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PROTEST MUSIC AND SURVIVAL IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY DURING THE FRANCO  
REGIME

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By Michael J. Dodick

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion of the Bachelor of  
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Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College  
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Approved:

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Advisor: Dr. Jason Klodt

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Reader: Dr. María Otero

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Reader: Dr. Ian Gowan

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of the origins of the Basque Nationalist movement that originated in the late nineteenth century, the Spanish Civil War that followed, and how a dictatorial regime damaged a minority autonomous region, the Basque Country. Within this scope, a singular, unique musical and artistic collective contributed efforts in preserving and growing Basque culture, a culture that had been refined to place focus on nationalistic ideals, unifying traditions, *Euskera*, and the nation of *Euskadi*. *Ez Dok Amairu*, the focus of this thesis, was a short-lived artistic group that concentrated on producing art, literature, and music (among other mediums) in *Euskera*. With clear inspirations from previous and existing Basque cultural institutions, movements, and history, *Ez Dok Amairu* nurtured a renewed interest and use of *Euskera* in the Basque country, even with the mitigating factors of the Franco regime, which included violence, censorship, and erasure. Through the analysis of some of their musical compositions and the development of the movement itself, this thesis argues that *Ez Dok Amairu* was successful in establishing linguistic foundations for *Euskera* through its music, while also the artistic works it produced acted as a tool for collectivization and celebration of Basque people during one of the most brutal periods of history in Spain and the Basque Country.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction.....5

Chapter 2: The Development of *Ez Dok Amairu*.....20

Chapter 3: Analysis of *Ez Dok Amairu*'s music.....28

Chapter 4: Conclusion.....52

## INTRODUCTION

Historians recognize the Basque country as one of the most ancient and distinct cultures in Europe. The Basques have existed so long that they are thought to be one of the first ethnic groups to exist in Europe. Evidence suggests that the Basques are descendants of indigenous groups that existed in the Iberian peninsula from 3000 to 5000 BC (Smith 1), placing them well before other known groups. Known for their unique language and other cultural heritage, their land spans six provinces in northern Spain and parts of France. Their culture includes an emphasis on folklore, gastronomy, music, and dance. With the Pyrenees mountains and the Basque mountains shadowing their land, early settlers had little space for mass agriculture. These mountains also kept the Basque country separate from parts of the outside world in terms of cultural influence and warfare. The Basque language, otherwise known as *Euskera*, is also an outlier in Europe, in that its origins do not trace back to the same origins as many of the other Indo-European languages. Historical linguists are unsure how to classify it. The Basque people have a profound and dedicated respect for their language. Today there exists a program named *Plan General de Promoción del Uso del Euskera*, a policy by the Basque Government to grow the use of *Euskera*, while shielding it from its major modern threats. Today *Euskera* speakers are a minority. According to Basque Cultural Institute, only 1 in 4 people speak *Euskera*. The *Plan General de Promoción del Uso del Euskera* advances the teaching of *Euskera* to young people to counter

this shortage. In the mid-twentieth century, there were a number of Basque cultural revivalist movements, like *Ez Dok Amairu*, the main focus of this paper, featuring a focus on the preservation and growth of *Euskera*.

In the late nineteenth century, the Basque country was in decline. The Basque Country's relative autonomy, which it had enjoyed since the late middle ages, was in jeopardy. The *Fueros*, which had long represented a degree of self-government for the Basque people, were suppressed (Smith 1). The *fueros* were a collection of local codes and laws originally developed in the middle ages that granted the Basques privileges to freedom and lands (Strong 325-27). The Spanish monarchy were obligated to respect these laws and in some cases, if they did not, the Basques responded with violence against royal officials (Strong 326). After their collective defeat in the Carlist wars, the *fueros* were abolished. Coinciding with the attack on local Basque law was a major reduction in the use of *Euskera*. Even though in the past the usage of *Euskera* and Spanish had been separate, with Spanish being used in official contexts and *Euskera* in casual ones, *Euskera* was fading out in the early twentieth century (Shih 43). Especially since Castilian had been used exclusively for education since 1850 (Shih 43). Thanks to large-scale immigration to the region due to industrialization in the 1890s, the Basque country was overrun by Spanish-speaking workers (Shih 43). Many Spanish immigrants worked for lower wages, pushing Basque workers out of their jobs. Industrialization and immigration put the Basque language and culture into perceived danger (Smith 1). Many hardline Basques believed that total integration, or a complete melding of Basque and Spanish culture, would destroy their culture and autonomy, even though their fears had not come to complete fruition. An author and political

firebrand, Sabino Policarpo Arana Goiri sought to put a salve over the quickly degrading Basque culture. At the time, “Basque Nationalists felt obliged...to preserve their language and ethnic identity, which was threatened by governmental policies and modernization” (Shih 43). To this end, Arana Goiri created a centralized national identity and ideology for Basqueness and in doing so, created a national flag and myth to represent the Basque lands, which then would be named *Euskadi*. At the same time, he sought to justify Basque independence from Spain, utilizing the nostalgia of the *fueros* (Sullivan 4).

One such core idea was the almost sacred reverence that Arana Goiri believed the Basque language deserved. Arana Goiri said, “*Euskera* might be the language of the Garden of Eden, the tongue spoken by all of mankind before the disaster of the tower of Babel” (translated from Spanish in Smith 2). Arana Goiri ascribed an almost mythological divinity to *Euskera* and placed it above all other languages. This idea was a response to the Basque defeat in the Carlist Wars, an attempt to embellish and celebrate their past. Though some of his ideas in hindsight are considered xenophobic, such as his belief that no foreigner should speak *Euskera* (Smith 2), Arana Goiri was a first mover that disrupted the relative disorganization of the Basque people, and in doing so created a concrete idea that the Basque people gathered and rallied around. Arana Goiri’s nationalist party allowed for Basques to collectively push for pro-Basque legislation through parliament, while also collectivizing the Basque people. Before, due to the lack of the *fueros* and the lack of a popular ideology, there was little Basque representation in parliament and Basque autonomy had been diminished. Arana Goiri’s mythologized interpretation of Basque culture fought for autonomy while also celebrating the collective culture

of the Basque people and these tenets drew in supporters. His party, *el Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV), or Basque Nationalist Party, continued to pursue his goals after his death, mainly Basque autonomy and the preservation of *Euskera* and Basque culture through parliamentary participation. The PNV slowly gained seats in the Spanish parliament in the early 1930s. These parliament seats represented a more tangible and official support of Basque autonomy and nationalist ideas. By the onset of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, the PNV and other Basque politicians had formed an official government of *Euskadi*. Unfortunately, this fledgling nationalist government only persisted for about six months until Francoist troops overpowered it. The Basque government had mustered an army to fight alongside the Republicans but they were no match. The Republicans were the main opposition fighting General Francisco Franco's nationalist troops, a conglomeration of the Second Spanish Republic's troops and other political groups. The remnants of the Basque government fled to Paris. The Basque people were left with no central authority to turn to and without an official representation of their autonomy. Basque culture defined itself in nationalist terms to survive, relying on unifying traditions, *Euskera*, and the idea of *Euskadi* to advance its goal of autonomy and preservation (Ben Ami 514, Smith 1).

In Franco's vision of a perfect Spanish State, there was no room for diversity of belief, language, or culture. The son of a Spanish naval officer, Franco joined the military and quickly rose through its ranks before the onset of the Civil War. When the war started, Franco and the Spanish Army of Africa joined the Nationalist side. Once installed as dictator, Franco wanted to resurrect the Spanish Empire from its ashes to make Spain prosperous once again. He wanted a globally recognized, Catholic, and economically powerful Spain, united under his control. After

the Spanish-American wars of independence and the Spanish-American war in 1898, Spain had lost its dominion over Latin America and the Philippines, plus Spain also ceded the majority of its remaining colonies to United States' control. Franco wanted to restore at least some semblance of this imperial power that Spain had forfeited, particularly in Africa where he had been based in the Spanish Army (Payne 240). Franco also had a particular disdain for the Basque and other minority peoples as evidenced by his oppressive policies. The Basques represented the opposite to what Franco's ideal Spain would have been, they were unique and not in the mold of the traditional Spanish people. To Franco, being traditionally Spanish meant speaking Spanish exclusively, and celebrating Spanish imperial history. Basques were not the people that elicited the image of a powerful and most importantly, homogeneous, Spain.

