



The Ohio State University

Department of History

Department of International Studies

An Eye for an Eye:

ETA Terrorism and Democracy in Post-Franco Spain

Rachel M. Armstrong

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Nicholas Breyfogle, Department of History

Jeffrey Lewis, Department of International Studies

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By Rachel Armstrong*

The Ohio State University, United States of America

On February 6th, 1981, engineer José Maria Ryan was found in the woods. He had a bullet in his neck and a mouth full of cotton. Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) “Basque Homeland and Freedom” claimed responsibility. Three days later, 200,000 Spaniards gathered in the streets to protest ETA’s violent act. By February 13th, a suspected ETA member named José Arregui Izaguirre was tortured to death in a Madrid prison. Outraged at the government’s brutality, 110,000 protesters flocked to the streets. Spain, newly democratized in 1975, was straining under the weight of a two-decade long terrorist insurrection. While the nation endeavored to consolidate a “government by the people,” elements of the hard-fisted fascist regime remained. Instead of calming the conflict, the government countered ETA’s violence with like-minded brutality. During Spain’s six-year democratic transition, ETA attacks increased, followed by government retaliation. Early 1981 signified a breaking point. Spain’s cycle of reactionary violence was met with backlash by the population, contributing to Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez’s resignation on January 29th. A month later, right-wing Civil Guard members, nostalgic for the stability of General Franco’s authoritarian rule (1939-1975), stormed parliament in a coup attempt. The plot failed, but it highlighted the fragile state of Spanish democracy. Both ETA and the government opposed a restored dictatorship, but years of retaliatory torture, assassinations, midnight kidnappings, and secret arrests had unintentionally weakened the fledgling democracy. By the end of 1981, ETA violence plummeted. Its violent tactics had proven counterproductive in the newly democratized environment. This study examines the relationship between political structure and terrorist violence in the context of Spain’s democratic transition. Although counterintuitive, democratic governments can perpetuate terrorism through hardline counterterrorism crackdowns. As evidenced in Spain, the use of authoritarian practices by democratic states delegitimizes the government, alienates the people, and renews the terrorists’ resolve.

* Correspondence to: Armstrong.523@buckeyemail.osu.edu

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Introduction

The noise was deafening in February 1981. Banners floated over the streets, suspended by shrieking protestors. Cries of “*Reject ETA!*”^{1*} and “*Peace!*”² reverberated off city buildings, quickly countered by a few indignant bellows of “*ETA on High!*”³ Crowds pressed from all sides, dispersing and reforming as the Spanish Civil Guard struggled to maintain public order. La plaza de Zabálburu was at maximum capacity. Here, in the heart of Bilbao, Spain, one hundred thousand people clamored for justice. Only sixty miles away another 60,000 demonstrators converged in San Sebastián. Forty-thousand more gathered in the Basque capital city of Vitoria.⁴ As tensions heightened, clashes erupted between civilians and the police. By the end of February 10th, 1981 fifty people were reported injured in the demonstrations.⁵

Spain was reeling. Only four days earlier, on February 6th, 1981, a civilian engineer was discovered dead in the woods. His body lay face up, less than 150 meters from the road. A blindfold covered José Maria Ryan’s unseeing eyes, and crumpled cotton filled the murdered engineer’s gaping mouth. He had been killed execution style.⁶ A kerchief mercifully concealed the gruesome remains of Ryan’s neck in the released photos.⁷ Ryan, a loving husband and father,⁸ had no ties to Spanish politics. He was neither a law enforcement officer, nor a government official. Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)⁹ or “Basque Homeland and Freedom”

¹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 11 Feb. 1981: 10. Print.

* All Spanish text translations are my own, unless otherwise noted

² *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

³ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 11. Print.

⁴ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁵ "Basques Strike to Protest Murder by Rebel Group." *The New York Times* [New York, United States] 10 Feb. 1981: *The New York Times*. 10 Feb. 1981. Web. 6 Dec. 2014.

⁶ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁷ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 3 Feb. 1981: 8. Print.

⁸ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

⁹ ETA split into two factions in 1974: ETA-militar (ETA-m) and ETA-político militar (ETA-pm). ETA-m was responsible for Ryan’s kidnapping and murder.

claimed responsibility for the violence.¹⁰ Its message was clear. ETA was willing to spill innocent blood to achieve its goal of creating an independent Basque State. After kidnapping the thirty-nine year-old on January 29th, the politically violent Basque separatist organization issued an ultimatum to the Spanish government. According to ETA's statement, Ryan, the chief engineer of a controversial nuclear power plant construction project, was abducted for his affiliation with government-promoted industrialist capitalism.¹¹ But the victim's civilian status made Ryan an especially desirable target. Kidnapping noncombatants incited fear in the Basque and Spanish populations, exaggerating public perceptions of ETA's societal power. Like other politically violent groups, ETA hoped to "instill fear and helplessness in a population in order to influence decision-making and to change behavior."¹² Their terror tactic was not new. Between 1968 and 1980 approximately 95.8% of ETA kidnapping victims were civilians.¹³ Most were released after paying substantial sums in ransom.¹⁴ However, while Ryan's abduction was not novel, the contingencies of his kidnapping were unusual. Instead of demanding money, ETA required the destruction of the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant in exchange for the engineer's life.¹⁵ Adamant to oppose terrorism, the Spanish government refused to negotiate. Despite public appeals for Ryan's release¹⁶ and a heartbreaking plea from the captured man's wife,¹⁷ Ryan was shot dead on the night of February 6th.¹⁸ Enraged at ETA's disrespect for human life, the Basque

¹⁰ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

¹¹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 30 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

¹² Werner G. K. Stritzke and Stephan Lewandowsky. *Terrorism and Torture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2009. 3. Print.

¹³ Robert P. Clark. *The Basque Insurgents: ETA, 1952-1980*. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin, 1984. 135. Print.

¹⁴ Yonah Alexander, Michael S. Swetnam, and Herbert M. Levine. *ETA: Profile of a Terrorist Group*. Ardsley, NY: Transnational, 2001. 21. Print.

¹⁵ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

¹⁶ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 8 Feb. 1981: 19. Print.

¹⁷ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

¹⁸ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

public erupted in protest. Two days after photos of Ryan's lifeless form hit the press, 200,000 anti-ETA protestors converged in the streets of Bilbao, San Sebastián, and Vitoria.¹⁹

José Maria Ryan's tragic death was only the beginning. On February 13th, exactly one week after Ryan's execution, the Spanish State plunged into a second wave of disorder. José Arregui Izaguirre, an imprisoned ETA member and suspected assassin,²⁰ lay dead at the hands of the Spanish government. Izaguirre had been captured by the Spanish Civil Guard on February 4th,²¹ two days before Ryan's murder. According to early autopsy reports, the thirty year-old *etarra* [ETA militant in the Basque language] died in the Madrid Carabanchel Penitentiary Hospital after suffering bronchial pneumonia, a pulmonary edema, and a pleural effusion.²² The circumstances of the terrorist's death were ominous. As an undercurrent of morbid suspicion swept through the country, the Ministry of the Interior ordered a formal investigation.²³ By February 15th, the sinister reality was clear. Izaguirre had been tortured to death. The five police inspectors involved in Izaguirre's interrogation were turned over to the justice process,²⁴ and the newly democratized government scrambled to quell public outrage. Only days after massive protests paralyzed the Basque Country in response to Ryan's death, another 150,000 angry people flooded the streets.²⁵ This time the anger was directed at the Spanish government. Regardless of opinion on ETA, the majority of the Spanish population was horrified at the democratically-elected government's disregard for basic human rights. Tremendous public

¹⁹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 10 1981: 1. Print.

²⁰ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 8 Feb. 1981: 24. Print.

²¹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 8 Feb. 1981: 5. Print.

²² *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

²³ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 11. Print.

²⁴ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

²⁵ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

outrage brought Northern Spain to a standstill. Schools closed, public transportation ceased, and industry screeched to a halt as anti-government demonstrations overwhelmed northern Spain.²⁶

Spain's troubles only became worse. On February 23rd, 1981, a group of two hundred right-wing Civil Guard members stormed parliament in a coup attempt.²⁷ Their ring leader, the "ultra"²⁸ fascist Lieutenant Colonel Tejero wanted to reinstate Spain's previous military dictatorship, which ended in 1975 after thirty-six years.²⁹ Although the plot failed, it sent shock waves through Spain. While the murders of early 1981 didn't explicitly cause the February 23rd crisis, they produced the volatile political climate that made Tejero's coup attempt possible. Known as *El Tejerazo*, the coup forced both ETA and the democratically-elected government to reconsider their strategies. Although neither group supported a return to authoritarian rule, years of retaliatory torture, assassinations, midnight kidnappings, and secret arrests had unintentionally weakened the fledgling democracy.

ETA reduced its popular support base by kidnapping and murdering Ryan. Immediately following the engineer's disappearance, denunciations of the Basque separatist group flooded the Northern press. The Catholic Federation of Vizcayan Priests announced it "felt compelled to publically express its repulsion at the kidnapping of José Maria Ryan, both for being an attack against the human rights of liberty and security, and for shattering a united family."³⁰ Seventy known individuals from Basque politics, culture, art, sports, and social media signed a communication published in the Basque newspaper *Egin* describing Ryan's treatment as "a flagrant violation of the concept of liberty and security for all persons."³¹ In response to Ryan's

²⁶ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 21. Print.

²⁷ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 24 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

²⁸ Robert Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. New York: St. Martin's, 1984. 205. Print.

²⁹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 24 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

³⁰ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 5 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

³¹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 6 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

murder, the Basque newspaper *La Gaceta del Norte* promised its “absolute rejection of ETA and condemnation of the group’s unspeakable criminal act.”³² And the February 8th front page of the Basque Country’s *El Correo Español* read “Repulsion and Nausea in the Basque Country Over Ryan’s Murder.”³³ ETA’s “self-indulgent violence”³⁴ escaped the control of the organization and derailed the trajectory of Basque independence. Even the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), a political organization which openly supported liberty for *Euskal Herria* (name of the Basque Country in the Basque language), issued a statement criticizing Ryan’s mistreatment. In a message to ETA via *Egin*, the PNV wrote “the kidnapping of a technician in service to Iberdeuro [Ryan] was an unthinkable act. It means those [ETA militants] think they can play with the liberty and life of a worker.”³⁵

Similarly, the Spanish government undermined its own legitimacy by utilizing torture against Izaguirre—a tactic which violated the democratic laws of The Spanish Constitution of 1978. Madrid’s “repressive state response”³⁶ alienated the Spanish and Basque populations and strengthened the credibility of ETA’s alleged oppression. Referring to Izaguirre’s death, the February 14th, 1981 cover of *El Correo Español* stated “the [Spanish] government must radically cease actions that do not respect the fundamental rights of people.”³⁷ Abel Hernandez, an opinion writer for *La Gaceta del Norte*, wrote “the shadow of torture does not promote national coexistence.”³⁸ *ABC* quoted Blas Piñar, president of the far-right Spanish political party New Force, arguing ““this [death of Izaguirre] reveals a lack of coherence in the government, which

³² *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 13. Print.

³³ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 8 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

³⁴ Martha Crenshaw. "The Effectiveness of Terrorism in the Algerian War." *Terrorism in Context*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995. 476. Print.

³⁵ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 6 Feb. 1981: 6. Print.

³⁶ Tom Parker. "Fighting an Antaeon Enemy: How Democratic States Unintentionally Sustain the Terrorist Movements They Oppose." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (2007): 155. Print.

³⁷ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

³⁸ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 13. Print.

allegedly safeguards human rights, but is still torturing [Basques].”³⁹ And *Egin* opinion columnist Rosa Olivares denounced the Spanish government for Izaguirre’s death, declaring “to torture, to repress, to interrogate, to crush the subversives, the terrorists, the revolutionaries...is socially permitted, accepted, tolerated by the forces of the parliamentary regime.”⁴⁰ Clearly, the Spanish government was not upholding civilian expectations of democratic justice.

The incidents of early 1981 mark a turning point in the history of ETA as an organization, the Spanish government’s relationship with ETA, and Spain’s progress towards democratic consolidation. By utilizing violent tactics reminiscent of the Franco-era, both entities lost public support and weakened the fledgling democracy. The success of each group was inhibited by its failure to innovate new strategies in the democratic environment. This study aims to examine the Ryan and Izaguirre murders in the context of Spain’s transition to democracy from 1975-1982. Under the “authoritarian and ultra-Spanish nationalist Francoist regime”⁴¹ ETA committed “only sporadic acts of violence.”⁴² But after Franco’s death in 1975, the Spanish State witnessed a dramatic increase in terrorist violence.⁴³ The implementation of democracy brought the Basques territorial autonomy from Madrid and representation in the central government, but the new political liberties did not satisfy ETA. The organization vowed to continue armed struggle until the Basque Country achieved full independence from Spain.

Although Spain’s political landscape had shifted drastically, both ETA and the Spanish government were “highly resistant”⁴⁴ to tactical change. Unfortunately, this inability to adapt backfired on both groups in early 1981. Analysis of media over the two murders indicates a

³⁹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 19. Print.

⁴⁰ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 18 Feb. 1981: 14. Print.

⁴¹ Goldie Shabad, and Francisco José Llera Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain." *Terrorism in Context*. Ed. Martha Crenshaw. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995. 411. Print.

⁴² Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁴³ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁴⁴ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 424.

prevailing sentiment of dissatisfaction among the Spanish and Basque populations. Newspaper coverage in the Basque Country (*La Gaceta del Norte*) and Madrid (*ABC*) highlights widespread condemnation of both homicides, signifying the Basque and Spanish populations' overwhelming weariness of violence. While ETA and the democratically-elected government fixated on one another, the Basque and Spanish populations sued for peace. The deaths of Ryan and Izaguirre triggered a quick succession of events which culminated in the February 23rd coup attempt. However, many other historical and cultural factors contributed to the near-breakdown of Spanish democracy. Thousands of years of Basque culture and society, the carnage of the Spanish Civil War, and the oppression of Franco's dictatorship bolstered the development of late twentieth century Basque Nationalism. This ideology, more than anything else, made the violence of January and February 1981 possible.

Conclusions of this Project

According to political scientist Martha Crenshaw, "terrorism can be effective without being successful, since it can produce decisive results that are nevertheless counterproductive."⁴⁵ In Crenshaw's mind, an "effective" terrorist attack produces some kind of result (i.e. the bomb explodes; the gunman assassinates a political figure etc.). However, a "successful" terrorist attack generates the political outcomes the group intended. ETA-m effectively kidnapped and assassinated Ryan in early 1981, but the engineer's death did not advance ETA's political goals. The Spanish government refused to destroy the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant, and the engineer's death did not augment ETA's civilian support base in the Basque Country. In fact, Spanish and Basque sympathy for ETA dropped off in the aftermath of Ryan's death (see

⁴⁵ Martha Crenshaw. "The Effectiveness of Terrorism in the Algerian War." *Terrorism in Context*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995. N. pag. 475. Print.

Chapter Two). The repercussions of ETA's murder outweighed the political benefits—making it largely unsuccessful.

The Spanish government also forfeited Spanish and Basque public support when it utilized torture, a hardline and illegal counterterrorism tactic (see Chapter Three). By employing terrorist-like methods against ETA, the newly-elected government undercut its own integrity. Although differences existed between civilian perceptions of Ryan and Izaguirre's murders in the Basque Country and Madrid, both media outlets documented substantial public outrage over the deaths. Spanish and Basque civilians were disgusted with the injustices committed by both sides. By early 1981, ETA and the Spanish government were operating outside the realm of civilian support. Excessive violence from both entities alienated the Spanish population, delegitimized each side's political objectives, and ultimately destabilized democracy.

Implications

At its most basic level, this research explores the functionality of terrorism. When does terrorism generate political change? And when does it not? Furthermore, how do governments de-radicalize terrorist insurgencies? These theoretical questions are much broader than ETA, but the Basque case can serve as a basis for understanding other ethno-nationalist terrorist organizations. European terrorism was a central concern during the late twentieth century. In addition to ETA, the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland, the Italian Red Brigades, and the West German Red Army Faction plagued the international community in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁶ Given the historical proximity of these groups, it is likely that similar socio-economic and political factors affected each organization. However, ETA is a particularly interesting case study because

⁴⁶ Dennis A. Pluchinsky. "Academic Research on European Terrorist Developments: Pleas from a Government Terrorism Analyst." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 15.1 (1992): n. pag. 15. Print.

it experienced a tangible turning point. Between 1979 and 1981, ETA violence plummeted.⁴⁷ START Global Terrorism Database reports 131 ETA attacks in 1980, but only 69 incidents in 1981.⁴⁸ In addition, START Global Terrorism Database estimates ETA killed 94 people in 1980, but only 23 in 1981.⁴⁹ Furthermore, half of ETA (i.e. ETA-pm) disbanded in 1981, reducing the number of active *etarras* significantly. On December 6th, 1980, Spanish Interior Minister Juan José Rosón released a statement to the newspaper *Deia* claiming 2,000 ETA militants (including both ETA-m and ETA-pm) were known to police.⁵⁰ A report published in *Deia* on June 13th, 1982 estimated ETA membership much lower. The publication, written by the deputy chief of staff of the Civil Guard, placed the number of ETA militants (again both ETA-m and ETA-pm) at 500.⁵¹ If explained, this phenomenon could lend insight to successful deradicalization and counterterrorism strategies on the global stage.

The ETA

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) or “Basque Homeland and Freedom” was established in 1959 by a coalition of radical student youth groups. Angered by the oppression of General Francisco Franco’s fascist regime (1936-1975), ETA sought to achieve Basque independence and promote the “recuperation of Basque culture and language.”⁵² Upon its inception, the group was peaceful. ETA spread its message through graffiti, the symbolic burning of Spanish flags, and an underground journal titled *Ekin* (meaning “to act” in the Basque language).⁵³ Unsatisfied with the results of civil disobedience, the group adopted a strategy of armed struggle in 1962. Despite its new commitment to violent resistance, ETA was fairly passive in the 1960s and early

⁴⁷ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 414.

⁴⁸ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Mar. 2015

⁴⁹ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Mar. 2015

⁵⁰ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 221.

⁵¹ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 222.

⁵² Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁵³ Wayne Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. New York: Rosen Pub. Group, 2003. 18. Print.

1970s. Internal debate over philosophy and strategy consumed the organization's energy for over a decade.⁵⁴

Tactical consensus emerged in 1967 when ETA leadership developed an “action-repression-action spiral theory.”⁵⁵ The approach was simple. ETA would provoke governmental repression by staging targeted terrorist attacks. Once mutual violence escalated to an “unbearable level,”⁵⁶ Spain would overthrow its totalitarian government. The ensuing chaos would permit the Basque Country to secede unquestioned. In 1973, ETA coordinated its most “dramatic and consequential”⁵⁷ operation yet. Basque militants assassinated Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco, Franco's favored successor. The murder reshaped Spain's political trajectory by prompting the “demise of the authoritarian regime,”⁵⁸ but it also divided the organization. Political schisms within ETA resulted in a permanent split in 1974. ETA-político militar (ETA-pm) pledged to participate in the political process, while ETA-militar (ETA-m) continued employing violence to pursue full independence.

After Franco's death in 1975, Spain experienced the long anticipated “rebirth of democracy.”⁵⁹ King Juan Carlos appointed Adolfo Suárez to the position of Prime Minister, and the new parliamentary government ratified a constitution in 1978. In response to the democratic transition, ETA agreed to discuss a cease fire if the Spanish government fulfilled a list of “requirements”. The document, titled the KAS Alternative, demanded the Spanish government amend the 1978 Spanish Constitution to include the right of self-determination for all peripheral nations. In addition, ETA wanted the “assertion of the territorial integrity of all Basque provinces

⁵⁴ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 19.

⁵⁵ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 19.

⁵⁶ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 19.

⁵⁷ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁵⁸ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁵⁹ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

in Spain,”⁶⁰ the recognition of Euskera as the official Basque language, the amnesty of all political prisoners, the withdrawal of Spanish troops from *Euskal Herria*, and improved labor conditions for the working class.⁶¹ Surprisingly, the Spanish government met the majority of the Basque organization’s demands. The Basque Country was granted political autonomy, civil liberties, trade unions, and territorial independence.⁶²

But ETA continued to operate as though “nothing had changed,”⁶³ and the number of ETA murders and kidnappings skyrocketed during Spain’s democratic transition.⁶⁴ According to Robert Clark, ETA’s mortal victims increased from nine in 1977 to 88 in 1980.⁶⁵ Furthermore, ETA’s target selections expanded. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the covert group primarily attacked law enforcement or military members.⁶⁶ Now its hit list included working-class civilians, business executives, police informers, bar owners, a cemetery attendant, construction workers, and the girlfriend of a Civil Guard officer.⁶⁷ The reasons were two-fold. ETA-militar’s leader José Miguel Beñaran Ordeñana (who went by the *nom de guerre* Argula) believed Spain’s transition to democracy would make the government especially vulnerable to ETA attacks.⁶⁸ Without stable political institutions and a working constitution, the Spanish government would be more inclined to acquiesce to ETA’s demands. If not, the democracy risked a failure to consolidate power. In addition, the new political environment allowed ETA to operate more

⁶⁰ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁶¹ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁶² Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁶³ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁶⁴ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 441-442.

⁶⁵ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 134.

⁶⁶ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 106.

⁶⁷ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 107-111.

⁶⁸ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 106.

freely. Liberated from Franco's secret police (or so they thought), ETA's militants declared they could fight for a free *Euskal Herria* as "independent, reunified, Basque-speaking"⁶⁹ patriots.

The Spanish government's response merely fueled the flames. Instead of negotiating with the Basque insurgents, the democratic order implemented new antiterrorist laws and police policies in 1978. The reforms suspended certain constitutional rights of suspected *etarras*, and facilitated a major terrorist crackdown.⁷⁰ The number of ETA killings peaked in 1980, followed by Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez's untimely resignation on January 29th, 1981. As the government dissolved into a power vacuum, a faction of the Civil Guard staged a military coup attempt against Spanish parliament on February 23rd, 1981. The coup failed, but it produced lasting effects on both the ETA and the Spanish government. ETA underwent structural changes, while the Spanish government pursued revised counterterrorism policies in the 1980s.

Immediately following the coup attempt of February 23rd, ETA-pm disbanded. The politically-minded section of ETA feared it would further destabilize democracy with continued violence. If democracy fell and Spain regressed into an authoritarian regime, the Basque Country would lose its newfound autonomy and ETA-pm would lose its political voice. ETA-m publically refused negotiations with the Spanish government, but violence levels dropped in 1981 and a long series of secret negotiations commenced.⁷¹ In 1983 the Spanish government shifted counterterrorism operations "underground" in the form of GAL (Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups) death squads.⁷² Instead of using police or military forces, Madrid authorities hired mercenaries to continue violent counterterrorism tactics against ETA. This secret attempt to root out terrorism under democracy strained ETA negotiations in the late 1980s and 1990s. On

⁶⁹ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 106.

⁷⁰ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 31.

⁷¹ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 37-38.

⁷² Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 7.

October 20th, 2011 ETA called a “definitive cessation” to its armed struggle.⁷³ In its fifty years of existence, ETA claimed at least eight hundred lives and wounded thousands of others.⁷⁴ Traces of the organization’s bloody history are still visible in Spain today. Further details of ETA’s history will be discussed in Chapter One.

Definitions

Terrorism:

Terrorism is a past and present issue. In the aftermath of 9/11, terrorism became the “prime mover in American politics—driving military strategy, national policy and legislation, and the domestic agenda.”⁷⁵ In 2013 alone, the START Global Terrorism Database reported 11,952 incidents of terrorist violence.⁷⁶ Al Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), Al Shabaab, the Caucasus Emirate, Hamas, Hezbollah, and many other terrorist organizations threaten the safety of the international community, as well as the national security of the U.S. But what defines a terrorist organization? Why do certain groups earn this distinction, while others evoke terminology such as “freedom fighters” or “criminals”? ETA’s use of murder, kidnapping, robbery, and explosives generated “a sense of terror both in the government and military circles, and among the general population,”⁷⁷ but was it a terrorist organization? Joseba Zulaika and William Douglass contend that “many acts that previously would have been labeled ‘assassination,’ ‘kidnapping,’ ‘threat,’ ‘bombing,’ etc., are nowadays classed and written about as ‘terrorism.’”⁷⁸ Furthermore, some people argue that ETA’s early violence was not terrorism—

⁷³ "Basque Group ETA Says Armed Campaign Is Over." *BBC News Europe* [London] 20 Oct. 2011: n. pag. *BBC News Europe*. Web. 10 Dec. 2014.

⁷⁴ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 4.

⁷⁵ Joseba Zulaika, and William A. Douglass. "The Terrorist Subject: Terrorism Studies and the Absent Subjectivity." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1.1 (2008): 27-36. 28. Web.

⁷⁶ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Sept.-Oct. 2014.

⁷⁷ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 52.

⁷⁸ Joseba Zulaika, and William A. Douglass. *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism*. New York: Routledge, 1996. 23. Print.

as there were no conceivable political alternatives to armed struggle under the Francoist regime. Others disagree, citing ETA's violent actions as unnecessary and "universally repugnant."⁷⁹ Even the American population has equally divided opinions. When the U.S. granted aid to Spain's anti-ETA efforts in 2002, 51% of Americans were opposed.⁸⁰ Clearly, the lines are blurry.

Scholars ardently "disagree on how to define terrorism,"⁸¹ and this study is unlikely to resolve the hotly contested topic. For the purposes of this paper, "terrorism" will be classified according to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) definition. The FBI defines "terrorism" as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives."⁸² Given ETA's socio-political goals, illegal actions, and consciously violent attacks against the federal government and civilians, the organization qualifies as a terrorist group.

But academic definitions aside, ETA was described as a "terrorist organization"⁸³ by the Spanish media during its active years. The prevalence and consistency of the term suggests a widespread, de facto classification of ETA among the Spanish populace. Although scholars can debate the proper "categorization" of ETA, it was Basque and Spanish public perception of the organization that mattered. Perception gave ETA its power—and perception guided counterterrorism policy decisions. If the Basque and Spanish people deemed ETA a terrorist

⁷⁹ Alex Poteliakhoff, Jos Weerts, and Margaret De Leeuw-Korthals Althes. "Terrorism: Causes and Prevention." *Medicine and War* 4.4 (1988): n. pag. 227. Print.

⁸⁰ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 52.

⁸¹ Harmonie Toros. "Terrorists, Scholars and Ordinary People: Confronting Terrorism Studies with Field Experiences." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1.2 (2008): n. pag. 279. Print.

⁸² "What We Investigate." *FBI*. FBI, 08 May 2013. Web. 10 Dec. 2014.

⁸³ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 9. Print.

group, then the organization was somehow fulfilling this “taboo”⁸⁴ label. In addition, the larger context of European terrorist movements in the 1970s likely encouraged the public to categorize ETA as a “terrorist” group. ETA maintained similar goals and tactics as other politically violence groups, including the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Baader Meinhoff, the Weather Underground, and the Red Brigades. Since the international community had already deemed these covert organizations “terrorist” groups, it seemed natural to define ETA likewise.

Political Violence:

Scholars dispute the definition of political violence with equal fervor. Some scholars argue there is no distinction between terrorism and political violence. Others contend the opposite is true. American historian Martin A. Miller defines political violence broadly as “the use of violence for political reasons.”⁸⁵ He asserts terrorism is simply a genre of political violence, which also includes the sub-groups of “war, genocide and ethnic cleansing.”⁸⁶ While not all political violence can be considered terrorism, all terrorism fits into the larger category of political violence. Unlike other forms of political violence, terrorism employees fear to generate insecurity in civilian society. For instance, blowing up a bomb in a shopping mall deliberately terrorizes noncombatants. If the perpetrators staged the attack for political reasons, the bombing can be considered terrorism. In contrast, a military coup also utilizes violence for political reasons, but the government overhaul does not necessarily aim to provoke fear in the civilian population. For the purposes of consistency, I will apply Martin’s definition to this research. However, given that ETA fulfills both definitions (terrorism and political violence), either term may apply to the Basque group in the course of this project.

⁸⁴ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. x.

⁸⁵ Martin A. Miller. *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013. 1. Print.

⁸⁶ Miller. *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*. 1.

Torture:

It is nearly impossible to define torture. As discussed later in this research, a given entity may define torture differently depending on the circumstance, the threat, the law, the public, and a host of other factors. Many modern-day countries are guilty of modifying the definition of “torture,” or referring to torture methods as “advanced interrogation tactics,” to appease civilian discontent. Frustratingly, it is also nearly impossible to miss torture. The practice itself is blatantly obvious when witnessed. Since this research deals heavily with the concept of torture, I will do my best to clarify the term up front. According to Australian psychologists Werner G.K. Stritzke and Stephan Lewandowsky, torture aims “to instill in the victim an overwhelming sense of debility, dependency, and dread.”⁸⁷ Although the exact methods vary, the objective of torture is to inflict pain on the victim—either physical or mental. Common torture practices include “waterboarding, beating, electrocuting, burning, intimidating with dogs, stripping prisoners naked, and forcing them to perform or mimic sexual acts.”⁸⁸ All of these acts, as well as any other practice that intends to inflict pain, will be considered torture in this paper.

“Hardline” Counterterrorism Tactics:

For the purposes of this paper, “hardline” counterterrorism tactics will include torture, secret arrest, and assassination. All three methods are common to law enforcement policies worldwide, and all three played a crucial role in Spain’s counterterrorism efforts against ETA from 1959-1987. I am choosing to separate these concepts from other anti-terrorism actions because governments often debate the morality and legality of these approaches. The controversial nature of these particular counterterrorism policies fundamentally impacted Spain in January and February 1981.

⁸⁷ Stritzke and Lewandowsky. *Terrorism and Torture*. 2-3.

⁸⁸ Stritzke and Lewandowsky. *Terrorism and Torture*. 2-3.

Methodology

The focus of this paper is January and February of 1981. Although important events occurred before and after this year, 1981 represents a climactic moment in the relationship between terrorism and democracy in post-Franco Spain. This research predominantly draws upon the qualitative and quantitative analysis of two original-text Spanish newspapers. The first, *La Gaceta del Norte*, was collected in August 2014 at the *Biblioteca Municipal* in the Basque city of Bilbao. The second, *ABC*, was acquired in August 2014 at the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* in the Spanish capital city of Madrid. Featured opinion pieces, interviews, photographs, and article topics can offer insight into a population's general viewpoint on various subjects. Furthermore, terrorist activities both manipulate and rely upon public opinion, making them a prevalent media subject. According to Zulaika and Douglass, "there is obvious power in the printed work or projected image."⁸⁹ Covert groups derive their influence from the "slippery / phantom quality"⁹⁰ that media assign to them. However, terrorists also depend on romanticized media portrayals to depict them as heroes, soldiers, or martyrs. Although media is not necessarily representative of an entire population's opinion, it certainly illustrates some of the ways in which society and individuals are thinking about and addressing issues of terrorism.

Consequently, this study qualitatively and quantitatively examined hundreds of articles from *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* from January 1st to February 23rd, 1981. I selected these particular dates for two reasons. First, this two-month span included media coverage of the major events of early 1981, including Ryan's kidnapping and execution, Izaguirre's capture and murder, Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez's resignation, and the February 23rd coup-attempt. Although Ryan was not kidnapped until January 29th, newspaper articles from early January

⁸⁹ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 10.

⁹⁰ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 14.

provided media perspectives on ETA prior to the pivotal events of this research. The second reason is purely logistical. It seemed wise to maintain the uniformity of the newspaper dates collected for comparative purposes. In addition, it was unclear which days and articles would be particularly useful at that point in the research.

To effectively gauge the relevance of the Ryan and Izaguirre murders according to the Basque and Madrid media, I constructed a series of quantitative analysis measures. The number of newspaper articles pertaining to ETA, Ryan, and Izaguirre were tallied, and a series of comparative charts and graphs were produced to visualize the tally results. In addition, the positive, neutral, and negative word choices referring to ETA were recorded. Again, graphs were generated to aid visualization of the findings. Finally, the qualitative characteristics of the newspaper articles were carefully reviewed, and important events, dates, and quotes were integrated into this project. The detailed criteria and conclusions of this newspaper analysis will be presented in Chapters Two and Three.

This study compared and contrasted the results of this research with existing secondary and primary source literature on the subject. Books on the origins of Basque Nationalism, the Spanish Civil War, Franco's regime, ETA, the Spanish transition to democracy, and GAL formed the historical framework for the project. A collection of scholarly journals on political violence contextualized ETA in relation to other terrorist movements, introduced global counterterrorism strategies, and presented deradicalization trends. The START Global Terrorism Database provided statistics and details of 2,027 ETA attacks from 1970 to 2010.⁹¹ Primary source research included a careful analysis of thirty-five translated testimonies of individuals who left ETA, and a qualitative review of newspaper articles from San Sebastian's *Egin* and Vitoria's *El Correo Español*. In addition, several original-text memoirs provided personal insight

⁹¹ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Sept.-Oct. 2014.

into *etarra* motivations. Unfortunately the memoirs focus on the late 1980s, placing them outside the immediate scope of this study. However, these individual accounts describe the political climate of Spain in the aftermath of 1981.

Historiography

Several texts were instrumental in the development of this project. Goldie Shabad and Jose Llera Ramo's chapter "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism in Spain" gave a general overview of ETA's origins, history, leadership, structure, and methods from 1959 to 1989. According to the authors, the persistence of ETA violence post-1975 was a product of Spain's "culture of violence."⁹² A climate of cultural repression, perceived threat, and symbolic violence fueled local support of Basque separatist violence. Shabad and Ramo's findings positively correlate with the results of this study. For decades a "culture of violence" pervaded Basque society. Thousands of Basques lost loved ones in the Civil War, watched Franco's regime brutally execute neighbors for speaking *Euskera*, or witnessed friends die in ETA's ranks. Those who personally experienced Franco's oppression often excused ETA's armed struggle. However, 1981 marked a turning point in public perception. Once popular support of ETA decreased in the wake of Ryan's murder (detailed in Chapter Two), the movement could not sustain its previous levels of violence. In their book, *Terror and Taboo*, Joseba Zulaika and William A. Douglass further stress the necessity of public sympathy in sustaining politically violent groups. Ethno-nationalist terrorist organizations (such as ETA and the Provisional IRA) tend to exhibit the most staying-power because their self-constructed "mysticism" can provide an ideological justification for violence.⁹³ Zulaika and Douglass's findings mirror the results of this research. ETA's strength sprung from its appearance as the

⁹² Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 422.

