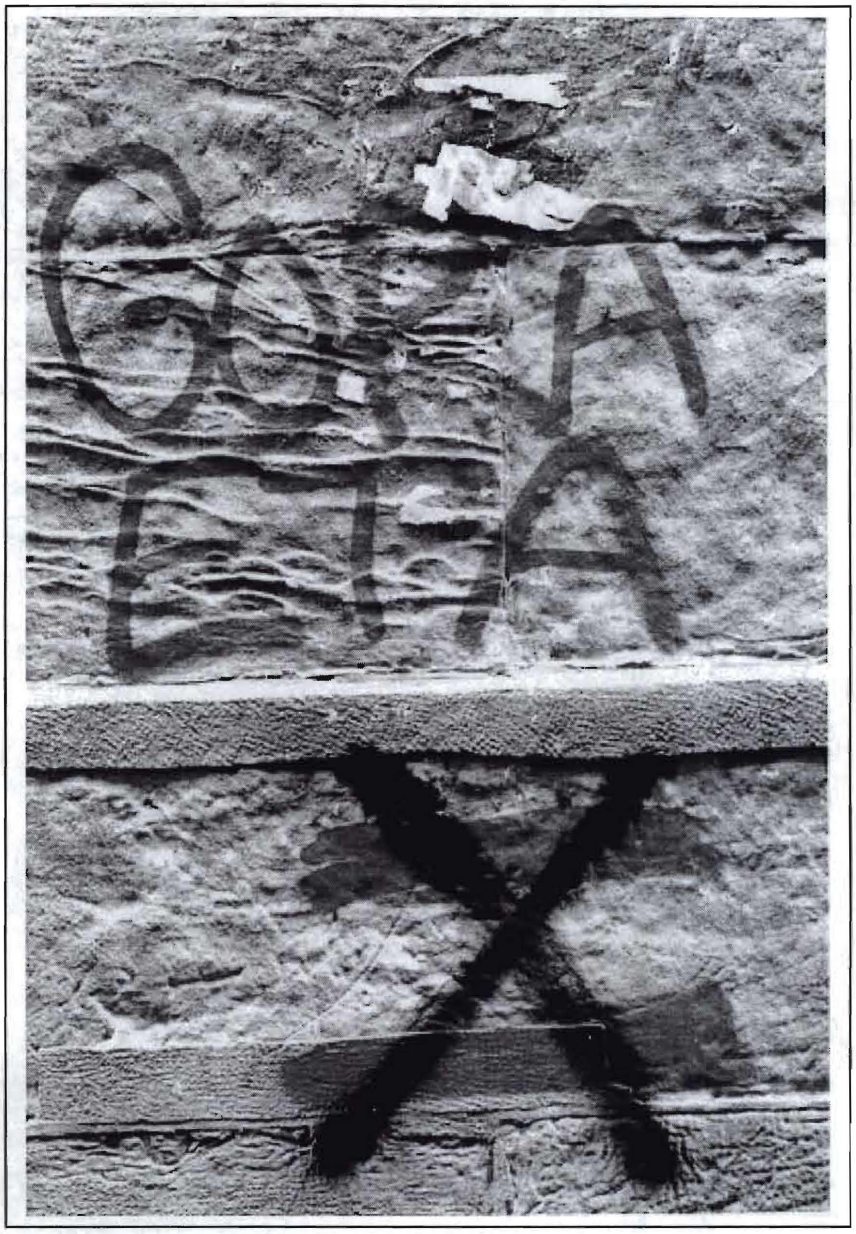
Basque Nationalism: From an American Student's Perspective.



Amber Kaset
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For Winkie

What would I have done without you these past four years? Every time I leave your office, I am freshly inspired and motivated. You are my friend and my most respected mentor,

and for Ibon
in his passionate and relentless fight to let his truth be known,

and for Javi
for helping an outsider and changing her mind in the purest way possible,

and
to the rest of their cuadrilla…

ESKERRIK ASKO.



The cuadrilla's soccer team in San Sebastián, "La concha" beach. A win dedicated to a friend lost in the Basque struggle.



Meet Kimba. **This hound was named after a term published by leaders in the Argentine media – inventing the slam "kimba." "Kimba" is a label for the supposed abundance of young Basques, tearing through the disheveled streets and blowing things up. Stereotyping an already struggling population in the Basque region, this term reflects the ignorant imagination of the media on an international level, concerning the nature of the Basques. Kimba's owner, Harekaitz (a nationalist), explained that "kimbas" do not actually exist... at least not in the Basque country. The dog's name seems to be Harekaitz's way of laughing at the world's misconception of his homeland. Meanwhile, Kimba, the Basque dog, trots through the handsome and quiet streets, barking irony, Basque-style, for the ignorant purveyors of the "terrorist-oriented culture" stereotype.**

Basque Nationalism: From an American Student's Perspective

The Basque people...not only [are] entitled to take up arms to resist the destruction of the Basque nation undertaken by Spain and France, but also [have] the moral obligation to oppose the inhuman actions of the oppressive state. It is the duty of every son of Euskalherría [the Basque nation] to resist the destruction of the Basque nation, even if this resistance requires revolution, terrorism, and war (qtd. by Krutvig in Medrano 1).

Federico Krutvig in 1963, as a member of the Academy of Basque Language and as a Basque nationalist, was devoted to the radical Basque ideology of nationalism found in Spain. However, not all Spaniards share his feelings. Having spent an academic year in Spain as a student at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, I witnessed the Basque situation closely, learning about many different perspectives in regards to the situation. Almost everyday, there was an article discussing some aspect of the Basque country on the front page of *El País* and *El Mundo*, just a few of the more well known newspapers coming out of Madrid. Stereotypes were quite common in Spain – many people believe all Basques to be involved with the terrorist group ETA. The Spanish students that I lived with made jokes about the Basques. The Basque issues were ever-present in all parts of Spain. I took a few trips north to San Sebastián and while there, was befriended by a group of Basque nationalists who made me realize how many sides of this issue existed. I began reading about the situation, asking questions to people with all different perspectives, and then began conducting interviews. I found that the situation is highly complex and that there are people in the Basque country and Spain alike who live each day in fear for their lives or frustration with the constant struggle to become a sovereign nation. Although Spanish is not my native language, I had become fluent enough to conduct all of my interviews and much of my research in Spanish. Through this process, I came to a few of my own conclusions about this situation. Indeed, Basque terrorism

stems from nationalism. Nationalism, as terrorism's predecessor, has deeply impacted the rise of violence by Basque terrorists and the reactions on part of the Spanish government. To understand the current situation in Spain, first it is necessary to learn about who and where the Basque people are. The context of the country's history lays out a clear context for examining the forms of nationalism present in the Basque country today. In developing the idea of Basque nationalism, the roots of the Basque terrorist movement become evident. In studying this situation for the past two years, I have concluded that the "Basque problem" is not simply one of nationalism, but one of a complex, vicious cycle of action and reaction predominantly between Basque terrorists and the Spanish State.

Before tackling the issues of nationalism and terrorism within Spain, it is essential to ponder a seemingly innocent but daunting question: Who are the Basques? A large percentage of the American college students that I have told about this project have never even heard of the Basque region. Others may have heard of it, but have no idea where it is or what is happening there. Some background information and details about the traditions and symbols of these people is necessary in order to understand the political situation at hand.



Euskadi: The seven Basque provinces.

(Clark Negotiating 1)

For such a small region, taking up exactly 3.5% of Spain's territory, the Basque country draws quite a bit of attention within Spain and worldwide (Clark, The Basque 10). It is located in both Spain and France, joined at the border of these two countries. The Basque region is estimated to be "slightly smaller than New Hampshire," with the entire area being only 8,218 square miles (Kurlansky 18). Also known as *Euskadi* or *Euskal Herria* by the Basque, and *País Vasco* by the Spaniards, the Basque country can be divided into seven provinces. Those located in France are traditionally, but not officially divided into three districts. To the Basque nationalists, these districts are (in French): Soule, Labourd, and Basse-Navarre. About 85% of Basque land falls on the Spanish side of the boundary (Clark, The Basque 8). These provinces are (in Spanish): Alava, Guipuzcoa, Viscaya, and Navarra.

The Basque culture is a truly ancient one. There is evidence that "there were people living in what is now the Basque region as long ago as 20,000 B.C." (Clark The Basque 13). In fact, many scholars believe these people to be ancestors of present-day Basques. However, there is inconclusive evidence to prove that. It is also said that Basques are direct descendants from Cro-Magnons, men who lived 40,000 years ago, because of their "burly" characteristics (Kurlansky 19).

There is much evidence that the Basque people are a physically distinct group. They "were found to be, on average, two the three centimeters taller than the average in France and Spain" (Hooper 387). This was quite obvious to me on the four trips I made to the Basque country. A few general physical observations can be made: the Basques are sometimes known to have a strong chin, long straight nose, high forehead, thick eyebrows, and long earlobes (Kurlansky 19). These observations are only drastic in some

people because of the fact that there has been quite a bit of intermarriage in the past century between Basques and predominantly Spanish immigrants in the Basque region.

Another important matter is the study of blood. Basque have the highest concentration of type-O blood in the world – more than 50 percent of the population (Kurlansky 20). An even more interesting finding is based on a fairly recent study dating back to the 1940s about a substance found in most human blood called Rhesus. One study in Basque country showed that 42 percent of the Basque did not have the Rhesus substance in their blood and one-third of those who did tested Rhesus negative (Hooper 387). This study is important because Rh negative blood in a pregnant woman can fatally poison a fetus that has positive blood. Therefore, the incident of miscarriage is high. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that the Basque population has remained so small. The physical aspects of the Basque people are relevant because part of the argument for sovereignty and/or independence has to do with ethnicity.