Even some opposition to Franco was tried by military courts until 1963. Along with these biased courts, martial law was instituted until 1948 (Ruiz 172) for the purpose of maximum control of the Spanish people. Franco placed the blame for the Civil War and its damages on the Republicans (Ruiz 172). By the premise of *justicia al revés*, or upside-down justice, Republican and Popular Front organizations were rendered illegal. Officials who disagreed with the legality of Nationalist uprisings were often tried by the military courts and summarily executed (Ruiz 177). Franco also tried to erase evidence of Basque culture where it was possible. These policies included outlawing the use of *Euskera*, changing the language of any official certificates to Spanish from *Euskera*, and even scratching Basque names off of tombstones, symbolically erasing Basque history (Smith 2). Traditionally Basque soccer clubs were also forced to change their names to more "appropriate" versions. For example, *Bilboko Athletic Kluba* became

*Athletic Club de Bilbao*. Franco was trying to scrub all popular uses of *Euskera* from the public eye, which included the aforementioned soccer clubs. According to Fernando García de Cortázar, a historian at the University of Bilbao, “the adversity that Franco subjected the Basques to was a cultural phenomenon” (qtd. in Smith 2). García de Cortázar described the phenomenon as being a total repression of language and cultural expression, alongside violence. The Franco regime was responsible for thousands of dead Basques during the Civil War in addition to the policies outlawing *Euskera* they enforced upon them after the war. Oftentimes, Francoist troops and police forces committed killings in cemeteries. These killings, of not just the Basque opposition but of all opposition are sometimes referred to as the White Terror (Payne 105). As many as 160,000 people died from 1936 to 1947. Mass assassinations targeted leftist political figures. Even people like Federico García Lorca, a famous poet with a socialist bent, as well as being a known homosexual, was executed. His collection of poetry named *Poeta en Nueva York*, or *Poet in New York*, condemned modern consumerism and ultra-capitalism (Maurer 14) that conflicted with the economic system Franco wanted to establish. Civilian areas like Guernica, the original home of the Basque parliament, a symbol of Basque freedoms, and the place where previous Spanish monarchs acknowledged the *fueros*, suffered bombings. The German Luftwaffe, working in tandem with Franco, targeted the town because of its significance as a meeting place, and hub for trade for the Basque people. In addition to violence, Franco’s government built labor camps and filled them with dissenters. These events along with the response, the Red Terror (Astorga 1), a counter-campaign by the Republicans, Communists, and their other allies, dismantled a large part of the structure of Spanish society by changing the political landscape

and by utilizing extrajudicial killings and other brutal violence to suppress and control the people of Spain, including the Basques.

However, almost paradoxically, these moments of violence and shocking destruction contributed to Basque nationalist support. Instead of being destroyed, Basque nationalism was pushed underground to folk clubs, bars, and other private settings. To oppose Franco, people had to be demonstrably Basque and to be Basque in many aspects was to speak the language and to support the idea and mythos of *Euskadi* (Smith 2). Demonstrably Basque included a lot of different factors. Support could have been as simple as wearing the colors of red and green, which were components of the *Ikurriña*, the Basque flag, or participating in Basque cultural events, like *Bertsolaritza*, a type of improvised poetry performed exclusively in *Euskera* (Garzia 78-81). Additionally, even if the support was private, like speaking *Euskera* in the home, the Basque nationalists accepted it. With the threat of violence, it was unsafe for many Basques to publicly demonstrate. As the regime developed further during the 1950s, some Basques thought that the PNV and other Basque civil groups were not doing enough to oppose the oppressive regime. Some Basques were prospering financially, while maintaining a nationalist belief, except that they had given up thoughts of resistance against the Franco regime (Sullivan 28). Most Basque people were still suffering economically and physically in the late 1950s. Basques had a persistent fear of arrest and murder for practicing their language after the White Terror. Speaking *Euskera* became hazardous. A group of students from the Jesuit Deusto University in Bilbao believed that a foreign power had taken over *Euskadi* and decided to change the dynamic. Much like Arana Goiri and other predecessors, they believed *Euskadi* had a right to sovereignty that

was being infringed upon, especially by the Franco government. Without self-government, they believed that *Euskadi* would continue to suffer as a vassal of Franco, existing on a lower level than Castile. Plus, they believed the Franco regime suppressed their culture, especially the language, and prevented the flourishing of *Euskadi*. They first named themselves ATA, or *Aberri Ta Askatasuna* (Homeland and Liberty), but soon after changed their name, as in some Basque dialects *ata* meant duck. They renamed themselves in 1959 however, as *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, or Basque Homeland and Liberty. Their first operations as an organization were mostly non-violent; they distributed lapel badges and flew the banned Basque flag, the *Ikurriña*. They firmly believed that the maintaining of *Euskera* as a language was essential and a key tenet of their mission. *Euskera* was the clear cultural factor that all the provinces of *Euskadi* shared and celebrated. ETA wanted to take advantage of that collective cultural aspect for the benefit of the Basque people. Their mission of a unified and strong Basque people relied on the survival of their language. *Euskera* also happened to be the best way to connect and garner support from other Basques as it did not rely purely on ethnicity and it was central to the idea of *Euskadi* established by Arana Goiri (Smith 3). ETA, along with some support from the clergy, formed underground Basque language schools that they named *Ikastolas*. The Jesuits and their historically strong educational institutions and orders were valuable to ETA. The new schools drew more persecution from the regime but at the same time, thousands more people joined ETA's cause (Smith 3). ETA focused on a less racially-based way of determining Basqueness in comparison to Arana Goiri's much more black and white classification relying on strictly ethnic lines and ancestry. ETA used the term *ethnos* to describe someone with commitment to Basque

ideals and, most importantly, someone who practiced the language. Since part of the population in Basque provinces was of Spanish descent because of earlier emigration, this strategy worked well because it did not exclude as many people as the more rigorous definitions of Basque heritage previously mentioned. ETA members allowed immigrants who had been assimilated into the culture and had sympathies for the Basque nationalist cause to join. But soon, their resistance would turn more radicalized, with the members believing violence was the answer to avert the forthcoming cultural extinction of the Basque country (Sullivan 29) and socialism became the main political driver with a focus on the working class, which resulted in ETA fracturing into two different groups ETA and *ETA-Berri* (New ETA) in 1966 (Smith 3). The main reasons for the schism have been described as differences between the nationalist wings of ETA that sought autonomy, and the more ideological wings that sought Marxist-Leninist social revolution for the working class, which had suffered the effects of autarky. Franco had instituted autarky, a policy that cut off all foreign trade, to attempt to build a more self-sufficient Spain, but had stagnated the economy. ETA would continue to operate after the dictatorship had ended, but slowly lost popular support because of their use of terror tactics like bombings, kidnappings, and other methods. ETA used terror tactics like the aforementioned kidnapping and extortion to fund their efforts. Violent methods led to collateral damage of local Basque businesses (Abadie and Gardezabal 115) and an increased sense of fear surrounding them due to their actions, eventually eroding their popular support. In fact, almost 70 percent of all fatalities to ETA activities between 1968-1997 were in the Basque Country (Abadie and Gardezabal 115). Factional violence was also prevalent, as some sections of ETA did not clearly agree on the best

way to pursue Basque independence. Also by the 2010s, the Spanish government post-Franco offered to allow former members of ETA to lay down their arms without punishment, which diminished their numbers further (Smith 4). Through a collection of factional fracturing, extremism, and other government efforts, ETA eventually dissolved in 2018 almost 60 years after they had formed.

Part of ETA's underlying mission was preservation of traditions as many utilized *Euskera*. This idea was not novel however, as the Basque country had a strong tradition of maintaining folklore, stories, and culture (Ben Ami 495). These cultural institutions were expressed through festivals, music, poetry, and dance. The clergy and familial tradition had preserved oral tradition from periods as early as the sixteenth century when the Bible was first translated into *Euskera*, providing the first known written example of the language (Smith 1). Basque mainly known as an oral language (with noted exceptions like the compilation of *Glosas Silenses*) until the sixteenth century when the Catholic church translated the Bible and other important writings to *Euskera* so that the regional clergy could carry out their pastoral duties other than mass. Even before Arana Goiri, Basque society had many different avenues of practicing their regional identity, through dance (*dantzak*), literature (*bertoslaritzak*), and music (*ochotes*). The majority of these practices continued into the dictatorship, whether in private or in public as a form of protest. These cultural institutions fit in well with the beliefs of Arana Goiri, ETA, and *Ez Dok Amairu* that Basque culture at its core, was a celebration of uniqueness and tradition, with *Euskera* and ideological construction that Arana Goiri had started at its core.