⁹³ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 20.

“self-styled guardians and avenging angels”⁹⁴ of Basque freedom. But Ryan’s assassination destroyed ETA’s facade of heroism, forcing ETA to reconsider its strategy.

By using hardline counterterrorism policies in a democratic system, the Spanish government debilitated its own credibility. Tom Parker’s article “Fighting an Antaeon Enemy: How Democratic States Unintentionally Sustain the Terrorist Movements They Oppose,” and Paddy Woodworth’s book *Dirty War, Clean Hands: ETA, the Gal and Spanish Democracy* augment this claim. According to Parker, democracies facilitate the terrorism they oppose by undermining their own principles through quasi-authoritarian crackdowns. He argues that politically violent groups draw strength from their environment. When democracies indulge violent state backlash, they incite the mass hysteria necessary for terror to flourish.⁹⁵ Woodworth’s investigation of the covert Spanish organization known as GAL further demonstrates the shortcomings of pro-state violence under a democracy. A glorified secret police, GAL carried out illegal activities (i.e. torture, assassination, arrest without due process) against suspected ETA members from 1983-1987. However, while the group was formalized in 1983, Woodworth advises these government-sanctioned incidents were occurring well before that.⁹⁶ This study’s analysis of Izaguirre’s murder corresponds with Woodworth’s research. Desperate to foil ETA violence, Spanish law enforcement authorities resorted to torture. Izaguirre became the first visible victim. His death, which blatantly contradicted Spain’s new democratic laws, triggered a hostile Basque and Spanish public response.

⁹⁴ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 20.

⁹⁵ Parker. “Fighting an Antaeon Enemy.” 155.

⁹⁶ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 46.

The Basque People

A Sacred Place

The Basques are an ancient people who settled in the territory straddling modern day Spain and France.⁹⁷ Four of the seven Basque Provinces are located in Spain, including Navarra (*Nafaroa*), Guipúzcoa (*Gipuzkoa*), Vizcaya (*Bizkaia*) and Alava (*Araba*). The Basque Country is roughly the size of New Jersey. It encompasses a compact 8,218 square miles, but hosts three million inhabitants.⁹⁸ Although some archeologists estimate the Basques have occupied this region for over 40,000 years,⁹⁹ the Basque people did not enter recorded history until approximately 218 BC.¹⁰⁰ Documented interactions with the Celts, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, Moors, and Franks¹⁰¹ provide historians with a glimpse into ancient Basque society. In the third century BC, the Basques “fought to preserve their land, language, and culture against a succession of invaders,”¹⁰² including the Arab and Germanic peoples. Remarkably, the resilient populace managed to withstand the “great invasions”¹⁰³ and retain their unique territory and identity. Not surprisingly, the trend of invasion continued. The Romans,¹⁰⁴ Charlemagne,¹⁰⁵ and later Napoleon¹⁰⁶ all posed a threat to Basque existence.

Dominated by “tough green mountains, rocky crests”¹⁰⁷ and “a cobalt sea,”¹⁰⁸ Basqueland is treacherously beautiful. According to Mark Kurlansky, the Basque Country appears “too green

⁹⁷ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 6.

⁹⁸ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 6.

⁹⁹ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 6.

¹⁰⁰ Mark Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. New York: Walker, 1999. 19. Print.

¹⁰¹ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 6-7.

¹⁰² Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 6.

¹⁰³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 26.

¹⁰⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 30.

¹⁰⁵ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 41.

¹⁰⁶ Lawrence John Tone. *The Fatal Knot: The Guerrilla War in Navarre and the Defeat of Napoleon in Spain*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 1994. 4. Print.

¹⁰⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 18.

¹⁰⁸ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 19.

to be Spain and too rugged to be France.”¹⁰⁹ The snowcapped Pyrenees Mountains give the “illusion of alpine scale”¹¹⁰ and “impenetrable”¹¹¹ grandness. In reality the highest point is only 5,200 feet, shorter than the tallest Adirondack Mountain.¹¹² However, the steepness and “jagged protrusion of rocks”¹¹³ have intimidated invaders for centuries. During Napoleon Bonaparte’s 1808 invasion of Spain, the Pyrenees limited the number of French roads “practicable for large armies”¹¹⁴ The unforgiving Northern terrain also denied Napoleon “immediate control of the coast”¹¹⁵ and ultimately trapped him on the plains of Castile, thwarting French success. In addition to the challenging terrain, Basqueland’s absence of readily-available resources afflicted potential conquerors. While Basque foliage is a lush dark green, the land is “not particularly fertile.”¹¹⁶ Frequent rainfall makes farming possible, but the hilly topography impedes modern farming equipment.¹¹⁷ As a result, successful agriculture demands the “hard labour”¹¹⁸ of individuals.

Basque Terrain:
Personal Photo, Urkiola
National Park August
2014



¹⁰⁹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 28.

¹¹⁰ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 28.

¹¹¹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 28.

¹¹² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 29.

¹¹³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 28.

¹¹⁴ Charles J. Esdaile. *Fighting Napoleon: Guerrillas, Bandits and Adventurers in Spain, 1808-1814*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004. 29. Print.

¹¹⁵ Esdaile. *Fighting Napoleon*. 29.

¹¹⁶ Paddy Woodworth. *The Basque Country: A Cultural History*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. 4. Print.

¹¹⁷ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 4.

¹¹⁸ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 4.

Due to their close proximity to the coast, the Basques have always enjoyed a rich “maritime history.”¹¹⁹ In the seventh and eighth centuries, the Basque Country produced the first commercial whale hunters.¹²⁰ By the sixteenth century, Basque “maritime skill and engineering innovations”¹²¹ manufactured the best “fishing, whaling, merchant, and warships”¹²² the world had ever seen. The Basques even stake a claim in the “discovery” of the Americas. When Cristóbal Colón [Christopher Columbus] sailed to the New World in 1492, his fleet was built and crewed by Basques.¹²³ And when Ferdinand Magellan died on his famous voyage to circumnavigate the globe, a Basque sailor named Juan Sebastián de Elcano assumed command in his stead.¹²⁴ Later, the Basque Country exported vast quantities of steel and other shipbuilding materials to the European Continent.¹²⁵ These industrial imports propelled Great Britain’s rise as the premier 19th century sea power. San Sebastián, and many other Basque coastal towns, continue to promulgate the Basque maritime tradition today.

A Forbidden Tongue

The Basques speak the oldest known living European language.¹²⁶ A consistent source of bewilderment for historians, linguists, and anthropologists, the Basque language appears to pre-date the Indo-European invasion and perhaps the Bronze Age.¹²⁷ Linguistically distinct from all other tongues, Euskera has “often been dismissed as an impossible language.”¹²⁸ To English and Spanish speakers alike, the frequency of “k” and “x” letters appears daunting. Although many

¹¹⁹ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 4.

¹²⁰ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 56.

¹²¹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 56.

¹²² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 56.

¹²³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 61.

¹²⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 63.

¹²⁵ San Sebastián: San Telmo Museum, August 2014. Exhibit.

¹²⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 23.

¹²⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 23.

¹²⁸ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 22.

non-Basques associate Euskera with harsh and staccato sounds, the language is surprisingly soft and smooth. The “x” is pronounced as a “ch”, so “house” or *etxea* becomes “et-CHAY-a.”¹²⁹ During Franco’s regime, Euskera was outlawed in favor of Castellano (or what most English speakers acknowledge as “Spanish”). This thirty-six year period of fascist oppression nearly eradicated Euskera from modern history. The “secret tongue”¹³⁰ was spoken quietly behind closed doors. Parents taught Basque children the language of their ancestors in secret, fearful of imprisonment or death. The language continued to struggle for existence, until a tiny group of university students began meeting covertly in 1952 to speak Euskera.¹³¹ Idealistic youth, fervent political discussions, and childhood memories of repression slowly radicalized the group. On July 31st, 1959 at the University of Deusto in Bilbao, ETA was born.¹³² Today, some Basques credit ETA with saving Euskera. Others believe the language would have survived regardless. In any event, the Basques identify very strongly with their language. There is no word for “Basque Country” in Euskera. To these ancient people, the Basque territory is simply *Euskal Herria*—or “Land of the Euskera Speakers.”¹³³

A Rare Culture

Unlike most civilizations, the ancient Basques had a matriarchal society. Because Basque men were habitually preoccupied with war, “the female line of Basques inherited property and titles.”¹³⁴ Consequently, Basque women possessed a great deal of societal power. Women were also responsible for farming the land. In most agrarian societies “the control of

¹²⁹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 22.

¹³⁰ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 1.

¹³¹ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 16.

¹³² Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 18.

¹³³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 19.

¹³⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 36.

draft animals and tillage [was] an important factor in man's dominance of women,"¹³⁵ but Basque women didn't face this "labor disadvantage."¹³⁶ Their nontraditional role as farmers allowed agricultural production to continue, despite a steady stream of debilitating wars.¹³⁷ In addition, this arrangement encouraged guerilla warfare—as young men could leave home urgently without suffering economic repercussions.¹³⁸ Although the Basque Country no longer adheres to this early structure, Basque women retain a large degree of influence in their homes. The wife and mother "administers things, pays the bills, disciplines the children, and conducts the general business of the home."¹³⁹

The Basque house, or *etxea*, is considered the most fundamental building block of Basque society. *Etxeas* are analogous with clans. An *etxea* begins as a physical place, but it eventually pervades time and space. Each *etxea* has a name, a founder, a family tomb, and an *etxekandere* [spiritual head]. The *etxekandere* is a respected woman "who looks after blessings and prayers for all house members wherever they are, living or dead."¹⁴⁰ Long after the physical structure is gone, Basques still introduce themselves by the name of their home—their *etxea*. For all Basques, *izena duen guzia omen da* [That which has a name exists].¹⁴¹

Today, the majority of Basques are devout Catholics. But long before Christianity spread through Europe, the Basques worshipped their own gods. The original Basque religion had strong ties to nature. Basques prayed to "sun gods, moon gods, rock gods, tree gods, mountain

¹³⁵ John Lawrence Tone. *The Fatal Knot: The Guerrilla War in Navarre and the Defeat of Napoleon in Spain*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 1994. 29. Print.

¹³⁶ Tone. *The Fatal Knot*. 29.

¹³⁷ Tone. *The Fatal Knot*. 29.

¹³⁸ Tone. *The Fatal Knot*. 29.

¹³⁹ Robert P. Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. Reno, NV: U of Nevada, 1979. 126. Print.

¹⁴⁰ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 6.

¹⁴¹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 7.

gods”¹⁴² and many other earthly spirits. While most Basque gods assumed animalistic forms, others resembled humans. And like the ancient Greeks, it was not uncommon for different villages to worship different spirits.¹⁴³ However, Basque culture contains one symbol of religious continuity. Most Basque valleys praised the sun as the “eye of God,”¹⁴⁴ leading anthropologists to associate the Basque people with sun worship. The sun was also a prominent feature of Basque grave markers. Gravestones from the first century B.C. depict circular images of the rising sun. Over time these sun engravings morphed into the “Basque cross,”¹⁴⁵ which illustrates the encircled intersection of four curved spokes. The icon’s cross-like appearance is a coincidence. According to Kurlansky, the “Basque cross” predates Christianity.¹⁴⁶ But the onset of Catholicism did not extinguish the Basque sun’s emblematic significance. Instead, the image of a “sun with its rays stretching toward a circular border”¹⁴⁷ became the official symbol of the Jesuit religious order. The celebrated St. Ignatius of Loyola was born into an aristocratic Basque family in 1491. After an early life of political intrigue, court romance, vain amusements, and near-death experiences, the young Ignatius committed himself to God. On August 15th, 1534 the former “handsome young courtier”¹⁴⁸ founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuit religious order) with seven followers. The Jesuits have 25,000 present day members, making them the largest Catholic order.¹⁴⁹ Forever enshrined in controversy and mysticism, St. Ignatius is considered the most famous Basque in history.

¹⁴² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 80.

¹⁴³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 80.

¹⁴⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 80.

¹⁴⁵ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 80.

¹⁴⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 80.

¹⁴⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 80.

¹⁴⁸ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 76.

¹⁴⁹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 79.

In addition to celebrating the Catholic tradition, the Basque people revere seafood, tough sports, *Rioja* wine, singing, Iberian ham, and tight-knit families. Basque sports celebrate the physical strength required to thrive in steep foothills of the Pyrenees. *Harri-jasotze*, or rock-lifting,¹⁵⁰ is a prime example. Basque men exhibit their brawniness by hefting gigantic boulders to their shoulders. Log-cutting, hay-mowing, wagon-lifting, and sheep-fighting, regattas, and tug-of-war also constitute “‘primitive’ Basque folk-sports.”¹⁵¹ As suggested by their names, many Basque sports originated in agricultural practices. Each *herri kirolak*, or rural sport, illustrates the prized masculine qualities of strength, resilience, and boldness. Pinned against both coast and mountain range, plagued with inadequate resources and fleeting alliances, the ancient Basques relied upon sheer tenacity to survive. Particularly indicative of Basque bravado is the ancient game of *pilota*, or *pelota* in Spanish. Reminiscent of modern day racquetball or squash, *pilota* is usually played on a two-walled court with two teams of two players each. One side will serve the ball against the end wall, striking the barrier between a demarcated low and high line. The opposing side must return the rebounding ball before it hits the ground more than once. Although *pilota* can be played using bats or rackets, bare-handed *pilota* appeals to the “old-fashioned machismo”¹⁵² of *Euskal Herria*. The audience can hear the smack of the 104-107 gram ball¹⁵³ against the athletes’ palms, as Basque men showcase their ambidextrous dexterity.

¹⁵⁰ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 2.

¹⁵¹ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 4.

¹⁵² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 332.

¹⁵³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 335.



Pilota Tournament: Personal Photo, San Sebastián August 2014

Basque cuisine is equally intertwined with the geography of *Euskal Herria*. A sea-faring people by nature, the Basques enjoy plentiful seafood on their coastal towns. Sea bream (*bixigu*), spider crab (*txangurro*), baby eel (*txitxardin*), spring anchovies (*antxoa*), small squid (*txipiron*), and sardines (*sardina*) compose especially popular Basque dishes.¹⁵⁴ In the seventh and eighth centuries, Basque whale became a coveted delicacy.¹⁵⁵ Forbidden from consuming red meat on holy days, but permitted to eat sea creatures, Europeans eagerly flocked to the Basque whale market. Commercial whalers sold lean cuts fresh or salted, and cured fattier parts like bacon.¹⁵⁶ Tender whale tongue was particularly desired among government officials, the Church, and European royalty.¹⁵⁷ Today, coastal Basque restaurants feature mainstream cod, sea bass, hake, salmon, mussels, and scallops. Cooked dishes are doused generously in olive oil, and garnished with white asparagus, spicy Espelette peppers, grilled zucchini, and baked bread. Basques are also noted for their *pintxos*, or “finger foods”. *Pintxos* are tiny sandwiches, consisting of bread, egg, cheese, and ham or seafood. Generally prepared in the morning, *pintxos* are displayed on bar counters for the remainder of the day, allowing guests to browse the selection. Unlike

¹⁵⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 45-46.

¹⁵⁵ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 48.

¹⁵⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 49.

¹⁵⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 49.

Spanish *tapas*, *pintxos* are “taken” not “ordered”. Following the customary rules of Basque hospitality, customers grab and eat their *pintxos* before paying. Tabs are on the honors system, silverware is nonexistent, and plates are optional. Basque breakfasts are small, typically consisting of a *pinxto* or Spanish tortilla. Beer, *cafe con leche*, and sangria are standard morning beverages. Similar to central and southern Spain, the Basque Country maintains the midday break of *siesta* from 4:00-6:00 pm. During *siesta*, workers return to their homes to enjoy the largest meal of the day. Analogous with American “dinner”, the *siesta* meal usually features bread, meat, vegetables, and red wine from the *Rioja* region of Basqueland. At 6:00 pm businesses, libraries, stores, and bars reopen for the evening. Dinner is uncommon. Most Basques snack on *pintxos* and sangria around 10:00 or 11:00 pm before retiring for the night.

Chapter One: The Roots of Basque Nationalism

The tree was young. Already tinged with the reddish-gold hue of approaching autumn, the oak's leaves ruffled softly in the rain. Slender branches swayed precariously, barely anchored to the tree's narrow trunk. Ceremoniously planted upon the highest hill in sight, the Oak Tree of Guernica (*Gernikako Arbola*) proudly overlooked the city below. A Romanesque assembly hall stood adjacent to the oak, casting a majestic air on the scene. As I gazed out on the tiny courtyard, a small group of French tourists congregated around the oak's ornate iron fence. Excited murmurs drifted from their direction, cameras buzzing anachronistically beside the stoic and peaceful "Basque Freedom Tree."¹⁵⁸ Vibrant against its stone encirclements, the tree continued its protective watch over *Euskal Herria*. It wasn't alone. Several hundred feet past the courtyard stood another tree. Now robbed of life, the oak was gnarled and discolored. Its pale bark gleamed in the falling dusk. I eyed the dead tree uneasily, strangely hesitant to move closer. Sheltered by a marble gazebo, the former Oak Tree of Guernica resembled a mausoleum. Planted in 1742, the oak had survived 150 years.¹⁵⁹ After its death in 1892, the "old tree's" trunk was preserved in the gardens of Guernica, a silent observer to the turmoil of the 20th century.

Hailed as the undying symbol of *Euskal Herria*, the Oak Tree of Guernica represents freedom, honor, democracy and peace to the Basque people. Each of the four oaks in recorded history descended from the original specimen, a tree that thrived for 450 years.¹⁶⁰ Named for this cherished oak, the Basque national hymn "*Gernikako Arbola*" opens with "O tree of Guernica / O symbol blessed by God."¹⁶¹ For thousands of the years, the tree has witnessed

¹⁵⁸ Steve Tallantyre. "'Basque Freedom Tree' Declared Dead." *The Local ES* [Spain] 15 Jan. 2015: n. Print.

¹⁵⁹ Tallantyre. "'Basque Freedom Tree' Declared Dead."

¹⁶⁰ Tallantyre. "'Basque Freedom Tree' Declared Dead."

¹⁶¹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 161.

Basque coronations, speeches, assembly meetings, elections, trials, and celebrations.¹⁶² Long before the Oak Tree of Guernica was recognized as the emblematic heart of Basque governance, ancient assemblies met beneath oak trees across Vizcaya.¹⁶³ While the origins of the practice are unknown, it seems that all male landowners were represented in these gatherings.¹⁶⁴ Signal fires and horns summoned the residents, calling the political process into action.¹⁶⁵ Gradually, the edge of Guernica became the most prominent assembly site. Once a “powerful provincial parliament”¹⁶⁶ was established at the location, the Oak Tree of Guernica was immortalized.

The tree did not lose its relevance, despite Basqueland’s transition from an early-Christian democracy to feudalism. During the Middle Ages, each Lord of Vizcaya pledged to uphold Basque liberties beneath the oak tree’s branches. Even when Basque leaders submitted to a centralized Spain, every Castilian king was obligated to pay homage at Guernica. These Spanish monarchs swore continued acceptance of Basque freedoms at the tree for seven centuries,¹⁶⁷ bolstering the tradition of an independent *Euskal Herria*. The unwritten laws, known as the *Fueros*, granted the Basque Provinces significant regional autonomy. Rights included habeas corpus, protection from torture, and exemption from mandatory military service. In addition, the *Fueros* accepted Navarra as a “nominal kingdom.”¹⁶⁸ The province could review royal decrees, control customs, collect taxes, and manage financial affairs.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶² Guernica: Biscayan Assembly House, August 2014. Exhibit.

¹⁶³ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 58.

¹⁶⁴ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 58.

¹⁶⁵ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 58.

¹⁶⁶ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 58.

¹⁶⁷ Woodworth. *The Basque Country*. 59.

¹⁶⁸ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 152.

¹⁶⁹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 152-158.

The Carlist Wars

In 1833 Spanish King Ferdinand VII died without a male heir. His death prompted a succession crisis between two potential monarchs, plunging Spanish society into a series of atrocity-ridden civil wars. Known as the Carlist Wars, the conflicts pitched Spanish and Basque conservatives against an increasingly-liberal monarchy. Princess Isabella II, the dead King's daughter and designated heir, vied for a "reformist, progressive"¹⁷⁰ Spain. She envisioned a constitutional government with an emphasis on secular republicanism, similar to the newly christened French Republic.¹⁷¹ Many Basque clergy, landowners, and peasants hotly contested Isabella's 19th century democratic vision. Her secular ideals threatened the supremacy of the Catholic Church, motivating many Basques to reject Isabella's platform as godless and immoral. Furthermore, the implementation of a republican structure endangered the Basque *Fueros*. A constitutional monarchy could not promote "equality" for all Spanish citizens, while simultaneously conserving Basque political privileges. Consequently, many Basques rallied to Isabella's rival, the late King's brother Carlos. A fervent absolute-monarchist, Carlos supported a powerful Church, the "home rule"¹⁷² of peripheral nations (such as *Euskal Herria*), the special interests of "brave and hardworking"¹⁷³ peasants, and a return to the romanticized feudalistic society of the past. Carlos's supporters, known as Carlists, included the majority of Vizcaya, Alava, Guipúzcoa, and Navarra.¹⁷⁴

The First Carlist War lasted from 1833 to 1839.¹⁷⁵ Isabella's royal army quickly defeated Carlos's forces, but the conflict failed to produce a lasting peace. Tensions mounted between the

¹⁷⁰ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 145.

¹⁷¹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 145.

¹⁷² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 144.

¹⁷³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 145.

¹⁷⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 148.

¹⁷⁵ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 148.

two sides again in the 1840s, when Basque Carlist veterans began carrying out violent attacks against Northern liberals. In retaliation, Isabella formed a national police force in 1844.¹⁷⁶ Known as the Civil Guard (*Guardia Civil*), the new law enforcement organization later became ETA's infamous opponent. The Second Carlist War broke out in 1872,¹⁷⁷ following the collapse of Isabella's idealistic "democratic monarchy"¹⁷⁸ and the proclamation of a formal Spanish Republic. Enraged at the even more "radical, anticlerical regime,"¹⁷⁹ the Carlists rallied behind a second challenger, Carlos VII. Again, the Carlists failed to procure the necessary support to achieve military victory. But although the Basque Provinces and other Carlos-supporters suffered a chain of debilitating defeats, the fledgling Spanish Republic was too weak and fragmented to solidify victory. Sensing dissension between moderate and conservative liberals of the Spanish Republic, a new republican figurehead emerged. Alfonso XII, son of Isabella II, united the liberals behind a "restoration monarchy."¹⁸⁰ In 1876 a new Spanish Constitution was ratified, abolishing the *Fueros* and signifying an end to the war. The Carlist defeat marked a "triumph for Spanish liberalism,"¹⁸¹ and an official end to Castilian oaths beneath the Oak Tree of Guernica.

¹⁷⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 152.

¹⁷⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 159.

¹⁷⁸ Cameron Watson. *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence: The Ideological and Intellectual Origins of ETA*. Reno, NV: Center for Basque Studies, U of Nevada, Reno, 2007. 37. Print.

¹⁷⁹ Watson. *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*. 37.

¹⁸⁰ Watson. *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*. 37.

¹⁸¹ Watson. *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*. 37.



The 'Old Tree:' Personal Photo, Guernica August 2014



The Oak Tree of Guernica: Personal Photo, Guernica August 2014
*Tree died in January 2015, will be replaced in February

A Restored Monarchy

The tragic Carlist Wars left Spain drained and devastated. Shell-shocked by war, economic ruin, and political instability, the nation reverted to its pre-republic tendencies. Alfonso XII assumed the throne, the oligarchy returned to positions of wealth and political power, and liberal “reform was abandoned in return for social peace.”¹⁸² Unfortunately, starvation, labor exploitation, and “brutal social injustices”¹⁸³ characterized Spain in the 1890s and early 20th century. The famished Spanish proletariat rebelled in a series of violent risings, crop burnings, and worker strikes. Their poorly organized rebellions consistently failed, and the “easily defeated revolutionary outbursts began to alternate with periods of apathy.”¹⁸⁴ Many Basques were equally dissatisfied with the restored monarchy. Although the Spanish Crown had been reinstated, the *Fueros* had not. In addition, government-sponsored industrialism in the Basque Country was upsetting the region’s demographics. As poverty spread across Spain,

¹⁸² Paul Preston. *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007. 22. Print.

¹⁸³ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 25.

¹⁸⁴ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 25.

waves of poor Spanish immigrants flooded into *Euskal Herria* in search for jobs in iron and steel foundries. The influx of starving workers brought a host of socio-economic problems to the Basque Country, including workplace competition, crowded slums, and higher disease rates.

Enough with Kings: The Second Spanish Republic

A weak monarch, discontent among privilege-seeking Spanish and Basques conservatives, and economic hardship brought the restoration monarchy crashing down in the early 20th century. On September 23rd, 1923 conservative General Miguel Primo de Rivera seized power in a military coup d'état against the Spanish government. King Alfonso XIII, who ruled from 1902-1931, became a figurehead. His presence in the Spanish government merely legitimized Rivera's rule, while the general controlled all State decisions. Years later, the Spanish middle classes revered Rivera's authoritarian regime as "a golden age."¹⁸⁵ But at the time, many Spanish and Basques conservatives viewed Rivera's emphasis on economic, political, and social reform as liberal and conciliatory to republicans. The dictator's inflation-ridden public spending, attempts to standardize merit-based military promotions, and introduction of labor committees to protect workers' rights alienated industrialists, army members, and landowners. When Primo de Rivera lost the visible support of the Spanish army in 1930, the general was forced to resign. Desperate to assuage the political instability, King Alfonso XIII appointed General Dámaso Berenguer to fill Spain's power vacuum.

Berenguer's "mild dictatorship floundered,"¹⁸⁶ as he attempted to appease both conservative and liberal viewpoints. In February 1931, Berenguer resigned under "mounting pressure for democratization and the abolition of the monarchy."¹⁸⁷ On April 12th, 1931 Spain staged municipal elections. For the first time in modern history, the citizens of Spain could

¹⁸⁵ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 35.

¹⁸⁶ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 36.

¹⁸⁷ Carsten Humlebæk. *Spain: Inventing the Nation*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Print.

choose their own form of government in a referendum. To the outrage of conservatives, the Republicans claimed “victory in 41 or the 50 provincial capitals.”¹⁸⁸ Authorities declared the Second Spanish Republic on April 14th, and a provisional democratic government transitioned to power peacefully. The announcement was “welcomed by celebrations in the streets, amid a holiday atmosphere that combined revolutionary hopes with a desire for reform.”¹⁸⁹

Disillusioned with the Spanish people’s lack of loyalty, King Alfonso XIII fled the country that night. His farewell note read “the elections held last Sunday clearly show me that I do not have the love of my people today.”¹⁹⁰ The Spanish monarchy would not regain its political power until 1975, nearly three and a half decades later.

“They Shall Not Pass:” The Spanish Civil War

The peaceful atmosphere of the Second Spanish Republic did not last. Certain segments of the population, such as members of the poor and working classes, ardently supported a democratic Spain. But other citizens resisted the restructuring of traditional society. Not surprisingly, strict social hierarchies prevented the Republic from receiving the “unanimous support of all Spaniards.”¹⁹¹ Under the new republican system, Spain’s poverty-stricken masses appealed for higher salaries, a redistribution of aristocratic lands, legal protections for workers, and a public education system.¹⁹² These demands “signified a threat to the most privileged members of society and raised inordinate hopes among the most humble,”¹⁹³ because they challenged the existing power structure. Spain’s “old order” placed the Catholic Church, the armed forces, and the aristocracy above the common people. With the termination of the feudal

¹⁸⁸ Julián Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013. 6. Print.

¹⁸⁹ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 6.

¹⁹⁰ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 6.

¹⁹¹ Pedro M. Muñoz, and Marcelino C. Marcos. *España: Ayer Y Hoy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005. 142. Print.

¹⁹² Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 6.

¹⁹³ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 38.

system, these influential institutions could not maintain their political authority. Tensions over this power shift intensified into a “savage conflict over the scale of social and economic reform.”¹⁹⁴ Although the social changes liberated the proletariat from the “excessive influence”¹⁹⁵ of the Church and the Spanish army, the republicans suffered from a “lack of cohesion.”¹⁹⁶ Lacking the necessary political organization, the Republic was doomed to fail.

In October 1933 a new political entity emerged. The *Falange*, a right-wing nationalist party, envisioned the rebirth of a powerful Spain under fascist rule. Led by the aristocratic José Primo de Rivera, the *Falange* inundated Spain’s conservative sectors with roman salutes, ritual chants, inspiring references to Spain’s Golden Age, and national pride. At *Falange* rallies, the waving flags, crowds of blue-shirted supporters, militaristic ceremonies, and unison cries of “¡Arriba España! (Upward Spain!)” evoked images of NAZI Germany. The far-right group pledged a revival of Spain’s presence on the international stage, the protection of Catholic “sanctity,” a reemphasis on traditional family life, the promotion of the pure Spanish *raza* (race),¹⁹⁷ and a masculine culture of violence. As the *Falange*’s influence expanded in 1934, “there were growing numbers of street battles between left and right.”¹⁹⁸ Unsuccessful at easing tensions through bipartisan cooperation, the Republic’s socialist elements united under the *Frente Popular* (Popular Front) coalition in February 1936. The left’s earnest attempt at consolidation produced disastrous consequences. Sensing a threat from the liberals, the right-leaning Spanish military rebelled against the republican government on July 18th, 1936. Citing

¹⁹⁴ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 38.

¹⁹⁵ Muñóz and Marcos. *España: Ayer Y Hoy*. 142.

¹⁹⁶ Muñóz and Marcos. *España: Ayer Y Hoy*. 143.

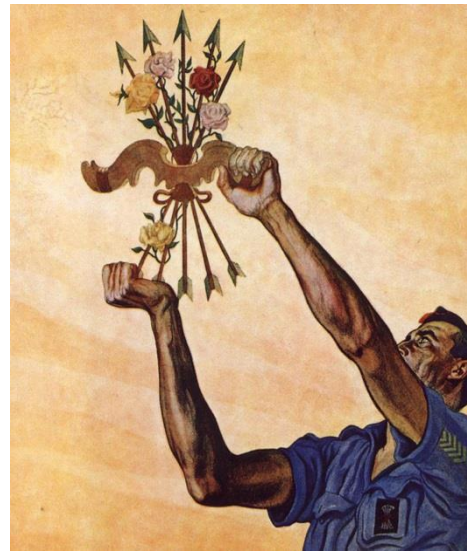
¹⁹⁷ RAZA. By Francisco Franco. Dir. José Luis Sáenz De Heredia. Cancilleria Del Consejo De La Hispanidad Ballesteros, 1942. DVD.

¹⁹⁸ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 70.

“the need to maintain order and the unity of the Fatherland”¹⁹⁹ approximately 120,000 armed soldiers marched on strategically-located cities across Spain. The act plunged Spain into war.



José Antonio Primo de Rivera and the Falange Flag



Falange Propaganda Poster: Man Hoisting Falange Symbol, the Yoke and Arrows

As Spanish historian Julián Casanova writes, “Had it not been for the military uprising in July 1936, there would not have been a civil war in Spain.”²⁰⁰ The coup attempt, organized by several army generals, did not “bring about a rapid seizure of power.”²⁰¹ However, it deepened divisions between the Spanish nationalists (those who supported the fascists) and the republicans (those who remained loyal to the Second Republic). The Church, the Spanish military, and the old aristocracy predominately sided with the nationalists. Spain’s working-classes, most Basques, Catalonia, and the democratic government joined the republican side. By the end of July 1936, the nationalists held most of Galicia, León, Old Castilla, Oviedo, Álava, and Navarra. The republican zone still controlled the principal cities and industrial centers of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Asturias. In a matter of weeks, internal fighting had ripped Spain in half. The civil war would last three long years and claim thousands of lives.

¹⁹⁹ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 25.

²⁰⁰ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 12.

²⁰¹ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 21.

Among the key figures of the July 18th, 1936 rebellion was a rising political star named Francisco Franco. At age 44, the charismatic major-general “had an ability to lead and inspire that is hard to explain.”²⁰² Battle-hardened by severe injuries in the Moroccan wars during his youth, Franco was “both ruthless and heartless, using fear as his favorite weapon.”²⁰³ In addition, the general was ardently fascist. A firm believer in a traditionalist Spain, Franco accused socialists and communists of attacking “civilization in order to replace it with barbarism.”²⁰⁴ Described as an “insecure little man”²⁰⁵ by Kurlansky, the general considered all Basque separatists to be aberrant traitors to Spanish unity. He romanticized 19th century war tactics (such as bayonet charges), despised Jews, and blamed Spain’s loss of Cuba on the United States. Above all, Franco desired a cohesive and powerful Spain. Along with three other Spanish generals, he was easily attracted to the military uprising.

In addition to possessing fervent nationalist sentiment, Franco had the resources to transform the 1936 fascist coup into reality. Under the Second Spanish Republic, Franco assumed command of Spain’s colonial Army of Africa. The outfit boasted 1,600 officers and 40,000 men, along with several expertly-trained legions comprised of criminals, outcasts, fugitives, and Moroccan mercenaries.²⁰⁶ While the army’s numbers were impressive, its devotion to “virility and violence”²⁰⁷ was nauseating. Franco’s troops were notorious for committing atrocities in Morocco, including the rape and slaughter of women and young girls. The Army of Africa was equally brutal in Spain itself. When Franco was charged with repressing a 1917

²⁰² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 193.

²⁰³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 193.

²⁰⁴ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 79.

²⁰⁵ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 193.

²⁰⁶ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 25.

²⁰⁷ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 25.

miner's strike in Asturias, his soldiers carried out "summary executions of leftists"²⁰⁸ after killing countless women and children in cold blood.