Another aspect of Basque culture and ethnicity that sets the Basques apart from the Spaniards is the Basque language, called Euskera. It is quite unique, having predated the Indo-European languages present in Europe and having no relation to those languages. Although numerous attempts have been made, no one has ever found a linguistic relative. "It is very likely the oldest living European language" (Kurlansky 23). The fact of the matter is that Euskera is a complete mystery to linguists. It sounds and looks nothing like Spanish or French. Although is has absorbed some French and Spanish words over the years, the basic grammatical structure is completely unrelated. There are even a few words in English that come from Basque, the most widely used is

honcho, coming from the Basque word, *jauntxo*, meaning a wealthy, powerful, rural landowner (Kurlansky 138).

In a conversation with Dorleta, a friend from Vitoria (the official capital of the Basque country), I learned the differing views on the usage of Euskera. Many people feel that is essential to know Euskera. My friend Ibon asked me this: "Would you live in Germany and not learn German?" Dorleta, on the other hand disagreed. She knows very little Euskera and feels that it would only be necessary if she wanted to get a job with the Basque government. Otherwise, she could live a normal life using Castilian Spanish. There are parts of the Basque country where people do not know Spanish, such as the small, rural towns, or *pueblos*, as they are known is Spanish. I conducted an interview with Xabi Lasaga Telletxea, and found that he learned Spanish when he was 15. His Spanish is perfect now, as he lives and works in Madrid. The language used in the home depends predominantly on the part of the Basque country and the size of the city. One century ago, these pueblos were very common with about 54% of the Basque population being completely fluent in Euskera. In an article called "The Basque Language at home," there was a statistic showing that nowadays, 23.7% of the Basque population knows Euskera very well, while even more of them have a less developed understanding of it. There are many conflicting views on this complicated topic.

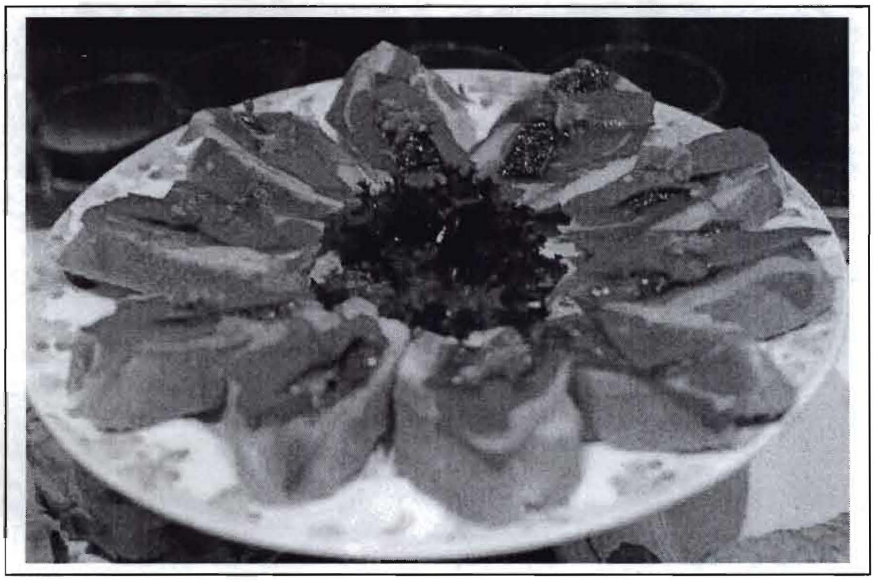
Traditionally, symbolically, and eternally Basque.

The traditions and symbols of the Basque people are highly relevant to this thesis because of their strong and inseparable link to feelings of nationalism. In Özkirimli's book, Theories of Nationalism, this connection is made. Some people may not even

notice the degree of nationalism around them since everyday life is also the domain of the 'unconscious':

> More often than not, nationalism takes shape through the visible, ritual organization of fetish objects [i.e. traditions and symbols] – flags, uniforms, airplane logos, maps, anthems, national flowers, national cuisines and architectures as well as through the organization of collective fetish spectacle – in team sports, military displays, mass rallies, the myriad forms of popular cultures (195).

I will do my best to give some of the more important examples that I observed during my time in Spain, in interviews, and the many hours of lecture. Some of these include: pintxos, sidrerías, caseríos, sociedades, nationalist bars, and the ikurriña. These will all be clarified in the next few pages. These symbols come from all parts of the typical Basque's daily life, going from traditional food, to the symbolic meeting places, to physical symbols of the people, such as clothes and flags.



One of the first things an outsider would notice is the tradition of food and drink in the Basque country. Basques will take any opportunity to eat and drink well, as enjoying a trip to the cider house is an unabashed tradition. Taking a walk into the old

part of the city of San Sebastián (or Donostia, as it is known in the Basque langauage of Euskera), the first thing that will be noticed is the large number of people standing up in bars, even during the middle of the day. On dozens of large platters, arranged on the bar counter, there will typically be an impressive variety and beautiful display of "pintxos," or what Spaniards may call *tapas*. One should expect them to be a bit more elaborate than those found in Spain. The Basque country is world-renowned for their rich cuisine and award-winning chefs. Along with these *pintxos*, people will be seen drinking a bitter, clear wine called *txacoli* during the day. These traditions vary slightly from those found in Spain.

One of the more unique traditions that I was fortunate enough to take part in is that of the sidrería, or the cider house. As I mentioned before, I was befriended by a group of Basques and they considered it very important that I get a true glimpse into Basque pastimes in order to understand how their culture is different than Spanish culture. The cider house was an unforgettable experience that most foreigners would never have the opportunity to experience. Basque cider, or sidra as they call it, is made in enormous barrels. It is very typical of the Basque region, and has a less sweet, more bitter taste than American cider beer. Typically found in the Basque countryside, cider houses serve a few typical Basque dishes such as: codfish omelet, Basque chorizo, and other meats along with bread. All the while, people run with their empty glasses to the barrels (each with its own unique taste) for unlimited cider whenever the man who opens the taps screams "Txotx!". The cider sprays out onto the floor in a horizontal stream as each person fills his or her glass halfway.

I realized that I was truly in the Basque country when the song and bertsolariak (which will be explained) began between the loud waves of laughter and screams of "txotx" echoing off the walls. These had been intangible concepts that I had studied in my Basque history and civilization class back in Madrid, until that night in Donostia at the cider house with Ibon, Sergio, Mikel, and Javi. At first, I understood the songs because they were in Castilian Spanish, but then the language changed to Euskera. Standing by the eight-foot tall barrels, Ibon began inventing rhymes with other Basques in what I later found out to be called *bertsolariak*. This folk culture tradition that I witnessed was a poetry competition, "in which the participants improvise in accordance with a given meter, each taking cue from his rival's poem" (Hooper 394). Bertsolariak are not only used in times of celebration. In the past, this oral literature of the popular verse-improvisers was used to send political messages to "broad sectors of the illiterate rural population" (Pasture 54). The tradition of bertsolariak is very reflective of the Basque culture. My Basque History professor, Carlos Cid, spent a lot of time on the topic, analyzing some bertsolariak that had been written (which is unusual since it is an oral tradition).

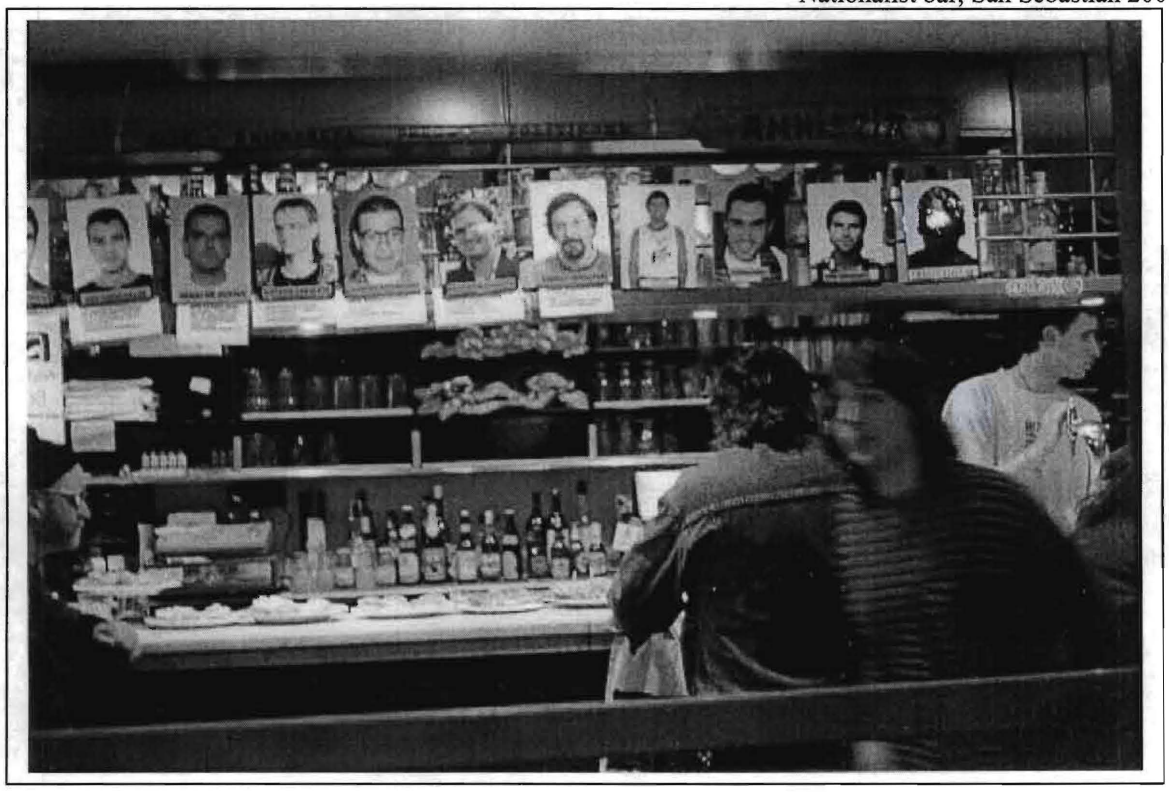
Another Basque tradition is that of the cuadrilla, or small, tight-knit group of usually about six friends that have known each other since childhood. It was one of the most prominent social institutions in small Basque villages (Moxon-Brown 154). I noticed that this term was not used very often in Spain, and later found out that the cuadrilla had its origins in the Basque country. I had made friends with a cuadrilla in San Sebastián and they took me in their circle and taught me about their culture. My friends, as do many Basque teenagers and men used this term loosely, just meaning a close group