Predecessors to *Ez Dok Amairu*, *Ochotes* have existed as a civil society organization since the early twentieth century. *Ochotes* were choirs of eight men with deep tone voices. They rose to prominence in the 1930s when they became famous for singing in bars, usually after the last call. Their songs many times had some folkloric element to them and were traditionally sung in a mix of *Euskera* and Spanish. Their songs featured classical stories that many Basque people likely would have heard as children, such as the stories that surround Saint Martin, a Christian folklore hero who is celebrated annually in *Euskadi*. As they grew popular, *ochotes* began to include songs of a more religious nature and even held contests in the 1960s to find the best group. Their competition was broadcast over the radio, a unique opportunity to showcase Basque culture publicly, while also providing some evidence that Franco's anti-Basque policies were beginning to relax (Smith 3).

Much like the *ochotes*, practitioners of *Bertsolaritza*, otherwise known as *bertsolaris*, were public performers of Basque culture (MacClancy 18). *Bertsolaris* would perform poetry to rhythm and rhyme through improvisation. The resulting product would sound a lot like modern slam poetry. For example, *Bertsolaris* often utilized rhyme and wordplay to critique current events, politicians, or society much like modern slam poets do today. Traditionally, a *bertso* was composed of two parts, the verse and the melody. Most historians agree that *Bertsolaritza* has been practiced in some form since the 1500s (Garzia 46). By the late nineteenth century following the Carlist Wars, *bertsolaris* had become sounding boards for current issues, often highlighting them in their work, especially injustices and other controversial subjects. Some *bertsolaris* worked for newspapers that partly informed some of their compositions (Garzia 92,

103). However, even though many poems were focused on current events, humor and satire were allowed. Some of the most well-known *bertsolaris* during the nineteenth century came from the province of Gipuzkoa. One of the most famous of the *bertsolaris* was Fernando Amezketarra, a humorist. His most famous works featured his life in more rural surroundings in a humorous tone (Garzia 97). Amezketarra worked as a shepherd and his compositions reflect the drudgery and boredom he experienced during his work. Just like *ochotes*, *bertsolaritza* also had competitions to decide who would be crowned the best *bertsolari* and who would win the *txapela*, the winner's beret. In contrast to the *ochotes*, however, all *bertsolari* compositions were performed in *Euskera* exclusively.

In the lead-up to the Spanish Civil War, one *bertsolari* was very influential. His stage name was Txirrita. His compositions mainly focused on social issues like politics and poverty, which grew his popularity. By the 1920s *bertsolaris* had split into two distinct groups. The first group was the *eskolatuak*, more well-read and educated *bertsolaris* who utilized traditional Basque poetry and writings to fuel their performances. Secondly, there were also the *eskolatu gabeak*, who were less studied *bertsolaris* like Txirrita. Since he could read but not write, Txirrita relied on his nephew to write his compositions when he practiced them (Garzia 49). Txirrita was known for his sharp wit in addition to his socially relevant performances. One of the socially conscious Txirrita verses speaks about the recently assassinated Antonio Cánovas de Castillo, who had served six tumultuous terms as the prime minister of Spain. “Ill da Canovas, fuera Canovas (Canovas is dead, out with Canovas)...galdu zituen gari-zelaiak, gallendu zaio sasiya (He destroyed the wheat fields, the burrs have vanquished him)” (Garzia 84). Txirrita's

clever social messaging and irony is evident through the metaphor of the destroyed wheat fields representing the working class that Canovas repressed through mass arrests, which then produced the burrs that were his downfall. Txirrita was also one of the *bertsolaris* who pushed for the first championship to be held in 1935, just one year before the civil war and the dictatorship would prevent *bertsolaris* from holding another competition until 1960, according to the organization Friends of the Bertsolaritza. Many *bertsolaris* described the post-Civil War period as “walking on a glass staircase” (Garzia 92). *Bertsolaritza* was relegated to low-key settings and audiences consisted mainly of family and friends. Some *bertsolaris* like Ignacio Eizmendio Manterola, nicknamed Basarri, returned from the forced labor camps and continued to compose, with his experience changing a large part of his work (Garzia 91). Bassari worked as a journalist in addition to his practice of *bertsolaritza*, which fed into the differences visible in his work after his imprisonment. Bassari avoided speaking about the past and present, because of the horrors he suffered in the labor camp (Garzia 91-92). Just like other aspects of Basque culture, *Bertsolaris* wrestled with the pressure Franco put them under. *Bertsos* were forced to move their performances underground and also changed their subject material to suit the current socio-political climate of *Euskadi*, both of which had a marked effect on the nature and practice of *bertsolaritza*.

Another unique cultural epicenter of the Basque country are the private gastronomical societies interspersed within it. Otherwise known as *Txokos*, they were social clubs that only allowed men to cook. Women were allowed to eat and spend time in the *txoko* but otherwise did not cook. Txokos met semi-regularly with members contributing to the meal with ingredients and

time in the kitchen. Members spent time together, enjoying Basque dishes like *pintxos*, which are small pieces of bread with ingredients on top, skewered with a toothpick, Guernica peppers, and salted cod. It would not be unusual to find pianos or other instruments in the *txokos*. Men throughout the nights spent in the *txokos* would sing and play Basque songs from years past. Also, members participated from all social classes. Many of their members describe them as a way to escape the grind of daily life, but during the Franco dictatorship, *txokos* had the uncommon permission to continue operating, because of their rules banning political talk between members during meetings. This exception allowed for members to meet together to eat, to drink, and most importantly, to sing and speak in *Euskera*. A communal place to flaunt Basque culture would have been rare to find during the dictatorship. This linguistic preservation and celebration could be credited with aiding in the social re-vitalization movements to come in the Basque country in the mid-twentieth century.

In addition, the Basque country has a rich history of dance that coincides with its musical pedigree. *Dantzak*, or dances, take many forms and vary highly by region (deAlaiza 57). Many include traditional dress to be worn while performing, whether it is wearing a beret, carrying a sword or wearing specifically colored pieces of clothing. Red and green pieces were worn because of the relation to the *Ikurriña*. The beret also was a good choice due to its historical prevalence among fisherman, shepherds, and *pelota* players. As a sport, *pelota* was uniquely concentrated in the Basque country and many still play today. *Pelota Vasca* involves two teams that throw a ball against a wall using their hands, gloves, racquets, or specially made baskets. *Dantzak* take place on many occasions like feast days or other holidays. *Dantzak* would often

take place in the same venue as *bertsolaritza* or other cultural rituals. Just like other cultural expressions, *dantzak* were severely restricted by the regime but thankfully persist till today, as a pillar of Basque culture. *Dantzak* serve as a reminder of the past and a celebration of the continued future of *Euskadi* through the use of tradition, symbolism, and art.

CHAPTER 2: The Development of *Ez Dok Amairu*

Though some Basque cultural institutions survived the White Terror and repressive policies, one socio-cultural movement stands out above the rest. *Ez Dok Amairu* was a social revitalization effort by some of *Euskadi's* most influential songwriters, poets, and artists, like Mikel Laboa and Benito Lertxundi, to foment the increased use of *Euskera* through a huge variety of means like music, literature, art, and dance. The name *Ez Dok Amairu* refers to a story named *San Martinen Esttasuna* (San Martín's rush) that ends with the line "*Ez Dok Amairu*" (there is no thirteen) referring to the curse of thirteen, a Christian idea that thirteen was inherently unlucky because there were thirteen people present at the Last Supper, one of them being Judas Iscariot, Jesus' eventual betrayer. Also, just like some of the Apostles that held different professions, *Ez Dok Amairu* and its founders wanted to combine the different fields of art to revitalize the Basque country, metaphorically breaking the curse upon it, inflicted years earlier by the abolition of the *fueros* and exacerbated by the Franco regime. Founded in 1966 and dissolved in 1972, *Ez Dok Amairu* was a cultural phenomenon in itself, with clear inspiration coming from previous artists. The initial inspirational roots of *Ez Dok Amairu* can be explained by the actions of two men, Nemesio Etxaniz and Michel Labeguerie. Nemesio Etxaniz was a catholic priest and one of the first people to translate Spanish music and other literature to *Euskera* in order to encourage greater usage of the language through Spanish popular culture (Aurtenetxe Zalbidea 1). While Etxaniz worked with Spanish material, Labeguerie worked on