But the general's assets went beyond brute strength. A skilled flatterer, Franco managed to obtain beneficial alliances with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Drawing from a network of German businessmen living in Morocco, the general pitched the "right-wing and anti-Bolshevik"²⁰⁹ nationalist cause to Hitler on July 25th, 1936 (just days after the rebellion began). The Führer answered by dispatching "20 Junkers Ju 52 transport aircraft, six Heinkel 51 fighters, 20 anti-aircraft guns, munitions and flight and ground crew"²¹⁰ to Morocco on July 29th. Mussolini, who received a similar petition from Franco, responded in kind. Blessed with German and Italian transport aircraft, high morale among his troops, and the admiration of his fellow nationalist rebels, Franco marched north. By August 7th, 1936, the cunning general held Seville. In the words of English historian Paul Preston, "Mussolini and Hitler thus turned a *coup d'état* going wrong into a bloody and prolonged civil war."²¹¹

Franco's resourcefulness did not go unnoticed. When General José Sanjuer (the appointed head of the July 18th, 1936 military rebellion) died in a freak plane crash on July 20th, Franco's co-conspirators selected him as the "sole political and military leader"²¹² of the nationalist cause. After Franco's official installation as the nationalist leader on October 1st, 1936, the ambitious general was in line to become the *Caudillo* (supreme chief or leader) of Spain. Now, all Franco needed was decisive nationalist victory.

²⁰⁸ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 79.

²⁰⁹ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 26.

²¹⁰ Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 26.

²¹¹ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 119.

²¹² Casanova. *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War*. 25.

General Francisco Franco, *Caudillo* of Spain

General Francisco Franco Reviews the Armed Forces

In the spring of 1937, Franco's vicious campaign reached new heights. Under Franco's orders, General Emilio Mola (one of the original conspirators) gathered 40,000 troops to wage an offensive against the Basque Country, a particularly tenacious republican zone. With Mola's preparations came a chilling threat: "If submission is not immediate, I will raze all Vizcaya to the ground, beginning with the industries of war. I have the means to do so."²¹³ Unfortunately for Franco, the republican Basques were dogged guerilla fighters. Accustomed to invasion, passionately defiant, and geographically advantaged, the Basques formed an iron defense around Bilbao. As Mola's legions trekked north, the nationalist forces encountered republican booby traps on steep hills, rocky outcroppings, poor roads, and exposed valleys. Frustrated by his slow progress, Mola issued a second "warning" on April 25th, 1937. Broadcast over the republican radio station, Mola cried "Franco is about to deliver a mighty blow against which all resistance is useless. Basques! Surrender now and your lives will be spared."²¹⁴ The republicans refused.

²¹³ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 266.

²¹⁴ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 267.

On April 26th, 1937, fire rained down on Guernica. The Condor Legion, Franco's collection of German and Italian aircraft, destroyed the city in one afternoon of sustained fire-bombing. The date was deliberate. April 26th, a Monday, was an appointed market-day for the residents of Guernica. Franco knew peasants would gather in the city center to buy and sell goods, gossip, and enjoy the outdoor weather. To inflict the most civilian casualties possible, Franco waited until the marketplace was bustling under the afternoon sun. According to Basque Father Alberto Onaindia, the bombardment began at 4:40 pm and lasted until 7:45 pm. When recalling the horrific day, the priest stated "The planes descended very low, the machine-gun fire tearing up the woods and roads, in whose gutters, huddled together lay old men, women, and children... Fire enveloped the whole city. Screams of lamentation were heard everywhere, and the people, filled with terror, lifting their hands to heaven as if to implore divine protection."²¹⁵ By nightfall the city ceased to exist. The dead and wounded lay buried beneath piles of rubble. Fire crackled in the blackened skeletons of former buildings. And the survivors were burdened with the agonizing task of laying "hundreds of mangled and decomposing corpses to rest."²¹⁶



Guernica Destroyed by the Fire-Bombing, April 1937



Guernica Today: Personal Photo, August 2014

²¹⁵ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 268.

²¹⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 202.

It is unknown how many people died in the fire-bombing of Guernica. The Basque government estimates approximately 1,600 people perished during the three hour attack.²¹⁷ But the statistic does not account for all the victims who died later, suffering from earlier wounds. Today, the event is immortalized in Pablo Picasso's famous painting titled *Guernica*, and the exhibits of the Guernica Peace Museum. However, in the immediate aftermath of the attack, Franco and his German supporters denied their involvement. Franco eventually admitted his guilt in 1970, a total of 33 years after the incident. The German government did not issue an official apology to the Basque people until 1998.

The Spanish Civil War dragged on for another two years after Guernica's bombardment. Franco claimed his victory on April 1st, 1939, to crowds of adoring nationalist supporters. Barcelona, famed for its republican battle cry "They Shall Not Pass!" was one of the last cities to fall. Exact death tolls are unknown, but Preston suggests the civil war cost Spain over half a million lives.²¹⁸ Republican defeat ushered in Franco's 36 year dictatorship, marked by oppression, censorship, and violence. The influence of the *Caudillo's* authoritarian rule will be discussed in greater depth in Chapters Two and Three. Although the Basque's civil war defenses failed, their defiant spirit outlasted Francisco Franco. The nationalist atrocities of the civil war, especially the fire-bombing of Guernica, instilled Basque feelings of hatred and rebellion towards Franco's regime. Perhaps fittingly, the Oak Tree of Guernica survived the nationalist bombings of April 26th, 1937. According to Kurlansky, homeless survivors sought shelter and comfort beneath the Basque Freedom Tree in the days after the attack. By the time Basque students founded the ETA in 1959, the oak was still standing.

²¹⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 200.

²¹⁸ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 299.



Visitors Pay their Respects to the Victims of Guernica: Personal Photo, August 2014

Chapter Two: The Family Man

ETA-militar's communication was short and dispassionate. The organization's militants kidnapped José Maria Ryan at gun point on January 29th at approximately 7:00 pm, labeling him a "Yankee imperialist at the service of the Spanish oligarchy."²¹⁹ Ryan's release, the message read, was contingent upon the destruction of the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant. The organization "had decided to increase the degree of its armed offensive by attacking not only the material goods of monopolist businesses, but also individuals who are known scientists or technicians in the service of the capital."²²⁰ Brimming with unspoken threat, the ultimatum declared "ETA-militar would concede one week for the demolition of Lemóniz."²²¹ Initially released to *Egin*, a local newspaper out of San Sebastián, ETA's demands quickly flooded the Spanish press. On January 31st, 1981, the anxious wife of José Maria Ryan issued a statement regarding her husband's kidnapping. With tears in her eyes, Murua cried "I don't understand the causes of my husband's kidnapping, given that he is a simple man who never meddles in problems or politics."²²² The distraught mother of five pleaded for her husband's release, avowing her "absolute repulsion"²²³ at the attack. She wasn't alone. Countless organizations, including the Spanish Federation of the Electric Sector,²²⁴ the Basque Parliament's Commission on Human Rights,²²⁵ The Conference on the Cooperation and Security of Europe,²²⁶ and Amnesty International²²⁷ condemned ETA's action with disgust. Thousands of citizens staged

²¹⁹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 30 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

²²⁰ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

²²¹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

²²² *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

²²³ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

²²⁴ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

²²⁵ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 12. Print.

²²⁶ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 9. Print.

²²⁷ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 5 Feb. 1981: 21. Print.

pro-liberation manifestations in the streets.²²⁸ Pablo Ryan, the five-year-old son of Ryan, entreated ETA to “release my dad soon so he can spend my birthday with me.”²²⁹ But even Pablo’s childhood innocence did not soften ETA’s resolve. ETA assassinated José Maria Ryan on February 6th, the day before his beloved son’s sixth birthday.



José Maria Ryan: *ABC*, January 31, 1981



Body of José Maria Ryan: *ABC*, February 7, 1981

This chapter explores ETA’s motives for kidnapping and assassinating José Maria Ryan, as well as Spanish and Basque public reaction to the engineer’s murder. I had never heard the name “José Maria Ryan” at the beginning of this project. Apart from Kurlansky’s *The Basque History of the World*, most scholarly works on ETA completely disregard Ryan’s tragic death. And even Kurlansky only dedicates a few sentences to the subject.²³⁰ But Basque and Spanish newspaper coverage of the murder is startlingly higher. In the month following Ryan’s kidnapping, Madrid’s *ABC* and Bilbao’s *La Gaceta del Norte* published a combined total of 99 articles concerning the ill-fated industrialist. The incredible frequency of Ryan-related

²²⁸ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 13. Print.

²²⁹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

²³⁰ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 279-280

publications piqued my curiosity while scanning newspapers in Bilbao, San Sebastián, Vitoria, and Madrid.

After analyzing the primary source material further, it became clear to me that Ryan's murder was a pivotal event in Spain's transition to democracy. Although Ryan was not a particularly unusual ETA target, Spanish and Basque public fury in response to his execution was remarkable. Humanization of Ryan via the press, ETA's ultimatum for the engineer's release, and pre-existing disillusionment over ETA's high 1980 death toll turned the Spanish and Basque populace against the separatist group in the wake of Ryan's assassination. Public anger over Ryan's death debilitated ETA's support base, and hardened the Spanish government's resolve to fight terrorism at all costs in early 1981.

Leftist-Leanings: ETA's Tactics from 1968-1981

Ryan's kidnapping was not an anomaly. Between 1968 and 1980, ETA abducted 24 people.²³¹ Of these victims, 70.8% were industrial or business figures.²³² Furthermore, during these years, 46.2% of ETA's total victims (including killed, wounded, and kidnapped) were civilians. According to Robert P. Clark's assessment of ETA's total victims, the terrorist organization "divided its targets about equally"²³³ between perceived combatants and noncombatants. Although the distinction between "combatant" and "noncombatant" is often vague, Clark identified combatants as all military and law-enforcement personnel, including Civil Guard, municipal police, military, and spies. Noncombatants were equated with civilians, including political/government officials, industrial/business figures, objects of revenge, bystanders, and accidental victims. I will apply these classifications in this paper.

²³¹ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 133.

²³² Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 133.

²³³ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 135.

Although, as Clark's findings show, ETA frequently kidnapped or wounded civilians, the majority of the organization's killings claimed law enforcement or military personnel. Civil Guard, municipal police, military men and spies constituted 68% of ETA's mortal victims from 1968-1980.²³⁴ From ETA's perspective, these "combatants" were directly responsible for the historical oppression of the Basque people under Franco. In addition, police and soldiers were actively engaged in the "military or paramilitary struggle against ETA."²³⁵ Government sponsored anti-ETA activity took off in the late 1960s. ETA's first martyr, a popular *etarra* named Extebarrieta, was killed by the Civil Guard in 1968.²³⁶ Later, the Spanish judicial system condemned nine *etarras* to death in the 1970 Burgos trial.²³⁷ The trajectory continued, with reciprocal killings accelerating into a "deadly *pas de deux* between the Spanish security forces and ETA."²³⁸ Sadly, at least 200 Civil Guard members were killed during ETA's 35-year campaign for Basque independence.²³⁹ According to reports from the Spanish Ministry of the Interior cited by Shabad and Ramo, 145 *etarras* were killed by law enforcement, died in jail, or were executed between 1968 and 1988.²⁴⁰

Although ETA's assassination attempts generally targeted combatants, the organization's most popular kidnapping victims were Basque industrialists. These particular attacks were an extension of ETA's 1960s ideological foundations. From 1960-1975, the Basque Country experienced a second period of intense industrialization. Immigration flourished, with the population of the Basque Country increasing by 44%.²⁴¹ While the immigrant population

²³⁴ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 135.

²³⁵ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 135.

²³⁶ Anderson. *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. 21.

²³⁷ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 39.

²³⁸ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 41.

²³⁹ Jesús Rodríguez. "Inside Spain's Civil Guard." *El País*. 22 Oct. 2014. Web. 7 Feb. 2015.

²⁴⁰ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 421.

²⁴¹ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 416.

consisted of some British, German, and northern European families, the majority of workers hailed “from Andalusia and other poor regions of Spain.”²⁴² The new residents lived in crowded slums, worked twelve hour days, and often “died young of lung disease or alcoholism.”²⁴³ Radically altered by the influx of working-class Spaniards, the Basque Country adopted modern infrastructures and urbanized cities. The growth was too fast for ethnic Basques. Metropolitan areas threatened the “declining, but increasingly idealized, traditional Basque culture.”²⁴⁴ And waves of new workers resulted in high levels of unemployment, disproportionately among young Basques. By 1988, 46.5% of all 16-24 year olds living in Basque Country and 24% of all 25-34 year olds living in Basque Country were unemployed.²⁴⁵ Ethnic Basques accused Spanish immigrants of stealing local jobs, polluting *Euskal Herria* with heavy industry, and generating an undesirable “underclass.”²⁴⁶

Class tension quickly translated to racism. Frustrated by the economic transformation of the 1960s and 1970s, many ethnic Basques mentally equated “destructive” industry with “inferior” Spaniards. To them, the burgeoning racial diversity was a threat to Basque identity, and therefore a form of Spanish imperialism. Ethnic Basques derogatorily referred to poor Spanish immigrants as “Chinese, Manchurians, or Koreans.”²⁴⁷ Others demonstrated their “racial superiority” by labeling the new residents as *maketos*, or “outsiders”.²⁴⁸ The linguistically pre-Roman word “*maketo*” was favored by Sabino Arana, the eulogized “Father of Basque Nationalism,” further promoting its usage. Even worse, many Basques called foreign workers *belarri motx* or “stumpy ears.” Known for their long earlobes, ethnic Basques viewed Spanish

²⁴² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 169.

²⁴³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 169.

²⁴⁴ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 417.

²⁴⁵ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 417.

²⁴⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 169.

²⁴⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 169.

²⁴⁸ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 169.

facial structures as physically inferior. The racial slur was not original to the twentieth century. *Belarri motx* was used by Basque Carlists to snub republican Spanish soldiers during the Carlist Wars.²⁴⁹ The renewal of the offensive term exasperated the “us” (Basques) versus “them” (Spaniards) dialogue. And anti-Spanish sentiment soon extended beyond name calling.

Equating the government-subsidized industrialism with Spanish expansionism, ETA leaders adopted a flare of “populist and antioligarchic rhetoric.”²⁵⁰ Many young *etarras* accused the central government of imperialism, economic exploitation, and the destruction of Basque solidarity. ETA was not alone. Other ethno-nationalist European terrorist movements of the 1960s and 1970s were assimilating similar leftist leanings. According to Richard English, the IRA placed “less emphasis during the 1960s on military training, and more on a leftist definition of republican struggle.”²⁵¹ In December 1969, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) split into two factions to accommodate the growing presence of Marxist members. Militants of the Provisional IRA were “traditional nationalists,”²⁵² who only wanted independence from the British Crown. In contrast, the Official IRA “emphasized class rather than communal identity.”²⁵³ These individuals viewed British rule of Ireland as the corrupt imperialism of an elite class. Consequently, the Official IRA’s doctrine combined the desire for Irish separatism with the hatred of British capitalism. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) experienced a similar ideological split in 1967. Although the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) remained a part of the PLO, this particular faction adopted Marxist-Leninist tendencies and became a revolutionary-leftist organization. George Habash and Wadi Hadad, two prominent

²⁴⁹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 170.

²⁵⁰ Shabad and Ramo. “Political Violence in a Democratic State.” 426.

²⁵¹ Richard English. *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. 84. Print.

²⁵² Christopher Hewitt, and Tom Cheetham. *Encyclopedia of Modern Separatist Movements*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2000. 133. Print.

²⁵³ Hewitt and Cheetham. *Encyclopedia of Modern Separatist Movements*. 133.

founders of the PFLP, sought to drive Israel out of Palestine and “start a movement that would rid the Arab world of leadership by imperialist Sheiks and monarchs.”²⁵⁴ While the PLO served as an umbrella organization for Palestinian independence, the PFLP simultaneously pursued its own anti-oligarchic objectives.

These Marxist and “anticolonialist”²⁵⁵ leanings brought ETA in contact with the Spanish Communist Party in 1963. After experiencing police repression at communist worker strikes, ETA launched a third assembly in 1964 to officially incorporate leftist sentiment into its ideology. The product of the meeting, ETA’s “Letter to the Intellectuals”, attempted to organize a leftist nationalist movement based on “action-repression-action” theory.²⁵⁶ The strategy aimed to provoke state-sponsored repression through ruthless killing. Louise Richardson argues all terrorist organizations aim to provoke reaction through violence. According to Richardson, terrorists “are action-oriented people operating in an action-oriented group...In taking action, therefore, they want to elicit a reaction.”²⁵⁷ ETA was no different. In theory, the covert group surmised, the government’s reckless oppression to terrorist violence would launch a “labor mobilization against the regime”²⁵⁸ and unify the Basque population behind a “broad interclassist national front.”²⁵⁹ Romantically banded together beneath the flag of *Euskal Herria*, the Basque Country would fight to reclaim its independence from Spanish “imperialism.” Editorials in *Zutik*, ETA’s underground newspaper, encouraged the attacks by assuring recruits that “Violence is necessary. A violence that will strike and demolish, that will turn our struggle into the good,

²⁵⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation. *The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*. Department of Justice, 1981. 9. Print.

²⁵⁵ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 428.

²⁵⁶ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 427.

²⁵⁷ Louise Richardson. *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. New York: Random House, 2006. 98. Print.

²⁵⁸ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 427.

²⁵⁹ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 429.

profitable violence that the Jews, the Congolese and the Algerians have created; that will place in our hands a substantial counterweight in the confrontation between our will for liberty against theirs for tyranny.”²⁶⁰ Eager militants answered the cry for bloodshed. Inspired by the concept of “anti-imperialist guerilla warfare,”²⁶¹ ETA claimed its first victim in 1968. Txabi Etxebarrieta, an ETA executive and passionate advocate for armed struggle, murdered a Civil Guard member named José Pardines on June 7th, 1968. Shortly after the assassination, Etxebarrieta was hunted down and killed by Spanish law enforcement. He was hailed as ETA’s first martyr.²⁶² Only two months later, vengeful *etarras* murdered San Sebastián police chief Melitón Manzanos outside his home on August 2nd.²⁶³ ETA’s action-repression-action strategy began with law enforcement targets, but it didn’t end there.

In 1973, ETA assassinated a high-profile politician as part of its action-repression-action theory. Spanish Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco, despised by ETA as a “symbol of pure Francoism,”²⁶⁴ was the designated successor of the ailing *Caudillo*. As one anonymous *etarra* stated, “Everyone knew that the Spanish oligarchy was counting on Carrero to assure a convulsion-free transition to Francoism without Franco.”²⁶⁵ Determined to end Franco’s legacy, ETA commenced “Operation Ogre” (Carrero Blanco’s assassination) on December 20th, 1973. ETA placed 165 pounds of dynamite in a shallow tunnel beneath the road outside Blanco’s church. As the Prime Minister left daily mass at 9:30 am, the militants detonated the bomb remotely. Blanco’s exploding car launched over a several story building, earning him the off-

²⁶⁰ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 130.

²⁶¹ Shabad and Ramo. “Political Violence in a Democratic State.” 428.

²⁶² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 241.

²⁶³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 243.

²⁶⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 253.

²⁶⁵ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 253.

color distinction of “first Spanish astronaut.”²⁶⁶ Franco survived his right-hand man by two years, but the Spanish and Basque populations viewed Blanco’s death “as the end of Francoism.”²⁶⁷ Whether physical, symbolic, or both, the Prime Minister’s assassination had an impact on Spain. And the action-repression-action strategy produced results. True to ETA’s predictions, Franco responded with brutal arrests and executions. By September 1975, Spanish police and Civil Guard had killed 33 Basque insurgents. As Kurlansky puts it, “Franco was still alive, still in power, and still killing.”²⁶⁸

Although Carrero’s assassination is an example of successful action-repression-action strategy, ETA could not solely target politicians. For one, politicians maintained body guards and enacted heightened security measures (especially after Carrero’s death). The additional protection made them more difficult targets. For another, there was a tangible limit of high-profile politicians to murder. And finally, political assassinations did not necessarily provoke overwhelming anger among law enforcement members. Politicians are considered “noncombatants” in this project to maintain consistency with Clark’s statistics. However, political figures do not fit the definition of “combatant” or “noncombatant” cleanly. Although politicians do not physically fight, they make decisions which can directly impact the repression or arrest of individuals. Since politicians choose to involve themselves with state policies and counterterrorism methods, their deaths do not always impel sympathy among members of law enforcement. Politicians, just like members of the military or police, place themselves in positions of potential danger to make decisions regarding state security. In contrast, civilians do not. Murdering non-political civilians often provokes anger, empathy, and fear—the perfect combination for retaliatory violence.

²⁶⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 254.

²⁶⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 254.

²⁶⁸ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 255.

Although it is unclear if or when ETA officially integrated civilian targeting into its doctrine, the covert group began murdering (non-political) noncombatants in the early 1970s. According to most scholarly views, noncombatants are “innocent of the violent and destructive action of war”²⁶⁹ and therefore exempt from atrocity. ETA, like other terrorist organizations, defied this norm. To them, civilian-directed violence became a key part of action-repression-action strategy. The murder of noncombatants could easily incite rage in law enforcement, improving ETA’s chances of provoking repressive government backlash. In addition, these “inexplicable” attacks generated terror in Spain and the Basque Country. As fear took root, ETA appeared both powerful and invincible to the Spanish and Basque populations. In September 1974, *etarras* detonated a bomb in a Madrid restaurant. The blast killed 13 people, and wounded 70.²⁷⁰ Yonah Alexander, Michael Swetnam, and Herbert Levine, refer to the bombing as ETA’s “first act of indiscriminate terrorism.”²⁷¹ Political Scientist Jacob Shapiro argues that terrorists fuel mass hysteria with seemingly “‘random,’ ‘indiscriminate,’ ‘arbitrary,’ and ‘unpredictable’”²⁷² attacks. Because victimization appears irrational, the media elevates the violence to inexplicable “wild savagery.”²⁷³ Widespread overreaction places “exaggerated weight”²⁷⁴ on militant capabilities, and sows unfounded terror. While researchers will never know the true motive of ETA’s restaurant bombing, it is likely the militants utilized this “particularly abhorrent”²⁷⁵ tactic to incite police brutality as part of its action-repression-action platform.

²⁶⁹ Troy Jollimore. "Terrorism, War, and The Killing of the Innocent." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 10.4 (2007): 354. Print.

²⁷⁰ Alexander, Swetnam, and Levine. *ETA: Profile of a Terrorist Group*. 34.

²⁷¹ Alexander, Swetnam, and Levine. *ETA: Profile of a Terrorist Group*. 34.

²⁷² Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 130.

²⁷³ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 160.

²⁷⁴ Shapiro. *The Terrorist's Dilemma*. 13.

²⁷⁵ Jollimore. "Terrorism, War, and The Killing of the Innocent." 353.

Other action-repression-action attacks appeared just as random. Alejandro Estrenian was assassinated by ETA in the city of Amorbietta on October 23rd, 1980. Estrenian was an unemployed clerk at the time of the attack.²⁷⁶ A twenty-four year old fisherman, named Florentino Lopetegui, was killed by ETA militants on March 6th, 1980 in Oforio.²⁷⁷ ETA murdered Luis Dominguez Jimenez on January 25th, 1980 in Vergara. He was a gravedigger by profession.²⁷⁸ His wife, Arrante Zurutuza, remembers her husband's death with anguish. "I could not go mad with grief, fear, and helplessness, because I had to take care of my children,"²⁷⁹ she recalls dejectedly. Jose Miguel Palacios Dominguez was an executed salesman.²⁸⁰ Forty eight year-old Julio Rabanete Herrero was wounded in a murder attempt while working as a bus driver.²⁸¹ Other ETA targets included a tennis club and beach house in Javea.²⁸²

Even accidental victims could prompt both law enforcement repression and civilian fear. Ten-year-old Fernando Garcia fell victim to an ETA attack on March 29th, 1980. Fernando and three childhood friends were playing near a car, when they discovered an abandoned package in the street. Curious, one boy picked up the parcel. It exploded in his hands, showering the street in blood and burnt flesh. Fernando's father rushed his son to the hospital, where doctors saved the boy's life in an emergency surgery. Traumatized by horrific injuries and his friend's sudden death, Fernando struggled against depression and anxiety. Later, Fernando offered a testimony of his story, ardently declaring "I don't want to hear your opinion about terrorism, until you've spoken with the victims."²⁸³ As ETA's carnage manipulated human emotions, Basque and

²⁷⁶ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Jan. 2015.

²⁷⁷ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Jan. 2015.

²⁷⁸ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Jan. 2015.

²⁷⁹ Cristina Cuesta. *Contra El Olvido: Testimonios De Víctimas Del Terrorismo*. Madrid: Temas De Hoy, 2000. 56. Print.

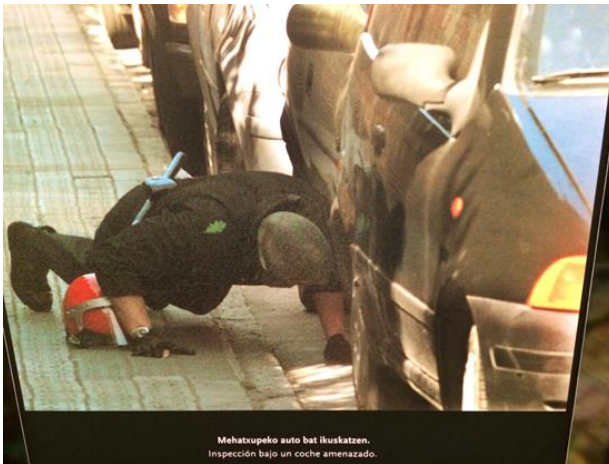
²⁸⁰ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Jan. 2015.

²⁸¹ Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Jan. 2015.

²⁸² Global Terrorism Database. University of Maryland, 2001. Web. Jan. 2015.

²⁸³ Cuesta. *Contra El Olvido*. 193.

Spanish fear ran rampant. Civilians refused to start their cars before ducking underneath to check for bombs.²⁸⁴ Mothers forbade their children from playing in the streets. Isabel, the widow of a slain husband, fearfully pointed out “our homes should be better protected.”²⁸⁵ Carmen Ibarlucea refused to give minute details of her husband’s assassination, bitterly attesting “It’s better to keep quiet about certain things for the good of our security.”²⁸⁶ When questioned about the effect of the violence on local communities, Ibarlucea answered “many families decided to leave Euskadi after a fateful day of terrorism transformed their lives.”²⁸⁷ Others, like Ibarlucea, decided to stay and pray for peace in the Basque Country.



Man Checks for a Car Bomb: Personal Photo, Guernica Peace Museum August 2014

But ETA’s civilian attacks had their shortcomings. By targeting noncombatants in both Spain and the Basque Country, ETA ran the risk of alienating its supporters. Like all covert groups, ETA required a local support base for funding, recruitment, and sympathy. The *etarras* had to carefully select each victim, as “using too much violence, or hitting the wrong targets, can

²⁸⁴ Guernica: Guernica Peace Museum, August 2014. Exhibit.

²⁸⁵ Cuesta. *Contra El Olvido*. 39.

²⁸⁶ Cuesta. *Contra El Olvido*. 25.

²⁸⁷ Cuesta. *Contra El Olvido*. 24.

be just as damaging to a cause as employing too little.”²⁸⁸ If ETA’s methods became distasteful to leftist-oriented Basques, a widespread class-based struggle would be impossible.

ETA viewed successful Basque capitalists as the perfect target. After many northern industrialists were incorporated into Spain’s elite social class, ETA viewed the businessmen as symbolic traitors to “rural Basque culture.”²⁸⁹ Instead of conforming to the ancient Basque professions of agriculture and fishing, the new dominant class pursued “mining, heavy industry,”²⁹⁰ and “banking.”²⁹¹ ETA’s public statements accused Basque industrialists of conducting business in a “repressive and coercive flow,”²⁹² and sacrificing “whatever it takes”²⁹³ to make money. Now ardently anti-capitalist, ETA could capitalize on its leftist support base by targeting wealthy manufacturers and professionals. Anti-imperialists would not object to the industrialists’ deaths, and Spanish authorities would seek revenge for the bloodshed. In addition, there were other benefits of kidnapping Basque industrialists. Not only did the attacks issue dramatic political messages against government-sponsored industrialism, they also gave ETA the “prestige of playing Robin Hood to striking workers.”²⁹⁴

The kidnappings followed a fairly predictable pattern. While ETA paraded as a band of honorable thieves who stole from the corrupt rich, the covert group “filled its war chest”²⁹⁵ with ransom and extortion money. Most abduction victims were released after giving ETA large sums in extorted payoffs. If the organization’s ransom demands were met, or the victim’s family arranged a suitable deal, the captive was set free. Kidnapped industrialist Felipe Huarte was

²⁸⁸ Jacob N. Shapiro. *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2013. 3. Print.

²⁸⁹ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 416.

²⁹⁰ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 415.

²⁹¹ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 415.

²⁹² *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

²⁹³ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

²⁹⁴ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 40.

²⁹⁵ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 40.

returned to his family unharmed in 1973 after fulfilling ETA's monetary demands.²⁹⁶ In 1976, ETA demanded \$1.6 million for the kidnapped son of a Basque industrialist named Arrasate. While it is unclear whether the ransom was ever paid, the young man was released unscathed.²⁹⁷ Later, the director of the Vitoria Michelin Tire Company was kidnapped in 1979 and released in good health.²⁹⁸

However, not all abductees saw home again. If ETA's requirements went unanswered, the group spared no bullets. At least six kidnappings ended tragically, including those of Javier de Ybarra and Angel Berazadi.²⁹⁹ Ybarra, a prominent Bilbao industrialist, was kidnapped on May 20th, 1977. A group of ETA-político militar members disguised themselves as hospital orderlies, entered Ybarra's home, tied and gagged his family members, and escaped in a stolen ambulance with the kidnapped businessman. In exchange for Ybarra's freedom, ETA demanded the release of 23 imprisoned *etarras* and a ransom of one billion pesetas (about \$14 million). Ybarra's family was incapable of meeting the terrorist organization's strict deadline, and the industrialist's body was discovered on June 25th.³⁰⁰ Angel Berazadi, a conservative Basque industrialist, was kidnapped and killed by ETA-político militar on April 7th, 1976.³⁰¹ Ryan's 1981 kidnapping and assassination is yet another example. In addition, it seems that ETA coerced "thousands of other Basque industrialists and professionals into paying a sizable annual "revolutionary tax" to the organization."³⁰² Although hard evidence is lacking, it appears that ETA captured or killed some businessmen who refused to pay.³⁰³

²⁹⁶ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 138.

²⁹⁷ Robert P. Clark. *Negotiating with ETA: Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country, 1975-1988*. Reno: U of Nevada, 1990. 76. Print.

²⁹⁸ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 139.

²⁹⁹ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 139.

³⁰⁰ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 102.

³⁰¹ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 91.

³⁰² Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 443.

³⁰³ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 139.

The Case of José Maria Ryan

Unlike ETA's typical kidnapping schemes, Ryan's abduction was not financially lucrative. Instead of demanding money, the terrorist organization required the "paralysis and demolition of the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant in the span of one week."³⁰⁴ At first glance, ETA's obsession with Lemóniz seems peculiar. Why would *etarra* terrorists want Lemóniz destroyed? After all, the plant was located only 12 kilometers from Bilbao.³⁰⁵ Any power produced at Lemóniz would directly benefit the Basque Country. But upon careful examination, the militants' ultimatum reflected both ETA's anti-imperialist ideology and a larger pattern of global anti-nuclear movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Construction of the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant began in 1972 by the power company Iberdeuro Basque Utility. Iberdeuro intended to build a series of five nuclear power plants on the Basque coast, but the government-sanctioned project was hotly opposed by many Basque citizens. First, the project's intended site was a popular local resort. The construction of Lemóniz would exploit the sandy white beaches and peaceful wilderness of the 15 kilometer Bay of Basardos, which stretches from Bilbao to San Sebastián. Second, civilians worried about "crowding existing residents near the plant"³⁰⁶, "as well as the potential "ecological and health dangers"³⁰⁷ of nuclear energy. Nuclear meltdown scares in the 1970's, including the U.S. Three Mile incident in 1979, were fresh in public memory. As one Basque leader asserted "A radiation accident at Lemóniz would wipe out the entire Basque people."³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Jan. 31 1981: 13. Print.

³⁰⁵ Wolfgang Rüdig. *Anti-nuclear Movements: A World Survey of Opposition to Nuclear Energy*. Harlow, Essex: Longman Current Affairs, 1990. 138. Print.

³⁰⁶ "Basque Citizens End Construction of the Lemoniz Nuclear Power Plant, 1976-1978." *Global Nonviolent Action Database*. Web. 7 Dec. 2014.

³⁰⁷ *Global Nonviolent Action Database*. Web. 7 Dec. 2014.

³⁰⁸ Jim Falk. *Global Fission: The Battle over Nuclear Power*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1982. 205. Print.

In addition, nuclear opposition in the Basque Country had political roots. The Basque population resented Iberdeuro as “a classic example of right-wing business interests that flourished under Franco.”³⁰⁹ According to Basque lawyer Juan Cruz, “The company [Iberdeuro] is dominated by the same oligarchy that turned Bilbao into the most polluted, most contaminated industrial city in the world.”³¹⁰ The Lemóniz venture, which began during Franco’s regime, was ardently supported by Spain’s central government. Although Franco’s intentions remain unclear, Mez, Schneider, and Thomas speculate the dictator hoped to acquire “knowledge with regard to the civil usage of nuclear technology also for military purposes.”³¹¹ Regardless of the regime’s objectives, the refusal of local political entities was “overruled by the central government.”³¹² Despite a series of petitions and legal challenges, the Basque population was powerless to halt construction. On July 14, 1977, the Basque people flooded the streets of Bilbao in the “largest anti-nuclear demonstration the world had ever seen.”³¹³ An estimated 150,000 to 200,000 protestors gathered to condemn the authority of the central government, and demand Iberdeuro’s cessation of the Lemóniz project.³¹⁴ By 1979, the environmental and political implications of the plant were “totally intertwined.”³¹⁵ Jane I. Dawson refers to this “convergence of environmentalism and nationalism”³¹⁶ as “eco-nationalism” in the context of anti-nuclear hysteria following the 1986 Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union. According to

³⁰⁹ “Spain Gets Warning on Basque Nuclear Power Plant” *The New York Times* [New York, United States] 18 Feb. 1982: n. pag. *The New York Times*. 18 Feb. 1982. Web. 7 Dec. 2014.