of friends. However, the cuadrilla often times served as a political support group for nationalists and etarras. A cuadrilla, according to an article by Robert Clark in European Terrorism is a small group or gang of young boys who spend all of their time in various kinds of exploits with one another, such as vandalism (448). It is an often overlooked aspect of Basque tradition, and one that can only be learned about through close experiences with a nationalist. The San Sebastián cuadrilla that I met was the tightest group of friends that I met during my year abroad.

One of the more important symbols that I noticed was the Basque farmhouse, or the caserío as it is called in Spanish, which is a physical representation of the importance of the family. The style varies from province to province, and originally "consisted of a ground floor containing accommodation for both humans and animals and a top floor where grain was stored" (Hooper 392). The caseríos, or *baserri* in Euskera, have changed very little over the years and stay within the same families because they are passed down from generation to generation to the oldest child. In an interview on May 28 of 2001 with Javier Esnaola (a San Sebastián resident with Basque roots on his father's side), I was told about a sort of cultural exchange that some Basques living in Basque cities participate in to improve their Euskera language skills. They may take a few months to live with a very typical Basque family located in the outskirts of their city, or in any small Basque town where there is a family willing to host. They work the fields and help take care of the animals, while living in the caserío with the host-family and learning more about their own traditional culture and language that they may have lost by living in cities within the region. As mentioned before, traditional Basque culture is much stronger in the villages than in the cities.

Other important symbols are the nationalist bars and "sociedades." San Sebastián, the Basque city in which I spent most of my time, is highly politically oriented, so I was able to visit several nationalist bars. Most attract a quite radically nationalist crowd. I had the opportunity to visit two of them. The first one was located in the center of town with a 20-something aged crowd. The walls were painted with slogans about independence and other political propoganda. There were a few dozen photographs of Basque political prisoners, some with sad, tired faces, others were pictures taken before the prisoners were detained. The photographs had small pieces of paper attached to the bottoms, giving names and other personal information. They were hung anywhere there was room.

Nationalist bar, San Sebastián 2001.



Shirts, stickers, jewelry, flags, and music (basically anything with the Basque flag or symbol on it) was for sale. The young people there had a style different than anything I

had seen in Spain. These nationalists had long hair, or braids, large hoop earrings, black boots, and a spark in their eye. Ibon asked them to give me some of their opinions on Spain, but they all refused. One girl said in Spanish to him: "This is war. A war. I can't be recorded talking about that." I understood their discomfort with the request as a lack of distrust. I noticed the shifty stares following me around the room as one of the few foreigners in town. Words cannot give an adequate description of what I saw and felt. I knew that I made some of the nationalists uncomfortable. Why else would an American be interested in understanding their side of the story? I studied in Spain, which meant to many of them that I was on Spain's side. Nor do words suffice in the description of the second bar that I went to the following day with Ibon. We only stopped by to pick up a newspaper (called Hitza) about the torture of political prisoners that he had promised me. The bar was small and humble. It was a sunny afternoon, about 3 pm, and my last day in the Basque country. There were people of ages ranging from about 14 to 65. The television was on a Basque channel showing the results of the day's match of *pelota*, a popular Basque sport. I could not understand the television or what anyone was saying because of the lack of Spanish, but I could guess what the silence meant when I walked in the room. The regulars were not at ease with my presence. They were suspicious. Ibon asked for the key to the back room as he left me alone for the two longest minutes of my life. As I stood there waiting for my friend, I noticed that this bar, too, had the pictures of the political prisoners. This was a meeting place for nationalists and they did not feel comfortable with outsiders. I was glad to leave so that I could continue taping my interview with Ibon.

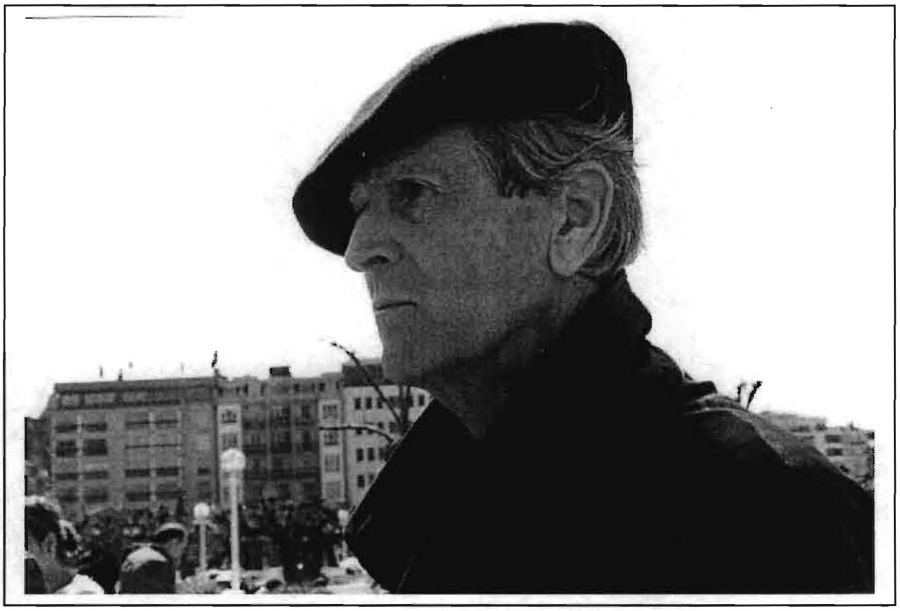


The wall of a nationalist bar in the old part of San Sebastián.

He told me about sociedades, as did Javi in his interview. A direct translation from Spanish would be a "society." These sociedades are much like the nationalist bars, but serve a different purpose. They are more exclusive, as you must buy membership. Members are allowed to bring guests, and up until a few years ago, these guests were only males. Females were only allowed to enter if they were the cleaning staff. Sociedades are very typical Basque meeting places for eating, drinking and sharing ideas, and usually have ties to specific political organizations. Some of the best chefs in the world became experts and shared their recipes in a sociedad. It is an important part of Basque unity, for men at least.

Another symbol for the Basque is the beret. It is usually wool and dark navy, and it mostly worn by men from older generations because of historical events, namely the Carlist War years. "Since the first Carlist War, the hat has not only become a central

symbol of Basqueness but has also gained international popularity and is generally associated with the political left (Kurlansky 146)." I attended at a celebration outside the *ayunamiento* (the city hall) for Aberri Eguna, Basque Country Day. There was traditional dancing, people holding signs, and singing; and most of the speeches were in Euskera. Because of the large concentration of nationalists in one place, I noticed many people sporting the Basque berets.



Aberri Eguna : April 1, 2001, El día de País Vasco.

The last, and probably one of the most important symbols I will discuss is the Basque flag, the ikurriña, designed by an important figure in Basque history, Sabino Arana. The Basque national colors were established as red, green, and white, and "according to Arana, the red background symbolized the people, the green X stood for the ancient laws, and the white cross, superimposed over it, symbolized the purity of it" (Kurlansky 167). Over the years, the meaning of the ikurriña changed for the Basque. It was a politically charged symbol since the beginning, and was illegalized during the

Franco regime, then legalized in 1977 when it became the symbol of the Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco) (Kurlansky 336). The ikurriña is now the official flag of the Autonomous Basque Community of Euskadi. Many people fought for the right to fly this flag, so it can now be seen on t-shirts, waving outside apartment windows, in restaurant and bars, as bumper stickers, in mostly all Basque cities today, just as the American flag is worn with pride in the United States.



The ikurriñas being put away after the Aberri Eguna celebration 2001.

In examining the symbols important to the Basque, I feel that it is essential to mention the presence of graffiti in the Basque region. It is much more common there than in Madrid. Much of it is anti-Spanish and is often accompanied by other types of political propaganda like posters and flyers for protests. *Gora ETA* (meaning "long live ETA") is a phrase spray-painted on many walls and buildings in San Sebastián because of the city's high involvement in political issues. This phrase is also found in many other Basque cities and towns, and on other propaganda. I found a few very interesting posters and a common, yet strong representation of the feelings toward Spain.



Concluding this depiction of the Basque culture, a quote from the French-Basque inellectual, Denis Langlois, will show some of the strong feelings for the culture present in the Basque Country.