composing entirely new Basque music with clear roots in traditional Basque culture and folklore, an eventual key part of the multi-faceted movement of *Ez Dok Amairu*. The artists of *Ez Dok Amairu* sought to awaken national consciousness surrounding *Euskera* linguistically and philosophically by demonstrating the direction the language and the culture were heading in. The members of *Ez Dok Amairu*, like many other Basques, worried about the diminishing use of *Euskera*. In addition to the aforementioned inspirations of Etxaniz and Labeguerie, *Ez Dok Amairu* was also inspired by the contemporary movement of *Nova Cançó* in Catalonia (Jauregiando 1288). Much like the idea of *Nova Cançó*, *Euskal Kantagintza Berria*, or the New Basque Song, had similar goals of revitalizing tradition, while modernizing Basque music (Jauregiando 1288). The New Basque Song emphasized traditions like poetry, oral storytelling, and folklore through music written in *Euskera*. Through the use of different instruments like the guitar and modern recording techniques, the New Basque song advanced Basque music. *Ez Dok Amairu*, in addition to being a part of this movement of creation of new songs in *Euskera*, was musicalizing old and new Basque poetry to reach a greater audience. By producing singles and albums, even with the extreme censorship present due to the regime, *Ez Dok Amairu* built considerable listenership and illuminated the Basque culture that had long been artificially dormant. For instance, the song “*Txoria Txori*” by Mikel Laboa was a musical interpretation of the poem with the same name by Joxean Artze. Laboa’s musicalization and recording of the song allowed for the poem’s message to reach a much wider audience. Conveniently the recording also made it easier for foreigners to hear the song and to learn the messaging and story behind it. Interestingly, according to *El Salto*, the development of Laboa's lyrics began on a napkin while

he was at dinner with his wife. Furthermore, alongside efforts to musicalize old Basque literature, *Ez Dok Amairu* also did group performances (Jauregiendo 1288). Their shows would include music, poetry and other arts, encompassing many different Basque cultural spheres. The holistic method *Ez Dok Amairu* utilized is one of its greatest strengths. By including different arts, *Ez Dok Amairu* was able to advance its mission further without neglecting any important parts of Basque culture. *Ez Dok Amairu* is often examined through the lens of Mikel Laboa, Lourdes Iriondo, and Benito Lertxundi's work, at least musically due to their strong influence on the group and their enduring popularity today.

Mikel Laboa was born in 1934 in San Sebastian and by the formation of *Ez Dok Amairu* in the 1960s was a songwriter. Laboa along with Benito Lertxundi and Lourdes Iriondo formed the musical core of the group with others filling more literary or artistic roles. *Ez Dok Amairu* was an artist collective, meaning music was not the only focus of the group. Other art forms, like poetry written in *Euskera* and art depicting Basque landscapes heavily featured in *Ez Dok Amairu* shows. Laboa often viewed himself as a political artist with his songs and lyrics having more than just surface level meaning (Eaude 1), principally a somber call for independence and autonomy, especially among Basque listeners. While some of his music was musicalized versions of old standards, Laboa and his work is often classified as experimental with parts of his catalog utilizing techniques for music production that were untraditional like some of the tracks that feature prominent shouting, and others totally new compositions. One such example would be his song "Gernika" off of the album *Bat hiru* (One-Three). The song is about the bombing of the town of Guernica by the Luftwaffe and lasts for twelve minutes and fifty seconds. During the

song, a single simple guitar line is played while Laboa describes the events that took place, with little to no musicality or rhythm in his voice. Laboa eschews traditional singing for spoken word to produce a dramatic effect. Laboa focuses on the brutality and horror of the bombing and also highlights the true sadness and lament that it produced. His album *Bat hiru* was chosen by a early-2000s readers' poll for *Diario Vasco* as the greatest Basque album of all time, cementing his legacy as a Basque artist and cultural figure. Interestingly, all of his albums have numerical names, save for the number thirteen, in reference to *Ez Dok Amairu*.

Like his compatriot Laboa, Benito Lertxundi also was a songwriting pathfinder for *Ez Dok Amairu*. In contrast to Laboa, however, Lertxundi was classically trained as a woodcarver by Franciscans at the School of Arts in Zarauz. Lertxundi quickly developed a love and appreciation for art and painting. In addition, Lertxundi also produced some of the most popular songs to come out of *Ez Dok Amairu* besides Laboa's "*Txoria Txori*," like "*Urrak Dakarrena*" and "*Zenbat Gera*." From a very young age, Lertxundi was exposed to music. When asked in 2006 about what music meant to him, Lertxundi said "What is the air for me? Something essential. I am air, without air I am not. For our emotional and spiritual feeling to grow, we need different types of air, like when our joy and sadness come and go. For me, music is the oxygen of the spirit" (Translated from Spanish, Salaberria 2). To Lertxundi then and especially during his time participating in *Ez Dok Amairu*, music was an essential artistic outlet that grew him emotionally. This emotional dynamic is especially prevalent in some of his songs, like "*Urrak Dakkarena*" and "*Zenbat Gera*," which will be analyzed further later.

Lourdes Iriondo, in addition to her musical contributions, is remembered for her more direct contributions to the survival of *Euskera*. Iriondo is well known for using her proceeds from performing to donate to *Ikastolas*. Also, her position as the only female member of *Ez Dok Amairu* placed her in a unique position as the sole female representation. In contrast to *txokos*, *Ez Dok Amairu* was a more diverse group, marking a clear transformation from the more masculine dominated cultural institutions, like the *txokos*, to more inclusive cultural representation. Iriondo, along with her husband, formed a formidable part of *Ez Dok Amairu*, with her husband Xabier Lete part of the musical core of the group as well. Iriondo was unique because the subject matter of some of her discography focused on children's characters and stories. In addition to this focus on children's characters in her songwriting, Iriondo also wrote a number of books marketed for children including, *Martin arotza eta Jaun Deabrua (Saint Martin the Carpenter and the Devil Lord)* (Arozamena Ayala 1). These titles all utilized national folklore as their basis (Arozamena Ayala 1), maintaining Iriondo's priority on fostering the growth of more *Euskera* speakers and national consciousness through folklore.

Thanks to the foundation Arana Goiri laid with his *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* and the idea of *Euskadi*, both ETA and *Ez Dok Amairu* were able to utilize an ideological base for their activism. Obviously, ETA and *Ez Dok Amairu* acted differently in efforts to achieve their goals, but the parallel development of the two movements and their subsequent divergence is important to discuss. It may be hard to quantify the effectiveness of ETA and *Ez Dok Amairu* in their protests and activism, but it is not hard to argue that *Ez Dok Amairu* maintained a more inclusive and peaceful stance throughout its existence when compared to ETA and its later factions. One of

the strengths *Ez Dok Amairu* possessed that ETA did not was a diversity of opinion. *Ez Dok Amairu*'s members came from different occupations and viewpoints to combine for a more holistic view and approach to preserving *Euskera* and similarly, Basque culture. Mikel Laboa was able to utilize his experimental musical methods to express the feelings he and others had about events like the bombing of Guernica or the general perception of the Franco regime and *Euskadi* in songs like "*Txoria Txori*." Iriondo added her emphasis on the funding of the *ikastolas* and on the importance of including children's literature to safeguard and develop future speakers of *Euskera*. Benito Lertxundi employed his artistic outlet to evoke emotions Basques could relate to like despair, hope, and defiance. Additionally, as a collective, *Ez Dok Amairu* included more than just musicians. Poets and other artistic vocations contributed to the mission. Many of *Ez Dok Amairu*'s compositions are musicalized versions of poetry or literature, in an attempt to make traditional Basque writings more accessible. *Ez Dok Amairu* recordings and albums also represented physical manifestations of Basque culture, countering in part the censorship and erasure Franco imposed on the Basque country. In contrast, ETA was much more factional due to the schism the organization suffered from in 1966. In the beginning, ETA was much more inclusive contrary to the ethnic hardline stance of Arana Goiri, mainly because of their definition of Basqueness as *ethnos*, not heredity. However, as ETA became more violent, it alienated the majority of Basques that had supported its mission. Also, the ideologies present in ETA only concentrated with the schism, with the more moderate members composing ETA and the socialist members composing *ETA-Berri*. The ideological hardlining and violence (often against other Basques) together excluded potential collaborators and damaged ETA's standing with the

Basque people and the international community as well (Smith 3-4). The clear division between *Ez Dok Amairu* and ETA is a product of their methods and not a result of the mission they shared. Unconscious cooperation between the two separate organizations helped to fight for Basque culture as it suffered repression, censorship, and violence under the Franco regime. Arguably, without the intervention of ETA, *Ez Dok Amairu*, and other cultural institutions, Basque culture would have been severely depleted, exacerbating the situation that the *El Plan General de Promoción del Uso del Euskera* and by extension, the Basque government are attempting to rectify today.