³¹⁰ Falk. *Global Fission*. 206.

³¹¹ Lutz Mez, Mycle Schneider, and S. D. Thomas. *International Perspectives on Energy Policy and the Role of Nuclear Power*. Brentwood, Essex: Multi-Science Pub., 2009. 358. Print.

³¹² Rüdiger. *Anti-nuclear Movements*. 138.

³¹³ Falk. *Global Fission*. 206.

³¹⁴ Falk. *Global Fission*. 206.

³¹⁵ Falk. *Global Fission*. 207.

³¹⁶ Jane I. Dawson. *Eco-nationalism: Anti-nuclear Activism and National Identity in Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996. 4. Print.

Dawson, anti-nuclear movements are often “transformed and incorporated”³¹⁷ into sovereignty struggles.

Propelled by the momentum of the anti-nuclear movement, ETA appropriated Lemóniz as a “powerful symbol of Spanish oppression.”³¹⁸ By hijacking a popular issue, ETA projected heroism while simultaneously pursuing its own violent ends. Militants equated nuclear supporters with Basque-hating traitors by issuing polarizing slogans like “Euskadi ala Lemoiz (either Basque or Lemóniz).”³¹⁹ According to ETA propaganda, the Lemóniz project endangered the very survival of *Euskal Herria*. This either/or scheme placed Basque industrialists in a compromising position. Continued support for nuclear energy meant public antagonism, and potential attack. But opposing the plant’s construction meant losing money, an honest job, and a degree of Basque oversight for the state-sponsored project.

By the time Ryan was kidnapped on January 29th, 1981, the “Battle against Lemóniz”³²⁰ had claimed its share of blood. Between 1977 and 1981, *etarra* militants staged hundreds of attacks against Iberdeuro’s offices and construction sites. The first bomb, which was smuggled into the reactor’s core, killed two employees, caused \$70 million of damage, and delayed the project by two years.³²¹ The situation escalated. In 1979, police shot and killed one of the 5,000 anti-Lemóniz demonstrators in Tudella. An eyewitness later recalled how “a twenty-three year old student from Saint-Sebastien, was dying on the bridge, from a bullet which entered her

³¹⁷ Dawson. *Eco-nationalism*. 4.

³¹⁸ Rüdiger. *Anti-nuclear Movements*. 139.

³¹⁹ Joseba Zulaika. *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament*. Reno: U of Nevada, 1988. 169. Print.

³²⁰ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

³²¹ Falk. *Global Fission*. 206.

mouth and exited through the top of her head.”³²² ETA retaliated by killing two Madrid policemen the following day.³²³

Growing Frustrations: Public Response to Ryan’s Death

Ryan was not the first civilian to die over Lemóniz, but his death contributed to a pivotal decline in Basque and Spanish public acceptance of ETA’s violence. During the July 1977 historic anti-Lemóniz manifestation, Basque flags waved high above the crowds while “chants against nuclear power were mixed with chants in support of the Basque separatist movement, ETA.”³²⁴ Opinion polls from a 1979 survey conducted by the Spanish research organization *Fomento de Estudios Sociales y de Sociología Aplicada* (FOESSA) indicated 63% of Basque people favored independence.³²⁵ The same study found 17% of Basque respondents considered ETA members to be patriots, and 33% viewed *etarras* as idealists. Collectively, half of the Basque sample possessed a favorable opinion of ETA.³²⁶ Furthermore, Gunther, Sani, and Shabad’s 1979 study discovered that 50% of surveyed Basques and 29% of surveyed Spaniards blamed the Franco regime for Spain’s political violence problem. According to the same opinion poll, 43% of Basque respondents and 20% of Spanish respondents believed the central government should negotiate with ETA.³²⁷

Despite possible limitations in sampling, it seems the Basque insurgents enjoyed substantial public support in *Euskal Herria* and central Spain during the late 1970s. But one year later public opinion polls told a different story. A July 1981 *Centro de Investigaciones*

³²² Falk. *Global Fission*. 207.

³²³ Falk. *Global Fission*. 207.

³²⁴ Falk. *Global Fission*. 206.

³²⁵ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 173.

³²⁶ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 175.

³²⁷ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 450.

Sociológicas (CIS) study reported only 12% of Basques favored independence.³²⁸ Compared to the 1979 FOESSA survey, pro-liberation sentiment had dropped by 51 percentage points. In addition, the 1981 CIS poll found that only 13% of Basque respondents favored ETA, with 2% viewing the militants as patriots and 11% considering them idealists. In contrast, 41% of Basques now equated ETA members to madmen, criminals, or manipulated personalities.³²⁹ ETA faced a weakened support base, as positive Basque perceptions of the group decreased from 50% in 1979 to a mere 13% in 1981.

Two days after photos of Ryan's grotesque body consumed the front page of Basque and Spanish newspapers, 200,000 anti-ETA demonstrators converged in the streets of Bilbao, San Sebastián, and Vitoria.³³⁰ The Civil Governor of Vizcaya accused ETA of committing "blood crimes."³³¹ Luis María Bandrés, the Basque Minister of Culture and executive leader of the Basque Nationalist Party, stated that Ryan's execution was "The end of ETA-militar. The death of Ryan had no justification."³³² A group of bishops from Bilbao expressed their sorrow that ETA resorted to the "cruelty and insanity of killing a human being."³³³ Juan José Pujana, the President of Basque Parliament, condemned ETA's "savage and murderous fury."³³⁴ The head of an antiterrorist delegation at a Madrid conference, Javier Rupérez, asserted "there are no good terrorists"³³⁵ in response to ETA's assassination. And even socialist political figure Gregorio Peces Barba called Ryan's murder a "sign of bestiality, irrationality, and perversity."³³⁶ Friends, coworkers, and relatives of José Maria Ryan gathered in the offices of Iberdeuro to mourn. The

³²⁸ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 175.

³²⁹ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 175

³³⁰ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 10 1981: 1. Print.

³³¹ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

³³² *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 7 1981: 8. Print.

³³³ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

³³⁴ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 5. Print.

³³⁵ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 12 1981: 14. Print.

³³⁶ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 5. Print.

Lemóniz plant lay quiet, engulfed in “an atmosphere of desolation.”³³⁷ Overwhelmed by the manifestations, the Basque Country shut down. Businesses and factories closed, schools cancelled classes, and public transportation ceased.³³⁸ To a visitor’s eye, *Euskal Herria* was in a state of mourning.



Pro-Liberation Demonstration in Support of Ryan:
El Correo Español, February 7, 1981



Anti-ETA Protest in La plaza de Zabálburu, Bilbao:
ABC, February 10, 1981

Even northern newspapers, which Spanish and Basque readers typically associate with “nationalist (separatist) sentiment,”³³⁹ highlighted the tragedy of Ryan’s assassination. By February 7th, hundreds of anti-ETA articles inundated the Basque press. Written by journalists, civilians, and politicians alike, the bulletins cursed ETA militants as “terrorists”, “intimidating criminals”, “murderers”, and “the Number One enemy of the Basque people.”³⁴⁰ Bold red letters on the front of *El Correo Español* stated “For Peace in the Basque Country: The Largest Demonstration.”³⁴¹ The cover of Bilbao’s *La Gaceta del Norte* read “Unanimous Clamor for

³³⁷ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 7 1981: 8. Print.

³³⁸ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 21. Print.

³³⁹ Katrin Voltmer. *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*. London: Routledge, 2006. 24. Print.

³⁴⁰ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 5. Print.

³⁴¹ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

Peace.”³⁴² And even more surprisingly, *Egin*, the local newspaper in San Sebastián, headlined with “Thousands of People Marched in Protest of the Death of Ryan: Serious Incidents in San Sebastián Produced Numerous Injuries and Contusions.”³⁴³

Launched in 1977 and published in both Euskera and Spanish, *Egin* was notorious for its separatist inclinations. In fact, the newspaper faced judicial action numerous times for illegally abetting ETA militants. Mirentxu Purroy Ferrer, the director of *Egin*, was tried for “encouraging the Basque people to take up armed struggle”³⁴⁴ in his 1980 publications. And in 1998, the newspaper’s publishing company was indicted for allegedly funding *etarra* cells.³⁴⁵ Despite *Egin*’s ideological leanings, the newspaper prominently featured the widespread condemnation of Ryan’s death. In its February 7th edition alone, *Egin* printed twelve articles regarding the engineer’s execution. Basques who the paper interviewed accused ETA of destroying the “peace of a family,”³⁴⁶ committing acts of “unimaginable brutality,”³⁴⁷ causing “immense pain,”³⁴⁸ “sowing terror,”³⁴⁹ and “destroying the coexistence”³⁵⁰ of the Basque people.

The Madrid press, normally removed from Basque matters, also fixated on Ryan’s murder. *ABC*, one of the capital city’s prominent newspapers, highlighted a picture of Bilbao’s La plaza de Zabálburu overwhelmed by 100,000 screaming protestors. The opening article read “Basque Country: The People Against ETA.”³⁵¹ Later paragraphs praised the widespread

³⁴² *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 10 1981: 1. Print.

³⁴³ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

³⁴⁴ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 12 1981: 10. Print.

³⁴⁵ Alexander, Swetnam, and Levine. *ETA: Profile of a Terrorist Group*. 22.

³⁴⁶ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

³⁴⁷ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 40. Print.

³⁴⁸ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 40. Print.

³⁴⁹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 40. Print.

³⁵⁰ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 40. Print.

³⁵¹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

“indignation”³⁵² over Ryan’s death, lauded the Basque people’s “historical and unambiguous rejection of ETA terrorism,”³⁵³ and expressed heartfelt condolences to Ryan’s widow.

ABC’s news coverage of Ryan wasn’t purely altruistic. Like all media outlets, the publication had its own political agenda. Described as an “influential and monarchical”³⁵⁴ newspaper by Spanish historian Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez, *ABC* is known for its pro-government leanings. The Luca de Tena family founded the *ABC* press in 1903.³⁵⁵ From 1939-1975 the newspaper conformed to Franco’s fascist propaganda. According to William Chislett, the privately owned newspaper “hardly ever stepped out of line under Franco.”³⁵⁶ When state censorship lifted upon Franco’s death, *ABC* maintained its conservative ways. In September 1977, the newspaper expressed reservations concerning Catalanian nationalism. An autonomous Government of Catalonia was “convenient, and acceptable,”³⁵⁷ as long as it refrained from undermining the “unquestionable unity of Spain.”³⁵⁸ *ABC*’s opinion of Basque nationalism was no different. An independent Basque Country defied Franco’s personally-stated vision of a “unified and imperial Spain,”³⁵⁹ a dream which many conservative Spaniards still idealized. To *ABC* and other right-leaning newspapers, ETA was a physical deterrent to Spain’s second “golden age.”

Despite the political agendas of various media outlets, it seems that both the Basque and Spanish populations viewed Ryan’s assassination unfavorably. As a loving husband and father,

³⁵² *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

³⁵³ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 9. Print.

³⁵⁴ Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez. "Beyond "They Shall Not Pass". How the Experience of Violence Reshaped Political Values in Franco's Spain." *Journal of Contemporary History* 40.3 (2005): 516. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Feb. 2015.

³⁵⁵ William Chislett. *The Spanish Media since Franco*. London: Writers and Scholars Educational Trust, 1979. 7. Print.

³⁵⁶ Chislett. *The Spanish Media since Franco*. 7.

³⁵⁷ Voltmer. *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*. 27.

³⁵⁸ Voltmer. *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*. 27.

³⁵⁹ Francisco Franco. "Discvrso Al Imperio De Las Espanas." *Jerarquía: La Revista Negra De La Falange Navarra*. 3 (n.d.): 15. Print.

Ryan's death easily garnered sympathy. His violent passing marked the perfect opportunity to denounce Basque separatist movements. Unfortunately, it is difficult to accurately gauge the public reaction to ETA's violence, as there were no opinion polls conducted around the time of Ryan's death. In an effort to quantify popular opinion concerning ETA in the days following Ryan's assassination, I conducted a comparative analysis of Madrid's newspaper *ABC* and Bilbao's newspaper *La Gaceta del Norte*.

To access the media coverage of each newspaper, I constructed three quantitative analysis schemas. I recorded the number of publications referencing ETA between January 1st and February 23rd in each newspaper, excluding all articles that mentioned Ryan. I decided to omit Ryan in this instance to gauge how the Madrid and Bilbao press were generally responding to ETA activities in early 1981. I wanted to establish this "baseline" coverage to later determine if media coverage of Ryan's kidnapping and assassination was unusual. Any non-Ryan article that mentioned "ETA," "Basque terrorists," "Basque terrorist organization," "*etarra*," or "ETA militant" counted towards the ETA category. I tallied the number of articles pertaining to Ryan's kidnapping and assassination in *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte*. Ryan was not featured in either newspaper prior to his kidnapping, but any article referring to the engineer between January 29th and February 23rd was included. For the sake of consistency, any article that mentioned José Maria Ryan's name qualified for the tally. Finally, I compared printed nouns attributed to ETA militants as positive, neutral, or negative both before Ryan's kidnapping (i.e. before January 29th) and in response to Ryan's kidnapping and assassination (i.e. articles referring to Ryan beginning on January 29th). The frequencies of positive, neutral, and negative descriptions from *ABC* were contrasted with those from *La Gaceta del Norte*. Details of my word analysis will be provided with the data in a subsequent section.

Media coverage of ETA (excluding Ryan) reveals differences in how Madrid and Bilbao responded to the terrorist organization in early 1981. From January 1st to February 23rd, *ABC* printed only 56 articles pertaining to the terrorist organization. But ETA consumed the northern news, with *La Gaceta del Norte* publishing 120 stories on the covert group (See Figure One). Between January and February 1981 *ABC* rarely covered ETA, and instead fixated on international terrorist movements. Ireland's Irish Republican Army (IRA), France's *Organisation de l'armée secrète* (OAS), Italy's Red Brigades, Germany's Red Army Faction (commonly known as the *Baader-Meinhof* Group), and Algeria's National Liberation Front (FLN) secured much of *ABC*'s coverage. Articles such as "Divisions in the Italian Government over the Controversy of Terrorism,"³⁶⁰ "Moscow Accuses Washington of Enabling Western Terrorism,"³⁶¹ "Censorship of the Italian Press against the Red Brigades,"³⁶² "Rome: General Assassinated by the Red Brigades,"³⁶³ "At Least Eleven Countries Support ETA or are Utilized by It,"³⁶⁴ "Bernadette Devlin, Gravely Wounded in a Terrorist Attack: Northern Ireland,"³⁶⁵ and "The Logic of Terror"³⁶⁶ filled *ABC*'s pages. International Terrorism even claimed *ABC*'s front page on January 4th with the headline "Terrorism and Information: A Debate in Italy."³⁶⁷ *ABC*'s coverage of global terrorism likely served dual purposes. By focusing on terrorist movements in other countries, *ABC* deflected domestic concern over ETA. This "out of sight, out of mind" approach assuaged public worry and promoted trust in the Spanish government. In addition, *ABC* highlighted international political violence to remind the civilian population it wasn't facing a

³⁶⁰ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 1 Feb. 1981: 15. Print.

³⁶¹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 3 Feb. 1981: 15. Print.

³⁶² *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 7 Jan. 1981: 9. Print.

³⁶³ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 2 Jan. 1981: 5. Print.

³⁶⁴ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 4 Jan. 1981: 8. Print.

³⁶⁵ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 17 Jan. 1981: 13. Print.

³⁶⁶ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 24 Jan. 1981: 3. Print.

³⁶⁷ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 4 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

terrorist insurgency alone. When presented in the context of global terrorist movements, ETA appeared less taboo.

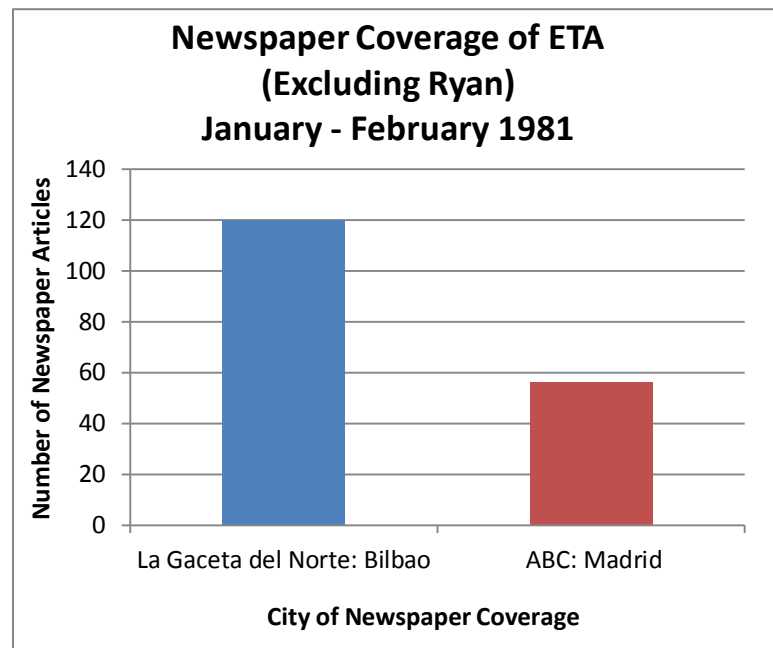


Figure One: Newspaper Coverage of ETA (Excluding Ryan)

Interestingly, *ABC's* coverage of international terrorism seemed to drop immediately after Ryan's murder. From February 7th to 11th, the four days following Ryan's execution, *ABC* published only two articles on global terrorism. These particular articles, titled "Washington Joins the Active Fight against Terrorism" and "USA Asks for Support in Proposition against Terrorism," focused on U.S. counterterrorism policy making. However, each publication referred to ETA. In a span of days, Madrid's terrorism dialogue shifted from international issues to the domestic problem.

Newspaper coverage of Ryan's kidnapping and murder reflects a different trend. Despite considerable historical animosity, Madrid and Bilbao found common ground with Ryan's death. Regardless of political opinion on Basque independence, neither collective civilian population condoned ETA's coldblooded murder. Not surprisingly, Madrid's *ABC* included more coverage

of Ryan's abduction and murder than Bilbao's *La Gaceta del Norte* (see Figure Two). The pro-government newspaper likely publicized ETA's violence to diminish sympathy for the Basque insurgents. Between January 29th and February 23rd, 1981 *ABC* published 57 articles regarding the engineer's kidnapping and assassination.³⁶⁸ *La Gaceta del Norte* only included 42 articles.³⁶⁹ Although public opinion in Madrid reflects greater preoccupation with Ryan's tragic death, the difference between tallies is not substantially large. The similar results indicate both Madrid and Bilbao were focused on ETA's bloodshed. This alone, is note-worthy. It would be inaccurate to suggest that all Bilbao civilians supported armed struggle for Basque liberty or that the entire Madrid population supported a centralized government, but the two cities have a long history of political disagreement. Bilbao and Madrid fought on opposite sides in the Carlist Wars and the Spanish Civil War. Later, their conflict translated into the struggle over Basque independence.

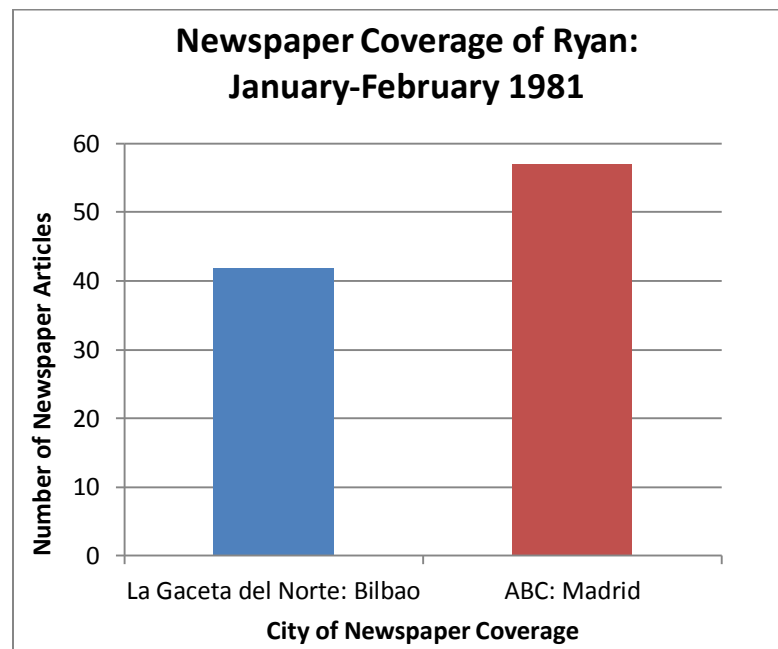


Figure Two: Newspaper Coverage of Ryan

³⁶⁸ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] Jan.-Feb. 1981: Print.

³⁶⁹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Jan.-Feb. 1981: Print.

The third schema was a comparative analysis of *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* descriptions of ETA, both before Ryan's kidnapping (i.e. articles that mention ETA between January 1st – January 28th, 1981) and in direct response to Ryan's kidnapping and assassination (i.e. articles that refer to Ryan between January 29th – February 23rd, 1981). Spanish words, just like English words, carry positive, neutral, and negative connotations. Not only does word choice convey meaning, it often imparts the author's opinion. Most studies use word choice analysis as a qualitative methodology, given the subjectivity of language. This research combines qualitative and quantitative methods to explore journalists' underlying, and perhaps unconscious, opinions of ETA before and in response to Ryan's kidnapping and assassination. By comparing these word choices, I hoped to pinpoint a possible Basque and Spanish opinion shift regarding ETA's violence in response to the engineer's mistreatment. Words such as “*abertzale* (pro-Basque),” “youth,” “pro-liberty vigilante,” and “hero” were included in the positive classification. Descriptions like “group,” “organization,” “member,” and “presumed *etarra*” constituted neutral vocabulary. And “terrorist organization,” “terrorist,” “armed group,” “authors of kidnapping,” “drug addicts,” “illegals,” “executioners,” “murderers,” “neo-fascists,” and “criminals” were considered negative nouns.³⁷⁰ Figures Three, Four, Five, and Six depict the results of the analysis graphically.

When describing ETA before Ryan's kidnapping, Madrid's *ABC* used 98 negative words or phrases, constituting 59% of its ETA word selections. Bilbao's *La Gaceta del Norte* used 84 negative words or phrases, making up 63% of its ETA descriptions. *ABC* used slightly more neutral phrases, with *ABC* utilizing 58 neutral words at 35% of all tallied descriptions, and *La Gaceta del Norte* including 36 neutral words at 27% of all tallied word choices. In contrast, *La Gaceta del Norte* printed slightly more positive descriptions than *ABC*. The Bilbao paper

³⁷⁰ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Jan.-Feb. 1981: Print.

included 13 positive nouns at 10% of all descriptive nouns on ETA, while the Madrid press only used 9 positive words at 5.0% of all ETA descriptions. The differences between positive, neutral, and negative descriptions are statistically small, and reveal little concerning opinion differences between Madrid and Bilbao. However, this data contrasts sharply with the descriptive nouns attributed to ETA in the context of Ryan's kidnapping and murder.

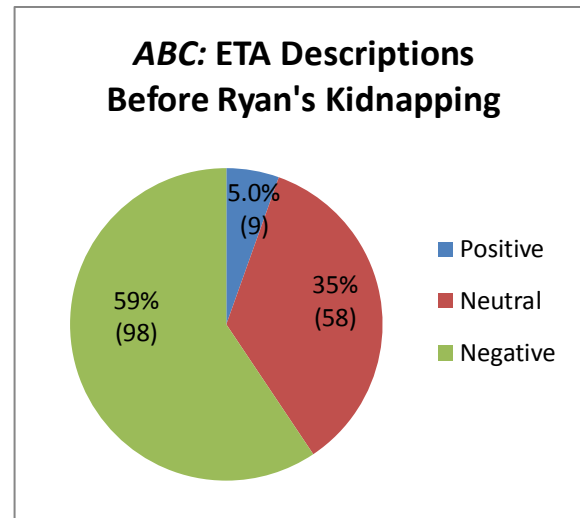
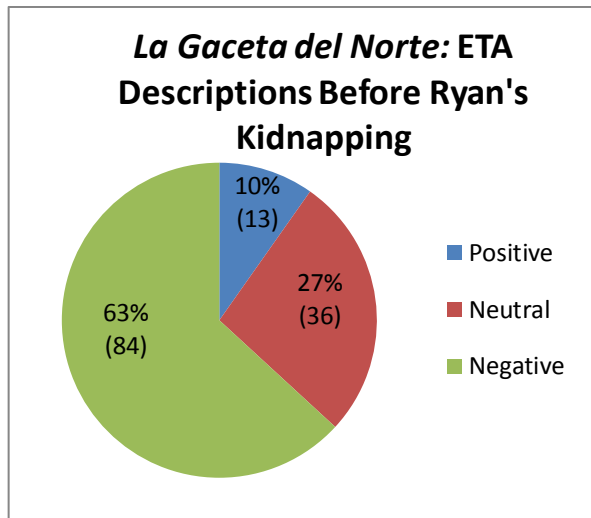


Figure Three: Bilbao ETA Descriptions - Before Ryan's Kidnapping

Figure Four: Madrid ETA Descriptions - Before Ryan's Kidnapping

In response to Ryan's kidnapping and assassination, the word selections of both *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* reflect an over-arching negative opinion of ETA. Madrid's *ABC* employed 221 negative words or phrases, constituting 91% of its ETA word selections. Bilbao's *La Gaceta del Norte* used 73 negative words or phrases, making up 90% of its ETA descriptions. *La Gaceta del Norte* used slightly more neutral phrases, with *ABC* utilizing 4 neutral words at 2.0% of all tallied descriptions, and *La Gaceta del Norte* including 6 neutral words at 7.5% of all tallied descriptions. *ABC* printed slightly more positive descriptions than *La Gaceta del Norte*. The Madrid paper included 17 positive nouns at 7.0% of all ETA descriptions, while the Bilbao press only used 2 positive words at 2.5% of all ETA word choices. Again, the difference between

each publication's positive, neutral, and negative descriptive nouns is slight. It seems both Madrid and Bilbao had an overwhelmingly negative opinion of ETA.

However, the increase in negative descriptions of ETA (in both cities) following Ryan's kidnapping on January 29th, 1981 is remarkable. Prior to Ryan's disappearance, 59% of *ABC's* word selections regarding ETA were negative. And 63% of *La Gaceta del Norte's* descriptions of ETA were negative. But in the newspaper articles concerning Ryan's kidnapping and death (after January 29th), *ABC's* ETA descriptions were 91% negative. And *La Gaceta del Norte* followed suit, with 90% of its ETA attributions falling into the negative category. Furthermore, praise for ETA and neutral terminology made up less than 10% of all published descriptions in both newspapers. In the context of Ryan's kidnapping and assassination, ETA was the villain of both Spanish and Basque media.

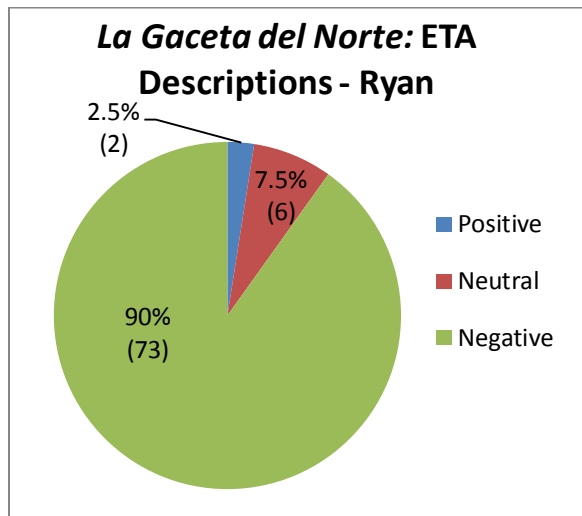


Figure Five: Bilbao ETA Descriptions - Ryan

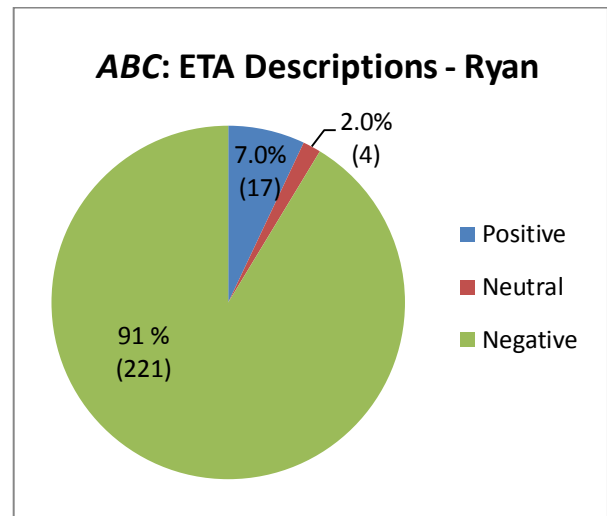


Figure Six: Madrid ETA Descriptions - Ryan

Ryan's death corresponded with a significant transformation in public response to ETA's armed struggle. In appearances, Ryan was no different than ETA's other victims. But unlike other ETA targets, the engineer was humanized before his death which encouraged a greater public reaction. ETA victims were typically mentioned in newspaper publications, but the

individuals rarely generated sustained media coverage. Leopoldo Garcia Martin, a retired second lieutenant of the national police, was murdered by *etarras* on January 17th, 1981. His death warranted only a small notice, titled “Retired National Police Lieutenant Killed.”³⁷¹ A Basque business owner named Javier Egaña was kidnapped and interrogated by ETA militants on February 6th, the same day as Ryan’s assassination. *La Gaceta del Norte* noted the kidnapping briefly in an article titled “The Business Owner Egaña, Interrogated by ETA,”³⁷² but Egaña’s name did not appear in print again. Even ETA’s kidnapping of three foreign dignitaries on February 19th did not prompt special media attention. The consuls, Antonio Alfaro Fernández of El Salvador, Hermann Díez del Sel Korsatko of Austria, and Gabriel Biurrún Altavil of Uruguay, appeared in a series of articles in *La Gaceta del Norte*. But the publications failed to include descriptions or personal details on the abductees or their families.

Instead of remaining an impersonal name, Ryan became a living, breathing man in many Basque and Spanish imaginations. Security scholar Bruce Schneier contends fear is strongest when the threat is personified in human form. He argues “people gloss over statistics of automobile deaths, but when the press writes page after page about the nine people trapped in a mine—complete with human-interest-stories about their lives and families—suddenly everyone starts paying attention.”³⁷³ Schneier’s example applies to Ryan’s death. By the time ETA executed the engineer on February 6th, regular civilians related to Ryan as a husband, father, and worker. Pepe Murua, Ryan’s wife, played a large role in giving her husband a human face. The black-haired beauty described her kidnapped husband as a “family man” during an interview with *Egin* on January 31st. “He has always liked to dedicate almost all of his time to our kids—

³⁷¹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 18 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

³⁷² *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 11. Print.

³⁷³ Bruce Schneier. *Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly about Security in an Uncertain World*. New York: Copernicus, 2003. 27. Print.

our marriage has five children—and to arrange and plant the small garden we have in front of the house”³⁷⁴ the woman asserted. In an article published by *La Gaceta del Norte*, Pepe Murua sadly declared her husband’s death “would destroy a happy household.”³⁷⁵ And a photograph in *El Correo Español* shows Pepe Murua leading a street manifestation in support of her husband’s release. On either side of their mother, two of Ryan’s young children grasp a banner. Behind the anxious family stands an array of shouting supporters, young and old, male and female.³⁷⁶ The public visibility of Ryan’s wife and children contributed to widespread sympathy for his situation.

No one, not even a supporter of Basque independence, wanted to see Ryan’s children grow up without a father. Haunted by the shadow of Ryan’s fate, one 58 year-old anonymous widower beseeched ETA-militar to kill him in the engineer’s place. In his heartbreaking message to the kidnapers, published in *El Correo Español*, the man stated “I have watched the family and five small children of Mr. Ryan on television. If you want to truncate the life of this man, you will produce another five victims. Also innocents, who will suffer, in their own way, all the evil things you have done to their father.”³⁷⁷ The Samaritan painfully continued “I find myself alone in life, for my only son died in a car accident. If you eliminate me in place of Mr. Ryan, the pain you might have caused to other people will end with me, and the effect you seek will be the same.”³⁷⁸ Ryan’s attempted savior was not the only sympathetic soul. Colleagues at Iberdeuro praised the engineer’s gentle spirit. Fellow technicians described Ryan as “simple, plain, and always willing to do a favor for a friend.”³⁷⁹ And according to his friends, Ryan “was

³⁷⁴ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

³⁷⁵ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 1. Print.

³⁷⁶ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 6 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

³⁷⁷ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

³⁷⁸ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

³⁷⁹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

always content and had kind words for everyone, even in difficult situations.”³⁸⁰ As a mere statistic, José Maria Ryan would have been forgotten. However, photos of the 39 year-old’s blindfolded corpse were not so easily wiped from history.

Pepe Murua and Children
at Pro-Liberation
Demonstration: *El Correo
Español*, February 6, 1981



In addition, ETA’s particular demands for Ryan’s release may have enraged Spanish and Basque civilians. Although this opinion was not explicitly stated in Spanish or Basque newspapers, the destruction of the Lemóniz Nuclear Power Plant seems like an unreasonable mandate to me. Obviously, constructing a nuclear power plant is not a trivial investment. By February 1981, Iberdeuro had poured millions of dollars and nearly a decade of labor into the Lemóniz project. There is no question the electrical company (and the Spanish government) was firmly dedicated to the construction of Lemóniz. As discussed earlier, Iberdeuro suffered countless ETA attacks against its premises during the 1970s. Several law enforcement members and two Lemóniz workers had already lost their lives to ETA’s anti-Lemóniz killings by the time militants kidnapped Ryan. It seems unlikely Iberdeuro and its government sponsors would discontinue the venture over the fate of a single employee.

³⁸⁰ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 31 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

Furthermore, ETA usually demanded ransom from the families of kidnapped Basque industrialists. Sometimes the victims' families could procure the necessary funds, and sometimes not. But at least ETA's ultimatums followed a fairly predictable pattern, and (to some degree) the abductee's fate lay with his family's willingness to pay. ETA's ultimatum over Ryan's life was something different. Pepe Murua and her children could not merely demolish Lemóniz to save the engineer's life. Ryan's family and friends were completely powerless to halt construction. The only entity that could free Ryan was Iberdeuro—and by default, the Spanish government. Given the preexisting bloodshed over the nuclear power plant, it seemed unlikely these two entities would come to Ryan's rescue.

