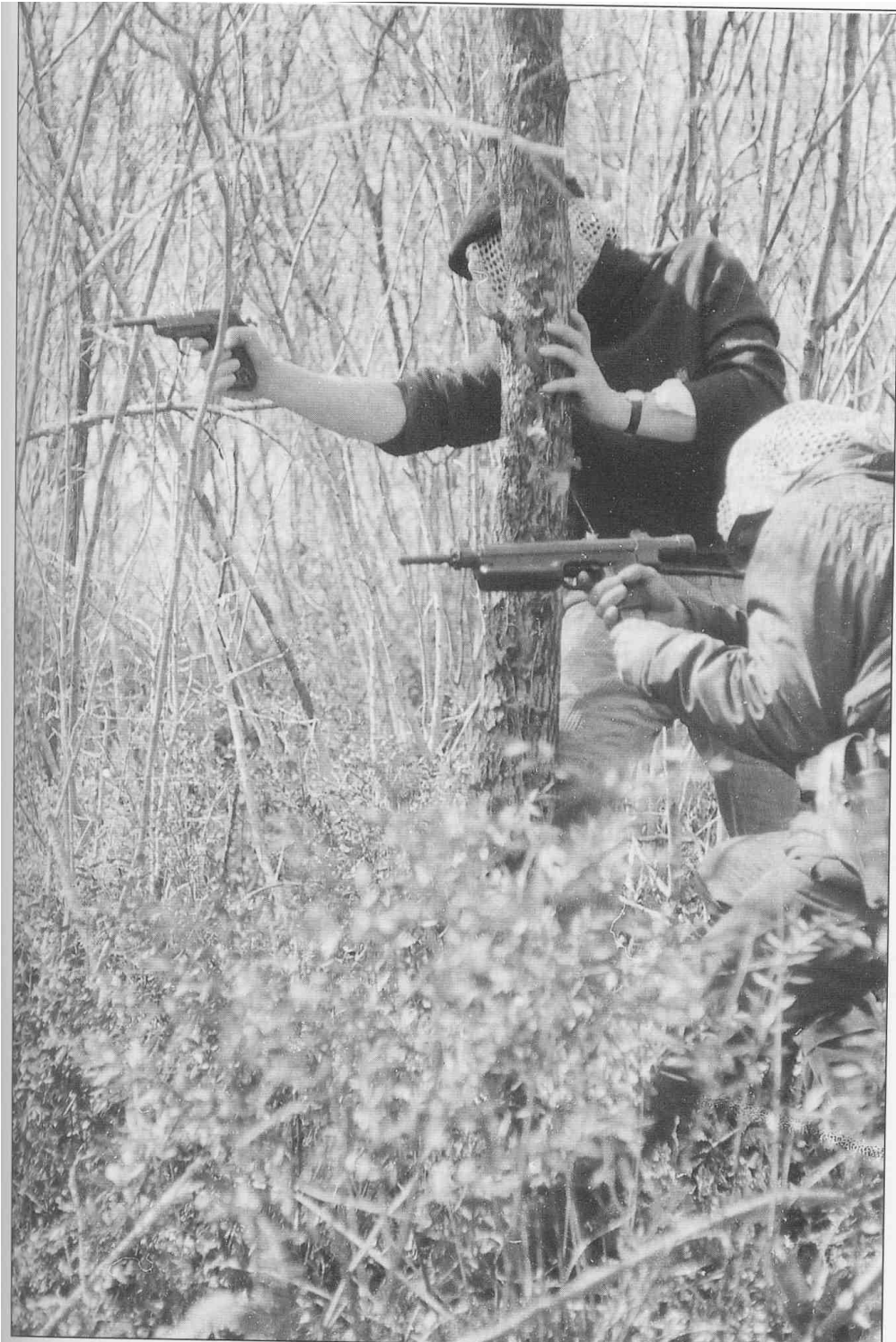


A typical scene of police pursuing Basque citizens in either Bilbao or San Sebastián.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Zumalde, *Las botas de la guerrilla*, 130.



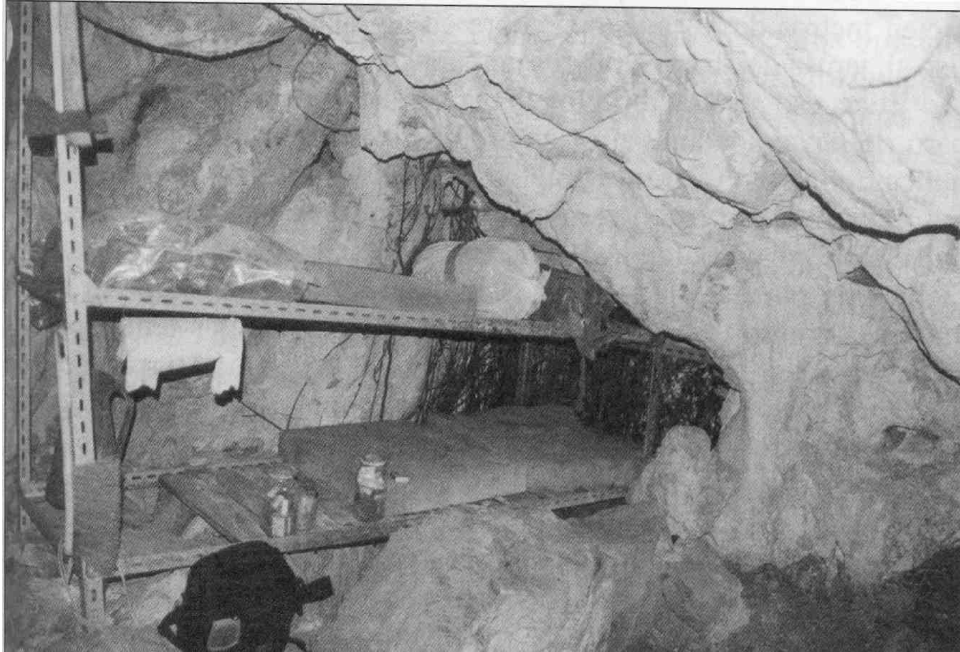


Two members of *Los Cabras* practicing guerilla warfare techniques for the armed insurrection that never arrived.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Zumalde, *Las botas de la guerrilla*, 307.





A mountain 'zulo' (hideout/hole) in a cave, which was primarily used to store weapons, but was also a refuge for ETA members.<sup>154</sup>



Members of *Los Cabras* painting 'Gora Euskadi Askatuta' (Long Live The Free Basque Country) and 'ETA' on street walls at nighttime. This was one of the ways they tried to raise awareness for their organization and for Basque nationalism.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 407.

<sup>155</sup> Zumalde, *Mi lucha clandestina en ETA*, 385.





This drawing is an example of the sensationalist rumors in the 1980s about the clergy's relation to ETA. People have always suspected the clergy had a direct/indirect relationship with ETA. The lack of verifiable source material has made some assume the worst. Further investigation is needed to verify these contentious accusations.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>156</sup> E. Ortega, "Los curas de ETA: un centenar de sacerdotes vascos colaboran con el terrorismo," in *Cambio* 16, N.603 (Madrid, June 20th 1983): 20.