The framework laid for a concentrated Basque national identity by Arana Goiri and the PNV combined with the already established cultural factors provided a perfect storm for a group like *Ez Dok Amairu* to take advantage of and further the progress of a developing national identity in *Euskadi*. Just like ETA, *Ez Dok Amairu* recognized the unique danger that the Basque country was facing, as described by García de Cortázar. However, *Ez Dok Amairu*'s use of musicality was their focus for completing their goal of preserving Basque culture and *Euskera*. This unique approach proved to be much easier to support in comparison to more militant methods like the actions of ETA. Nonetheless, to develop an understanding of *Ez Dok Amairu* and the positive consequences of its actions, its music must be examined. In the coming section, some of *Ez Dok Amairu* and its members' most popular and unique compositions will be analyzed. The songs selected for this analysis include “*Txoria Txori*” by Mikel Laboa, “*Gernika*” by Mikel Laboa, “*Urak Dakarrena*” by Benito Lertxundi, “*Zenbat Gera*” by Benito

Lertxundi, “*Askatasuna Zertarako*” by Lourdes Iriondo, and “*Ez Gaude Konforme*” by Lourdes Iriondo.

CHAPTER 3: Analysis of *Ez Dok Amairu's* Music

*Ez Dok Amairu*, at its core, was a method for survival during the Francisco Franco dictatorship. Just as Fernando García de Cortázar described, the policies, violence, and pressure exerted on the Basques by Franco was extraordinary. These pressures produced a multitude of Basque responses like ETA and *Ez Dok Amairu*. The nature of the conflict between *Euskadi* and Franco's regime necessitated that the Basque people use alternative methods for survival. Conventional warfare was not an option, as the standing Basque government and military had been defeated in the Civil War. Without the option of conventional war, other choices were more tenable. ETA utilized Guerrilla warfare and armed resistance. Ultimately, guerilla warfare efforts did not result in the defeat of the Franco regime, but did build support and encouragement for Basque nationalism, till more terroristic efforts by ETA made armed resistance unpopular, especially within *Euskadi* itself (Abadie and Gardezabal 116). On the other hand, protest was an option to the Basque people. Certainly, protests during the dictatorship had their dangers, but they were less severe than fighting a war with the government. Also, as policies governing language usage and assembly loosened (Smith 2), protest became a more viable mechanism for fighting for Basque autonomy and Basque culture. ETA, in addition to its armed aspect, contributed greatly to the practice of protest on behalf of *Euskadi* during the dictatorship. In fact, the snake and the ax featured prominently in the official ETA symbol represent political an

armed struggle respectively. Just as ETA had developed a culture of protest and struggle against the dictatorship, so too did *Ez Dok Amairu*. By reforming, modernizing, and diversifying their methods of protest and cultural expression, *Ez Dok Amairu* was able to contribute to the goal that ETA and their organization shared, a flourishing Basque culture, including *Euskera*, that hopefully would lead to eventual autonomy from the foreign powers oppressing *Euskadi*. Instead of just relying on protest and armed conflict, *Ez Dok Amairu* adopted the arts for its ends. *Ez Dok Amairu* built upon past and present cultural practices, like those previously mentioned in the first chapter of this paper, ultimately preserving important elements of Basque culture and building upon them. The combination of celebration and preservation of Basque culture executed by *Ez Dok Amairu* is why it is important to study *Ez Dok Amairu* to establish its place within the context of the Franco dictatorship and the history of the Basque Country.

“Txoria Txori” proved to be Laboa’s most seminal work due to its influence on Basque culture, music, and attitudes surrounding Basque nationalism.

Hegoak ebaki banizkio	Si le hubiera cortada las alas
Nerea izango zen,	Sería mío
Ez zuen aldegingo.	No habría escapado
Hegoak ebaki banizkio	Si le hubiera cortada las alas
Nerea izango zen,	Sería mío
Ez zuen aldegingo.	No habría escapado
Bainan, honela	Pero de ese modo
Ez zen gehiago txoria izango	Habría dejado de ser pájaro

Bainan, honela	Pero de ese modo
Ez zen gehiago txoria izango	Habría dejado de ser pájaro
Eta nik...	Y yo...
Txoria nuen maite.	Lo que amaba era un pájaro
Eta nik...	Y yo...
Txoria nuen maite.	Lo que amaba era un pájaro
Hegoak ebaki banizkio	Si le hubiera cortada las alas
Nerea izango zen,	Sería mío
Ez zuen aldegingo	No habría escapado
Bainan, honela	Pero de ese modo
Ez zen gehiago txoria izango	Habría dejado ser un pájaro
Eta nik...	Y yo...
Txoria nuen maite	Lo que amaba era un pájaro
La la la la...	La la la la... (musixmatch.com, 2022)

“Txoria Txori” (“The Bird is a Bird”) was one of the most popular and influential pieces of music to come out of the Franco era in Spain. Originally, the story was written as a poem by *Ez Dok Amairu* member Joxean Artze in 1957. Mikel Laboa musicalized the lines and recorded it as a song in 1968, then added it to his album *Bat hiru* in 1974. Shortly after, the song became a de-facto Basque independence anthem due to its popularity and resonance within the Basque community (El Salto). Many Basques could relate to the song because the metaphor of the song represented the situation for many Basques during the dictatorship. Basques had suffered the

effects of the White Terror, censorship of their language, and lack of freedom. The metaphorical method of highlighting these issues for the listener proved to be effective. The song itself has a few main themes centered around possession, freedom, and identity.

The central image of the song is a small songbird and a man observing it. Mikel Laboa, acting as the man, plays a simple guitar line while singing the first few lines, “Hegoak ebaki banizkio nerea izango zen” (genius.com). The line translates to “if I had clipped its wings...it would have been mine... it would not have escaped...but then it would not have been a bird anymore” (translated from Spanish). The lines by Artze and Laboa are imploring the listener to have empathy for the Basque country. Laboa and Artze want the Basque country’s oppressors to realize the beauty of *Euskadi* and to let it be free. The bird and the narrator of the song have clear representations in reality as the bird represents the Basque Country and the narrator is more like the *Estado Español*. The call for autonomy presented by these first few lines is strong. The image of a bird and principally, its ability to fly, has often been referenced by other works of art or music to represent freedom, peace, and beauty. One example is *The Goldfinch* by Carel Fabritius, a painting which features a goldfinch chained to its perch representing a lack of freedom. “Txoria Txori” uses this trope to imply the meaning of its lyrics. Also, the lyrics describe the identity crisis that the Basque country was suffering from, “...it would not have been a bird anymore,” the lyrics suggest that the strain of censorship, violence, and erasure imposed by the Franco regime upon *Euskadi* are destroying its identity, including *Euskera* and other cultural practices like *bertsolaritza*, *dantzak*, and *txokos*. The autonomy of the bird also correlates with the desired autonomy for *Euskadi* that Arana Goiri, the PNV, ETA, and others had been clamoring for. The Basque country wanted to spread its wings, metaphorically, and it was prevented from doing so

by violence, censorship, and the other practices used by the Franco regime. The song, however, ends on a more hopeful note. Laboa sings, “Txoria nuen maite” (genius.com). The line translates to “and I loved that bird” (translated from Spanish). Representing an ardent plea for understanding and reconciliation, this lyric serves to reinforce the non-violent, empathetic approach that the song takes. Laboa hopes that the listener, like the man, can realize the inherent value in the bird without the need to possess it. In other words, the value of *Euskadi* is evident and to preserve that intrinsic value, *Euskadi* requires freedom.

In addition to the lyrical content of the song, the structure of the song also contributes to its ultimate message. During its playtime of three minutes and twenty seven seconds, Laboa plays a single cyclical guitar riff. Laboa composes the song in this way to draw the listener’s attention to the lyrics and not the musical elements. Moreover, Laboa utilizes a highly repetitive structure for the lyrics to press the message further without confusing the listener. This repetition served as a means of stronger messaging and as a means to help build the song’s popularity. The song’s simplicity in addition to its emotionally affecting lyrics combined to produce a song that many Basques could sing on their own, even without total fluency in *Euskera*, furthering *Ez Dok Amairu*’s goal of developing more speakers of *Euskera*. Though “Txoria Txori” was not a musicalized classic like some other works by *Ez Dok Amairu*, it proved to be a nearly instant classic, with the song enjoying some popularity even today. Multiple covers of the song exist, including a version sung by Joan Baez. “Txoria Txori” and its enduring popularity as a Basque independence anthem today help cement *Ez Dok Amairu*’s legacy as a group that celebrated, developed, and preserved Basque culture.