In hindsight, ETA's ultimatum appears far less impractical to me. In the wake of Ryan's assassination, Iberdeuro officials shut down Lemóniz on February 10th, 1981. While company officials released a statement to *La Gaceta del Norte* guaranteeing "the temporary closure of Lemóniz will be minimal,"³⁸¹ Ryan's death actually resulted in a "de facto stop of work at Lemóniz."³⁸² Iberdeuro officially discontinued the project in 1983. Clearly the terrorist organization's 1981 ultimatum was not out of line, seeing that Iberdeuro formally closed the plant only a few years later. However, Spanish and Basque civilians could not predict the future in early 1981. It is quite possible the Spanish and Basque public found the terms of Ryan's release excessive and unreachable. Ryan's seemingly inevitable execution, combined with ETA's trajectory of increasing violence, likely struck a nerve.

Ryan's death was not the sole cause of the public opinion shift, but his murder certainly contributed to growing disquiet over ETA's tactics. ETA violence reached an "all-time high in

³⁸¹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 10 Feb. 1981: 10. Print.

³⁸² "Basque Citizens End Construction of the Lemoniz Nuclear Power Plant, 1976-1978." *Global Nonviolent Action Database*. Web. 4 April 2014.

1980,³⁸³ further contributing to public outrage over Ryan's assassination in early 1981. Clark, who explored the distribution of ETA victims between 1968 and 1980, conducted his analysis of Basque violence using personal data gathered from contemporary press reports. According to Clark's statistics, ETA killed 88 people, wounded 81, and kidnapped seven in 1980 alone.³⁸⁴ Shabad and Ramo place ETA's 1980 victim totals even higher, at 93 individuals killed and 10 kidnapped.³⁸⁵ These researchers compiled their quantitative data of ETA's attacks from Andrés Casinello's "ETA y el problema vasco," Miguel Castells' *Radiografía de un modelo represivo*, José L. Pinuel's *El terrorismo en la transición española*, and the Spanish Ministry of the Interior's security reports on antiterrorist activities. Although its sources are unknown, the Guernica Peace Museum places ETA's 1980 death toll highest at 94 victims.³⁸⁶

The bloodshed was not erratic but mounted steadily. Beginning in 1968, ETA pursued an increasingly violent trajectory (see Figure Seven). Between 1968 and 1973 ETA's annual number of fatal victims ranged from zero to three.³⁸⁷ In 1974 the *etarras* killed 11 individuals, wounded 58, and kidnapped zero. Besides a slight drop in murders in 1977, ETA's killings continued to increase. Armed struggle reached a new level in 1979, when ETA murdered 72 people, wounded 141, and kidnapped 8 in a single year.³⁸⁸ ETA's annual victims peaked in 1980, but fell significantly in 1981. Shabad and Ramo note ETA's 1981 mortal victims dropped to 30 individuals, while the group's kidnapping victims decreased to six.³⁸⁹ Clark does not record numerical data for 1981, but his analysis recognizes 1980 as the "high tide"³⁹⁰ of ETA's

³⁸³ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 116.

³⁸⁴ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 119.

³⁸⁵ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 441-442.

³⁸⁶ Guernica: Guernica Peace Museum, August 2014. Exhibit.

³⁸⁷ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 133.

³⁸⁸ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 133.

³⁸⁹ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 441-442.

³⁹⁰ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 116.

bloodshed. Furthermore, the Guernica Peace Museum exhibit records ETA's fatal victims declining to 33 in 1981, followed by a trend of decreasing oscillation through 2001.³⁹¹ The findings of the Guernica Peace Museum are displayed graphically in Figure Eight. ETA's annual killings from 1968-2001 are illustrated by the light blue line. The small numbers above each year indicate the reported number of fatalities. As stated previously, the spike in the Guernica Peace Museum's data occurs in 1980 with 94 recorded deaths.

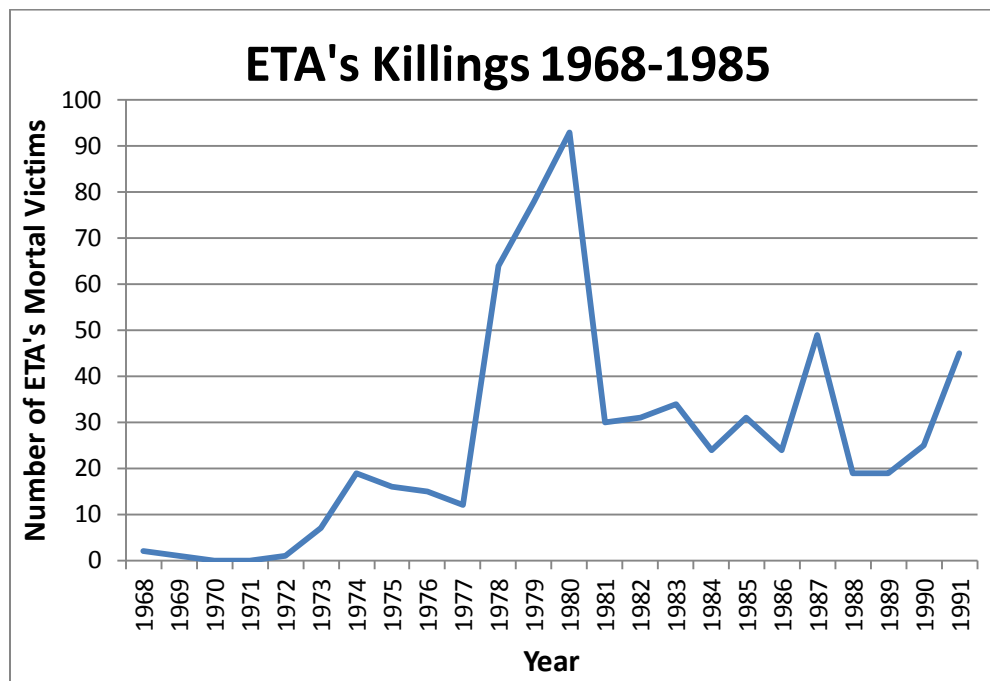


Figure Seven: ETA's Killings, Shabad and Ramo,

³⁹¹ Guernica: Guernica Peace Museum, August 2014. Exhibit.



Figure Eight: ETA's Killings, Guernica Peace Museum, August 2014

The timing of Ryan's assassination tipped the scales against ETA. Already drained by the unprecedented bloodshed of 1980, the Basque and Spanish people were tiring of ETA's violence in early 1981. The militants had claimed too many innocent lives. Carmen Ortuzar, the grieving widow of a murdered Civil Guard, condemned ETA militants for their evil actions. "They kill because they want to kill...it seems so absurd, so cruel"³⁹² she noted darkly. Ortuzar was not alone. Hundreds of victims and innumerable families mourned irreplaceable losses. ETA's attacks were considered "particularly abhorrent"³⁹³ when they directed violence at noncombatants. Each time ETA claimed a civilian, Spanish and Basque society cringed, imploring "Why this? He is neither police nor military!"³⁹⁴

³⁹² Cuesta. *Contra El Olvido*. 187.

³⁹³ Troy Jollimore. "Terrorism, War, and The Killing of the Innocent." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 10.4 (2007): 353. Print.

³⁹⁴ Cuesta. *Contra El Olvido*. 49.

ETA had no qualms with murdering innocents, but the Basque and Spanish populations refused to endure unrelenting violence. In October 1980, moderate political parties such as the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), and the Union of the Democratic Center (UCD) convened a demonstration in San Sebastián to “protest against terrorism and for peace.”³⁹⁵ Universities, including the historically pro-independence University of Deusto, agreed to close for the occasion. Another 20,000 individuals staged anti-ETA protests on November 2, 1980.³⁹⁶ *Etarras* murdered four Civil Guard members on the day of the parade, and ETA claimed nine additional lives before the year ended.³⁹⁷ Clark suggests “Peace may have been what most Basques wanted at the end of 1980, but it was not what they seemed likely to get.”³⁹⁸ He was right. Instead of a ceasefire, the New Year brought Ryan’s tragic kidnapping and murder. Met with “indignation and stupefaction by all sectors”³⁹⁹ of the Basque and Spanish populace, Ryan’s assassination ushered in a surge of civilian resistance. Upon hearing of the engineer’s death, doctor and politician Roberto Lertxundi vowed, “They [ETA] must be eliminated. A society cannot permit murderers to kill for the sake of killing.”⁴⁰⁰ After twelve years of violence and suffering, the Basque and Spanish populations were ready for peace. Ryan’s assassination, publically viewed as a “criminal act,”⁴⁰¹ represented an opportunity to denounce ETA and weaken the terrorist organization’s support base.

³⁹⁵ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 119.

³⁹⁶ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 119.

³⁹⁷ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 119.

³⁹⁸ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 119.

³⁹⁹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴⁰⁰ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴⁰¹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 7 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

Chapter Three: Cause of Death: Pneumonia?

Ryan's fate prompted more than public opposition. By early 1981, the Basque and Spanish governments were also enraged. On February 4th, 1981, just two days before Ryan's assassination, King Juan Carlos voiced warlike sentiment against ETA's militants. "Known more for skiing than for politics,"⁴⁰² the "tall, handsome, and silent"⁴⁰³ monarch was viewed as a harmless puppet by Franco's regime.⁴⁰⁴ But upon the dictator's death, the young monarch proved to possess political savviness and a good deal of spine. The typically mild Don Juan Carlos threatened ETA's violent struggle beneath the symbolic Tree of Guernica. "I will not ignore the painful manifestations of violence that frequently cover this beloved Basque land in blood,"⁴⁰⁵ the king declared. He went on to condemn "those who practice intolerance, despise coexistence, and do not respect the institutions or elementary rules of orderly freedom of expression."⁴⁰⁶ Angered by the "rancor of violence and sectarianism"⁴⁰⁷ in the Basque Country, the forty-three year old royal vowed to end ETA's killing spree. In response to Ryan's assassination on February 6th, Basque politician Enrique Múgica Herzog released a statement to *Egin*'s February 8th edition. The political figure denounced all ETA militants, but also extended his condemnation to all "accomplices of ETA, political groups and media channels that defend their [ETA's] thesis, protect them, support their actions or excuse them."⁴⁰⁸

It seems the anti-ETA sentiment extended beyond words. On February 13th, 1981, an *etarra* named José Ignacio Arregui Izaguirre was discovered dead in a Madrid prison hospital.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 267.

⁴⁰³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 267.

⁴⁰⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 267.

⁴⁰⁵ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 5 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

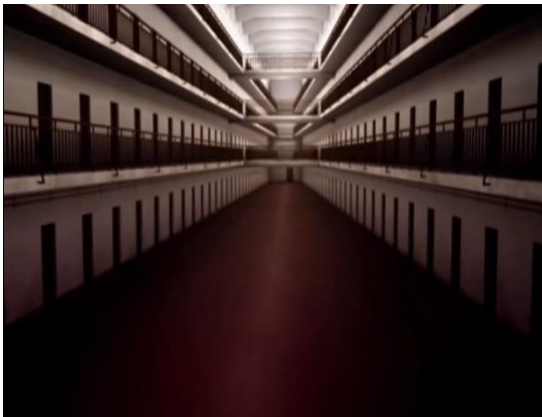
⁴⁰⁶ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 5 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴⁰⁷ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 5 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴⁰⁸ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 8 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁴⁰⁹ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 13. Print.

The thirty-year-old militant had been intercepted by Spanish law enforcement near Madrid's Prado Museum on February 4th. Izaguirre and three fellow ETA-militar members were discovered in a stolen car, with numerous weapons and munitions in their possession.⁴¹⁰ There is no evidence to suggest the *etarras'* arrest resulted from Ryan's abduction, although it is possible Madrid authorities were on high-alert following the engineer's kidnapping on January 29th. The insurgents were incarcerated in Madrid's Carabanchel Penitentiary to await judicial action. Built in 1944 under Franco's regime, Carabanchel was constructed in a Madrid suburb to remove political prisoners from the city center.⁴¹¹ According to the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CRIC), the penitentiary's wheel-and-spoke design, tall glass windows, and never-ending hallways gave prisoners the sense "of being watched constantly."⁴¹² Constructed by the forced labor of inmates, the prison carried a connotation of state repression and malignant happenings from the 1940s through the 1990s. Due to its notorious reputation, the Spanish state abandoned Carabanchel in 1998 before destroying the building in 2008.⁴¹³



Corridor of Carabanchel Penitentiary: *The Carabanchel Prison: "A Model of Repressive Space"* (CRIC)



Corridor of Carabanchel Penitentiary after Abandonment: *The Carabanchel Prison: "A Model of Repressive Space"* (CRIC)

⁴¹⁰ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴¹¹ *The Carabanchel Prison: "A Model of Repressive Space"* Dir. Cristina Sánchez Carretero. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spanish Ministry of Education and Science, 2012. Online.

⁴¹² *The Carabanchel Prison: "A Model of Repressive Space."* Online.

⁴¹³ *The Carabanchel Prison: "A Model of Repressive Space."* Online.



Model of Carabanchel Penitentiary: *The Carabanchel Prison: "A Model of Repressive Space"* (CRIC)

According to Spain's Minister of the Interior, Izaguirre "was put to judicial resolution on February 10th within the penitentiary."⁴¹⁴ But on February 12th, the suspected terrorist suffered severe dizziness while being reviewed by the *División del Gabinete de Archivo e Identificación Personal* (Spain's judicial investigation services, equivalent to the U.S. FBI). Although the prison doctor noted Izaguirre's "good state of consciousness,"⁴¹⁵ the *etarra* was suffering from respiratory acidosis (a medical emergency characterized by decreased ventilation), a discolored tongue, tongue-bites, crackling death rattles, swollen lower legs, and a high blood pressure of 170/90. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the doctor ordered Izaguirre's "urgent transfer to an appropriate hospital facility."⁴¹⁶ Within 16 hours the prisoner was moved to the penitentiary's hospital. Initial medical reports listed Izaguirre's symptoms to include "conjunctivitis, a bruised right shoulder, internal swelling of both arms and legs, second degree burns on the bottom of each foot, a stupor-like state, intense shortness of breath, and prolonged abdominal pain."⁴¹⁷ But on the morning of February 13th, Izaguirre's condition had worsened. The doctor's notes read "insufficient respiration due to double bronchopneumonia. Pneumonic condensation developed

⁴¹⁴ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴¹⁵ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴¹⁶ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴¹⁷ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

in the middle lobe of right lung within last few hours. Serious prognosis.”⁴¹⁸ At 9:00 am a hospital nurse reported the feverish Izaguirre murmured “‘Nik uste diat hiltzekotan nagoela (I think I am dying).’”⁴¹⁹ By early evening the *etarra* was dead.⁴²⁰



José Ignacio Arregui Izaguirre, San Sebastián:
Egin, February 17, 1981



Izaguirre's Funeral, Zizurkil: *Egin*, February 17,
1981

Madrid officials skirted suggestions of torture. But it seemed clear to Spanish and Basque civilians that José Ignacio Arregui Izaguirre was tortured to death. On February 14th, Minister of the Interior Juan José Rosón Pérez ordered an “exhaustive investigation”⁴²¹ concerning Izaguirre’s illness. Instead of proposing an explanation, Pérez affirmed “I cannot operate on assumptions, but on realities. The reality lies with the medical examination that will be conducted by forensic scientists tomorrow.”⁴²² The judge assigned to the Izaguirre case, José Antonio de la Campa, was equally tight-lipped. Although De la Campa publically affirmed Izaguirre suffered bronchial pneumonia, a pulmonary edema, and a pleural effusion,⁴²³ the judge refused to entertain allegations of torture. De la Campa ambiguously stated “the fact that ill-

⁴¹⁸ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴¹⁹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁴²⁰ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴²¹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴²² *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴²³ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

treatment was the direct cause of the alleged ETA member's death is not clear, and could be ruled out."⁴²⁴ Ironically, the *ABC* article that published De la Campa's interview, was titled "Five Police Officers to Face Justice."⁴²⁵ The same government officials who evaded the word "torture," were already prosecuting law enforcement personnel for committing that very crime.

Statements from Izaguirre's next-of-kin, including three brothers and two cousins, further confirmed the dead militant's mistreatment at the hands of the government. Immediately after Izaguirre's death, his family members assured *ABC* journalists the suspected *etarra* "had not lived at home for two years,"⁴²⁶ preemptively discounting any implicated connections to their dead relative. Later they expressed outrage at learning of Izaguirre's death through the press. Izaguirre's family members never received an official notification of the *etarra's* death, and they were not permitted to view his body until February 15th—only two hours before Izaguirre's corpse was transferred from Madrid's Institute of Anatomical Forensics to his hometown for burial. It seems reasonable Madrid authorities did not allow anyone to view the *etarra's* body before the autopsy, given that Izaguirre was part of a criminal investigation. But the government's failure to notify the dead prisoner's family reveals an odd break of standard bureaucratic procedure. According to the European Prison Observatory, the Spanish Penitentiary Law of 1979 details "in the event of a prisoner's death, serious illness, serious injury, or the transfer to a hospital, the authorities shall, unless that prisoner expressly requested them not to do so, immediately inform the spouse or partner of the prisoner, or, if the prisoner is single, the nearest relative."⁴²⁷ Furthermore, the family's disbelief at Izaguirre's official cause of death suggested foul play. The militant's brothers "affirmed he [Izaguirre] had a strong physical

⁴²⁴ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴²⁵ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴²⁶ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 19. Print.

⁴²⁷ Monica Aranda Ocaña. *Prison Conditions in Spain: European Prison Observatory*. Rep. Rome: Antigone Edizioni, 2013. 19. Print. Criminal Justice Programme of the European Union.

constitution and had never been sickly.”⁴²⁸ It seemed unlikely the healthy thirty year-old simply dropped dead of pneumonia. And Izaguirre’s next-of-kin confirmed “the gruesome wounds on his corpse”⁴²⁹ ominously signaled abuse.

Many political entities voiced their suspicions publicly. Carolos Garaicoechea, the *lendakari* (or president) of the Basque government, commented on the day after his death that Izaguirre’s death had a “sinister appearance”⁴³⁰ and asserted the “Basque parliament would demand responsibilities.”⁴³¹ Political parties, including the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) and the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) issued a formal inquiry to the Spanish government regarding Izaguirre’s death.⁴³² The leader of the PNV, Xabier Arzalluz, subtly implicated foul play, saying “There is great suspicion that this man died in very strange conditions, and there is both an official and unofficial version.”⁴³³ José María Benegas, the Secretary General of the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), abandoned all political delicacy. He released an official communication conveying the PSOE’s revulsion at Madrid’s violation of human rights. Benegas blatantly stated: Izaguirre’s death “was the consequence of torture suffered during his detention. [PSOE] wants to publically manifest its absolute repulsion and condemn this act, which should be considered a flagrant transgression of elementary human rights, intolerable in a democracy.”⁴³⁴ The Municipal Council of San Sebastián even suspended its session when hearing of Izaguirre’s death. Before dismissing, the assembly dedicated its pre-established two

⁴²⁸ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 19. Print.

⁴²⁹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 280.

⁴³⁰ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴³¹ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴³² ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴³³ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴³⁴ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

minutes of silence for José Maria Ryan, followed by an improvised minute of silence for Izaguirre.⁴³⁵

Just one week after anti-ETA sentiment erupted in protest of Ryan's assassination, Spain's political voices were horror-struck by the nature of a terrorist's untimely death. On February 15th, the disturbing rumors of torture were confirmed. Published autopsy reports revealed Izaguirre suffered "physical violence,"⁴³⁶ which causally contributed to the prisoner's pulmonary crisis. Once again the Spanish government avoided using the word "torture." During the span of their torture-related research from 1975-1994, Basque psychologists Lurdes Moraza and Mertxe Basterra claim the Spanish government insisted "torture does not exist in the Spanish democracy."⁴³⁷ When media outlets or human rights advocates suggested otherwise, State authorities would deny the suspected abuses met the official definition of "torture." According to Moraza and Basterra, whose study analyzed thousands of media communications from 1978-1994, the Spanish press would simply replace the term "torture" with a substitute word.

Such was the case with Izaguirre. After conceding Izaguirre's burns were likely the result of "mistreatment", Judge De la Campa then stated "I don't want to give any definitive and exact information, without having the final report."⁴³⁸ Although De la Campa's vague response could be interpreted as an attempted cover-up, it is more likely the judge was exercising caution against premature media hype. After all, publically revealing case details before a trial can compromise the justice process. In either case, the unspoken truth lingered on public minds. An opinion column in *La Gaceta del Norte* read "The Shadow of Torture."⁴³⁹ Another opinion piece in *ABC*

⁴³⁵ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴³⁶ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁴³⁷ Lurdes Moraza and Mertxe Basterra. *La Columna Infame*. Tafalla: Txalaparta, 1994. 11. Print.

⁴³⁸ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

⁴³⁹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 15 1981: 13. Print.

was titled “Torture Exists in Spain,”⁴⁴⁰ and one of *Egin*’s articles argued “The Autopsy of Arregi Izaguirre Confirmed Signs of Torture.”⁴⁴¹ Common sense guided the media’s reaction. The *etarra* had been imprisoned for eight days before displaying respiratory illness. Had Izaguirre entered Carabanchel with severe physical injuries he would have succumbed to pneumonia sooner. The physical abuse must have occurred behind prison walls.

It would be tempting to argue Izaguirre’s fatal torture was retaliation for Ryan’s assassination, but there is no concrete evidence to support the theory. The timing of Izaguirre’s alleged torture certainly corresponded with Ryan’s death. Ryan was already an ETA hostage when government forces imprisoned Izaguirre on February 4th. Kurlansky speculates Izaguirre’s extensive wounds “testified to the ten days of torture that had killed him.”⁴⁴² In addition, extensive indignation over Ryan’s death (illustrated in Chapter Two) supports the notion Izaguirre suffered revengeful violence. Ryan’s assassination, chronologically very close, may have provided a rationalization for Izaguirre’s abusive interrogators. However, there are many motivations for torture. It is possible the five policemen utilized torture to acquire intelligence information from the *etarra*. Or perhaps torturing ETA militants was a standard operating procedure in Spanish prisons at the time. Even if Ryan’s murder did not specifically provoke Izaguirre’s mistreatment, the chronological proximity of the two events is relevant. In some way, either directly or indirectly, Ryan’s death affected Izaguirre’s imprisonment. Maybe the engineer’s kidnapping placed law enforcement members on high-alert, causing Izaguirre’s February 4th arrest. Maybe prison policemen tortured the *etarra* out of vengeance for Ryan’s fate. Or maybe Ryan’s death made the Basque and Spanish populations extra sensitive to injustice, generating additional fury over Izaguirre’s death. Regardless of the exact connection

⁴⁴⁰ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

⁴⁴¹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

⁴⁴² Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 280.

between Ryan and Izaguirre, the *etarra*'s prison death provides this research with a case study on how Madrid authorities were responding to ETA violence in early 1981.

Many Basque and Spanish civilians immediately implicated the Spanish government with Izaguirre's death. Although it is possible the *etarra*'s abusive interrogators operated at their own volition, press reports implied the police officers acted under official orders. Monseñor Setién, a Bishop of Bilbao, accused the Spanish government of "robbing the consciousness and forcing the ethical convictions"⁴⁴³ of law enforcement officials. Setién's colleagues, Moseñores Larrea and Uriate, fervently claimed Izaguirre's torture and death "was not an accidental or singular occurrence,"⁴⁴⁴ but rather a standard governmental procedure. An anonymous opinion writer in Madrid identified Izaguirre's murder as "a grave error...of our democracy,"⁴⁴⁵ associating the *etarra*'s death with a systemic State defect. A *La Gaceta del Norte* journalist conformed to this view, deeming Izaguirre's death an "institutional example"⁴⁴⁶ of State corruption. An *Egin* opinion column signed "family member of torture victim" asserted "the police, the torturers, are nothing but executors of a repressive policy directed by the highest levels of power against the [Basque] revolutionaries and people."⁴⁴⁷ Supporters of this opinion deemed Madrid prison guards and police officers an extension of government power. To them, Carabanchel's ruthless prison guards acted in the interests and practices of Spain's administration.

Psychologist Philip Zimbardo contends torture is often the product of institutional perversion. Zimbardo argues governments typically label deviant policemen and soldiers "a few bad apples" to deflect blame from themselves. But power elites actually "create mechanisms that

⁴⁴³ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴⁴⁴ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁴⁴⁵ ABC [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 14. Print.

⁴⁴⁶ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 15 1981: 13. Print.

⁴⁴⁷ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 16. Print.

translate ideology—say, the causes of evil—into operating procedures.”⁴⁴⁸ When government executives condone atrocity or dehumanize certain populations, the state adopts a culture of impunity. In the Spanish case, press reports implicated two of the highest-ranking government officials with Izaguirre’s torture. Publications in *El Correo Español* asserted “The murky circumstances surrounding the suspected *etarra* José Arregui Izaguirre’s death directly involve two ministers.”⁴⁴⁹ The article dubbed Minister of the Interior Juan José Rosón and Minister of Justice Francisco Fernández Ordóñez as “most responsible”⁴⁵⁰ for the terrorist’s death. Although the ministers could be considered “rouge” individual actors, they did not personally torture Izaguirre. Instead these power elites likely created or maintained the institutional hierarchy which permitted the *etarra*’s torture. Interestingly, *El Correo Español* journalists blamed these “guardians of the system”⁴⁵¹ for Izaguirre’s death above the interrogators who abused the imprisoned terrorist. The distinction suggests the Basque media held Spain’s institutional authorities accountable for Izaguirre’s death, not a few evil policemen.

Furthermore, the Spanish government carried a harsh reputation for torture under the Francoist regime. Franco’s Law of the Spanish People (*Fuero de los Españoles*) did not protect civilians from torture. The document granted the Spanish people the right to judicial security, but stated “All the [judicial] organs of the State shall act in accordance with a hierarchic order with pre-established norms.”⁴⁵² In effect, the *Caudillo* legally solidified his authority to use execution and torture. As discussed later in this chapter, Spanish justice from 1939-1975 was characterized by secret arrests, vicious torture tactics, and mysterious disappearances of political dissenters.

⁴⁴⁸ Philip G. Zimbardo. *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*. New York: Random House, 2007. 10. Print.

⁴⁴⁹ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

⁴⁵⁰ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 4. Print.

⁴⁵¹ Zimbardo. *The Lucifer Effect*. 10.

⁴⁵² *The Statute Law of the Spanish People*. Title 1. Chapter 1. Art. 17. 1945 (amended 1967)

This legacy of brutality likely bred Spanish and Basque distrust in the central government, and substantiated civilian suspicions that Izaguirre was tortured to death by the Spanish state. One *Egin* journalist overtly connected Izaguirre's torture to memories of Francoist atrocity. He wrote the *etarra*'s interrogators "used the same [torture] methods—only even more brutal—as the torture in the time of the Dictator [Franco]."⁴⁵³ And Basque opinion writer Ardotxi passionately declared "For all those people detained, incarcerated, tortured, and killed in the time of Francoist power, José Arregui has raised a flag against the pseudo-democracy of today."⁴⁵⁴

Basques civilians quickly voiced their anger over Izaguirre's fate. Small manifestations broke out around 7:00 pm on February 15th. The impromptu marches attracted an approximate total of 7,000 Basques to the streets of Bilbao, San Sebastián, Vitoria, and Pamplona. Most participants criticized torture tactics, while a smaller minority "uttered shrieks against the police and in favor of ETA."⁴⁵⁵ As the anti-government protests gained momentum, the Basque Country halted industry, services, and eventually all civilian activities.⁴⁵⁶ *Egin* reported the complete closure of public transportation, centers of learning, companies, industries, and even bars.⁴⁵⁷ Public response to the *etarra*'s mistreatment eerily resembled the pro-Ryan demonstrations, which occurred only a week before. And it would be reasonable to suggest public outrage over Izaguirre's death was extraordinary. Although I cannot provide hard evidence to this effect, I did not encounter any other instances of civilian outcry over an ETA terrorist's death in my research.

⁴⁵³ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

⁴⁵⁴ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 16. Print.

⁴⁵⁵ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 15 1981: 10. Print.

⁴⁵⁶ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 15 1981: 15. Print.

⁴⁵⁷ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

The protests only escalated. On February 16th, 10,000 Basques attended Izaguirre's funeral in Zizurkil, a town located 20 km south of San Sebastián.⁴⁵⁸ The attendees prayed over Izaguirre's displayed body, bore his coffin through the streets, and paid their respects to the suspected *etarra*'s family.⁴⁵⁹ The same day, approximately 108,000 civilians gathered in the streets of the Basque Country to protest the Spanish government's brutal mistreatment.⁴⁶⁰ Cries of "Amnesty Yes, Torture No,"⁴⁶¹ "Police Kill,"⁴⁶² "Against Terrorism of the State"⁴⁶³ reverberated through the streets. *Egin* journalists described the protest as a "great show of solidarity, the most important one of recent years in Euskadi."⁴⁶⁴

Izaguirre's fatal torture, which deepened the "us" [Basque] vs. "them" [Spanish government] mentality, also provided Basque separatists with the opportunity to denounce Madrid authorities. *Herri Batasuna* ("Popular Unity" in English), an influential Basque nationalist political party, pressed its political advantage by declaring the demonstrations a "great triumph"⁴⁶⁵ for the Basque people. Party representatives praised the Basque people for strengthening the nationalist coalition, and publically criticized government cruelty. ETA also took advantage of the *etarra*'s death. Eager to thwart public sympathy for the violent group, one *ABC* opinion writer stated "to convert the members of ETA into heroes, in this way, would be a manipulation of this death."⁴⁶⁶ But the writer's admonitions went unheeded. ETA, sensing an opportunity to garner public support, painted Izaguirre as a tragic martyr for Basque liberty. The

⁴⁵⁸ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 20. Print.

⁴⁵⁹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

⁴⁶⁰ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁴⁶¹ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

⁴⁶² *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

⁴⁶³ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

⁴⁶⁴ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁴⁶⁵ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁴⁶⁶ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

militants hailed Izaguirre as a “Homeric”⁴⁶⁷ hero, who stood “ready to die”⁴⁶⁸ for the cause. *ABC* reported “ETA Capitalized on the Manifestations”⁴⁶⁹ by appearing at various demonstrations to mourn its fallen comrade. Militants and supporters interjected shouts of “Hail ETA Militar”⁴⁷⁰ in crowd chants, and one anti-government march even carried a “banner signed by the terrorist organization ETA.”⁴⁷¹ Despite the ethno-nationalist exploitation of Izaguirre’s murder, many outraged Basques had no political motivations. The front page of *Egin* estimated about 77,000 demonstrators identified with leftist Basque political parties, while another 31,000 protestors were centrist civilians. Although it would be nearly impossible to accurately count a crowd of 110,000 people, the Basque political parties organized themselves into separate blocks. Political delegates from each block tallied their own crowds, allowing *Egin* reporters to estimate the larger crowd demographics. The presence of centrist civilians is especially notable. Only a week previously, these same individuals had publically denounced Ryan’s assassination with equal fervor.⁴⁷² The Basque Country, still emotionally raw from Ryan’s death, was in uproar again. But this time, the Spanish government was the enemy.

⁴⁶⁷ Zulaika. *Basque Violence*. 89.

⁴⁶⁸ Zulaika. *Basque Violence*. 89.

⁴⁶⁹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁴⁷⁰ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 17 1981: 18. Print.

⁴⁷¹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁴⁷² *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.



Anti-Government Protest, San Sebastián: *Egin*,
February 17, 1981



Anti-Government Protest, Bilbao: *Egin*, February
17, 1981

This chapter examines the circumstances and consequences of José Ignacio Arregui Izaguirre's brutal death at the hands of Madrid law enforcement officials. Like "José Maria Ryan," I was unfamiliar with the name "José Ignacio Arregui Izaguirre" at the start of this project. Although the suspected *etarra* is absent from most academic texts on ETA, the circumstances of his death captivated the Spanish and Basque press in early 1981. Within a period of four weeks, Madrid's *ABC* and Bilbao's *La Gaceta del Norte* published a combined total of 74 articles regarding the imprisoned terrorist. As this chapter will argue, Izaguirre's death demarcates another key moment in Spain's post-Franco democratization process. Frustrated by ETA's violence, Madrid authorities likely tortured Izaguirre to extract intelligence information or to retaliate for Ryan's tragic assassination. "Instead of capitalizing on a tragic public relations victory"⁴⁷³ from Ryan's death, the Spanish government fought ETA's violence with similar cruelty. This vengeful counter-terrorism policy undermined democratic principles outlined in the Spanish Constitution of 1978, and prompted Spanish and Basque civilian backlash. As the next

⁴⁷³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 280.

chapter will discuss, the political instability stemming from Ryan and Izaguirre's deaths contributed to a near-failure of Spanish democracy on February 23rd, 1981.

Franco's Brutality: Torture and Murder of Basques from 1939-1975

Izaguirre's death, while incarcerated, was not unprecedented. According to the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) cited by Kurlansky, Franco's regime executed a total of 21,780 Basques between 1939 and 1945 alone.⁴⁷⁴ While the chilling statistic has never been verified, it is clear a substantial number of Basques perished in the *Caudillo's* post-Civil War purges. Clark remarks "hundreds of innocent civilians were rounded up on the street by day, and in their homes at night, driven to remote country areas, or to deserted graveyards, and executed summarily, without even the benefit of having a priest hear their confession."⁴⁷⁵ Basque veterans who opposed Franco's rule endured unimaginable misery in Spanish prisons. Inmates of the Dueso prison were forced into crowded cells with no running water or toilets. Death came by starvation, disease, firing squad, or the medieval *garrote*.⁴⁷⁶ And sadly, frequent "beatings, torture, and forced confessions"⁴⁷⁷ augmented execution rates. Martin, a Basque nationalist who fought for the Republican side during the Civil War, bitterly recalls his imprisonment from 1937 to 1942. When asked if incarceration was better than a hazardous battlefield, the former soldier succinctly responded "To be a prisoner is the worst thing."⁴⁷⁸ A woman named Josefa, the wife of a nationalist soldier, remembers encountering a former Basque republican in her hometown after the Civil War. Franco's forces, who saw Josefa meet the young man's eyes, questioned whether the two were acquaintances. "No," she lied. Years later Josefa confessed the Basque had eaten

⁴⁷⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 227.