> He descubierto una verdadera comunidad, no una de estas comunidades folklóricas que se exhiben en las vitrinas de los museos. Una comunidad viva, con su lengua, su cultura de ayer y sobre todo de mañana. Un pueblo donde la solidaridad, la amistad, la fraternidad no son solo palabras. Una comunidad donde se estrechan lazos cuando el peligro esta ahí, donde se canta y baila habitualmente, no solo a modo de fiesta, sino para sentir que se existe profundamente (Giacopuzzi 211).

I have discovered a true community, not one of these folkloric communities that you see in the museum windows. An alive community, with its language, its culture of yesterday and more than anything, tomorrow. A place where solidarity, friendship, and fraternity are not just words. A community where they throw out the rope when danger is near, where they sing and dance often, and not just for parties, but to feel that they deeply exist (my translation).



Three proud Basque girls in traditional dress.

Langois saw the Basques as a very united people, as they came together in a time of repression and of fear for the loss of their culture. Spaniards, on the other hand, could not identify with these problems, and was and still is made up of a variety of different cultural influences. Spain does not lend itself to nationalism based on culture as much as a smaller region would, such as Galicia, Cataluña, or País Vasco.

Nationalism surfaces, terrorism follows.

With this basic understanding of the Basque culture, it would seem logical to start out discussing the problem of terrorism, because it is directly effecting the political situation in Spain. However, in order to understand terrorism, one must understand its roots: nationalism. In order to be chronologically correct, Basque nationalism did exist before the terrorist group, ETA, came into being, and it is relevant to note that the two concepts of nationalism and terrorism are intricately and inseparably intertwined. We can start out with a few important questions. What is a nation? What is nationalism? Who are the nationalists?

There is no real agreement as to what a nation is. The Basques have a non-state nation, as do Scots and Bretons. They have all now begun to demand independent status to match up with their ethnic composition, so obviously none of these groups of people agree as to what their nation is and should be (Palumbo 33). Most people look at nations as having a homogeneous race, for example. Others, like the French historian, Ernest Renan, take a different view. He makes a few good points, contrary to popular perceptions:

> How is it that Switzerland, which has three languages, two religions, and three or four races, is a nation, when Tuscany, which is so homogeneous, is

> not one? Why is Austria a state and not a nation? In what ways does the principle of nationality differ from that of races? (qtd. in Ozkirimli 35)

Finding an agreed-upon concept of nation would simplify the problem. This is, essentially, one of the main predicaments for some people. The Spanish government does not see the Basque country in need, or perhaps fit, to be given the status of the "Basque nation." There are people in the Basque region who do. Not only is the controversy based on the definition of "nation," the term "nationalism" is also disputed.

In over twenty books, I found differing definitions of nationalism. It has been described as a type of doctrine, a movement, a condition of mind, a response, and an ideology. The common thread tying these distinct definitions together is that in all types of nationalisms, "there is the single feature of self-determination" (Symmons 41). One reason that there are so many books and theories is that "no single political doctrine has played a more prominent role in shaping the face of the modern world; millions of people around the world have willingly laid down their lives for their 'fatherlands' and this almost ritualistic mass self-sacrifice continues unabated" (Williams 1). In a book on all types of nationalism, fittingly called Nationalism, by Michael Palumbo, I found a somewhat accurate definition of nationalism in the case of the Basque:

> Nationalism may be defined as a condition of mind, feeling, or sentiment of a group of people living in a well-defined geographic area, speaking a common language, possessing a literature in which the aspirations of the nation have been expressed, attached to common traditions, possessing traditional heroes, and, in some cases, having a common religion (34).

On a cultural level, this definition works. However, Palumbo left out a few very important things in his definition of nationalism: the desire for political unity and self-government. These are two of the very important issues at hand in the Basque situation (I hesitate from referring to it as the "Basque problem"). Spain is very much involved in

the situation, even more so than France, as it has many vested interests in it besides the halting of terrorism. Hence, it would be just as accurate to say the "Spanish problem." Remember, as one Basque writer claimed: "The link with Spain is long and profound. We must never act in ignorance of this link. Nor ought we violently to provoke the destruction of this link" (Zirakzadeh 5).

Before continuing, I would like to address one question: Who are nationalists? Ask a Spaniard. Ask an etarra (a member of ETA). Ask me. Our responses may and probably will all differ. Even reading a few Spanish newspapers will not provide a clear-cut response. "There are few news media in Spain that could be considered neutral and disinterested" (Clark, Negotiating With ETA, 230). In fact, most newspapers and news magazines are connected to certain political parties or ideologies, and will write in order to sway the reader's perspective. For the purposes of this thesis, nationalists will be considered those who want sovereignty, and etarras are the extremely radical nationalists. Also, I will focus on the situation of the Basque country in Spain. France's role during the Franco dictatorship and the fight against ETA was practically null (Morán 393).

Because of the complex nature of nationalism, scholars have developed three theories to explain it over the years: primordialism, modernism, and ethno-symbolism. They are always disputed, but each one applies to the Basque situation in some ways. Primordialism is an approach held by scholars who say that "nationality is a natural part of human being, as natural as speech, sight, or smell, and that nations have existed since time immemorial" (Özkirimli 64). It is an ethnic attachment. Modernism, as a reaction to primordialism, proves that nationalisms "are the products of specifically modern processes like capitalism, industrialism, the emergence of the bureaucratic state,

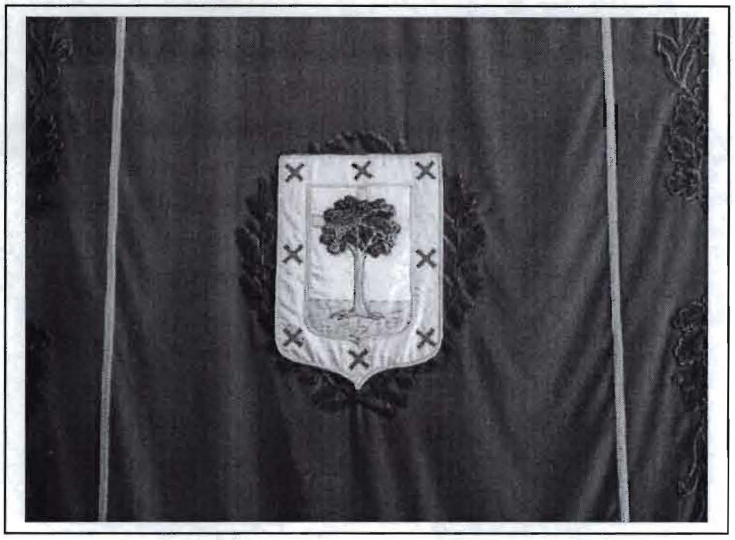
urbanization, and secularism" (Özkirimli 85). It is often thought that the concept of nationalism was born during the French revolution because before that time, there was no room for nations. In the last theory, ethno-symbolism, there is some overlap with primordialism. Its scholars state that: "The formation of nations should be examined in…a time dimension of many centuries, for the emergence of today's nations cannot be understood properly without taking their ethnic forbearers into account" (Özkirimli 167). These scholars find faults in the modernistic idea of nationalism because it may overlook the myths, symbols, and values of a people. Each theory holds it own truth and helps the Basque nationalism to be more easily analyzed.

This leads to a more in depth concern: How, more specifically, did Basque nationalism gain its momentum? There were many factors, as nationalism gained momentum during all of the 20th century. One period that stands out was during the final months of the Franco dictatorship and the first years of monarchy, when all of Spain was gripped by what was sometimes called "fiebre autonómica," or autonomy fever (Hooper 39). It did not occur solely within regions with distinct languages (like in Cataluña, Galicia, and Euskadi), but also in areas like Estremadura, Andalusia, and the Canary Islands. In the case of the Basques, their nationalism was based on fear that their culture and language (among many other factors) were in danger of extinction. They needed unity and strength, and a nationalist group provides a major cohesive force. Many nationalisms formed in "response to a cultural crisis, an answer to a condition of social disorganization and anomie, or simply as an alternative to extinction" (Symmons 50). Basque nationalism was born under a variety of conditions and feelings, many of which bloomed during the dictatorship of Franco. It may be interpreted as "a reaction

against...developments on the part of groups within Basque society who perceived themselves as being most vulnerable to or threatened by the processes of change" (William 240). These "processes of change" began before Franco came into power, and increased in number during his rule. They include, but are not limited to: immigration into the Basque country by Spaniards, the abolishment of the local laws, acts of economic bias, and the banning of the Basque language, Euskera.

Immigrants poured into the Basque Country during the 1960s because the increased demand of Basque industrial and manufactured goods lead to a shortage of employees within the region (Zirakzadeh 64). These employees came from all over Spain. By the late 1970s, over 40% of the Basque population were recent immigrants (called "maketos" in Euskera) or children of them (Zirakzadeh 64). Many Basques felt that their traditional culture was being destroyed by these unassimilated newcomers, so, in turn, nationalism became a type of reaction against this process of industrialization. Tensions were then born between the indigenous community and the working class immigrants (Williams 253). A good example of this is the situation between my two Basque friends, Javi and Ibon. They are both part of the same cuadrilla, share many of the same experiences and friends, yet clash in regards to political beliefs. Javi's mother was a maketo. For this reason, Ibon, the "purely-Basque-in-every-way" nationalist teases Javi, claiming that he is not really Basque. Although his comments are said in jest, deep down he believes there to be much truth in his ridicule. Immigration is highly important topic in the "Basque situation," for many sources state that "nationalism was originally produced by a reaction to the effects of immigration in [that] economic boom" (Sulivan 7).