“Gernika” formed part of Laboa’s most famous album *Bat hiru*, which has continued to garner acclaim, even after his death in 2008.

Arrano beltzarekin joan ziren	Fueron con el águila negra
Joan joan	Fueron fueron sí
Jaengo	De Jaen
Navas de Tolosara	A las Navas de Tolosa
Nafarrak	Los Navarros
Etakkate kateekin itzuli etxera	Y cadena
Etakkate kateak ekarri Herrira	Con las cadenas volvieron a casa ( <i>Euskadi</i> ),
Etakkate kateak harmarria	Y cadena,
Atzerritarrentzat	Las cadenas trajeron al pueblo,
Gerla irabazi	Al escudo.
Atzerria.	
Eta Herria Nafarroa galdu	Ganaron la guerra
Nafar aroa	Para los extranjeros
Aroa galdu	En el extranjero
Ez dea bada	Y perdieron Navarra en casa,
Etsipengarria	La era navarra.
Oraindik	No es pues desesperante
Ez dugula ikusi,	Que todavía no hayamos visto-aprendido,
Ez dugula ikasi,	Visto-aprendido,
Ez da nonbait aski.	No es acaso suficiente.

Gibeletik eman	Dar por detrás
Nor nor nor	Quién quién quién
Nork ez daki	Quien no sabe que
Digutela	Que
Ematen ari	Nos
Ari	Dan
Ari zaizkigula	Que nos están dando
Digutela eman	Que nos han dado
Eman	Que nos dan
Ematen,	Dar y tomar,
Hartuko,	Dar y entrar,
Sartuko	Entrar y tomar
Dugula	Tomaremos
Digutela	Entraremos
Digutela	Nos la meterán
Sartuko	Nos la cogerán
Hartuko	Si es que vienen
Baldin	Cuando vengán a dar a dar
Badatoz	No aprendemos
Datozanean	De una vez por todas
Ematera ez badugu beingoz	Cómo cerrar las puertas de atrás.
Lehiatila nola itxi ikasten.	(musixmatch.com, 2022)

“Gernika” is one of Laboa’s most experimental compositions. An exceedingly long song by music industry standards, “Gernika” also features an un-orthodox lyrical structure. There is no chorus and verse structure present in the song. Instead, the song lyrics flow more like stream of consciousness poetry, with no rhyme, little repetition, and little reference to the rhythm. Unlike the previously discussed “Txoria Txori,” Laboa’s singing in “Gernika” is atonal, lacking a key or recognizable tone. In addition, a guitar line is played that includes some dissonance between certain chords, which produces an effect of uneasiness and anxiety. These factors combine to create a song that is steeped in symbolism and historical references, used to tell the story of the bombing of the city of Guernica, perpetrated by the Luftwaffe and the Italian air force at the behest of Franco. The bombing, immortalized in a painting by Pablo Picasso, proved to be a de-moralizing instance of destruction that further weakened the Basque Country, eventually leading to Franco’s capture of Bilbao and victory in Northern Spain in the Civil War.



Fig. 1. Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid.

In the title, it appears that the song “Gernika” would mainly consist of a narrative of the historical event it references. While there are mentions of the bombing like the first line “Fueron

con el Águila Negra,” which alludes to a specific Luftwaffe air wing that participated in the bombing, the Condor Legion, that was a special group in the Luftwaffe that was formed to support the nationalists directly during the Spanish civil war. This line not only highlights the involvement of the aforementioned Nazi air group but also serves as an example of symbolism in the song. Eagles are birds of prey known for their ability to take down large animals. Laboa paints the Nazi and Italian collaborators as “black eagles” predators targeting the largely defenseless Basque people in Guernica. On a more basic level, black eagles also refer to the Fascist imagery of Spain, Italy, and Germany during the 1930s. After this lyric, Laboa then goes on to compare the involvement of the Nazis and Italians to another historical event from Spain’s medieval history, the battle of *Las Navas de Tolosa*. The *Reconquista* was a long lasting conflict between Spaniards and other peoples of the Iberian peninsula against the Moors for control of the Iberian peninsula, in which the battle of *Las Navas de Tolosa* was a turning point for King Alphonso VIII in his campaign against the Almohad caliphate (Gomez 161-62). The battle featured a conglomerate of Spanish forces against the caliphate, including the armies of Navarre and Aragon, who were Alphonso’s rivals. This outside involvement parallels the aid the Nazis and the Italian fascists gave to Franco during the Spanish Civil War and more specifically, the bombing of Guernica. Laboa says, “los navarros y cadena, con las cadenas volvieron a casa... ganaron la guerra para los extranjeros” (Laboa 1). The irony of this comparison is apparent, as northern Navarre has historically aligned itself with the Basque provinces, and it came to the aid of the Spanish monarch, Alphonso VIII, during a turbulent time of constant conflict. Laboa remarks on this change in relations from hesitant allies, to enemies of the state (Smith 2). The Navarrese, more specifically, Basques, fought alongside the Castellians, just to be

treated as enemies and as an opponent to the glorification of imperial Spain that Franco advocated for. Also, the context of rivals helping one another is important, as Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Franco's *Estado Español* were all burgeoning fascist states, seeking to regain the past glory of their imperial histories. This dynamic easily could have produced rivalries between the three. The chains Laboa is speaking of, "las cadenas trajeron al pueblo" (Laboa 2), are the eventual regressions of freedom and self-governance that the Basques would suffer later starting with the abolishment of the *fueros* in the 1890s and culminating in the cultural erasure perpetrated by the Francoists. To end the song, Laboa uses these words, "Si es que vienen... cuando vengan a dar a dar no aprendemos de una vez por todas... cómo cerrar las puertas de atrás." Laboa speaks largely metaphorically in these lines, directly addressing the Basque people. Laboa implores them to shut out those who would harm the Basque country, through resistance and other means.

"Gernika" as a part of an *Ez Dok Amairu*'s catalog served an important role as a reminder of the past, while also highlighting the irony of a strong Spain needing outside help to defeat its enemies. This irony provides a harsh criticism of Franco's belief in a rejuvenated imperial Spain. In addition to the metaphorical, symbolic, and lyrical elements present in the song, the anxious mood of the music and the un-melodic vocals serve as foreshadowing of the problems the Basques would face, plus serve to focus the attention of the listener on the horror experienced by the Basques at the hands of the German Luftwaffe and Franco.

"Urak Dakarrena" features on Benito Lertxundi's album, *Ez Dok Amairu*. Just like lots of Laboa and *Ez Dok Amairu*'s musical products, the song focuses on the lyrics and not flashy instrumental parts or effects.

Urak dakarrena	Lo que trae el agua
Urak daroa	El agua lo lleva
Lurrak emandakoa	Concedido por la tierra
Lurrean gelditzen da	Se queda en el suelo
Eta gu hemen	Y nosotros aquí
Beti gu hemen	Siempre nosotros aquí
Zuhaitzak bezala lurrean	Como árboles en el suelo
Kantuak bezala haizea	Viento como canciones
Muinak bezala erroetan	Como el núcleo en las raíces
Ura bezala itsasoan	Como el agua en el mar
Urak dakarrena	Lo que trae el agua
Urak daroa	El agua lo lleva
Lurrak emandakoa	Concedido por la tierra
Lurrean gelditzen da	Se queda en el suelo
Eta gu hemen	Y nosotros aquí
Beti gu hemen.	Siempre nosotros aquí
Ekaitzak bota-arazten	Tormentas purificadoras
Ifar eta hegoaldetik	Norte y sur
Gizon izateko hasi behar da	Tengas que empezar un hombre
Gizon izaten hemen.	Él es un hombre aquí. (euskal.net, 2022)