⁴⁷⁵ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 84.

⁴⁷⁶ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 84.

⁴⁷⁷ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 84.

⁴⁷⁸ Zulaika. *Basque Violence*. 28.

breakfast at her house that morning. ““They took him to the cemetery and there they gave him the last shot. I will never forget that,”⁴⁷⁹ she remarked painfully.

When ETA entered the political stage in 1959, Franco continued his cruel policies under the guise of counter-terrorism tactics. The dictator’s forces conducted massive anti-ETA sweeps, “arresting, torturing, and imprisoning”⁴⁸⁰ hundreds of Basques without judicial process. Kurlansky estimates Franco arrested 4,356 Basques without trial between 1963 and 1973.⁴⁸¹ The statistic may be low. Given the *Caudillo*’s use of death squads, it is likely additional presumed *etarras* disappeared unreported. The precursor to ETA’s violent action-repression-action strategy was an attempted train derailment on July 18th, 1961. After ETA’s attack, which did not (and did not intend to) physically harm anyone, “more than 100 [militants] were arrested and tortured; about 30 of these were taken to the infamous Carabanchel prison in Madrid for more interrogation and torture.”⁴⁸² And when ETA assassinated chief police inspector Melitón Manzanas in 1968, “Madrid imposed martial law, and hundreds of suspects were imprisoned amid rumors of police brutality.”⁴⁸³

Although the Fuero de los Españoles or Statute Law of the Spanish People (detailed in the The Spanish Constitution of 1972) guaranteed the “dignity, integrity and the liberty of the human person,”⁴⁸⁴ and “the right to judicial security”⁴⁸⁵ for every Spaniard, Franco’s absolute power could easily halt these fundamental human rights. Known as a “state of exemption,”⁴⁸⁶ this suspension allowed police and Civil Guard members to disregard civil liberties such as

⁴⁷⁹ Zulaika. *Basque Violence*. 29.

⁴⁸⁰ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 227.

⁴⁸¹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 252.

⁴⁸² Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 157.

⁴⁸³ Zulaika. *Basque Violence*. 55.

⁴⁸⁴ Francisco Franco. *Fundamental Laws of the State - The Spanish Constitution*. Madrid: 1972. 48. Print.

⁴⁸⁵ Franco. *Fundamental Laws of the State*. 51.

⁴⁸⁶ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 170.

“freedom of expression, privacy of the mail, assembly and association, habeas corpus, freedom of movement and residence, and freedom from arbitrary house arrest.”⁴⁸⁷ According to Clark, a state of exemption was declared six times in the Basque Provinces between 1960 and 1977. ETA scholar José María Portel estimates 8,500 Basques were affected by the states of exemption, “either through arrest, imprisonment and torture, or by fleeing into exile to avoid the police or vigilante groups.”⁴⁸⁸ Amnesty International, which conducted investigations of Spanish police brutality in 1975, found conclusive evidence that “massive detentions took place in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa provinces at levels far higher than the official statistics claimed.”⁴⁸⁹ The resulting publication, titled *Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Spain*, contended the Spanish government detained more than 2,000 Basques during its six states of exemption. Madrid authorities documented only 189 arrests.⁴⁹⁰

Torture was common. Eva Forest, a Catalan mother of three, was arrested and tortured in 1974 for interviewing ETA commandos for a solidarity organization.⁴⁹¹ In her testimonies, Eva recalls hearing “carnival-like laughter” in the midst of horrific beatings. She goes on to describe the unspeakable experience of watching a “blindfolded woman lying nude on a table whom the torturers told they had advanced technology to sterilize her through some type of ray.”⁴⁹² The woman, who endured electric shock on her abdomen, was “particularly broken”⁴⁹³ after the incident. Tragically, Eva was imprisoned, interrogated, and tortured without trial until her release in 1977.⁴⁹⁴ Her case was not unusual. Amnesty International’s 1975 report asserted “torture was

⁴⁸⁷ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 170.

⁴⁸⁸ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 171.

⁴⁸⁹ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 173.

⁴⁹⁰ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 173.

⁴⁹¹ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 270.

⁴⁹² Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 211-212.

⁴⁹³ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 212.

⁴⁹⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 270.

systematically used against a *minimum* of 250 Basque detainees”⁴⁹⁵ from 1960 to 1975. But investigators suggested the phenomenon was far more frequent than hard evidence could prove. Victims who died while incarcerated vanished from prison records and many abused detainees likely avoided human rights interviews, fearing police retaliation. Each victim interviewed by the human rights organization “had been tortured at least once a day during his period of imprisonment.”⁴⁹⁶ Some inmates had suffered up to five torture sessions in one day. And sickeningly, the abuse lasted anywhere between “half an hour to six hours.”⁴⁹⁷ To quote Amnesty International’s assessment, Madrid’s torture methods consisted of:

“Severe and systematic beatings with a variety of contusive weapons, falanga (beating on the soles of the feet), burning with cigarettes, near drownings by being submerged in water while suspended upside-down, enforced sleeplessness, and forms of psychological stress, including mock executions, sexual threats, threats to relatives and the technique known as *el cerrojo* (the frequent fastening and unfastening of bolts on the cell doors in order to keep prisoners in perpetual fear that the torturers have returned).”⁴⁹⁸

According to Amnesty International, all three major police forces of the Basque Provinces, including the *Policia Armada*, the *Guardia Civil*, and the *Brigada Político-Social*, participated in the beatings. Given the consistent nature of the violence and its usage across law enforcement agencies, Amnesty International’s report argues prison torture was a “systematic technique to punish and suppress Basque nationalists and was not a series of isolated and

⁴⁹⁵ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 174.

⁴⁹⁶ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 174.

⁴⁹⁷ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 174.

⁴⁹⁸ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 174.

irregular violations of law by a few police.”⁴⁹⁹ This assessment suggests the frequent violence against alleged *etarras* was a state-sanctioned activity for two specific reasons. First, torture could potentially obtain intelligence information or confessions from terrorists. Second, the beatings could “intimidate the Basque population into submission, and to frighten them into abandoning support for the Basque nationalist cause.”⁵⁰⁰ While only the victim suffered physical violence, the entire community of Basque separatists endured the collective punishment of fear. If Basque nationalists grew too terrified to support ETA militants, the covert group could not fulfill recruitment goals, acquire necessary funds, honor “martyrs,” or evade arrest.

“Things Have Not Changed:” Basque Torture under Democracy

Counter-terrorism torture tactics continued after the imposition of democracy. Although Section 15 of Spain’s new Fundamental Rights and Public Liberties (outlined in The Spanish Constitution of 1978) guaranteed “Everyone has the right to life and to physical and moral integrity, and under no circumstances may be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment,”⁵⁰¹ law enforcement officials paid no heed. The fascist tendencies of Franco’s authoritarian regime pervaded Spain’s early democratic institutions. According to Clark, “the worst elements of Franco’s police state survived the transition to democracy in Spain.”⁵⁰² These “elements” were both physical and cultural. Countless individuals, including Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez himself, served under Franco. Those who promoted or participated in torture from 1939-1975 likely supported the continuation of the tactic. In addition, Franco’s tenure generated a culture of impunity. The dictator’s post-Civil War purges permitted

⁴⁹⁹ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 174.

⁵⁰⁰ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 174-175.

⁵⁰¹ *The Spanish Constitution*. 1978. Sec. 15.

⁵⁰² Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 40.

nationalist soldiers to humiliate, rape, pillage, and kill dissenters with no repercussions.⁵⁰³ Sadly, this mindset outlived the *Caudillo* himself.

In October 1979, Amnesty International conducted another mission concerning Spain's mistreatment of political prisoners. The publication, which analyzed torture incidents between September 1978 and June 1979, reported maltreatment occurred in Madrid, Barcelona, and Bilbao police stations against Basque prisoners.⁵⁰⁴ Abuse included threats of death or mutilation, sleep deprivation, beatings of the "head, body, genitals, soles of the feet, and fingers,"⁵⁰⁵ suspension by hand-cuffed wrists, electric shock, sexual threats, and *la bañera* or "having one's head forced into a bathtub filled with a mixture of water, blood, vomit, excrement, and food remnants and kept there until near-suffocation."⁵⁰⁶ One detained ETA militant, Mikel Amilibia, claimed he was tortured by Civil Guard members for six days in October 1979. When the *etarra* was released on October 20th, he displayed burn marks on his inner thighs from electrodes. Doctors confirmed the thirty-two year old had endured severe electric shock while in captivity.⁵⁰⁷

Izaguirre's 1981 death is yet another example of law enforcement torture under Spanish democracy. In their research, Zulaika and Douglass cite Moraza and Basterra's *La Columna Infame*, a book on Spanish torture. Moraza and Basterra's analysis of Spanish media communications from 1978 to 1994 reveals 14,000 Basques have been arrested since 1978 for political reasons, and "85 percent of those arrested are subjected to torture and maltreatment of all kinds."⁵⁰⁸ Clearly, Izaguirre was neither the first nor the last victim of brutal treatment in prison. And four days after Izaguirre's death on February 13th, imprisoned ETA militant Isidro

⁵⁰³ Preston. *The Spanish Civil War*. 302-208.

⁵⁰⁴ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 261.

⁵⁰⁵ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 262.

⁵⁰⁶ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 261.

⁵⁰⁷ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 262.

⁵⁰⁸ Zulaika and Douglass. *Terror and Taboo*. 204-205.

Extabe Urestrilla was admitted to the Carabanchel prison hospital for a bullet wound in his left shoulder.⁵⁰⁹ The *etarra*, who was captured with Izaguirre on February 4th, was experiencing severe pain and permanent dizziness. While *ABC* proposes Urestrilla may have been injured during a shoot-out with law enforcement on February 4th, the article offers no evidence for the suggestion. It is possible the militant was shot in prison. And even if Urestrilla suffered the gunshot wound on February 4th (and not in Carabanchel), Spanish prison authorities neglected to provide him with sufficient medical treatment in a timely manner. Forcing a person to live with a bullet lodged in their shoulder for 13 days could certainly be considered torture.

Spain Was Not Alone: The International Aspect

Spain's high torture rates were not unusual. Many democratic European nations utilized physical abuse from the 1960s-1980s to combat separatist insurgencies. During the 1970s and 1980s, the British government was notorious for the brutal interrogation and torture of suspected IRA militants. In July 1976, IRA prisoners in Belfast's Crumlin Road Jail issued a statement protesting the "continuous barrage of abuse, both verbal and physical, from the prison wardens."⁵¹⁰ Jim Auld, a twenty-year old Irish Catholic, was mistakenly arrested by British security forces in 1971 as a presumed IRA member. In his testimony, the youth recalled "They [police] beat me with batons, they kicked me all around the place. They were aiming towards my privates and my head and they were making me keep my hands at my sides. I went unconscious a couple of times and they woke me up."⁵¹¹ During the 1970s Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officers at the Castlereagh Interrogation Center participated in abuse. Former members recall "both IRA suspects and loyalists were beaten, burned with cigarettes or lighters, forced to

⁵⁰⁹ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁵¹⁰ English. *Armed Struggle*. 190.

⁵¹¹ John Conroy. "Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People The Dynamics of Torture." *The New York Times* [New York] Print.

assume stressful positions for long periods, stripped and humiliated, and sometimes threatened with murder.”⁵¹² In an interview with *The Guardian*, one senior RUC detective avowed the “beatings were an integral part of the policing process.”⁵¹³

The democratic French government was equally ruthless during Algeria’s war for independence in the 1950s and early 1960s. Henri Alleg, a French journalist who supported Algerian independence, was arrested by French paratroopers during the Battle of Algiers in June 1957. His memoir, *The Question*, reveals appalling acts of torture committed by the French military. In one horrific memory, Alleg recounts enduring his first round of electric shock: “I leapt in my bonds and shouted with all my might... A flash of lightning exploded next to my ear and I felt my heart racing in my breast. I struggled, screaming, and stiffened myself until the straps cut into my flesh.”⁵¹⁴ Later Alleg remembers choking as paratroopers forced his rag-wrapped head underwater. “I had the impression of drowning, and a terrible agony, that of death itself, took possession of me. In spite of myself, all the muscles of my body struggled uselessly to save myself from suffocation.”⁵¹⁵ Alleg was one of many victims. Martin Evans, author of *Algeria: France’s Undeclared War*, argues torture was a fundamental aspect of the Battle of Algiers. He writes, “Although there was no written order sanctioning torture, the army was verbally encouraged to use it”⁵¹⁶ by high-ranking military officers. French History teacher and Communist Party member Robert Bonnaud recorded his eyewitness account of the inhuman brutality committed by the French military in Algeria. He explained the horrific torture methods, stating “the electrodes are fixed to the temple, to the underside of the tongue, to the genitals as

⁵¹² Ian Cobain. "Inside Castlereagh: 'We Got Confessions by Torture'" *The Guardian*. 11 Oct. 2010. Web. 18 Mar. 2015.

⁵¹³ Cobain. "Inside Castlereagh."

⁵¹⁴ Henri Alleg. *The Question*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 2006. 44. Print.

⁵¹⁵ Alleg. *The Question*. 49.

⁵¹⁶ Martin Evans. *Algeria: France's Undeclared War*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012. 206. Print.

well as to any other sensitive part of the body...Such torture leaves hardly any marks.”⁵¹⁷

French General Jacques Pâris de la Bollardière, who assumed his command in eastern Algeria in July 1956, was equally shocked by the French military’s routine use of torture. Enraged by the barbaric practice, Bollardière published an open letter against the French government in the newspaper *L’Express*. He was dismissed from the French army, served sixty days in solitary confinement, and was exiled to an obscure African territory.

Bollardière’s outrage was only the beginning. When news of torture in Algeria flooded the European press in March 1957, eye-witnesses and civilians alike fervently pledged a “humanist rejection of torture.”⁵¹⁸ Destabilized by public outrage, the French government denied the collective use of torture and censured press articles. Determined to continue fighting for Algeria, the French military threatened a military coup d’état in May 1958. From May 24-29th the French people waited anxiously, fearing French paratroopers would drop into Paris and overthrow the government. On May 29th, 1958 the Fourth French Republic fell, destabilized by controversy over torture and the burden of a war-induced financial crisis. The coup came in the form of General Charles de Gaulle. Already a prominent political figure, the World War II veteran announced he would found a new Republican government to “ensure national unity.”⁵¹⁹ De Gaulle’s Fifth Republic featured a strong presidency with a weak parliament, and an emphasis on the de-escalation of violence in Algeria. By Izaguirre’s fatal torture in February 1981, France’s 1958 crisis was still a fresh memory. Many Spanish and Basque civilians personally witnessed the near collapse of French society as a result of state-sanctioned torture in the Algerian War. Furthermore, even in late 20th century Europe, democracy was still a fragile concept. Spanish and Basque civilians, like French citizens before them, likely recognized

⁵¹⁷ Evans. *Algeria*. 212.

⁵¹⁸ Evans. *Algeria*. 212.

⁵¹⁹ Evans. *Algeria*. 235.

government torture as a direct threat to democratic consolidation. And just like 1958 France, Spain experienced citizen backlash for torturing insurgents under a democratic regime.

Definitions and Laws: The Case against Torture

Many contemporary democracies use torture, so the tactic cannot be accurately deemed “undemocratic.” However, the concept of torture contradicts the basic civil liberties sought by most democracies. According to Merriam Webster’s, the most basic definition of democracy is “a government by the people.”⁵²⁰ Torture rejects this representative justice process. Perpetrators disregard the “will of the people,” and consume themselves with the necessity of gaining information, sowing fear, or instilling pain. In doing so, the physical abuse “corrupts the moral standards of the nation practicing it.”⁵²¹ In addition, the dictionary also considers democracy “an organization or situation in which everyone is treated equally and has equal rights.”⁵²² Again, torture defies this designation. Victims of physical abuse are treated horrendously in comparison to their fellow citizens. Furthermore, American Social Psychologist Clark McCauley argues torture fundamentally violates the democratic principles of individual rights and individual punishments. Torture victims suffer abuse, often before guilt is ascertained, because they belong to an “enemy group.”⁵²³ Instead of facing punishment for their own individual crimes, victims pay for the misdeeds of their entire community. In the case of Spain, Izaguirre suffered for the collective crimes of all ETA militants before his own offenses were even determined.

A democracy that pledges equality but engages in torture, contradicts its moral foundations. This behavior, while potentially beneficial in the short-term, can actually inspire

⁵²⁰ *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, Web. 11 Feb. 2015.

⁵²¹ Stritzke and Lewandowsky. *Terrorism and Torture*. 2.

⁵²² *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, Web. 11 Feb. 2015.

⁵²³ Clark McCauley. "War versus Criminal Justice in Response to Terrorism: The Losing Logic of Torture." Ed. Werner G. K. Stritzke. *Terrorism and Torture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2009. 64. Print.

armed insurgencies. Mohammad Sidique Khan, one of the terrorists responsible for the July 7th, 2005 London train bombings, defends his atrocities by saying “Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world...I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters.”⁵²⁴ Algerian War scholar Martin Evans argues there is no doubt torture strengthened support for Algerian separatists, namely the National Liberation Front (FLN). And Warner G.K. Stritzke points out, terrorists can use the “moral double standards of democratic nations”⁵²⁵ as justification for civilian targeting.

More concretely, torture in 1981 Spain threatened to break the legal framework of the newly democratic state. Izaguirre’s death in the hands of Madrid prison authorities violated the fundamental laws of the state. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 blatantly outlawed torture and the “degrading punishment or treatment”⁵²⁶ of Spaniards. Given Izaguirre’s injuries, he likely suffered both excruciating pain and personal humiliation in Carabanchel. Furthermore, the document asserted “A habeas corpus procedure shall be provided by law”⁵²⁷ for all prisoners. Although the Minister of the Interior assured the Spanish press that Izaguirre enjoyed fair “judicial resolution”⁵²⁸ within the penitentiary, this secretive hearing may or may not have happened. In addition, the General Prisons Act of 1979 decreed: “The prison administration shall ensure the life, integrity and health of inmates.”⁵²⁹ Izaguirre’s interrogators did the opposite. The *etarra*, who was lawfully protected by the State, “had a premature, violent, and terrible death”⁵³⁰ from police-inflicted wounds. Clearly, Madrid did not meet its own legal stipulations in February

⁵²⁴ Stritzke and Lewandowsky. *Terrorism and Torture*. 4.

⁵²⁵ Stritzke and Lewandowsky. *Terrorism and Torture*. 4.

⁵²⁶ *The Spanish Constitution*. 1978. Sec. 15.

⁵²⁷ *The Spanish Constitution*. 1978. Sec. 17.4.

⁵²⁸ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 17. Print.

⁵²⁹ *The General Prisons Act*. 1979. 12.

⁵³⁰ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15. Feb. 1981: 16. Print.

1981. And, as detailed in the following paragraphs, both Spanish and Basque civilians condemned the central government's failure to uphold its new democratic principles.

“Who Cared?”

Izaguirre was a suspected terrorist and murderer “whom the police accused of several assassinations.”⁵³¹ Among other crimes, he was accused of “blowing up two Civil Guard in Logroño which resulted in two deaths and at least thirty injuries, and placing a bomb in a central street of Logroño which killed two, a deputy of police and an industrialist.”⁵³² But the *etarra*'s fatal torture prompted an intense Spanish and Basque public reaction, among civilians and politicians alike. As illustrated above, thousands of demonstrators congregated in the streets to denounce the prisoner's fatal torture. And approximately 10,000 individuals mourned the suspected terrorist at his funeral.

Countless newspaper articles and opinion pieces from both Spain and the Basque Country labeled Izaguirre's death a hypocritical deviation from Spain's democratic laws. A bishop interviewed by *ABC* exclaimed “Not a single reason provided by the State can justify the violence”⁵³³ against Izaguirre. In *El Correo Español*, PNV President Xabier Arzallus stated “The torture [of Izaguirre] is an attack against a fundamental human right protected by the Constitution and all of its laws... You cannot justify one murder and condemn another.”⁵³⁴ An article drafted by *Europa Press* featured in *Egin* agreed with this assessment. The column denounced Izaguirre's death, reading “The Constitution sets forth, that in no case, may people be subjected to torture, nor inhuman or degrading treatment.”⁵³⁵ Charo Zarzalejos, a journalist for

⁵³¹ James M. Markham "Basque's Death in Jail Brings Call for Mass Strike." *The New York Times* [New York] 15 Feb. 1981: Print.

⁵³² *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Feb. 14 1981: 1. Print.

⁵³³ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 17 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁵³⁴ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 6. Print.

⁵³⁵ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15. Feb. 1981: 32. Print.

La Gaceta de Norte, argued the newly-crafted Spanish government had not “upheld democratic laws, free elections, or a Constitution accepted by all”⁵³⁶ since its inception. The Basque Parliament issued a statement on the cover of *El Correo Español*’s February 14th edition, stating “The Basque Country condemns this death [of Izaguirre] with the same force it has condemned all murders.”⁵³⁷ And *Egin* journalists cited Julen Guimón, a representative of the Union of the Democratic Center Party (UCD), in their February 15th edition. When questioned about the “criminal’s” death, the politician defended Izaguirre, arguing “I do not believe anyone has the right to call someone a criminal until a judge has delivered a definitive sentence.”⁵³⁸ Clearly, many Spaniards and Basques rejected Izaguirre’s death as blatant injustice.

To further assess the Spanish and Basque response to the *etarra*’s death, I constructed two analysis schemas similar to those in Chapter Two. First, I tallied the number of articles pertaining to Izaguirre’s imprisonment and death in *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte*. Izaguirre did not appear in publications prior to his death on February 13th, but I included any article mentioning the presumed ETA militant between February 13th and February 23rd. For the sake of consistency, any article that mentioned José Ignacio Arregui Izaguirre by name qualified for the tally. Unfortunately, I could not compare “baseline” Spanish and Basque media response to the deaths of ETA militants (i.e. excluding Izaguirre) with Spanish and Basque media reaction to the death of Izaguirre (i.e. only Izaguirre). This particular analysis schema was possible in the case of Ryan, given that ETA staged many attacks in the month preceding the engineer’s death. But Izaguirre’s death was unusual. In the newspapers collected from January 1st – February 23rd, I found no mention of another *etarra*’s death. Due to this limitation, I was particularly interested

⁵³⁶ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 13. Print.

⁵³⁷ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 1. Print.

⁵³⁸ *Egin* [San Sebastián, Spain] 15. Feb. 1981: 3. Print.

in gauging any differences between Madrid and Bilbao media reactions to the presumed terrorist's death.

Second, I compared the positive, neutral, or negative descriptive nouns attributed to *etarras* in articles referring to Ryan's kidnapping and murder, with those word choices used in articles referencing Izaguirre's torture and death. The frequencies of positive, neutral, and negative descriptions from *ABC* were contrasted with those from *La Gaceta del Norte*. I wanted to assess whether the high frequency of negative words attributed to ETA following Ryan's death changed after Izaguirre's death. In addition, I was interested in noting any variance between ETA descriptions in Bilbao and Madrid in response to Izaguirre's fatal torture. Details of my word analysis will be provided with the data in a subsequent section.

Newspaper coverage analysis of Izaguirre's torture and death reflects an equal level of preoccupation over the *etarra's* mistreatment in Madrid and Bilbao. Despite the contrasting political leanings of the cities (detailed in Chapter Two), both *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* published exactly 37 articles regarding Izaguirre between February 13th and February 23rd. In this 10 day span, both newspapers published approximately 4 articles about Izaguirre per day. The results indicate both Madrid and Bilbao were focused on the death of an imprisoned terrorist. This is astounding by itself. The fatal torture of Izaguirre, a man who likely murdered two Civil Guard officers, a police deputy, and a civilian, captivated Basque and Spanish media coverage for weeks. Even more surprising, the publications generally rejected Izaguirre's fate (as demonstrated in previous paragraphs). Furthermore, *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* wrote exactly the same number of articles concerning the presumed ETA militant's untimely death. Given the historical anti-ETA sentiment in Madrid, this research anticipated very little reaction to the *etarra's* death in *ABC's* publications. And recognizing the generally friendlier view of ETA in

the North, this project expected a greater response to Izaguirre's death in Bilbao. Instead, the statistics illustrate a shared sense of injustice across Spain and the Basque Country. Regardless of opinion on Basque nationalism or ETA, both the Basque and Spanish media considered Izaguirre's fatal torture a morally repugnant and hypocritical rejection of Spain's new democratic foundation.

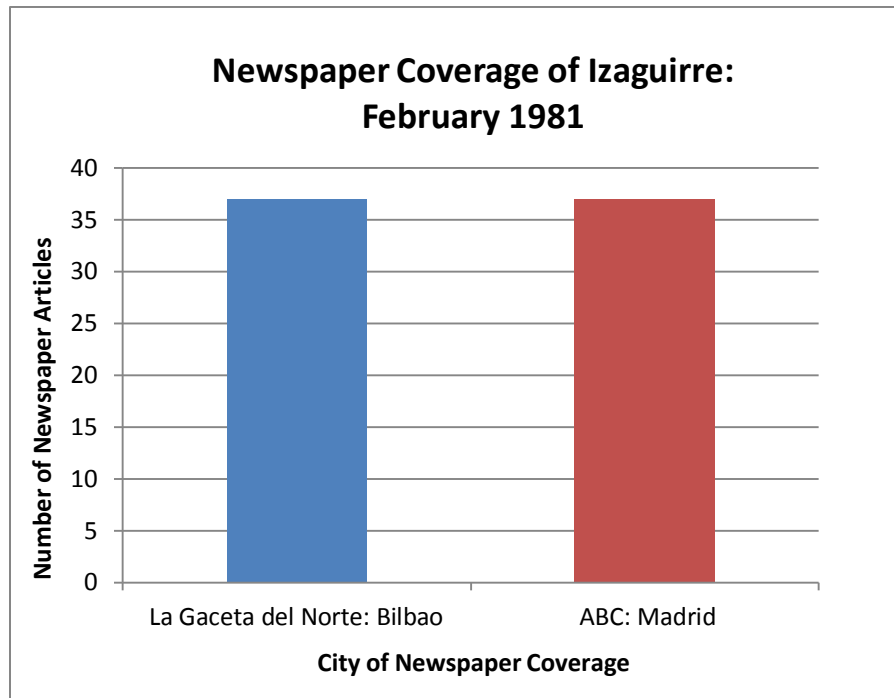


Figure One: Newspaper Coverage of Izaguirre

The second analysis method compared *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* descriptions of ETA in articles pertaining to Ryan's kidnapping and murder, and articles pertaining to Izaguirre's torture and death. Again, this research combines qualitative and quantitative methods to explore journalists' underlying opinions of ETA in response to Ryan's kidnapping and assassination, and Izaguirre's fatal torture. By comparing these word choices, I hoped to identify a possible Basque and Spanish opinion shift regarding ETA in response to the imprisoned *etarra's* mistreatment. The same linguistic analysis from Chapter Two applies to this section.

Words such as “*abertzale* (pro-Basque),” “youth,” “pro-liberty vigilante,” and “hero” were included in the positive classification. Descriptions like “group,” “organization,” “member,” and “presumed *etarra*” constituted neutral vocabulary. And “terrorist organization,” “terrorist,” “armed group,” “authors of kidnapping,” “drug addicts,” “illegals,” “executioners,” “murderers,” “neo-fascists,” and “criminals” were considered negative nouns.⁵³⁹ Figures Two, Three, Four, and Five depict the results of the analysis graphically.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the word selections of both *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* reflect an over-achingly negative opinion of ETA in response to Ryan’s death. Madrid’s *ABC* employed 221 negative words or phrases, constituting 91% of its ETA word selections. Bilbao’s *La Gaceta del Norte* used 73 negative words or phrases, making up 90% of its ETA descriptions. *La Gaceta del Norte* used slightly more neutral phrases, with *ABC* utilizing 4 neutral words at 2.0% of all tallied descriptions, and *La Gaceta del Norte* including 6 neutral words at 7.5% of all tallied descriptions. *ABC* printed slightly more positive descriptions than *La Gaceta del Norte*. The Madrid paper included 17 positive nouns at 7.0% of all ETA descriptions, while the Bilbao press only used 2 positive words at 2.5% of all ETA word choices. The difference between each publication’s positive, neutral, and negative descriptive nouns is slight. In articles referring to Ryan’s kidnapping and assassination, both Madrid and Bilbao expressed a tremendously negative opinion of ETA.

⁵³⁹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] Jan.-Feb. 1981: Print.

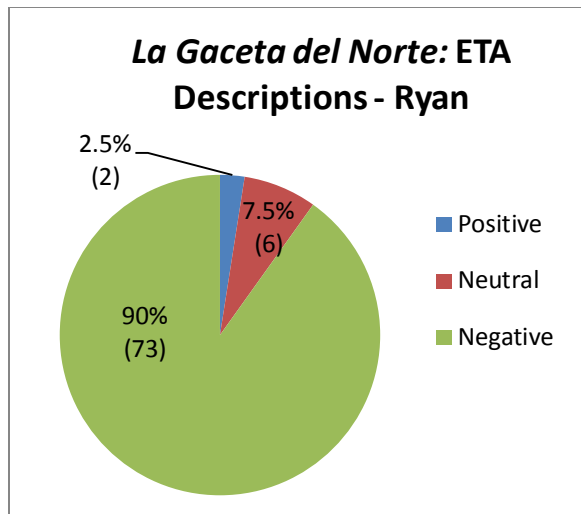


Figure Two: Bilbao ETA Descriptions - Ryan

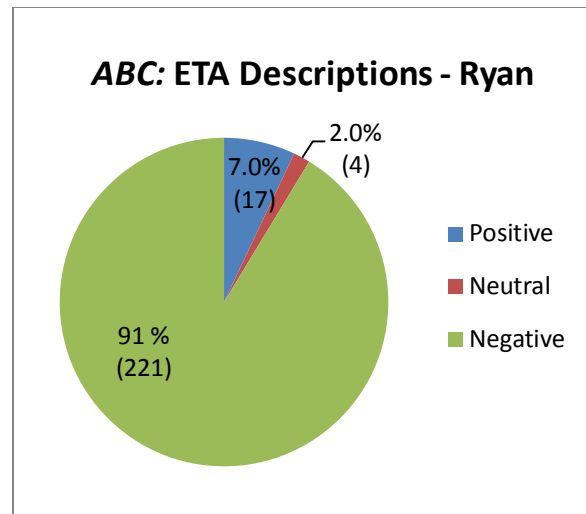


Figure Three: Madrid ETA Descriptions – Ryan

However, the positive, neutral, and negative nouns used to describe ETA in the aftermath of Izaguirre's torture and death differ strongly from those word selections used in response to Ryan's kidnapping and murder. In articles referring to Izaguirre's brutal fate, both Madrid and Bilbao attributed far less negative nouns to ETA. Madrid's *ABC* employed 155 negative words or phrases, constituting 62.5% of its ETA descriptions. Bilbao's *La Gaceta del Norte* used even fewer negative nouns. The Northern newspaper included 29 negative word choices, making up 34.5% of its ETA word selections. *La Gaceta del Norte* used more neutral phrases, with *ABC* utilizing 51 neutral words at 20.5% of all tallied descriptions, and *La Gaceta del Norte* including 43 neutral words at 51.2% of all tallied descriptions. And both newspapers used approximately the same number of positive words or phrases. *ABC* utilized 42 positive descriptive nouns at 17% of its ETA word choices, and *La Gaceta del Norte* used 12 positive words at 14.3% of its ETA descriptions.

The sharp decrease in negative ETA descriptions following Izaguirre's torture and death is stunning. In articles referring to Ryan's kidnapping and murder (only a week prior to Izaguirre's death), 91% of *ABC*'s ETA references were negative. And 90% of *La Gaceta del*

Norte's ETA word choices were negative. But when Izaguirre's fatal torture consumed Spanish and Basque media on February 14th, only 62.5% of *ABC*'s and 34.5% of *La Gaceta del Norte*'s ETA descriptions were negative. Furthermore, the frequency of neutral and positive nouns reflects a substantial increase between articles referencing Ryan and publications concerning Izaguirre. In the context of Ryan's mistreatment, 2.0% of *ABC*'s ETA descriptions were neutral and 7.0% were positive. *La Gaceta del Norte*'s neutral and positive nouns were equally low. In response to Ryan's kidnapping and death, 7.5% of the Bilbao newspaper's ETA word selections were neutral and 2.5% were positive. But in articles referencing Izaguirre, 20.5% of *ABC*'s ETA descriptions were neutral and 17% were positive. And 51.2% (the majority of ETA descriptions) in *La Gaceta del Norte* were neutral, while 14.3% were positive. The large increase in neutral noun choices in both Madrid and Bilbao is particularly fascinating. It suggests the public possessed a less polarized stance on ETA following Izaguirre's death than it did after Ryan's kidnapping and murder. Instead of portraying ETA militants as evil incarnate or heroic patriots, the Spanish and Basque press took a more neutral stance. Izaguirre was a presumed terrorist, but he was also a victim. As this realization dawned on both the Spanish and Basque populace, public opinion mellowed from two emotionally-driven extremes.

The difference between negative shift in Madrid and Bilbao is also noteworthy. Although both *ABC* and *La Gaceta del Norte* attributed substantially less negative descriptive nouns to ETA following Izaguirre's death, *ABC* was far more derogatory than its Northern counterpart. While 34.5% of *La Gaceta del Norte*'s ETA descriptions were negative, *ABC*'s negative nouns reached 62.5% of all words assigned to ETA. The conflicting political sympathies of Madrid and Bilbao likely contributed to the disparity. Madrid, the city in which Izaguirre suffered brutal torture, was more inclined to denounce *etarras* as dangerous criminals. Negative descriptions of

Izaguirre, and his fellow ETA militants, provided a superficial justification for the prisoner's death. In contrast, Bilbao was historically sympathetic to ETA's cause. *La Gaceta del Norte* journalists were more likely to avoid negative condemnation of Izaguirre and other *etarras*. Instead the Bilbao paper utilized positive or neutral terminology regarding ETA to bolster support for Basque independence movements.