Besides the change in demographics, there was a change in many laws. For centuries, the Basque had their own set of local laws called *fueros*. In Spanish, this means "codified local customs." It was part of their identity as Basques. "Throughout history, Basques have been willing to compromise their independence as long as they could have self-rule by their traditional laws," their fueros (Kurlansky 65). Madrid allowed the Basques to be Basque since the 1800s because of their location; they knew that in protecting their own land, invaders crossing the French boarder would not get through the Basque, in turn (indirectly) protecting the Spanish. Not only did the Basque like having their own laws because it was a historical tradition, they liked the fact "the fueros meant low fiscal contributions and exemption from military service" (Medrano 70). In my Basque history class, there was a lot of attention given to the fueros. In some ways they were even more progressive than Spanish laws and because they were local laws, and were more relevant to the people there. One slogan associated to the fueros is: "Justice to the poor as to the rich" (Kurlansky 66). In "Basque History of the world," there are some examples of the regulations that the fueros covered: commercial and criminal law, the purity of cider, exploitation of minerals, laws of inheritance, administration of farmland, crimes and punishment, and a notably more progressive view of human rights than was recognized in Castillian law (66). The fueros were abolished at the turn of the 19th century, and although this may have been long ago, nationalists have not forgotten their connection to them. In fact, they still use the fueros that were codified in the 12th century as a reference point for the fiscal autonomy that they desire nowadays.



Museo de País Vasco, Bilbao. A tapestry depicting the symbol of the fueros.

The Spanish government abused its power over Basque economic issues. For such a small region, the Basque country was a very busy place in relation to the economy. Industrialization was a key factor in this. They were also big producers of steel and timber. For the past 40 years, the annual per capita gross product and per capita disposable income have been the highest in Spain. However, this does not make the Basques powerful because of a few unjust decisions on part of the Spanish State. The Spanish government constantly shortchanged the Basque region when distributing public services (Zirakadeh 107). There was a high incidence of fiscal inequities and geographic maldistribution of government expenditures. As an example, the Spanish government spent on average 2,501 pesetas on each child under the Spanish State education system, and only around 1,500 on Basque children (Zirakadeh 107). For these reasons, the local economic conditions have shaped many political issues and concerns. This aspect of repression has been a factor in leading to violence, as economically motivated unrest. This lack of control has led many Basque nationalists to feel very uncomfortable with the Spanish government and to lose trust in it. One Basque nationalist party intellectual,

Jesús de Sarriá stated in regards to the strong nationalist feelings on economic issues and their attachment to them:

> For us Basque Nationalists, national wealth is connected to the substance of nationality itself...The wealth that we have is a fundamental element, like a shield and fortress, for nationality and citizenship. We are a people with a practical sense, with concrete notions, with a spirit of solidarity within the national economy (qtd. in Zirakadeh 116).

In any war, economic issues take front stage. However, there are many nationalists who refuse to admit that there are any economic motivations for their desire for solidarity and/or separation. They claim their motivations to be cultural factors, such as Euskera.

Because of the strong cultural attachment and sentiment towards Euskera, its prohibition during the Franco Era was probably the most impacting process of change for the Basques, nationalists and non-nationalists alike. "Perhaps because the use of Euskera is so strongly associated with Basque ethnicity, the Basques' freedom to use and teach the language has been a major source of friction with Madrid for several generations. Overt Spanish policies to discourage the use of the language date from late decades of the 19th century" (Clark, Basque Insurgents 3). In fact, until the late 1960s, it was against the law to teach it in schools. After the 1960s it was officially tolerated, but there was much official suspicion and periodic police harassment. Because of this, many parents forbade their children to speak Euskera, leading to diminishing numbers of people who can speak the language today. To help bring the language back into use, schools called *Ikastolas* were brought into being. They are "part-time voluntary schools dedicated to the dissemination of the local language and culture" (Williams 251). There are also Euskera language schools for adults called *Euskaltegi*. My friend, Javi, attends an Euskaltegi a few days a week. He is still not completely fluent, but understands quite a bit. His father

was Basque and fluent in Euskera, but his mother is Spanish so he did not grow up speaking Euskera in his home. These schools are very commonly attended and very appreciated by people like Javi who want to be able to join in the spirited conversations of the cuadrilla. Aside from these rational measures to bring back Euskera, there have many radical ideas to preserve it. Many super-radical nationalists want to make it the sole official language of Euskadi. This is yet another reason for the increase in strong feelings of nationalism. Often times, "nationalist movements originate and develop when something that is dear to a given people – their language and customs – is forcibly taken away from them" (Symmons 4).

Other more recent areas of controversy have developed during the past 30 years, predominantly within the Basque Country against its people and by the Spanish State. "Escalation of terrorism in the late 70s has been explained in [the following] terms of inadequate, even counterproductive [and violent], state response" (Reinares, European Democracies 133). These include the controversy of Basque political prisoners, the presence of the Spanish police within Basque territories, and the acting out of Spanish anti-terrorists groups.

During the repressive dictatorship of Franco, there were many unfair arrests of Basques. In fact, this became the focal point for the already deteriorating Basque-Spanish relations and led to many demonstrations and protests. Basque writer and pacifist, Fernando Savater, stated in his book Perdonen las molestias, that a person that is put in jail for writing or declaring his or her political ideas is without a doubt a political prisoner (74). However, he states that "Dificilmente puede ser llamado "preso político" en cambio, el que asesina, extorsiona, roba, tortura, secuestra, apalea o cause estragos

movido por ideas políticas (o por ideas raciales o por ideas religiosas)" (74). He is basically trying to say (according to my translation) that it would be difficult to call those "political prisoners" who murder, extort, rob, torture, kidnap, beat others, or wreak havoc for political ideas (or for racial or religious ideas). Defining the term "political prisoner" is essential here because this is the backbone of the Spanish argument. The Basques have a problem with the situation of the political prisoners because there is a law in the Spanish constitution that states that any prisoner must be kept within their own region. Many Basque prisoners are sent to other regions or countries, like Galicia or the Canary Islands. This is directly against the Spanish law and everyone knows that. So why is this allowed to happen? In an interview with a non-nationalist Basque, Javier (yet another Javier, but this time in Madrid), he said that many Spaniards do not feel that they should have to apply that law to terrorists. They believe that terrorists should have no rights.



A flag waves in the old part of San Sebastián. The map of Euskadi superimposed on the Ikurriña support the return of Basque prisoners to their homeland. "Euskal presoak" means Basque Prisoner in Euskera.

Indeed, no rights are exactly what political prisoners had in the Franco Era and what many still have today. Prisoner dispersal was and is against the law, but this is allowed because prisoners' rights are a minor priority. It is a form of torture. A trip to a nationalist bar will clarify this. There are literally hundreds of prisoner's pictures framed and hung on bar walls in each city, like the ones I saw in San Sebastián. It is something that the nationalists want to see everyday to remind them why they are fighting. Fernando Savater, stated in regards to this issue "Yo he estado preso y conozco la emoción, la íntima urgencia con la que se espera la visita de una madre, de una novia o de cualquier familiar que trae al hosco encierro el aroma bendito del mundo exterior" (Savater 77). Savater was basically saying that he was once a prisoner and knows the emotion, the intimate urgency that one has when awaiting the visit of a mother, of a girlfriend, or some other family member that brings to the closed-in space the blessed aroma of the outside world (my translation).

So why does the Spanish government allow prisoner dispersal? As unfair as it may have seemed, the Spanish government noticed that the concentration of etarras in the Basque penitentiaries "facilitated social control enforced by terrorist leaders" (Reinares 139). The Spanish government hoped that the prisoner dispersal ordered in 1989 would weaken the terrorist link. It did to a certain extent. ETA feared this as well, because they knew that there is power in numbers; so in losing the concentrated number of etarras, they were essentially losing control of the situation within and outside of the prison setting. Some people fought to bring the prisoners back to Euskadi to support ETA and to keep it more united and strong, others were the family members of the prisoners and they felt that their rights were being out rightly violated. A majority of the people that I saw at

the courthouse for Aberri Eguna (the celebration of Basque Country Day) were family members of Basque prisoners. They were holding signs with photographs and names on them, protesting against the prisoner dispersal. These Basques were not only protesting to bring back their friends and family to Euskadi, they were protesting the unfair treatment of their loved ones, a treatment more harsh than that given to Spanish prisoners.



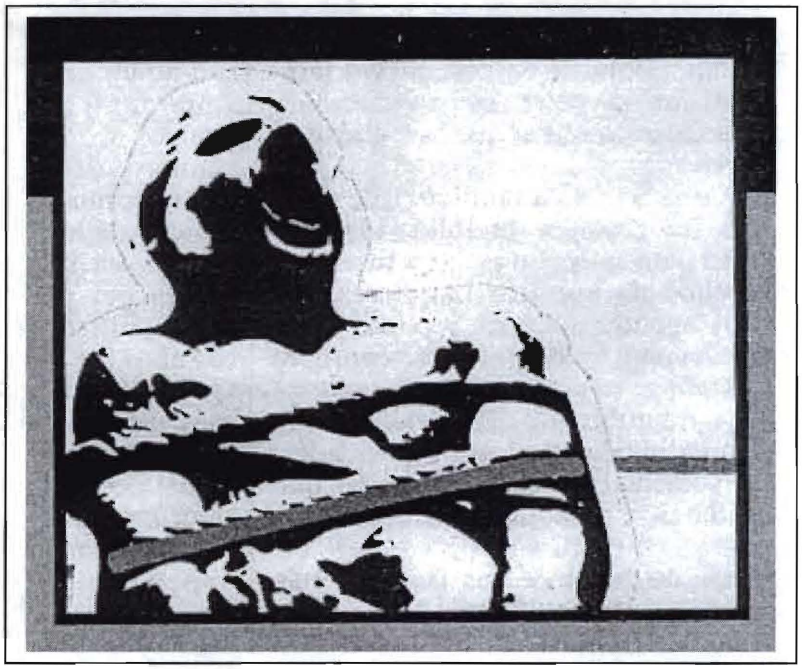
Basque mothers protest their sons' imprisonment at the celebration of Aberri Eguna.