The title itself is symbolic, “Urak Dakarrena” translates roughly to “Lo que lleva el agua” which describes *Euskadi* as the carrier of water, a progenitor of life. The lyrics also invoke pride in the Basque country, much like the writings and ideology of Arana Goiri. The mythologized version of Euskadi presented in Arana Goiri’s writings presents itself in the lyrics, “tormentas purificadoras del norte y del sur” (Lertxundi 1). Lertxundi describes a great tumult of storms from all directions surrounding the Basque Country. These storms are metaphors for the efforts of cultural preservation from outside forces, such as Franco’s *Estado Español* or the rapidly disappearing use of Euskera. Through these damages, however, the Basque Country remains sturdy, “y aquí estamos...siempre nosotros aquí,” the Basque people have been present and will remain present, even through the troubles presented by the Franco regime and other changing economic and social circumstances. In contrast to “Txoria Txori,” this song is much more candid in its portrayal and description of *Euskadi* and the necessity for resistance against the storms it is facing. Rather than relying on largely metaphorical or allegorical language, Lertxundi uses the Basque country as a central character in his song. The syncopation of the rhythm, as previously mentioned, aids in maintaining the listeners attention, but when combined with the lyrics, an imaginative side of the song is present. The speed of the beat and the singing blend to create an exciting effect on the audience. In addition to the metaphorical language describing *Euskadi* as a holdout against the outside forces, “Urak Dakarrena” also attempts to cultivate the natural mythos of *Euskal Herria* through lyrics describing some of the natural features of the Basque Country, “Lo que trae el agua...el agua lo lleva...concedido por la tierra” (Lertxundi 1) Lertxundi describes *Euskadi* as a vibrant land, flowing with life-giving water the Basques and others relied on, in contrast to a wasteland, devoid of water. The mysticism presenting *Euskadi* as

a cradle or origin of life is paralleled by Arana Goiri's assumption that, "*Euskera* might be the language of the Garden of Eden, the tongue spoken by all of mankind before the disaster of the tower of Babel" (translated from Spanish in Smith 2). The sanctity of *Euskadi* is echoed in other artistic mediums. A documentary film named *Ama-lur* (Mother Earth) directed by Fernando Larruquert and Nestor Basterretxeak premiered in 1968, during the height of *Ez Dok Amairu*'s activities. *Ama-lur* focused its recordings on traditional Basque life in the countryside while also describing a number of ancestral traditions and other important cultural events. *Ama-Lur* was a goddess within the Basque mythological canon, who created *Eki*, the goddess of the Sun and *Ilargi*, the goddess of the Moon. These two goddesses are important to Basque mythology because of their control of the day-night cycle, and *Eki* was regarded as a protector of the Basque people from evil and wrongdoing (Barandiarán 372). *Ama-lur* was first shown at an international film festival in San Sebastian, much to the dissatisfaction of the Franco regime (Roldán Larreta 1). Franco's censors demanded the film be edited, with scenes featuring Picasso's *Guernica* and the Tree of *Gernika* be removed.

"Urak Dakarrena" released in 1971 and like *Ama-lur* contributed to the mythological canon of *Euskadi* that Arana Goiri and other Basque nationalists sought to highlight. Songs like "Urak Dakarrena" and others aided in establishing a more holistic celebration of *Euskal Herria*, including focuses not just emphasizing *Euskera*. Historical myths like those shown in *Ama-lur* and those described in "Urak Dakarrena" brought attention to the Basque pantheon while also serving an important role in creating a centralized myth for the Basque people to latch onto. With a centralized myth, it was much easier for the Basques to self-identify together and empathize

with each other. Describing and believing the Basque country as sacred, pure, and important gave impetus to the desire and mission to preserve it.

“Zenbat Gera” presents a much more melancholic view of the Basque Country’s plight. It featured alongside “Urak Dakarrena” on Lertxundi’s *Ez Dok Amairu*.

Zenbat gera? lau, bat	¿Cuántos somos? ¿Cuatro, uno,
Hiru, bost, zazpi?	Tres, cinco, siete?
Zer egin degu, ezerrez	¿Qué hacemos juntos?
Zer egiten degu, alkar jo	¿Qué hacemos? Nada.
Zer egingo degu, alkar hil	¿Qué haremos? ¿Matarnos?
Gure asmoak, esperantzak,	Nuestras intenciones, esperanzas,
Herria, askatasuna	Pueblo, libertad,
Justizia, pakea	Justicia, paz,
Egia, maitasuna	Verdad, amor
Mitoak, hitz hutsak?	¿Mitos, palabras vacías?
Zenbat gera...	¿Cuántos somos?...
Hori ez, hori ez, hori ez	¡Eso no! ¡Eso no! ¡Eso no!
Hori ez, hori ez, hori ez...	¡Eso no! ¡Eso no! ¡Eso no!
	(euskal.net, 2022)

“Zenbat Gera” paints a harrowing picture of the post-Spanish Civil War times for the Basque people. A mournful song, “Zenbat Gera” attempts to best describe the horror, shock, and sadness that the Basques experienced as a result of the White Terror and other measures of violence levied against Basque culture and people as a whole by the Franco regime. The results of these acts were thousands of dead Basques and extreme damage to the health of Basque culture and the use of Euskera. Much like the previously examined song “Gernika,” “Zenbat Gera” is a direct reference to events during and after the civil war. One line describes it best, “¿Cuántos somos? ¿Cuatro, uno, tres, cinco, siete?” (Lertxundi 1). Lertxundi laments the loss of life and remarks on how few people were left. Extrajudicial killings like those perpetrated in the White Terror were fairly widespread in the Basque country even with the widely varying estimates of the exact number of deaths (Graham 106). The Basques had suffered so much and “Zenbat Gera” provided an outlet for mourning and collectivization much like the other previous songs. Like “Txoria Txori,” “Zenbat Gera” became a song that served as a rallying cry for a certain aspect of the Basque nationalist movement, in this case, a remembrance of those that had been lost to the outside forces that had been corrupting and damaging the Basque country.

In terms of musical structure, this song features a refrain, “¿Cuántos somos? ¿Cuatro, uno, tres, cinco, siete? ¿Qué hemos hecho? Nada. ¿Qué hacemos juntos? ¿Qué haremos? ¿Matarnos?” (Lertxundi 1), which is played twice in the *Ez Dok Amairu* album version of the song. The lyrics are structured with a call and answer pattern. Lertxundi poses a question, then answers it with the next phrase or line. This lyrical structure lends itself well to live performances. Asking and answering questions or statements is central to human conversation, which is what the song tries to mimic. Another effect of this replication of conversation is the

involvement of the audience. Whenever a song, in this case “Zenbat Gera,” of this type is performed, it allows for the audience to take part more easily by simply answering the phrase sung, without needing to know the whole song’s lyrics. A key goal of *Ez Dok Amairu* and its artists was to generate more cultural participation and more use of Euskera. Songs like “Zenbat Gera” are strong examples of this goal manifesting itself in their music, while also highlighting important social events, like remembrance of those who had been killed by the dictatorial regime.

Although the refrain is very somber in tone and lyrical content, the chorus and final lines of the song provide an element of hope. Lertxundi directly addresses the audience, the Basque people calling them to action: “Nuestras intenciones, esperanzas, pueblo, libertad, justicia, paz, verdad, amor. ¿mitos, palabras vacías?” (Lertxundi 1). Lertxundi emphasizes that the peace, hope, people, and love of the Basque country were real, even with the blows they had suffered during the Spanish Civil War and afterwards. The idea of *Euskadi*, a united Basque people, and an independent nation was not just a myth, it was a reality. The song ends with one more recitation of the refrain and then an emphatic repetition of this line, “¡Eso no! ¡Eso no!” Lertxundi refutes the premise that there is nothing the Basque people can do, “¿Qué hemos hecho? Nada... ¡Eso no!” (Lertxundi 1). The obstinate resistance to the premise that the idea of a Basque nation and people is false is characteristic of Arana Goiri’s, ETA’s, and *Ez Dok Amairu*’s efforts to conglomerate the Basque people and provinces into a coherent group, with shared ideas, goals, and sovereignty.

Listening to “Zenbat Gera” serves as a startling reminder of the disturbing destruction that the Basque country experienced. Reading the lyrics with the historical context behind them

evokes many saddening feelings, even to an outsider of *Euskadi*. Like many of the other previous songs analyzed, “Zenbat Gera” has lasting influence on Basque culture today, with other versions and covers of the song circulated. Much more similar to “Gernika” than some of the other songs with more metaphorical and ambiguous themes, “Zenbat Gera” attempts to lyricize a generation and people’s trauma successfully.

Though she was well known for her monetary support of *ikastolas* and her work as an author, Lourdes Iriondo also produced important pieces of music for *Ez Dok Amairu* including “Askatasuna Zertarako.”