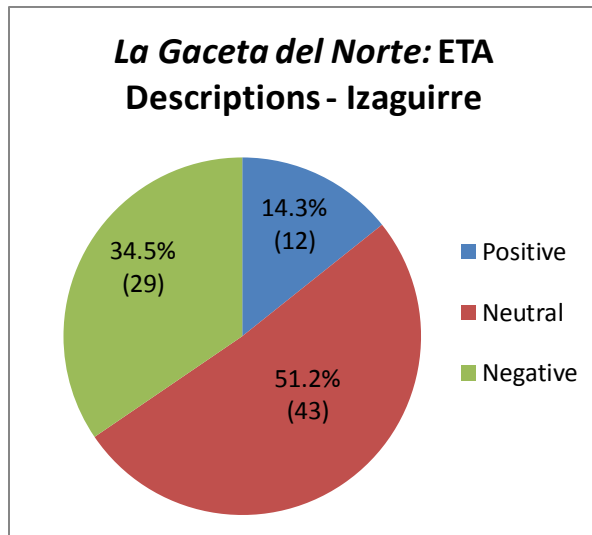


Figure Four: Bilbao ETA Descriptions - Izaguirre

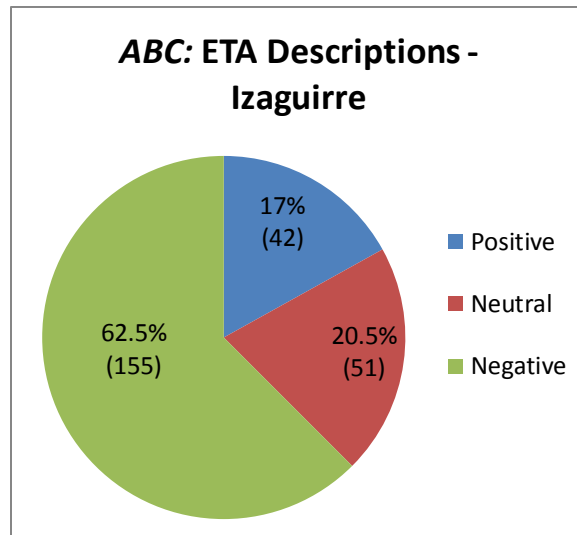


Figure Five: Madrid ETA Descriptions - Izaguirre

Despite Izaguirre's criminal history, the *etarra's* savage torture increased favorable public sentiment towards the Basque terrorists. His prison death, which Basque and Spanish civilians deemed an example of governmental disregard for Spain's new democratic system, enraged both populations. A representative of the Socialist Party of the Basque Country (*Euskadiko Ezkerra*) speculated to *El Correo Español*, "This fact [Izaguirre's death] demonstrates that there is a government strategy to divide the country [around terrorism] and cause another civil war."⁵⁴⁰ And the Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE) issued a statement asserting "the death of José Arregui Izaguirre, brought on by nine days of interrogation, threatens

⁵⁴⁰ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 14 Feb. 1981: 5. Print.

the new coexistence and freedom of all Spanish citizens.”⁵⁴¹ Evidently, the central government was not meeting Basque and Spanish expectations of democracy. Inspired by the promise of peace under democracy, the public would no longer tolerate injustice from either ETA or the Spanish government.

⁵⁴¹ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 12. Print.

Chapter Four: The Aftermath

Colonel Antonio Tejero wore a “bushy moustache,”⁵⁴² a three-cornered hat, a crisp uniform, and a self-righteous attitude. The forty-nine year old Civil Guard officer ardently believed that “Spain, since the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in 1975, had gone to the dogs.”⁵⁴³ Determined to reinstate the fascist old order, Tejero launched a military coup d’état against Spanish democracy on February 23rd, 1981 (the event is known as *El Tejerazo*). At approximately 6:30 pm that evening, Tejero and a small group of paramilitary Civil Guard members stormed Spanish parliament in full session. Astonished diplomats ducked under seats as Tejero’s rebels fired “intimidating rounds that ripped into the ceiling and visitors’ gallery.”⁵⁴⁴ Deputy Prime Minister Manuel Gutierrez Mellado bravely stood in protest, before the intruders “ignominiously man-handled”⁵⁴⁵ the former general back to his seat. After several minutes, and minimal struggle, Tejero held the entire Spanish parliament at gunpoint.

When news of the coup reached the press, Spain froze in apprehensive silence. Spanish and Basque civilians crowded around radios and TVs. Many individuals hurried home to gather family members and possessions. Leftist politicians and union leaders fled the country, fearing the reinstatement of a fascist government. And Basque nationalists poured across the border into France, uneager to endure another 36 years of social and political oppression. According to Graham, “over 25,000 cars left Spain that night, cleaning out the petrol stations of their supplies and exhausting all the bank cashpoints in the border area.”⁵⁴⁶ For many, Tejero’s coup signaled high prospects for another civil war. If Tejero’s forces could consolidate power behind a military junta, Spain would have a new “Franco.” If not, the country could descend into another

⁵⁴² Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 1.

⁵⁴³ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 1.

⁵⁴⁴ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 1.

⁵⁴⁵ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 1.

⁵⁴⁶ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 1.

gruesome war between fascists and democracy-supporting republicans. Meanwhile, Tejero settled down to wait. The Colonel, who felt confident in the armed forces' dissatisfaction with Spain's new democracy, expected a smooth transition to military dictatorship. Luckily for Spain's five-year-old democratic government, Tejero gambled incorrectly.

Many scholars credit King Juan Carlos with saving the day. When parliament was seized, the King was dressed in a leisurely track-suit and tennis shoes. Despite being caught off guard, the young monarch quickly sprang into action. Juan Carlos donned the ceremonial uniform of Captain General of the armed forces, and "began an urgent series of calls to check on the loyalty of his soldiers. His lonely vigil lasted nearly until dawn."⁵⁴⁷ Several phone calls in, it became apparent that Tejero had powerful friends. General Jaime Milans del Bosch, a highly decorated and fascist-leaning officer of Valencia, had 3,500 men under his command. In addition to his personal standing army, the General enjoyed considerable "prestige and friendship"⁵⁴⁸ among Spain's eight other regional military commanders. Furthermore, another one of Tejero's co-conspirators was godson to Alfonso XII, the King's grandfather. Given his royal connections, the aristocratic General Alfonso Armada believed he could easily persuade Juan Carlos to abandon democracy and support Tejero.

But the King refused to yield. Juan Carlos, who "set democratic reforms in motion"⁵⁴⁹ after Franco's death in 1975, was personally invested in Spain's new government. After the *Caudillo's* death, the young king understood the Spanish monarchy was weak and illegitimate. His own grandfather died in miserable exile after the imposition of the Second Spanish Republic, and Juan Carlos's early reign consisted of trailing behind Franco in a "forced public role."⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁷ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 2.

⁵⁴⁸ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 2.

⁵⁴⁹ Humlebæk. *Spain: Inventing the Nation*. 78.

⁵⁵⁰ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 146.

While civilians associated the Crown with nationalist support of Franco's dictatorship, democracy "coincided with the national mood which both favored and expected [political] change."⁵⁵¹ After instituting a parliamentary monarchy, democratic elections, and an approved constitution, Juan Carlos was firmly committed to democracy. According to Spanish historian E. Ramón Arango, the King "showed himself to be a modern, progressive, intelligent man with a modern, progressive, intelligent wife, devoted to democracy and willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to bring it about: the relinquishment of his own power."⁵⁵² Don Juan would not jeopardize Spain's democratic system for anyone, including the military.

Juan Carlos demanded Tejero's men either stand down or start a war. Although a few military generals vacillated in their support of the King, only Milans del Bosch remained loyal to the rebels. No one wanted to relive the Spanish Civil War, possibly the bloodiest three years in the nation's history. Even Armada, despite his original bravado, "tried to conceal his involvement in the coup."⁵⁵³ Tejero, recognizing his support base had disintegrated, negotiated the release of the hostages. He left parliament without handcuffs, declaring "I'll get thirty years for this."⁵⁵⁴ The disgraced Colonel was released from military prison in 1996, after serving a 15 year sentence.

Years later a palace observer recalled Juan Carlos sending for his thirteen year-old son at 3:00 am after the crisis began to wind down. The King, with Queen Sofia at his side, explained the events of *El Tejerazo* to Prince Felipe. Juan Carlos told his son "while the first duty of a king was to serve the people, a king's ultimate duty was to be the people's last defense."⁵⁵⁵ The young monarch's courage was not forgotten. Spanish and Basque republicans thanked their King,

⁵⁵¹ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 148.

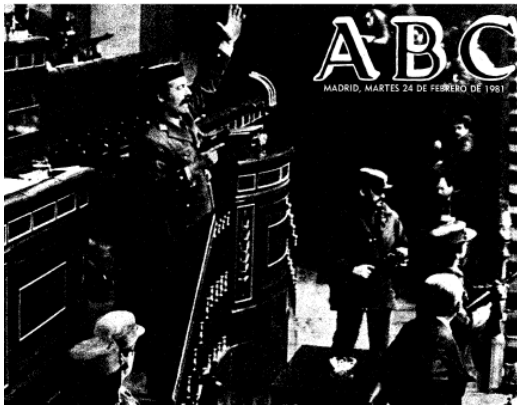
⁵⁵² E. Ramón Arango. *Spain: Democracy Regained*. Boulder: Westview, 1995. 103. Print.

⁵⁵³ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 2.

⁵⁵⁴ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 3.

⁵⁵⁵ Arango. *Spain*. 144.

realizing Juan Carlos “had proved the ultimate guarantor not only of democracy but also of their lives.” As historian Robert Graham points out, no other Spanish monarch had ever defied a military coup attempt prior to February 23rd, 1981. Juan Carlos’s decision-making, while certainly a “remarkable personal achievement,” was also a first-time display of royal fortitude. Democracy survived the night, but the coup attempt prompted structural changes in both ETA and the Spanish government.



El Tejerazo, Madrid: ABC, February 24th, 1981



El Tejerazo, Madrid: ABC, February 24th, 1981

This chapter, rather than focusing on singular incidents like the previous two, addresses the implications of Ryan and Izaguirre’s murders on both ETA and Spanish democracy in the 1980s. The chapter begins by explaining Tejero’s motivations for the February 23rd coup attempt, and their connection to Izaguirre’s murder. The chapter continues by outlining the political aftermath of democracy’s near-failure. February 23rd ushered in a host of changes to Spain’s political climate, including ETA-político militar’s decision to disband, ETA-militar’s lower levels of violence and the formation of a secret government anti-terrorist police force called GAL (Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups). These changes, either direct or indirect results of Tejero’s coup attempt, defined Spain’s relationship with terrorism through the 1980s and 1990s.

Politics and Power Vacuums: The Causes of *El Tejerazo*

Basque terrorism was inevitably linked to Spanish politics during the 1975-1982 democratic transition. ETA militants had threatened Spain's domestic security for over a decade, and the institution of democracy had only heightened the group's dependence on armed struggle. With ever-rising levels of bloodshed, "ETA's abandonment of political violence"⁵⁵⁶ became a primary objective of King Juan Carlos. On July 30th, 1976 the young king granted amnesty to all political prisoners, except those sentenced for terrorist attacks. Juan Carlos refused to pardon individuals who "caused death or endangered the life of any person."⁵⁵⁷ His dedication to counterterrorism was insightful. Political Scientist Michael T. Klare writes that a successful government "assumes an obligation to protect its constituent population from random and unauthorized violence. When a state can no longer provide such protection, its authority withers and failure is likely."⁵⁵⁸ If the fledgling democracy failed to disarm ETA, the Spanish government would not achieve the political legitimacy it needed. By 1981, the cessation of Basque violence was paramount.

Unfortunately, Spain's democratic leadership had mixed strategies on addressing the "Basque problem." After Carrero Blanco's assassination in 1973, Carlos Arias Navarro assumed the position of Spanish Prime Minister. The "dithering administrator"⁵⁵⁹ originally served as director-general of security under Franco, and carried the "additional stigma of a grim repressive record on the nationalist side in Malaga during the Civil War."⁵⁶⁰ Although Arias was an

⁵⁵⁶ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 411.

⁵⁵⁷ Clark. *The Basques, the Franco Years and Beyond*. 273.

⁵⁵⁸ Michael T. Klare. "The Deadly Connection." *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Ed. Robert I. Rotberg. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2004. 117. Print.

⁵⁵⁹ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 149.

⁵⁶⁰ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 149.

“uninspired choice,”⁵⁶¹ King Juan Carlos asked the Prime Minister to retain his current role under democracy. Known for maintaining tight control over Spain’s intelligence community, Arias “was at least *au fait*”⁵⁶² with the abuse of suspected *etarras* in prison. When anti-ETA vigilantes shot and killed two Basque nationalists at right-wing rallies in May 1976, Civil Guard members did nothing to stop the attacks or arrest the perpetrators.⁵⁶³ Arias, who controlled Spain’s law enforcement forces, likely ordered the passivity. Woodworth claims the Prime Minister resigned a few weeks later, confirming his guilt in the matter. Graham takes it a step further. He suggests the “King was forced to sack Arias”⁵⁶⁴ for damaging Spain’s international image and refusing to adhere to democratic measures. In any event, Arias “was not the best man to encourage a mood of national reconciliation”⁵⁶⁵ after Franco.

In contrast, the new Prime Minister was the perfect man to advance democratic reform. After carefully considering his options, King Juan Carlos replaced Arias with the forty-five year-old Adolfo Suárez. Deemed the “new face of democracy,” Suárez had “clean, youthful looks,”⁵⁶⁶ middle-class ideals, a pretty wife, happy children, and no connections to the aristocracy. Ironically, Suárez “had spent all his life inside the Francoist administration.”⁵⁶⁷ But the young politician was a skilled adaptor. Suárez, who appeared politically neutral, achieved his successful reputation through “wits, charm, and cold ambition.”⁵⁶⁸ Luckily for Juan Carlos, the newly appointed Prime Minister had the brains to match his face. Suárez was “groomed in the intricacies of the Francoist power structure,”⁵⁶⁹ so he knew exactly how to enable its destruction.

⁵⁶¹ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 149.

⁵⁶² Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 49.

⁵⁶³ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 49.

⁵⁶⁴ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 149.

⁵⁶⁵ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 149.

⁵⁶⁶ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 159.

⁵⁶⁷ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 150.

⁵⁶⁸ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 150.

⁵⁶⁹ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 150.

He legalized political parties and trade unions, presided over the first democratic elections since 1936 (in which he became the first democratically-elected Prime Minister in post-Franco Spain), and passed the 1976 Law of Political Reform that established a Spanish Parliament and Senate through universal suffrage.⁵⁷⁰

Unlike Arias, Suárez understood the importance of adhering to counterterrorism policies that (at least) appeared to follow constitutional precedents. Realizing the mistakes of his predecessor, Suárez “insisted that the intelligence services kept their dirty warriors on a tight leash.”⁵⁷¹ Spanish police could easily incite public unrest or increased ETA violence “through brutal and unpredictable behavior.”⁵⁷² The Prime Minister did not end the mistreatment of suspected *etarras*, but he attempted to combat terrorism through legal channels. Determined to counter ETA’s rising death toll, the Suárez government passed strict new anti-terrorist laws in 1978. The new acts gave police additional powers to arrest and detain presumed terrorists. Spanish authorities could hold suspects for 72 hours without charges, if the courts were notified.⁵⁷³ Unfortunately, the new laws gave the police legal opportunity to abuse its power. While judges could halt detentions, Clark argues “this check was almost never applied.”⁵⁷⁴

Suárez did not stop with legislation. In 1978, the Prime Minister attempted to open negotiations with ETA. According to a close observer, Suárez “saw himself as the person chosen by circumstances to resolve the ETA problem, and he took a very close personal interest in the progress of the talks.” His reconciliatory attitude, while more in line with the democratic principles of The Spanish Constitution of 1978, alienated right-wing law enforcement and

⁵⁷⁰ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 150.

⁵⁷¹ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 49.

⁵⁷² Susan Rose-Ackerman. "Establishing the Rule of Law." *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Ed. Robert I. Rotberg. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2004. 186. Print.

⁵⁷³ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 41.

⁵⁷⁴ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 41.

military officials bent on destroying ETA. In 1980 Spanish parliament debated a censure motion against the Suárez government for pursuing “negotiations with ‘terrorists and assassins.’”⁵⁷⁵ As Suárez watched his own political party (the UCD) fragment over the issue, he reneged.

Challenging the censure motion, the Prime Minister stated ““I must say that I have never been in agreement with any negotiation of the government with ETA. At no time.””⁵⁷⁶

Suárez certainly felt caught between two counterterrorism approaches. Hardline tactics enraged Basque nationalists and undermined the new democratic constitution, as later witnessed by protests to Izaguirre’s death. But a lack of governmental pro-state violence against ETA infuriated fascist-leaning law enforcement and military members. Suárez was powerless to appease both sides and simultaneously eliminate ETA-inflicted bloodshed. The Prime Minister resigned on January 29th, 1981, the same day José Maria Ryan was kidnapped by ETA-militar. At 7:47 pm the Prime Minister interrupted all radio and television broadcasting to announce his resignation. The message lasted exactly twelve minutes.⁵⁷⁷ Ryan was kidnapped at approximately 7:00 pm, 47 minutes prior to Suárez’s speech. However, the engineer’s kidnapping could not have triggered the Prime Minister’s decision. Suárez’s announcement, via television and radio, likely took days or weeks to coordinate—far longer than 47 minutes. It was not a rash action. But turmoil within the Spanish government regarding ETA’s violence likely encouraged the Prime Minister to step-down.

Although Suárez failed to disclose concrete reasons for his departure from public office, it is possible the Prime Minister experienced a crisis of conscious over the “Basque Problem.” In a segment of his resignation speech, released by *ABC*, the former Prime Minister assured the

⁵⁷⁵ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 90.

⁵⁷⁶ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 90.

⁵⁷⁷ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 30 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.

public ““My departure is more beneficial to Spain than my continuation as President.””⁵⁷⁸

Another statement published in *La Gaceta del Norte* read “I will remain dedicated in body and soul to the defense and promotion of the ethical commitment and moral rearmament that Spanish society needs.””⁵⁷⁹ And *El Correo Español*, which published Suárez’s entire announcement, quoted the Prime Minister enigmatically affirming ““My decision is an act of strict loyalty, of loyalty to Spain which is free to form an indispensable foundation and overcome a history full of traumas and frustrations; of loyalty to the idea of a political center that is structured around an inter-classist, reformist, and progressive system committed to eradicating injustice.””⁵⁸⁰

In his farewell address as the highest-elected official in Spain, Suárez expressed alienation from the existing political system. Spain had not yet achieved his vision of democracy. The Prime Minister believed the nation was lacking a moral and political center. Interestingly, Suárez considered his resignation a greater act of “loyalty” to the State than his continued service in government. Perhaps internal government divisions over counterterrorism methods brought the Prime Minister to his breaking point. As discussed in Chapter Three, Franco’s hardline counterterrorism tactics continued after the implementation of democracy in 1975. Although there is no hard evidence, it is possible Suárez felt he could no longer support, condone, or order the mistreatment of *etarras*. Izaguirre’s torture, which occurred several days after Suárez’s resignation, suggests law enforcement members and government officials still considered torture a viable counterterrorism approach.

⁵⁷⁸ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 30 Jan. 1981: 13. Print.

⁵⁷⁹ *La Gaceta Del Norte* [Bilbao, Spain] 30 Jan. 1981: VIII. Print.

⁵⁸⁰ *El Correo Español* [Vitoria, Spain] 30 Jan. 1981: 4. Print.



Flashback to Adolfo Suárez Winning Democratic Elections in 1976: ABC, January 30, 1981



Adolfo Suárez Resigns: ABC, January 30, 1981

The fall of Suárez opened a power vacuum. Graham suggests what Suárez “judged a responsible action was an irresponsible betrayal of the voters who had placed their confidence in him.”⁵⁸¹ His replacement, the indecisive Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, was no match for the political intricacies of Spain’s democratic transition. With a “natural distaste for bashing heads together,”⁵⁸² the newest Prime Minister was hesitant to disagree with ultra-conservatives in the Spanish government, law enforcement, and military. Only several days into his term, Sotelo faced overwhelming Spanish and Basque public outcry over Ryan’s assassination. And one week later, Izaguirre’s fatal torture prompted a second civilian backlash. It is unknown whether Sotelo personally ordered or condoned Izaguirre’s mistreatment, but the floundering Prime Minister quickly directed blame at the *etarra*’s interrogators. After news of Izaguirre’s death flooded Spanish and Basque media, Sotelo suspended five policemen and turned them over to the justice process.

Unfortunately, tensions over two different counterterrorism approaches continued unchanged after Suárez’s resignation. Sotelo’s firm arrests in the wake of Izaguirre’s death

⁵⁸¹ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 163.

⁵⁸² Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 164.

backfired. “Within twenty-four hours of the suspensions, the three most senior officers concerned with combatting terrorism had handed in their resignations in protest.”⁵⁸³ Many Spanish law enforcement and military members viewed Sotelo’s action as a harsh betrayal. After all, these particular individuals had sacrificed countless man-hours and many lives to prevent ETA attacks. Clark estimates ETA killed 91 Civil Guard members, 68 policemen, and 20 military men between 1968 and 1980.⁵⁸⁴ These victims constituted nearly 70% of all ETA’s murders. In addition, it is possible the five condemned policemen were acting under higher governmental orders. If so, the interrogators were facing judicial action for obeying their superiors. A supporter of Izaguirre’s interrogators justified the torture, saying “A basic difference separated the two deaths... José Maria Ryan was a worker and innocent man, and José Arregui was a member of ETA-militar and a presumed terrorist.”⁵⁸⁵ Another opinion writer in *ABC* argued that Spain’s security forces were constantly “persecuted in recent years by the murderous terrorists of ETA.”⁵⁸⁶ Regardless of their crimes, the writer insisted, imprisonment was a poor way to repay the policemen’s public service records. For a few right-wing extremists, “arresting defenders of Spain’s honor”⁵⁸⁷ crossed a line.

After careful planning, Tejero and his gang of supporters launched the 25th military coup attempt in Spanish history since 1814.⁵⁸⁸ Tejero’s February 23rd, 1981 seizure of parliament failed, but it affected the course of Spanish democratization. Immortalized as *El Tejerazo*, the coup d’état plot had major consequences on the Spanish government and ETA. Neither group supported a return to authoritarian rule. ETA wanted Basque independence, not the

⁵⁸³ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 252.

⁵⁸⁴ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 136-137.

⁵⁸⁵ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 21 Feb. 1981: 9. Print.

⁵⁸⁶ *ABC* [Madrid, Spain] 15 Feb. 1981: 18. Print.

⁵⁸⁷ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 280.

⁵⁸⁸ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 281.

reestablishment of dictatorial oppression. And the Spanish government had been moving towards democracy since 1975. Realizing the fragility of the regime, both the central government and ETA adjusted their respective strategies in the aftermath of *El Tejerazo*.

A Group Disbands: ETA-político militar

In response to democracy's near-collapse on February 23rd, 1981, ETA-político militar (ETA-pm, the politically-oriented majority faction of ETA) began to disintegrate and disband. Following the coup attempt, ETA-pm "negotiated an amnesty agreement with the Spanish government for its imprisoned and exiled members."⁵⁸⁹ Shabad and Ramo state "In 1981, shortly after the attempted coup d'état by a segment of the military, ETA-pm was dissolved, and those members who wished to continue the armed struggle joined ETA-m."⁵⁹⁰ Other members of ETA-pm committed themselves to Basque independence through strictly political methods. Jennifer Holmes, author of *Terrorism and Democratic Stability*, writes ETA-pm "which disbanded in 1981, transformed itself into the Euskadiko Eskerra (EE),"⁵⁹¹ a Basque socialist party. By 1982, the collective entity of ETA was less than half its original size.

February 23rd, 1981 was a catalyst for the group's expiration. In the aftermath of *El Tejerazo*, many members of ETA-pm felt Basque violence was undermining ETA's core goal of independence from Spain.⁵⁹² One former ETA-pm member described the ideological currents sweeping through the organization following Tejero's seizure of parliament:

“Even though we had already made the decision to declare a truce [after Tejero staged his coup], we didn't announce it until February 24. And this is when we really went all out. Not only did we call a truce, but within the

⁵⁸⁹ James Ciment. *World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient times to the Post-9/11 Era*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011. Print.

⁵⁹⁰ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 433.

⁵⁹¹ Jennifer S. Holmes. *Terrorism and Democratic Stability*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001. 60. Print.

⁵⁹² John Sullivan. *ETA & Basque Nationalism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1988. 156. Print.

organization itself, you now were seeing this tendency totally in favor of calling off armed struggle, and taking advantage of the political avenues that had opened up through the Parliament, etc., to be able to take part in this process and above all, to do something to consolidate democracy, which was still under threat, as was clear from the February 23 coup attempt (Interview no. 1).”⁵⁹³

When asked why he chose to leave ETA, one anonymous ETA-pm militant explained:

““It was that February 23 [1981] business, that happened when I was in jail, and I think that from that point...or maybe already by that point...you had the government, the Basque regional authority, other regions were on the way to self-government charters, and the public administrations were being formed...So you might say that I just stopped...it just didn’t make sense anymore...back in 1976, who would have thought that we were ever going to have a democratic king, that we would have a Basque government in which all segments of the political spectrum were represented? In other words, that the objective conditions had changed (Interview no. 50).”⁵⁹⁴

Other ETA-pm militants were just as wary of further destabilizing democracy through continued violence. One interviewed deserter argued:

““The thing was that we reached this point where we had the Autonomy Statute, elections held, and you say to yourself: okay, what comes next? We got what we wanted, so what sense is there in going on shooting

⁵⁹³ Fernando Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism: A Qualitative Empirical Study on Disengagement and Deradicalization Among Members of ETA." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23.5 (2011): 784. Print.

⁵⁹⁴ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 783.

people, and planting bombs?...Anyway, no matter how you look at it, independence is not something that was ever going to be achieved by a handful of kill-happy morons, and believe me, because I got to know them well, you're not going to get very far at all, not far at all, down that path (Interview no. 3).”⁵⁹⁵

Another *etarra* agreed, pointing out:

“I had this feeling that things had really changed...that the situation was objectively different than when I first became a militant. You had this feeling a new era was dawning for Euskadi and for the Spanish state. Fascism had come to an end with Franco, and there was this pervading feeling of things finally opening up...Everything that had led me to become a member was at least starting to change (Interview no. 6).”⁵⁹⁶

And a fifth ETA member recognized the detrimental effects of terrorist violence on democratic consolidation:

“So I'm starting to realize...that if politically, some type of understanding is going to be reached. If the will for it exists, then it can happen... There are other issues, sure, different matters of emphasis, different viewpoints, you're on the right and I'm on the left, but one can accommodate them in order to achieve a common purpose. Only the real problem that is keeping them divided is the violence (Interview no. 33).”⁵⁹⁷

The de-radicalized *etarras* had a point. Although the Basque Country did not have full independence from Spain in early 1981, the institution of democracy had expanded Basque

⁵⁹⁵ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 782.

⁵⁹⁶ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 782.

⁵⁹⁷ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 787.

liberties significantly. The democratic Spanish Constitution of 1978 stated “Political parties are the expression of political pluralism, they contribute to the formation and expression of the will of the people and are an essential instrument for political participation.”⁵⁹⁸ And it also guaranteed “the right to freely express and spread thoughts, ideas and opinions.”⁵⁹⁹ Furthermore, the Statute of the Autonomy of the Basque Country (ratified by referendum on October 25th, 1979), granted the Basque Country the “organization, regime and functioning of its institution of self-governance”⁶⁰⁰ and a political voice in Spanish parliament. For the first time since the implementation of Franco’s regime in 1936, *Euskal Herria* enjoyed a sense of autonomy from Madrid. A return to fascism would effectively erase the Basque Country’s newfound freedoms.

ETA’s actions did not necessarily provoke *El Tejerazo* but both murders contributed to the February 23rd democratic crisis. National discourse over counterterrorism tactics (amongst civilians, politicians, and military members) certainly played a role in prompting the February 23rd coup attempt. Massive civilian outrage over ETA-m’s brutal assassination of Ryan (which occurred a few days before Izaguirre’s death) likely encouraged the Spanish interrogators to use violent counterterrorism tactics. And remarkable public outcry over Izaguirre’s fatal torture angered and alienated Spanish law enforcement members to the point of rebellion.

The linkages between events were not lost on ETA-pm. Democracy provided new avenues of political change, whereas violent terrorist cycles reinvigorated right-wing support for fascism. As Spanish Social Scientist Fernando Reinares contends, “It was not therefore a surprise that many of them [ETA-pm] decided to give up their clandestine militancy after acknowledging these structural transformations.”⁶⁰¹ And Clark agrees, arguing “It was clear from the events of

⁵⁹⁸ *The Spanish Constitution*. 1978. Sec. 6.

⁵⁹⁹ *The Spanish Constitution*. 1978. Sec. 20.1-a.

⁶⁰⁰ *The Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country*. 1979. Art. 10.1.

⁶⁰¹ Reinares. “Exit From Terrorism.” 781.

February 23 that neither ETA nor the Basque people in general would be able to defend themselves against a military takeover of the Spanish government; and so (p-m) would pull back from the brink to avoid what might be a fatal provocation of the armed forces.”⁶⁰²

A Group Survives: ETA-militar Continues Armed Struggle

The effects of February 23rd, 1981 on ETA-militar are less discernable. However, the faction did display several structural changes after Tejero’s military coup attempt. Unlike the politically-oriented ETA-pm, ETA-m refused to disband. The covert group was ardently dedicated to achieving full independence for the Basque Country, no matter the costs. Well before the events of 1981, ETA-m had issued a statement in March 1978 to the Basque press justifying its continuation of violent tactics despite the shift to democratic political structures.

The communiqué read:

“Many people are wondering today, why is ETA still active after Franco’s death and with the process of democratization of the Spanish state under way? ETA has not changed. What has changed is the awareness of a sector of people toward our organization and what it represents and defends. These people thought that we were simply anti-Francoist patriots, and they never stopped to think about the definition that goes along with our initials: a Basque socialist revolutionary organization for national liberation...ETA will try to exist and to struggle in the most appropriate way for the creation of a Basque socialist state, independent, reunified, and Basque-speaking.”⁶⁰³

⁶⁰² Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 96-97.

⁶⁰³ Clark. *The Basque Insurgents*. 106.

A publication issued by PNV leaders in 1978 reiterated these sentiments: “As long as the Spanish state does not take effective and clear steps designed toward reversing discrimination against Basque culture, it will be very difficult for us to explain to ETA why they should lay down their guns.”⁶⁰⁴

ETA-m retained this all-or-nothing mentality in the aftermath of *El Tejerazo*. Although the terrorist organization’s kidnapping and assassination of José Maria Ryan partially instigated the Civil Guard’s February 23rd, 1981 coup attempt, ETA-m had no concern for the stability of the Spanish government. In fact, the covert group expressed disinterest in Madrid’s political troubles. One *etarra* summed up his political opinions, saying: “As far as I’m concerned, I don’t care who is running the government in Madrid, but what matters is: are they going or are they not going to grant us independence? (Interview no. 35).”⁶⁰⁵ And one anonymous Basque woman, a friend and supporter of ETA militants, voiced her approval of ETA-m continuation of armed struggle after February 23rd, 1981. She felt ETA-pm sacrificed the ideals of Basque nationalism by disarming. When referring to ETA-pm disbanding, the woman remarked: “they [ETA-pm members] are better politicians, if you wish, but the ETA military are more truthful, more efficient.”⁶⁰⁶

Although ETA-m remained devoted to its dream of an independent *Euskal Herria*, the group did alter its strategy after the events of *El Tejerazo*. First and foremost, ETA-m committed significantly less violent acts through the remainder of 1981. As illustrated by Figures Seven and Eight in Chapter Two, ETA violence levels dropped dramatically between 1980 and 1981. There are several possible reasons. The first was explored in Chapter Two. Up until Basque and Spanish civilian protests to Ryan’s assassination in February 1981, ETA-m had never

⁶⁰⁴ Shabad and Ramo. "Political Violence in a Democratic State." 453.

⁶⁰⁵ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 790.

⁶⁰⁶ Zulaika. *Basque Violence*. 203.

experienced overwhelming public criticism. Like all terrorist groups, ETA-m depended on a level of citizen support to recruit new militants, collect arms, evade arrest, and raise funds for new attacks. Without this sympathy base, the terrorist organization could not fulfill armed operations. And without a presence in the media, ETA-m could not pursue its action-repression-action strategy.

Therefore, the military-oriented sector of ETA likely limited its violent attacks to regain support within the Basque population. A press conference held by de-radicalized ETA-pm members on February 22nd, 1982, confirmed this idea. According to former ETA-pm members, ETA-m could not sustain its high levels of violence after Ryan's death. The representatives stated: "The acceptance of armed struggle by the Basque people...has declined substantially due to the participation of the masses in the political game and the social fatigue produced by the period of mobilization and agitation of the past decade."⁶⁰⁷

Furthermore, it is possible elements of ETA-pm's ideological disillusionment extended to ETA-m in the aftermath of February 23rd, 1981. Although ETA-m did not experience the same level of de-radicalization as ETA-pm after the coup attempt, some *etarras* agreed with the politically-minded sector. This dissatisfaction with armed struggle may have reduced ETA-m's reliance on violent attacks. As one former ETA-m militant explained his reasons for leaving:

"I came to the conclusion that we were losing sight of our goals. There were two fundamental reasons for this. Because the struggle never really got all the popular support it should have. And because it should have come to an end in 1980, or 1982 at the very latest. Because it [armed struggle] was a short-term process, designed to achieve its objectives over a short-period of time...Secondly, you begin to sense that the process is

⁶⁰⁷ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 105.

being redirected towards objectives that are not the same as the ones you began fighting for back in 1977 (Interview no. 34).”⁶⁰⁸

Finally, internal disagreement and mistrust likely restricted ETA-m’s ability to coordinate terrorist attacks. Like all bureaucratic organizations, ETA-m suffered from conflicting opinions and loyalties. Shapiro contends “terrorist groups face an organizational dilemma whenever leaders and their operatives have different induced preferences.”⁶⁰⁹ Without the clear objectives, full unwavering dedication, and strong leadership, terrorist organizations cannot retain followers. Such was the case with ETA-m after February 23rd, 1981. One former *etarra* identified the contradictions in ETA-m’s leadership after the coup attempt:

“Here we were going around all over the place talking about freedom for everyone, freedom here and freedom there, and they come to me telling me to cool it, that I should shut up and do what I was told (Interview no. 32).”⁶¹⁰

Another ETA-m militant who joined in 1978 began sensing doubts about the organization’s leadership in the early 1980s.