During the Franco Era, trials for terrorism and related offenses were treated much differently than other non-terrorist related trials. Torture was ever-present and many rules were broken: no extenuating circumstances to explain the behavior of the accused could be used, no evidence could be introduced to prove torture in extraction of a confession, and the accused was prohibited to testify in Euskera or have an interpreter in the case of poor Spanish skills (Clark, Basque Insurgents 239). Aside from unfair treatment, the Spanish state often tried to deceive the public by publishing faulty statistics. In 1975, the Spanish government claimed to have detained 189 Basques.

However, an Amnesty International investigation proved the real number to be over 1,000 in the provinces of Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa alone (Clark, Basque Insurgents 244). Harsh treatment was not only a reality for etarras, but for nationalists as well. For the Spanish government, there was no distinction between the two. A Basque nationalist opposed to ETA was often times treated just as badly as an etarra. In fact, it got so unbearable for many people that they would deliberately injure themselves to be sent to prison hospitals where the treatment was better. During the 1970s and 1980s, these problems predominated, leading to many suicides and illnesses caused by mistreatment.

This political prisoner controversy still exists today. However, the peak of this problem was in the 1970s, during the latter part of the Franco Regime. On November 25, 1975, exactly three days after Franco died, King Juan Carlos began freeing Basque prisoners, except for 150 that were sentenced for terrorists acts (Clark, Basque Insurgents 249). Spain still claims to have solved a large part of the problem; however a Basque publication discusses in detail the abuse and torture that still exists in Spanish prisons against many Basques. In an article called "Torturados," in a nationalist publication called Hiltza, a Basque woman detained on February 5, 2001, Leire Gallastegi, describes her experience with the Guardia Civil officers that arrested her: "Me dieron a elegir entre las cosas que había encima de la mesa, tenía que elegir entre la orden de detención de mi madres, los electrodos o el mango de una escoba. Tenía que elegir uno y yo elegí el palo de la escoba" (4). In English, she said: "They made me choose from the things on the table, I had to choose between the arrest of my mother, the electrodes, or the handle of a broom. I had to choose one and I chose the broom handle" (my translation). According

to this article, 55 out of the 93 arrests of Basque nationalists in the first three months of 2001 became victims of torture (article did not specify party or relation to ETA).



A picture published in an underground nationalist paper called Hiltza.

The inflictors of torture were not punished. In fact, in 1984, more than twenty police and Civil Guards accused of torturing their prisoners had recently received decorations or awards from Interior Minister Barrionuevo (Clark, Negotiating With ETA 56). The media has exposed Barrionuevo's unjust actions. An investigation by Amnesty International is the 1980s found torture to be a grave problem, and in interviewing Barrionuevo, they discovered his true feelings on the topic. He claimed that occasional abuses and harsh practices "are ultimately justified by the grave threat that is posed by terrorism to the lives and security of citizens and the survival of the democratic way of life (Clark, Negotiating With ETA 56)." This once again proves the existence of the vicious cycle among the many sides involved in the "Basque-Spanish situation."

Another topic of controversy for many Basques that has led to the development of nationalism is that of the police force within the Basque country. The 1970s were difficult years for the Basques because of counter-terrorism movements implemented by the Spanish police and Spanish Civil Guard (also call the *Guardia Civil*). In 1978, about 6,000 national policemen and 12,000 civil guards were deployed in the Basque provinces (Reinares, European Democracies 127). This deployment of Spanish officials into the Basque country occurred right after the fall of Franco leadership, so many people in the police force were already hostile towards the new process of democratization. Democratization heightened the officials' anger even more towards the changes and revolution desired by many Basques. The police force inherited negative attitudes from the dictatorship and took that out on many innocent Basques. In fact, "between 1977 and 1979, 39 people died in the whole of Spain as a consequence of police behavior in street clashes with demonstrators" (Reinares, European Democracies 124). There was also much insubordination by civil guards and policemen within the police force leading to even more violence against the Basques. Aside from the problem of violence, problems that were worse in the 1970s, nationalists today claim one of their main issues to be the maintenance of public order (i.e. establishing their own police force). They do not want the Guardia Civil intervening in most cases because of the past problems and violence incurred during the process of democratization.

In response to ETA, many anti-terrorist organizations developed in Spain. These were not always legal organizations. In fact, the most well known was GAL, Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (or Anti-terrorist Groups of Liberation). "GAL, emerging in 1983, attempted to complement governmental counter-terrorism initiatives with an

illegal, violent campaign against suspected members of ETA" (Reinares, European Democracies 136). There has been proof that the Guardia Civil and other Spanish enforcement agencies were directly involved in the state terrorist activities. GAL members were vicious, often times carrying the same anger and mentality of certain etarras. One member of GAL, José Amedo, stated: "When I die, I am going to regret only one thing, not having been able to kill all the etarras, not having liquidated all of them. That would have solved problems for a lot of people" (Woodworth 200).

So why then was GAL important in continuing the violent cycle of terrorism and repression? A Spanish newspaper, *El País*, published an article stating in 1995: "It has been said that the GAL affair and a good part of the scandals which stain the government, affect the political past; but now it is becoming evident that in fact they affect the future, and perhaps set conditions for it" (Woodworth 295). GAL members were responsible for 27 people killed between 1983 and 1987, one-third of which had absolutely nothing to do with ETA (Reinares, European Democracies 136). They also killed two intermediaries in a negotiation between Spain and the Basque country, preventing any type of possible agreement. In 1987, GAL's last victim was killed. He was a Basque pacifist and refugee for having refused to do military service. His widow Laura Martín responsed: "I want the truth, all of it, all of it" (Woodworth 160). Incidences like this one raise tension between Spain and the Basque country leading to increased nationalism and in some instances, terrorism. In fact, "the often indiscriminate character of official repression [like the ones described before] helped to create popular identification with the Basque nationalist cause, and sympathy for ETA" (Williams 250).

The emergence of nationalism preceded terrorism, but both increased at parallel rates because of some of their overlapping ideas. Nationalism for many Basques was "a response to the imminent destruction of a people's way of life" (Symmons 1). Many once-moderate nationalists turned to the terrorist organization, ETA – Euskadi ta Askatasuna (Euskadi and Freedom). Killing cannot be justified in any case, but the Spanish government's unfair treatment of the Basques was a key factor in the development of terrorism. This is no light affair. Most Americans can now relate, as the recent tragedy of September 11th brought attention to terrorism worldwide. Political analyst, Brian Jenkins, summarizes terrorism as follows:

> The threat of violence, individual acts of violence, or a campaign of violence designed primarily to instill fear – to terrorize – may be called terrorism. Terrorism is violence for effect: not only, and sometimes not at all, for the effect on the actual victims of the terrorists. In fact, the victim may be totally unrelated to the terrorists' cause. Terrorism is violence aimed at the people watching. Fear is the intended effect, not the byproduct, of terrorism. That, at least, distinguishes terrorist tactics from mugging and other forms of violent crime that may terrify but are not terrorism (Clark, The Basque Insurgents 8).

Who played the most important role in shaping nationalist and terrorist feelings today? This man who systemized the fears of the thinning numbers of purely Basque people and resentments into the political ideology, which we know as Basque nationalism, was Sabino de Arana Goiri (Hooper 395). It is essential to note the importance of Sabino Arana's role in modern-day Basque terrorism. Radical nationalists still follow many of his teachings and beliefs from the early 1900s. He fought for the purity of the Basque people, and was undoubtedly a racist. Arana felt the presence of immigrants into the Basque country, whom he called *maketos*, to be a threat to the pureness of the "Basque race." He wrote predominantly about philosophy and

etymology, and created many neologies in the Basque language, including the word "Euskadi," meaning "collection of Basques." A few quotes by Arana reveal his intense love for his "nation" and the strong prejudice that consumed him:

> My patriotism is not rooted in human motives, nor is it directed toward material ends. My patriotism is rooted and everyday is more rooted in my love for God, and its aim is to connect God to my blood relatives, to my great family, the Basque Country (qtd. in Zirakzadeh 125).

> If we had to choose between a province of Biskaya populated by "maketos" [immigrants] that would only speak the Basque language and a Biskaya populated by Biskaínos (people of Basque origin) that would only speak Castilian, we would certainly choose the latter, because the Basque substance, which can be purified when contaminated by foreign influence, is preferable to a foreign substance whose properties can never by changed (qtd. in Medrano 139).

One of Arana's largest contributions to the separatist cause was the founding of the Basque Nationalist party, (or the Partido Nacionalista Vasco, PNV) on July 31, 1894. This party was revolutionary for its time. Most members of the PNV today are not very radical, at least not as much as those from EH (Euskal Herritarrok). EH is what used to be known as HB, or Herri Batasuna (People's Unity). HB was illegalized because of its outright support of ETA. In fact, Herri Batasuna refused to take part in a demonstration of peace in 1989 in which all other Basque parties were involved (Reinares European Democracy 138). "ETA initially emerged out of frustration with the PNV's inablility to grapple with the special problems of underground resistance to dictatorial rule" (Williams 248). Besides the influence of the PNV, there were many other events that led to the formation of ETA.

The 1950s was a time of resistance. ETA was formed during this time of the Basque resistance movement from a group called Ekin. Ekin started in 1952 as small

group of young men that met to discuss politics and improve the understanding of contemporary politics (Clark, The Basque Insurgents 26). According to Medrano in his book, Divided Nations, Ekin, the group of new militants, revitalized the Basque resistance movement by intensely studying the Basque culture and nationalist ideologies, and by focusing on recruitment and cultural indoctrination of new members (137). They found many members at Deusto University in Bilbao. In 1956, Ekin fused with Euszko Gaztedi (EG), or "Basque Youth." This event, on July 31, 1959 (the 64th anniversary of the founding of PNV by Sabino Arana), led to the birth of ETA, Euskadi and Freedom.

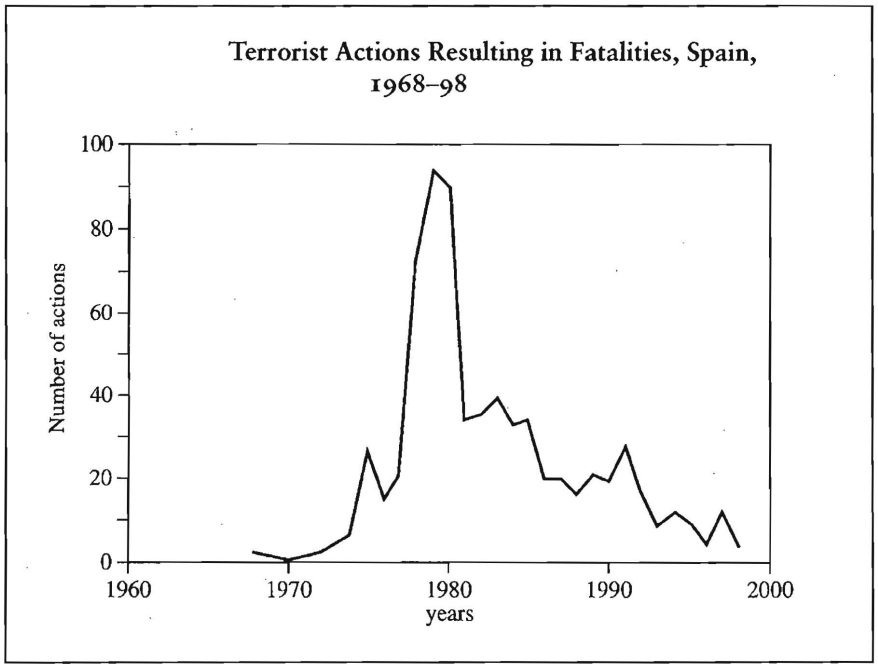
The exile of the Basque government in 1937 was a terrible and cruel time. The youth of the region suffered more than anyone, for this is why youth groups such as Ekin and EG flourished. "It was in this context that ETA was born, and it is this setting that must be understood if one is to appreciate how and why ETA came to be" (Clark, The Basque Insurgents 20). It was born strong and grew the most between 1960 and 1980. The region's ongoing tradition of protest provided a pool of recruits and communication networks through: social protest movements in non-urban areas, long-standing Basque labor movements, and urban-neighborhood associations (Zirakzadeh 34). These were just a few of the more formal institutions, but there were individual strong feelings throughout the Basque nations that supported ETA as well.

Radical nationalist, Iñaki Egaña, wrote about why ETA grew more popular throughout the Franco Regime:

> En los años sesenta la presencia de ETA sirvió para demostrar que el pueblo vasco estaba vivo y que, sobre todo, al margen del franquismo, la recuperación de las señas de identidad nacionales dependía en gran manera de la propia iniciativa popular (Lorenzo 252).

> In the 1960s, the presence of ETA served to show that the Basque people were alive, and that, above all, at the margin of the Franco Era, the recuperation of the signs of national identity depended a large part on the own initiative of its people (my translation).

Etarras wanted to show that they had not given in to Franco, and that they were still willing to put up a fight. In order to do so, they planned attacks with care to make them symbolic and communicative; and there is some evidence that they tried to minimize harm to bystanders and other noncombatants (Clark, The Basque Insurgents 123). In regards to the number of victims by ETA, there have been some studies that showed that the annual number of homicides in some major American cities is lower that the casualty levels of ETA in it's entire history. Numbers of deaths are not the priority for ETA. It is not in the quantity of killings, but the quality of the message sent to Spain. In other words, "the significance of ETA's violence lies in the psychological effects of its attacks as opposed to the actual physical damage done by them" (Clark, The Basque Insurgents 126).



(Reinares, European Democracies 123)

The physical damage done by ETA attacks usually takes many forms. One form is "kale borroka." In Euskera, that means street struggle. More specifically, it is politically motivated street violence, occurring fairly often. ETA also uses car bombs, and directly targets certain people. The principle targets of ETA are the members of the Guardia Civil and the Spanish police force. Business and industrial figures are at the top of the list, as are other political figures. In ETA: Historia política de una lucha armada, ETA gives an explanation for its use of violence against Spain:

> La oligarquía española no solamente trata de arrestar o matar a los militantes revolucionarios sino que, metódicamente y siguiendo su estragedia, actúa violentamente contra el pueblo vasco mediante la explotación y la opresión. Por esto mismo se hace necesaria para el pueblo una estragedia de liberación, que contemple la práctica de la violencia ofensiva (Giacopuzzi 32).
>
> The Spanish oligarchy not only tries to arrest or kill revolutionary militants, but methodically and following their strategy, acts violently against the Basque people by means of exploitation and oppression. For this reason exactly, it is necessary for our people to have a liberation strategy that considers the practice of violence for offending our nation (my translation).

An etarra document describes why this violence continues because of the goal of victory.

> Durante decenios no había nada, excepto silencio. Pertenecemos a una generación que ha nacido entre paréntesis y solo ahora empezamos a despertar y a comprender. No es que estemos al borde de la revolución, pero sin duda, algo está pasando: el pueblo ha comenzado a caminar. En la misma práctica, en la experiencia directa, los hombres y mujeres de nuestro pueblo han ido comprendiendo que la victoria, aun siendo difícil y lejana, es también inevitable. Esta comprensión, sin embargo, no ha sido espontánea ni inmediata (Lorenzo 249).
>
> For decades there was nothing, except for silence. We pertain to a generation that was born between parentheses and only now do we begin to wake up and understand. It's not that we're on the verge of revolution, but without a doubt, something is happening: the Basque people have begun to move. In the same practice, in the direct experience, the men and women of our nation continue understanding that the victory, although being difficult and distant,

> is also inevitable. This understanding, however, has not been spontaneous nor immediate (my translation).

ETA not only used violence (violence that was more ramped during the Franco Era) they relied other activities and symbols over the years to accompany violence in the attainment of this "inevitable victory." Some examples are: the Basque flag (Ikurriña), destruction of Francoist architectural symbols, celebration of Basque National Day (Aberri Eguna), and illegal transmissions of radio messages by the president of the Basque government (Medrano 136).

The tidal motion of violence, cyclical vengeance.

Upon examining the historical and present-day context of the Basque issue, I am convinced that ETA's violence and the Spanish government's repression have no beginning or end. There is a never-ending, back and forth cycle among many entities that keep the problem alive. Furthermore, one of the biggest mistakes most people make in regards to the "Basque situation" is to assume that the obstacles to peace are between two contending parties – ETA and the Spanish State coming from Madrid, however these are the two that are only the most often mentioned in regards to the "Basque-Spanish situation." In Negotiating with ETA, Robert Clark reveals that "there are at least two dozen clearly identifiable clusters of interested parties that have stake in the outcome of this struggle" (11). The numbers might even reach 30 or 40 if these parties are accurately subdivided. In European Terrorism, the contending political forces and groups involved with constantly shifting agendas and priorities are divided into four principle categories: "(1) ETA itself, with all its factions, and its prisoners and exiles and their families, (2) other Basque groups, including Basque autonomous government and the political parties

and media associated with it, (3) Spanish government and its associated political parties and media, and (4) international groups, including other governments and such organizations such as Amnesty International and Interpol" (Moxon-Brown 492).

These political forces and groups all have differing opinions, and interests and goals at stake. A Basque nationalist, Engracio de Aranzadi, once said, "it is an error to think that the nationalist objective is independence" (Zirakzadeh 115). This contradicts what many of the nationalists said in interviews with me. Some of them stated that the goal was independence; others said they just wanted more autonomy. Surprisingly, there is quite a bit of conflict of opinion within ETA, among its members (as is the case with all parties and groups involved). "Within each government [Spanish and Basque], tensions grow between and among various ministries as each tries to advance bureaucratic goals" (Clark, Negotiating With ETA 227). Besides that, it is often overlooked that there is more than one ideology predominating in the PNV, and that "political beliefs of etarras have multiple sources and are not simply an echo of the beliefs of an earlier established anti-modern nationalist party" (Zirakzadeh 109).

To prove how far from possible a settlement of the "Basque situation" is, simply look into the issues of conflict within one party that has interests at stake: let's choose ETA as an example. Among etarras, three general topics are intensely disputed: (1) who were the "Basque people" deserving liberation from bondage (working class, immigrants, only native Basques, only Basque speakers), (2) how the Basque people should be liberated (armed struggle, labor organizing, cultural revitalization, or some hybrid of methods), and (3) what liberation should be institutionally look like (a future social order

with factory assemblies, with government owned industries, with powerful unions, or with none of these)" (Zirakzadeh 79).