“Of course, if you go around getting your hands bloody day after day, you’re going to end up being totally isolated... That’s not to say I have a problem with the idea of armed struggle. As long as it stays clear that it has to be real armed struggle and... that you play by the rules, if you get my drift. None of this indiscriminate stuff or anything of that sort (Interview no. 36).”⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁸ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 790.

⁶⁰⁹ Shapiro. *The Terrorist's Dilemma*. 101.

⁶¹⁰ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 793.

⁶¹¹ Reinares. "Exit From Terrorism." 794.

Reduced violence levels were not the only change in ETA-m's behavior after *El Tejerazo*. In February 1982, ETA-m expressed interest in negotiating with the Spanish government. Before carrying out a series of violent attacks between February and May, the organization issued a set of conditions to Madrid. Similar to the mid-1970s KAS Alternative, the demands included the withdrawal of Spanish police from the Basque Country, the transfer of law enforcement authority to the Basque government, and the relocation of all Basque prisoners to Basque prisons. The Spanish government refused to respond, and ETA-m commenced with further violence. However, on April 18th, 1982 a headline in the Spanish newspaper *Deia* read "ETA Wants to Negotiate."⁶¹² And an ETA-m communication to *Egin* published in mid-April stated: "This political practice [referring to the recent armed attacks], has become the only alternative offered to us from Madrid to resolve the so-called Basque problem...Notwithstanding these indications [of Madrid's intransigence], in politics, in principle, there is nothing immovable...it cannot be discounted that in the near future a series of events—will bring about the qualitative change in the process and exchange those warrior songs for the sounds of political accords."⁶¹³ The statement indicated ETA was ready to forego violence, if the Spanish government agreed to compromise. Whether Madrid was willing to negotiate was another matter entirely. Although various political parties (including *Herria Batasuna* and the PSOE) attempted to launch negotiations in the 1980s, hopes of peace were continually dashed by central government authorities.

Because ETA-m was a violent covert organization, it is difficult to concretely link ETA-m's 1981-1982 structural changes to the February 23rd, 1981 coup attempt. However, the democratic crisis (and its contributing factors) likely affected ETA-m's organizational decisions.

⁶¹² Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 119.

⁶¹³ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 119.

Ryan's assassination, Izaguirre's death, and *El Tejerazo*, which transpired in a time span of less than one month, existed in extremely close chronological proximity to one another. It is unlikely historians will ever identify all the interwoven implications of these three occurrences, but it would be reasonable to assume each event impacted the others. Furthermore, ETA-m's reduction of violence and attempt to negotiate with Madrid happened in quick succession with the events of January-February 1981. At one level or another, the chain of violence and political instability in early 1981 affected the organizational evolution of ETA-m.

Fighting Fire with Fire: The Spanish Government and GAL

What was the GAL Conspiracy?

Like both factions of ETA, the Spanish government underwent structural changes after the political turmoil of February 23rd, 1981. In 1983, rather than using its own police forces, the Spanish government began hiring mercenaries to kill ETA militants. The secret group, known as GAL (Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups) consisted of right-wing French military veterans from the Algerian war, Italian fascists, Portuguese immigrants, and hitmen from Europe's organized crime circles.⁶¹⁴ Similar to other pro-state terrorist groups, the government conspiracy aimed to handle Spain's "dirty work" without jeopardizing Spain's constitutional image or implicating official law enforcement institutions. Between 1983 and 1987, GAL killed 27 Basques and injured many more—including women and children. The organization existed to destroy ETA, by whatever means necessary.

It would be too strong to suggest GAL was a direct result of *El Tejerazo*. Unlike the impact of Tejero's rebellion on ETA-pm (or even ETA-m), the linkage between the coup attempt and Madrid's GAL scheme is less concrete. In terms of chronology, GAL did not begin violent attacks until 1983, two years after Tejero's rebellion. And since the Spanish government

⁶¹⁴ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 290.

endeavored to keep the mercenary organization secret, much of GAL's gory details are still unknown. However, the coup attempt likely affected Spain's decision to engage in pro-state terrorism. February 23rd, 1981 represents a watershed moment for the nation. Dissatisfied members of the Spanish Civil Guard nearly toppled a six-year-old democracy over parliament's new emphasis on *legal* counterterrorism actions. Only two years later the Spanish state hired foreign assassins to engage in *illegal* counterterrorism tactics. It is highly unlikely *El Tejerazo* had no impact on this decision. Furthermore, the origins of GAL can be traced back to political decisions made in the aftermath of Tejero's coup attempt.

Who Created GAL and Why?

After democracy's near-collapse on February 23rd, 1981, the Spanish government rushed to appease the Civil Guard and the military. Sotelo's government understood that giving Tejero's rebels harsh punishments would only heighten tensions between Spain's democratically-minded parliament and supporters of the conservative extremists. Increased animosity between the two groups could provoke another civil war. Liberal political leaders "suddenly responded sympathetically"⁶¹⁵ to the fascist viewpoints of Spanish law enforcement members. Tejero and Milans del Bosch received thirty-year sentences, a third leader got six years, and the eleven others were sentenced to less than three years.⁶¹⁶ The verdicts were mild considering Tejero's posse committed high-treason against the Spanish government. Furthermore, the five policemen accused of torturing Izaguirre were released from custody with impunity.⁶¹⁷ Clearly, the democratic Spanish government was tip-toeing on eggshells. Rather than risk another coup (or another civil war) by delivering severe justice to Tejero's men, the democratic order chose to diffuse hostilities with mercy.

⁶¹⁵ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 282.

⁶¹⁶ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 282.

⁶¹⁷ Graham. *Spain: A Nation Comes of Age*. 253.

The Spanish government did not stop there. Instead of merely appeasing the right-wing Civil Guard members, the democratic government chose to take a harsher stance against ETA-m. The newly-elected Prime Minister, Felipe González Márquez (served from 1982-1996), quickly “adopted a tough new policy toward ETA which seemed to offer little hope of a negotiated settlement.”⁶¹⁸ As discussed earlier in the chapter, the González government refused to enter talks with ETA between February and May 1982. Twelve individuals lost their lives in the resulting terrorist attacks. At a September 1982 press conference, González ardently asserted “we [government officials] say ‘No’ to negotiation [with ETA].” His remarks reiterated the austere sentiments expressed by Interior Minister Juan José Rosón at an April 22nd, 1982 Spanish Congress of Deputies debate. At the meeting Rosón declared “with ETA there is not nor will there be, neither now nor in the future, any possibility of negotiation. One does not negotiate with life or with freedom. The unity of the country is not for sale, and neither the government nor the people are ready to turn over or break up Spain.” Clearly, González’s government was not in a reconciliatory mood.

After the turbulence of *El Tejerazo*, González was likely hesitant to alienate Spanish police, Civil Guard, and military members by acting weak and conciliatory towards ETA terrorists. At a press conference December 1st, 1982, the Prime Minister fervently denounced ETA-m. González stated “if what ETA pretends is to threaten and coerce the government of the nation, I must say that we are going to remain firm. In the face of this challenge, I call on the citizenry to react against this threat and contribute to peace in the Basque Country and all Spain.” His fiery proclamation appeared to excuse violent or even vigilante counterterrorism tactics against ETA. Like his predecessor, who chose to pursue minimal sentences against

⁶¹⁸ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 105, 121-126. All quotations on page.

Tejero's rebels, González was likely attempting to mollify the far-right elements of Spanish law enforcement.

However, the Prime Minister could not permit hardline counterterrorism tactics without undermining the central government's democratic legitimacy. Incredible public fury over Izaguirre's fatal torture in February 1981 was still fresh in González's mind, and Spain's collective memory. Realizing the fine line between justice and retaliation, González issued a clarification to his earlier statement on December 13th, 1982. In an *El País* interview, the Prime Minister explained "I do not want to be misunderstood, and if people believe that I am offering a dialogue to those who act violently, I am being misunderstood. As far as I am concerned there can be only one kind of dialogue—the kind laid down by the limits of the constitution."⁶¹⁹ This time, González appeased Spain's democratic center by defending the non-violent justice process described in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Like Suárez in January 1981, González was vacillating between two opposite counterterrorism approaches in an effort to please both sides.

In 1983, González and his fellow government officials discovered the answer to their counterterrorism dilemma. The Spanish government could placate right-wing law enforcement and military members, and simultaneously maintain an "untarnished" democratic image. Madrid authorities decided to hire subcontractors to resolve the "Basque Problem" through illegal means. Spanish police and Civil Guard would continue to pursue terrorists, through legal channels, while GAL would take care of the unconstitutional methods. The public would not question the government's commitment to democratic justice, and Spanish law enforcement would rest easy knowing ETA-m would get "what it deserved." Beginning in 1983, the Spanish government ordered Spanish police forces to recruit and pay GAL assassins.

GAL Violence

⁶¹⁹ Clark. *Negotiating with ETA*. 126.

During its four-year “dirty war,”⁶²⁰ GAL utilized kidnapping, torture, and murder to debilitate and intimidate the Basque terrorists. Although GAL mercenaries carried out attacks in Spain, much of the organization’s violence occurred in France. Spanish authorities likely ordered GAL operations in France to pressure the French government into adopting a harsher stance towards ETA fugitives. The covert group’s first victims were two young *etarras* named Joxean Lasca and Joxi Zabala, who went missing in 1983. When their teenage bodies were discovered in the Alicante countryside in 1991, forensic evidence revealed the young men had been shot, physically tortured, and forcefully subjected to the influence of psychoactive drugs. During court trials in the 1990s, GAL member Daniel Fernández Aceña confessed to the gruesome crime. The former mercenary admitted the torture of Lasca and Zabala “had got out of hand.” He confessed the young *etarras* were eventually “killed, burned with car tyres and buried in quicklime.”

Other GAL attacks were just as grisly. On December 19th, 1983, GAL assassinated Ramón Oñederra (*nom de guerre Kattu*). The twenty-three year old *etarra* worked at a bar, played football, and had a steady girlfriend. Described by others in ETA as “not a very significant” member, Oñederra was an easy target. GAL members opened fire on the unsuspecting youth while he played solo chess in an empty bar. When the bar’s owner ran in the room, he found Oñederra’s body riddled with ten bullets. Nine days later GAL gunmen murdered twenty-seven year old *etarra* Mikel Goikoetxea Elorriaga in front of his wife and small daughter. The bullets were “so powerful they went on to penetrate a steel shutter and a door.” GAL claimed responsibility for Elorriaga’s shooting the next day, writing “no activist, collaborator, or sympathizer with ETA will be able to escape our vengeance.” At the “Massacre at the Monbar” on September 25th 1985, GAL members killed four suspected ETA militants at a café-bar in the Monbar Hotel. GAL assassins walked into the hotel, opened fire, and walked out. An eye witness

⁶²⁰ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 7-8, 74, 87-88, 94. All quotations on page.

recounts watching one victim crawling “with his body half inside and half outside the bar...the old guy [GAL member] was shooting him, finishing him off.”⁶²¹

Tragically, many of GAL’s victims had no affiliation with ETA. Some individuals were targeted due to mistaken identities, others were suspected of harboring sympathies for ETA’s cause, and a few were unlucky bystanders. On Christmas Eve, 1985, GAL gunman shot Robert Caplanne at close range in Biarritz. The thirty-seven year old electrician had no connections to ETA. He died of bullet wounds to the chest, stomach, and neck on January 6th. A local newspaper called Caplanne’s murder “an incomprehensible act.” GAL gunmen shot newly widowed Karmele Martínez and her three year old daughter while they ate dinner in a Petit Bayonne bar on February 8th, 1985. According to eye witnesses, “men outside were pumping bullets into the bar, with 9 mm automatic weapons.” Martínez recalls frantically reaching for her daughter after being shot herself. “She was not unconscious, I could see she was still alive. She had blood on her backside...and her windcheater was turning pink.” Both mother and child survived, but they suffered severe physical and mental trauma from the incident.

Other innocent victims were less fortunate than Martínez. Sixty-year-old Christophe Matxikotte and sixteen year old Catherine Brion were driving in the French Basque town of Bidarray when GAL ambushed their car in 1986. After sustaining a burst of automatic fire, the car pitched into an embankment. Matxikotte died before help arrived, and Brion died in the ambulance. The girl’s heart-wrenching last words were “*Maman, je vais mourir*” (Mother, I am going to die). And Basque refugee Juan Carlos García Goena died in a car bomb at 5:20 am on July 24th, 1987. Laura Martín, Goena’s wife, remembers “I couldn’t see the car, and I saw him lacerated with glass. He did not scream but he moaned, he moaned...” The blast tore off

⁶²¹ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 156. 162-163, 167, 170. All quotations on page.

Goena's leg and part of his face. Laura Martín sprinted out of the house, but her husband was already dead.

The Truth Comes Out

After *etarras* began disappearing in 1983, Spanish and Basque political entities and civilians began to assume foul play. Many suspected the shadowy death squads were a “full-scale clandestine offensive”⁶²² organized by the democratic Spanish government. Xabier Arzalluz, the leader of the PNV, announced “I am personally persuaded, although I cannot prove it, that the GAL and that ‘dirty war’ have ties to government measures in Madrid.”⁶²³ At a press conference, *Herri Batasuna* argued there was “connivance between the GAL and the apparatus of the [Spanish] state.”⁶²⁴ *El País* also voiced its suspicions publically:

“Who recruits, organizes, arms, supplies, and pays the mercenaries of the GAL? Who gives the green light for their murders, points out their victims, and gives the order to fire? Who protects their strategic withdrawal towards the Spanish frontier? If silence is the only answer to these questions, it should not be forgotten that there are occasions when silence is the most eloquent of attitudes.”⁶²⁵

Today, it is clear the conspiracy was state-sponsored. But GAL's organizational details remained shrouded in mystery until the 1990s, when court investigations uncovered the truth. In 1997 a captured GAL mercenary named Ismael Miquel Gutiérrez, vowed before the Spanish courts that he had killed under orders ““from authorities in the Interior Ministry at that time.””⁶²⁶

⁶²² Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 97.

⁶²³ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 59.

⁶²⁴ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 59.

⁶²⁵ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 193.

⁶²⁶ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 421.

BBC Europe confirmed “GAL was financed by secret funds from the Interior Ministry.”⁶²⁷ And at a high-profile trial over GAL’s “Massacre at the Monbar,” GAL gunmen confirmed Spanish police forces “paid 50,000 francs for a wounded [ETA] victim, and 200,000 francs for a dead one.”⁶²⁸ By the 2000s, the highest ranking officials of Spain’s democratic government, including the Prime Minister, Interior Minister, and Director of Security Forces, were either suspected or convicted of aiding GAL.

Although Paddy Woodworth argues “the strings that moved the GAL have not been traced to their ultimate puppet master,”⁶²⁹ the 1990s trials verified high level members of the Spanish government were responsible for the mercenaries. The Civil Governor of Vizcaya from 1982 to 1984, Julián Sancristóbal, confessed to organizing and funding GAL’s first kidnapping. The fiery politician had a nefarious reputation for “fighting fire with fire.” And according to a 1995 publication from the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*, Sancristóbal frequently told his advisers ““I would sort [ETA] out in four days, practicing ‘two for one.’”⁶³⁰ The Civil Governor meant to kill two *etarras* for every one of ETA’s victims. In 1996, José Barrionuevo, the Interior Minister of Spain from 1982 to 1988, was convicted of authorizing GAL activities during his tenure. His Director of Security, Rafael Vera, was also found guilty by the Supreme Court of Spain due to an “avalanche of data and evidence”⁶³¹ against him. In response to the verdict, Vera angrily responded ““I have no faith whatsoever [in our justice system].”⁶³² Both men received ten-year sentences, and Barrionuevo was later tried for misuse of public funds in 2001.

⁶²⁷ “World: Europe Spain's State-sponsored Death Squads.” *BBC Europe* 29 Jan. 1998: Web.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/141720.stm>

⁶²⁸ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 156.

⁶²⁹ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 177.

⁶³⁰ *El Mundo* [Madrid, Spain] 9 Jan. 1995: Print.

⁶³¹ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 336.

⁶³² Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 337.

Prime Minister González himself narrowly evaded Supreme Court prosecution for involvement with GAL. In 1996 Spanish Judge Baltazar Garzón “built an impressive case alleging that Felipe González was the director of GAL.”⁶³³ Spain’s Supreme Court rejected the prosecution appeal on November 5th, 1996, on a narrow six-four margin. The right-wing Prime Minister publically denied any participation, but he commented “People do not want to understand that we inherited a State apparatus, in its entirety, from the dictatorship.”⁶³⁴ Instead of denouncing GAL or praising the success of Spanish democracy, González chose to associate the current State structure with Franco’s authoritarian regime. The cryptic statement appeared apologetic, as though González were begging Spanish civilians to excuse his government for unconstitutional actions. Furthermore, González subtly defended GAL. He contended: “Incidents like those which have taken place in Spain [GAL attacks] have happened in all countries where terrorism has attacked democracy...but the whole world applauds Clinton and Bush, when there is a terrorist attack, people say ‘Let’s go after them wherever they are hiding.’ Applause all around.”⁶³⁵ González trailed off, leaving the conclusion of his argument unstated. However, his marked silence accused the Spanish people of hypocritically demanding safety, but rejecting hardline counterterrorism tactics. Regardless of his true involvement with GAL, González is “best remembered for either tolerating or masterminding a network of death squads.”⁶³⁶

International Precedence for Pro-State Terrorism

The presence of pro-state terrorism in Spain was not unusual—in this González was right. In fact, many other nations employed or permitted paramilitary organizations to combat terrorist insurrections from the 1950s through the 1980s. There are countless examples of pro-state

⁶³³ Kurlansky. *The Basque History of the World*. 297.

⁶³⁴ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 407.

⁶³⁵ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 342.

⁶³⁶ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 11.

terrorism in the late-twentieth century, including right-wing death squads in South and Central America funded by the United States. For comparative purposes, this section will discuss two European pro-state terrorist groups operating in chronological proximity to the GAL. Like Spain, Great Britain and French Algeria maintained legitimate police forces to fight terrorism, while allowing pro-state extremists or mercenaries to commit hardline anti-terrorism tactics.

There are several explanations for the prevalence of late-twentieth century European paramilitaries. In the Spanish case, GAL partially existed to pacify right-wing law enforcement officials who had been using torture, secret arrest, and assassination against ETA for decades. For these police, military, and Civil Guard members, hardline counterterrorism methods were the norm. Non-violent tactics didn't necessarily fail in Spain, but law enforcement authorities often didn't attempt them. Franco's culture of impunity pervaded the State apparatus long after the imposition of democracy.

More generally, Spain, Great Britain, and France (and other nations) likely realized hardline actions sometimes work. According to American lawyer Alan Dershowitz, "the tragic reality is that torture sometimes works, much though many people wish it did not."⁶³⁷ Torture, along with assassination and secret arrest, can yield the same "benefits" as terrorism. These hardline tactics can instill fear in a collective population, diminish terrorist recruitment levels, intimidate the opponent group into political submission, or acquire intelligence information. In addition, pro-state terrorism can channel negative civilian or military energy into productive action.

During the IRA's 40 year fight for an independent Northern Ireland, British security forces were notorious for colluding with pro-state terrorist groups. In 1966 and 1971

⁶³⁷ Alex J. Ballamy. "The Moral Prohibition on Killing Non-Combatants." Ed. Werner G. K. Stritzke. *Terrorism and Torture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2009. 24. Print.

respectively, Irish Protestants founded the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defense Association (UDA) to combat the IRA's Catholic separatist violence. These vigilante groups were not directly connected to the British government, but they enjoyed the "blind eye" of London authorities for decades. Although the UVF went through periods of government prohibition for its violent acts, the UDA remained legal until 1992.⁶³⁸ Between 1972 and 1978, a particularly violent period in the UDA's history, the loyalist paramilitary killed 120 people. Many civilian victims, including farmers, shopkeepers, women, and children, had no connection to the IRA.

The UVF and UDA were not state-sponsored like the GAL, but their violent actions were condoned by the British government. London authorities viewed the loyalist paramilitaries as unpredictable, but potentially useful, tools. On October 23rd, 1972 the UVF staged a massive raid on the British Army's base at Lurgan to collect weaponry. The loyalist gunmen stole "Eighty-five SLRs [self-loading rifle], twenty-one SMGs [submachine gun], 1,300 rounds of ammunition, flares and flak jackets." When a British soldier woke up during the theft, a UVF gunman murmured "Don't worry. We won't harm you. All we want are the weapons which we'll put to better use than you before December."⁶³⁹ The British government never investigated or convicted the perpetrators. London had no interest in punishing loyalist thieves, as long as the UVF continued killing IRA militants. British "ignorance" was not atypical. In 1973, Belfast soldiers stopped three armed UDA men. Instead of arresting the loyalists, the British military forces handed them over to the UVF—which in turn let the UDA militants walk free.⁶⁴⁰ And some Northern Irish believed the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR), a formal British infantry regiment, was in league with the loyalists. When the British government deployed UDR troops to

⁶³⁸ Anne Cadwallader. *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland*. 9. Print.

⁶³⁹ Cadwallader. *Lethal Allies*. 26.

⁶⁴⁰ Steve Bruce. *The Red Hand: Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. 212. Print.

South Armagh in 1978, a security spokesman from the area protested London's transfer orders. He argued "local people will look at the UDR presence as blatant harassment and intimidation carried out to placate extreme loyalist politicians."⁶⁴¹ Whether or not British soldiers were actually colluding with loyalist paramilitaries was irrelevant. IRA supporters viewed the two groups as co-conspirators.

Some British security forces even participated in Ireland's pro-state terrorism. In August 1973, British parliament commissioned a study regarding the existence of British military members in the UDA. The report concluded "that some soldiers are undoubtedly leading double lives."⁶⁴² It stated between 5 and 15% of all soldiers in the UDR were involved with the UDA. Furthermore, the document claimed "the UDR is the single best source of loyalist weapons and their only significant source of modern weapons."⁶⁴³ Not surprisingly, joint membership in the UDA and UDR was encouraged by the British military. In July 1972, the "Civil Advisor" to the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the British Army in Northern Ireland wrote: "One important (but unspoken) function of the UDR is to channel into a constructive and disciplined direction Protestant energies which might otherwise become disruptive."⁶⁴⁴ In short, the military official charged UDR soldiers with aiding the UDA's violent attacks. Sociologist Steve Bruce contends the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the UDR, and other factions of the British Army shared counterterrorism intelligence with the loyalist paramilitaries. According to Bruce, when British security forces collected an IRA militant's "habits of movement, the interior layout of his house, his appearance, his car number and type, and so on,"⁶⁴⁵ they would pass the information to

⁶⁴¹ Cadwallader. *Lethal Allies*. 143.

⁶⁴² Cadwallader. *Lethal Allies*. 35.

⁶⁴³ Cadwallader. *Lethal Allies*. 35.

⁶⁴⁴ Cadwallader. *Lethal Allies*. 35.

⁶⁴⁵ Bruce. *The Red Hand*. 212.

UDA hitmen. And in 1975 a UVF representative asserted the loyalist organization often received “British army photographs of IRA suspects.”⁶⁴⁶

The French military and the pro-state Organisation d l’armée secrete (OAS) were equally intertwined during the Algerian War, which lasted from 1954-1962. Similar to Spain’s GAL, the OAS was a far-right paramilitary organization created to combat Algerian separatism. Between 1961 and 1962, OAS militants kidnapped, tortured, and killed hundreds of National Liberation Front (FLN) terrorists. Sadly, the loyalist organization also claimed the lives of many innocent women, children, and Muslims. Unlike Spain’s GAL mercenaries, or even the UDA/UVA militants of Northern Ireland, OAS members were predominantly French soldiers. When several ex-lieutenants devised the pro-state paramilitary organization in January 1961, French General Raoul Albin Louis Salan voiced his apathetic support. The high-level official remarked, “if it [the OAS] amuses them [the French military] and helps them pass the time waiting for better things, then let them get on with it.”⁶⁴⁷ Benyoucef Benkhedda, an Algerian politician and leader of the FLN, confirmed the popular support of the OAS among French Foreign Legionaries and army troops. In 1962 Benkhedda stated “the union between the O.A.S. and dissident French army units was creating so much provocation...Had they succeeded there would have been an appalling massacre.”⁶⁴⁸

In addition to remarkable support among the French military in Algeria, the OAS enjoyed a level of respect in France. French politician Jacques Soustelle denounced the “barbarous methods”⁶⁴⁹ of the OAS, but declared the pro-state terrorist organization was now “the real third

⁶⁴⁶ Bruce. *The Red Hand*. 213.

⁶⁴⁷ Alistair Horne. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962*. New York: Viking, 1978. 441. Print.

⁶⁴⁸ Horne. *A Savage War of Peace*. 507.

⁶⁴⁹ Horne. *A Savage War of Peace*. 498.

force in Algeria.”⁶⁵⁰ Another political figure, Léon Delbecq, announced ““the only effective power in Algeria is the O.A.S”” at a Paris conference in November 1961. And the right-leaning deputy Jean Dides passionately declared ““Glory to General Salan, who will restore France’s grandeur!””⁶⁵¹ While the OAS didn’t receive unanimous support from Paris authorities, members of the French government certainly condoned (and even celebrated) the group’s violent actions.

By 1983, there was considerable precedence for pro-state terrorism in Europe. High-profile attacks in Northern Ireland and French Algeria placed loyalist paramilitaries in international news circuits. It is highly unlikely Spanish Prime Minister González and other Madrid authorities were not aware of these “examples.” Furthermore, González faced a fundamental counterterrorism dilemma. If he ordered hardline anti-terrorism tactics, the Spanish and Basque public would rebel. But if he relied on legal counterterrorism methods alone, the Spanish military and law enforcement might stage another coup attempt. These factors, combined with the prevalence of pro-state terrorist movements world-wide, likely encouraged the creation of the GAL.

Did It Work?

Unfortunately for the Spanish government, GAL was largely unsuccessful in countering ETA-m’s violence. In fact, it may have incited higher death tolls. Although the evidence is circumstantial, ETA-m’s violence did increase during GAL’s active period. According to Shabad and Ramo’s statistics ETA killed 31 people in 1982. But by 1987 the number of murders increased to 49. GAL’s last assassination occurred in July 1987, and in 1988 ETA killings dropped to 19 people.⁶⁵² Historian Raúl López Romo contends, “Unlike Northern Ireland, the Basque Country did not have two terrorist groups confronting one another and enjoying similar

⁶⁵⁰ Horne. *A Savage War of Peace*. 498.

⁶⁵¹ Horne. *A Savage War of Peace*. 499.

⁶⁵² Shabad and Ramo. “Political Violence in a Democratic State.” 441.

levels of social support.”⁶⁵³ ETA and its sympathizers, who were ruthlessly hunted by GAL assassins, could play the oppressed victim. GAL, on the other hand, became the villain. Enrique Gimbernat Ordeig, a criminal law professor at Complutense University in Madrid, asserted GAL’s actions were unconstitutional and intolerable. He ironically stated, ““all citizens have the right to life...except those who are victims of State terrorism.””⁶⁵⁴ The Spanish newspaper *El País* denounced GAL, publishing “No State which really believes in the rule of law can, for whatever reason, leave [such crimes] uninvestigated and unpunished.”⁶⁵⁵ Laura Martín, a Basque woman widowed by GAL, bitterly questioned ““Is there no one, not one of them, who suffers remorse which does not let them live? For me these people [GAL members] are not normal...these people, who have committed barbarities, feel nothing.””⁶⁵⁶ And a Basque nationalist group confirmed Laura Martín’s opinion, stating “These mercenaries [GAL] are in fact paid, above all, to spread terror.”⁶⁵⁷ Spanish and Basque civilians alike condemned GAL’s actions.

GAL’s violence against ETA only strengthened the Basque survivors’ commitment to armed struggle. Edurne Brouard lost her father to GAL mercenaries in 1984. Santiago Brouard, a doctor and ETA militant, was shot six times while he attended to an infant patient in his medical clinic.⁶⁵⁸ After his death, Edurne remembers her mother screaming ““they [GAL] will have to pay for this.””⁶⁵⁹ When Woodworth interviewed Edurne in 1997, the young woman passionately argued ““I don’t believe that the wife of a *guardia civil* suffers less than I do.””⁶⁶⁰ GAL

⁶⁵³ *El País* [Madrid, Spain] 13 Mar. 2015. Web.

http://elpais.com/elpais/2014/10/20/inenglish/1413807111_949949.html

⁶⁵⁴ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 231.

⁶⁵⁵ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 230.

⁶⁵⁶ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 173.

⁶⁵⁷ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 167.

⁶⁵⁸ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 130.

⁶⁵⁹ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 132.

⁶⁶⁰ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 137.

assassinated Karmen Galdeano's father in 1985 outside his family home. The young woman remembers kneeling by her father's body in the street, pledging her allegiance to ETA. She sobbed "Aita [Daddy], I'm going to do it, I'm going to finish the course, I'm going to carry on."⁶⁶¹ Later Karmen honored her promise by becoming a defense attorney for *etarras*.⁶⁶² Izaskun Ugarte, the young widow of a murdered *etarra*, viewed her husband's assassination by GAL as confirmation of the necessity of ETA violence. At her husband's funeral, Izaskun raised the symbol of ETA crying "the finest homage one can pay to *Txaplela* [her husband's *nom de guerre*] is to continue the armed struggle."⁶⁶³ The black-haired beauty continued her fiery rhetoric by stating "Txaplela's sword was liberty, and thousands of swords will take his place."⁶⁶⁴ Her passionate spectacle transformed Elorriaga (*Txaplela*) into a Basque martyr. As Woodworth argues, "The GAL had turned him [Elorriaga] into an even more dangerous member of ETA in death than he was in life."⁶⁶⁵ ETA-militar would continue to fight.



Mikel Goikoetxea Elorriaga laughing with his wife, Izaskun Ugarte



Izaskun Ugarte defiantly holding her husband's ashes in one hand, and ETA's symbol in the other

⁶⁶¹ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 147.

⁶⁶² Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 147.

⁶⁶³ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 98.

⁶⁶⁴ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 98.

⁶⁶⁵ Woodworth. *Dirty War, Clean Hands*. 99.

Chapter Five: Final Thoughts

Conclusions

This research explores a remarkable period in Spanish history. In less than one month, three distinct events consumed Spanish and Basque society—including media, politics, and daily life. While each occurrence arose from unique circumstances, all three have a common factor. ETA terrorism (or efforts to mitigate ETA terrorism) spawned Ryan’s assassination, Izaguirre’s fatal torture, and the February 23rd, 1981 military coup attempt. Combined, the three events produced long-term results within ETA’s organizational structure and the Spanish government’s counterterrorism strategy. Although the linkages between *El Tejerazo* and ETA-pm, ETA-m, and GAL have varying degrees of strength, the coup attempt undoubtedly affected the ways in which ETA and the Spanish government approached their respective objectives in the 1980s. This incredible chain of events, beginning with José Maria Ryan and ending with GAL mercenaries, reshaped the trajectory of Spain’s democratic transition.

Like terrorism, democracy played a vital role in this story. Spanish and Basque hopes for political liberty, King Juan Carlos’s devotion to the new democratic system, and Spanish law enforcement’s qualms with transparent justice affected innumerable political decisions in the 1980s. To me, democracy represents the will of the people. While the intricacies of *El Tejerazo* and GAL are fascinating (and crucial) parts of this research, my original contributions focus on the Basque and Spanish people. The deaths of José Maria Ryan and José Ignacio Arregui Izaguirre generated a new sense of unity between Basques and Spaniards. Many Basques who supported independence found Ryan’s assassination appalling. And many Spaniards who despised ETA’s violence condemned Izaguirre’s mistreatment. Disregarding civil-war loyalties, regional sympathies, political opinions on *Euskal Herria*, and longings for vengeance, Basques

and Spaniards banded together against injustice. Furthermore, both Basque and Spanish civilians acted on their convictions. It is one thing to criticize a wrongdoing. It is another thing entirely to denounce one's friends (or defend one's enemies) in street demonstrations or media publications. This courage, displayed by Basques and Spaniards alike, is an extraordinary example of compassion and resolve. The thousands of individuals who chose to overlook a bloody past for the hope of a non-violent future, inspired later generations to work for a free and fair Spain. Thanks to their legacy, the Basque Country eventually found peace.



Sunset in San Sebastián, Personal Photo: August 2014

Future Research

In the future, I aim to extend my research of Spanish counterterrorism tactics beyond ETA. Spain weathered ETA's 52 year terrorist insurrection, but the political, cultural, and economic implications of the violent conflict continue to dictate the nation's domestic and international security policies. The Madrid Train Bombings of March 2004 shifted international terrorism to the forefront of Spanish public policy. Today, Spain endeavors to mitigate jihadist radicalization and networking within its borders. Recent tragedies in Western Europe, including

the January 2015 Paris attacks, lend new relevance to the study of how and why regional sympathies enable asylum seeking terrorists. Many terrorist ideologies, including separatism, ethno-nationalism, and jihadism have shaped the political landscape of Spanish history. I hope to identify the various factors that make Spain an attractive operational headquarters, residence, or target for terrorists.

Additionally, this research may be incorporated into a comparative review of ETA and the IRA in the future. The separatist terrorists of Northern Ireland exhibit remarkable similarities with their Basque counterparts. The two organizations were active at the same time, both incorporated ethno-nationalist and leftist sentiment into their ideologies, and both groups operated under parliamentary democracies. Furthermore, ETA and the IRA eventually chose to disarm. If pursued, this research would compare quantitative and qualitative analysis of newspapers from London and Belfast with the newspaper trends revealed in this project. This joint-review would explore the similarities and differences in media perceptions of terrorism (and counterterrorism) in both Spain and Ireland. The results may lend further insight into the influence of popular press on ethno-nationalist terrorist organizations.

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