Some of the problems within ETA arose because of "a split between two factions of ETA whose leaders held conflicting views of the role of violence in the Basque struggle" (Clark, Negotiating With ETA 10). The two factions were: ETA-militar, or "milis," and ETA-político-militar, or "poli-milis." ETA (m) members were responsible for armed attacks that predominantly took place in Madrid and Barcelona, as they still do. ETA (pm) worked with labor organizations, and were pro-negotiators. A good example of this is the negotiation of 1977 that ETA (pm) tried to make with the Spanish government, as an attempt to release some Basque prisoners. ETA (m) ruined the deal for ETA (pm) because the *milis* did not want to lose the support given to ETA by prisoners' family members, support that would be lost if the number of Basque prisoners declined (Reinares, European Democracies 124). Unfortunately, since 1974, the principle element of ETA has been ETA (militar), being the main source of terrorism. Losing power and the ability to successfully negotiate, ETA (pm) decided to dissolve itself in 1981 (Reinares European Democracies 133).



Why no one bends.

Disagreement in this cyclical struggle is also related to the methods and problems in negotiation between ETA and the Spanish government. "What is at stake here is the timing of a cease-fire; whether it should come before, during, or after the resolution of the issues" (Moxon-Brown 495). Spain's philosophy in these types of matters is: first truce, then talks. They refuse to sit across the table from ETA and negotiate while killing is going on. This, in turn, is one of the reasons that the cycle of action and reaction between ETA and Spain continues. ETA refuses to make a cease-fire until Spain makes some compromises. This leads us to believe that "one major problem here is that both sides want to negotiate from a position of strength, and neither wants to be seen as seeking peace from a position of weakness" (Clark, Negotiating With ETA 232).

Why else do the negotiations always fail? There is no problem with the channels of communication. "All parties involved know each other well, and they are in frequent contact with each other when it suits their needs" (Moxon-Brown 490). And there is no problem with the lack of opportunities to negotiate. Between the years 1975 and 1988, there were at least 20 identifiable attempts to negotiate (Moxon-Brown 489). Most people from all the parties involved want the violence to end, but trust and confidence are in short supply. From the Basque perspective, so deeply marked by generations of repression during the Franco Regime, "latent conflicts within the area frequently yielded to a shared distrust of state authority" (Williams 251). However, there has been evidence on both sides (Spain and ETA) of duplicity, treachery, and deceit (Clark, Basque Insurgents 279). There is also a problem of finding trust-worthy and brave

intermediaries. These people know that they risk their lives to intervene. In fact, there have been a few intermediaries killed around the time of negotiation.

Although there are serious disagreements on the order of negotiation, there have been cease-fires on part of ETA. There was an average cease-fire of one every eight months during the period up to April 1989 (Moxon-Brown 490). However, these cease-fires did not usually last very long. The most well known cease-fire was ended April 4, 1989, which had been established about three months earlier on January 8 (Moxon-Brown 490). The violence was put back into motion after each cease-fire. In an interview in Patriotas de la muerte, an etarra explains why she became a member of ETA, therefore telling us why these cease-fires never worked:

> Es que ellos (los españoles) utilizaba la violencia. Es que...en una situación de dictadura como...la que era el franquismo...es que...si ellos...su forma de relacionarse con nosotros era la violencia. Y ademas, bueno, luego incluso leías y buscabas argumentos defensores de las armas. Bueno, el rollo de Argelia, el rollo de tal, de Bolivia, del Che (qtd. in Reinares 89).
>
> It's just that they (the Spaniards) used violence. It's that...in a situation of dictatorship like...one like the Franco dictatorship...it's...if they...their way of relating to us was by using violence. And besides that, well, then you also read and looked for arguments defending weapons. Well, it's like the deal of Argelia, with so and so, fighting in Bolivia, the rationality of Che. (my translation)

Many etarras felt that the Spanish government was never really listening and that because they were Spaniards, they used the power that they had over the Basques to their advantage. Somehow, violence used in fighting against terrorism seemed acceptable to many Spaniards. Perhaps that had something to do with the fact that no one was leaving ETA.

There is a problem within ETA that keeps people from leaving their terrorist lives: fear. Many etarras are afraid of revenge. Many ETA members have been killed by

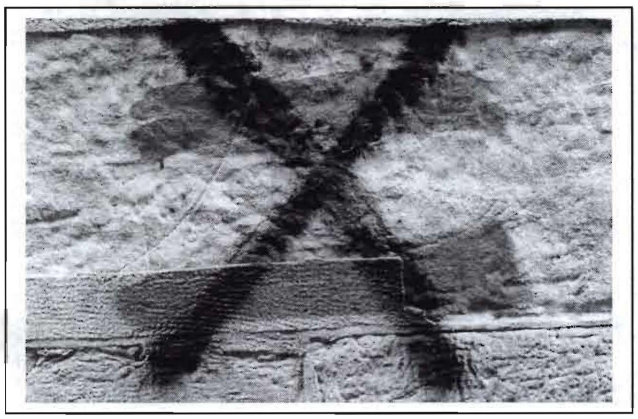
unknown assassins for laying down arms (Clark, Basque Insurgents 279). Others have become so alienated from normal society that they fear what awaits them when a cease-fire is finally called (280). After being so reliant on the organization for so many years, etarras may have become dependent on the support they receive. Not only do they fear leaving ETA, they are not supported in doing so. Social reintegration is supported neither by ETA nor the Spanish government, hence making this possibility less desirable.

Misunderstanding among all Spaniards and Basques, of all belief systems and ideologies have kept this conflict alive. Nationalism is often times blamed for the terrorism in Spain, but I have named enough evidence to disprove this. Most sources agree that ETA and the Spanish government have surfaced as the two principle entities of conflict in the "Spanish-Basque situation." Basque nationalism sprang forward as a reaction to the repressive Spanish government, but the Spanish government also tightened its grip as Basque nationalism grew. Besides violence, frustration has been one of the main products of the vicious cycle of action and reaction. The Spanish government may ask the nationalists what they want, but most of the time the government elites will not respond to the Basque claims. It is a fact that the Spanish democracy has not been capable of dealing honestly with the terrorism and the violation of human rights fundamentally exercised during the years of the dictatorship (Elzo 103). Perhaps ETA should not be given so much credit as a source of the general Basque feelings. It is apparent that "violence plays virtually no role in Basque culture...ETA is an anomaly as far as the rest of Basque culture is concerned. Basques do not support or practice violence on either an interpersonal or an intergroup level, and traditional Basque culture does not support ETA behavior" (Clark, Basque Insurgents 278). Nationalism, however,

is supported by most Basques, as the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) is the most voted-for party in the Basque Country. Just as we cannot make a stereotype of all Basques as terrorist (as many Spaniards do), we cannot distinguish certain nationalisms as either good or bad. All contain seeds of progress and regress, as Özkirimli states in Theories of Nationalism:

> It is through nationalism that societies try to propel themselves forward to certain kinds of goals (industrialization, prosperity, equality with other peoples, etc.) by a certain sort of regression – by looking inwards, drawing more deeply upon their indigenous resources, resurrecting past folk heroes and myths about themselves and so on (90).

The "Basque situation" has not only been clouded by the nationalist movement, but by the many parties and groups of both Spain and the Basque country with interests at stake. The cycle of change and reactionary measures remain steadily, undeniably, and forcefully in motion today.



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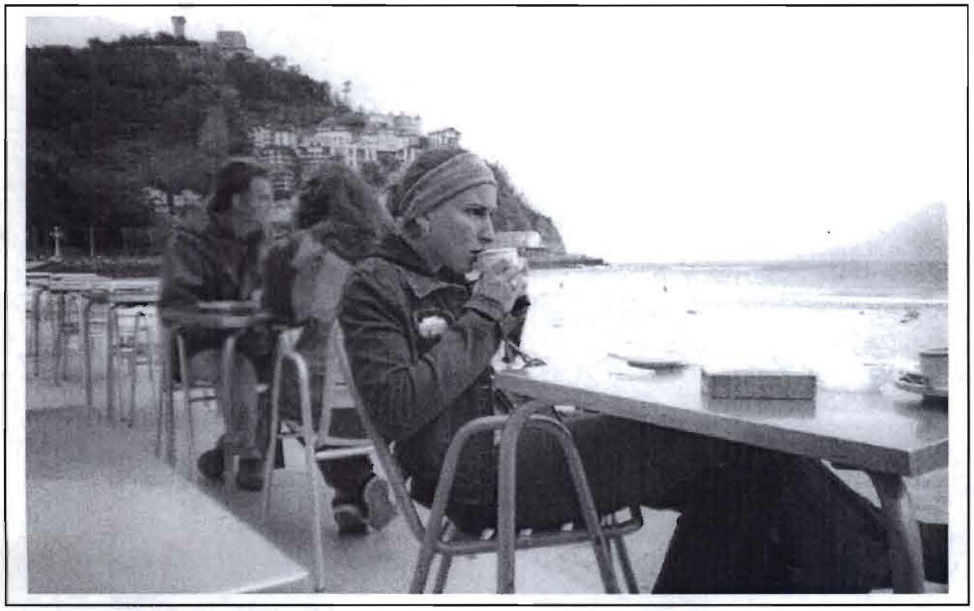
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Postscript

I took all of the photographs (not including the photo of the soccer team) in San Sebastián and Bilbao on the four trips I took during the spring semester of 2001. I decided to incorporate photography into my College Scholars project because I have been very interested in this medium during my four years of university study. I took a photojournalism course here at the University of Tennessee, and a yearlong photography course at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in the faculty of Bellas Artes (Fine arts).



Un café con leche at La Concha. San Sebastián.
Amber Kaset