Libertade ansia gizonak daukagu

Beraren jabe izaten ba ote dakigu?

Askatasun gosea errexena degu,

Izanda, jabe izaten ba ote dakigu?

Askatasuna pakerako, ez

Bengantzako, ez ilzeko, Askatasuna

Maitatzeko, gizon guztien onerako.

Libertade ez da errien jostallu baizik

Gizon bakoitzak irritzi bear du

Ez-jakintasunaren kateak urratu eta

Lagunurkoa leialki maitatu.

Askatasuna pakerako, ez

Bengantzako, ez ilzeko,

Somos hombres de libertad

¿Sabemos quién es el dueño?

¿Sabemos que somos los dueños

Del hambre de libertad?

Libertad por la paz, no por venganza,

no por la muerte, por amor a la

libertad, por el bien de todos los

hombres.

La libertad no es la diversión del

pueblo, pero todo hombre debe

romper las cadenas de la ignorancia

y amar fielmente al amigo.

Libertad por la paz, no por venganza,

No por la muerte, por amor a la

Askatasuna Maitatzeko,  
Gizon guztien onerako.

Libertad, por el bien de todos los  
hombres. (Transcription of lyrics and  
translation done by author)

One of Iriondo's most popular songs, "Askatasuna Zertarako," called for dramatic change and restructuring of the way some Basques and Spaniards thought. Iriondo remarked on the pervasiveness of violence in the first few lines, "Somos hombres de libertad. ¿Sabemos quién es el dueño? ¿Sabemos que somos los dueños del hambre de libertad?" (Iriondo 1). Iriondo asserts that freedom is inherent, given to individuals at birth. This self-reflection and inclusivity is not present in other more nationalistic works of Basque art, like some of the songs in this paper, or the writings of Arana Goiri and ETA. As mentioned earlier, diversity was one of the largest strengths that *Ez Dok Amairu* possessed as an artistic group. There was room for diversity of thought in addition to artistic methods. Iriondo's words in the first few lines, while not necessarily aligned with the prevalent messaging of Basque nationalists, were an important mark of self-control and open-mindedness. They represent a moment of self-questioning and a moment of clarity. These lines further this premise, "Libertad por la paz, no por venganza, no por la muerte, por amor a la libertad, por el bien de todos los hombres" (Iriondo 1). Iriondo described the necessity of Basque independence for the good of humanity. To Iriondo it was not pursuing freedom for reasons of vengeance or violence, but rather freedom because they deserved it as human beings. In contrast to the actions of ETA, which relied sometimes on violence against their own people (Abadie and Gardezabal 115), Iriondo advocated for "el bien de todos los hombres" (Iriondo 1) and not just the Basques.

Structurally this song retains many of the common characteristics of other *Ez Dok Amairu* songs. “Askatasuna Zertarako” employs a simple acoustic guitar part paired with vocals and minimal use of other instruments and techniques. What separated Iriondo’s music from her contemporaries would be her voice. *Ez Dok Amairu* was a male-dominated group, meaning Iriondo’s voice stood out musically due to its pitch. Her voice is higher and she also utilizes vibrato, which is a regular, pulsating change of pitch, making her voice pleasant to listen to. In addition, “Askatasuna Zertarako” also follows the typical refrain-chorus-refrain song pattern, which helps to emphasize her message of reflective liberation, instead of violent retribution. Repetition of the refrain “Libertad por la paz, no por venganza, no por la muerte, por amor a la libertad, por el bien de todos los hombres” (Iriondo 1), highlights the humanistic view that Iriondo proposes for Basque independence, shedding the xenophobic and strict view of Basque liberty and ethnicity that Arana Goiri and others espoused.

Utilizing a viewpoint aimed to dull the ethnocentrism and extremism of Arana Goiri and ETA, Iriondo constructs an inclusive idea for Basque liberty, *askatasuna*, that rejects the necessity of violence and instead reflects Iriondo’s inclusion in *Ez Dok Amairu*, an acceptance for difference of opinion, creed, and gender. In fact, Iriondo criticizes the ignorance she saw from both the Franco regime and others, “todo hombre debe romper las cadenas de la ignorancia y amar fielmente al amigo” (Iriondo 1). Iriondo references the classical imagery of restriction, chains, to describe the grip ignorance holds on many Spaniards and Basques, which in her opinion, would prevent any true peace and liberty for all. To Iriondo, the end of the Spanish Civil war and the end of the Franco dictatorship would not naturally bring out equality for the Basques and Spaniards. Cultural enmity and ignorance that existed between the two groups would

continue the tension, even without extenuating circumstances. Finally, Iriondo expresses a weariness for the previously mentioned enmity, tension, and ignorance. Iriondo continues, “Todo hombre debe... amar fielmente al amigo” (Iriondo 1). Much like the often referenced biblical verse, “Love thy neighbor,” Iriondo wants Basques and Spaniards to love each other like friends. Additionally, Iriondo desires for the friendship to be steadfast, not born out of convenience or other ulterior motives. After all, Basques and Spaniards had coexisted and collaborated previously, like the Kingdom of Navarre and Kingdom of Castile during the battle of *Las Navas de Tolosa*, so there was historical precedent for a Basque-Spaniard partnership to exist. Iriondo’s word demonstrated a belief in an amicable relationship between Basques and Spaniards could flourish, and wanted to highlight the potential of this friendship in her music.

Another song featured on her eponymous album *Lourdes Iriondo* in 1968 “Ez Gaude Konforme” discusses young peoples’ feelings during the Franco dictatorship.

Gazte gera gazte,	Somos jóvenes,
Ta ez gaude konforme	Y no estamos conformes
Mundo garbiago bat	Quisiéramos vivir en un mundo mas
Bizi nahi genduke,	limpio,
Gezuraren kontra	Contra la mentira
Injustizirik ez,	Sin la injusticia
Gazte gera gazte	Somos jóvenes,
Ez gaude konforme	Y no estamos conformes
Nere abesti hau ez da politika,	Esta canción mía no es política,
Justizia nahi det, egiak agertu	Quiero mostrar las verdades

Gizonak daduzkan eskubide hoiek

Kunplitu ditezen bihotzez abestu

Ez noa inoren kontra egia maite dut

Gazte gera gazte...

Gazte geralako maitasun batean

Sinistu nahi degu, bainan baita ere,

Gehiegi dakigu munduan dagozen

Gezur ta gorroto, injustizi asko

Gauza hoién kontra abestu nahi degu

Gazte gera gazte...

Bainan aho batez gure herriaren

Problemak esaten uzten ez badigute

Guk nahiago degu betiko ixildu

Gero egun batez beldurrarengaitik

Traidore ginala esan ez dezaten

Gazte gera gazte...

Cantar de corazón para que

Se cumplan esos derechos que tiene  
el hombre

No voy contra nadie, amo la verdad

Somos jóvenes

Porque somos jóvenes queremos  
creer

En un mismo amor, pero además

sabemos demasiado sobre las

Injusticias odios y mentiras que hay  
en el mundo.

Contra esas cosas queremos cantar

Somos jóvenes...

Pero si no nos dejan decir a una sola  
voz

Los problemas de nuestro pueblo

Preferimos callarnos para siempre

Para que luego digan un día

Que éramos traidores por miedo

Somos jóvenes (Lyrics transcribed  
and translated by author)

When compared to other songs on the *Lourdes Iriondo* album, “Ez Gaude Konforme” is a deviation from the standard theme and feel of the other songs. A triumphant and defiant song, “Ez Gaude Konforme” illuminates the beliefs and feelings of many young people in Spain. Like many groups in Franco’s *Estado Español*, young people suffered from Franco’s repressive and restrictive policies. Many young people had parents or other family members killed, kidnapped, or severely injured during the Spanish Civil War and as a result lost important parts of their lives. Also, under the previously mentioned policy of autarky, Spain suffered economic depression and widespread famine (del Arco Blanco 4-5). Young people in the work force and at home suffered in large part due to the economic situation and the corruption of the Franco regime (Barciela López 84-85). Job opportunities were less numerous and low quality. Franco’s autarky policies focused on agriculture and industry, leaving many university educated Basques and Spaniards without work suitable for their qualifications. Young Basques saw first hand the effects of the censorship and threat of violence placed on their culture by the regime, meaning many young people lost a strong cultural connection with parents, grandparents, and others. Without outlets for cultural expression and growth, along with the common disappearance of gainful employment, young Basques felt stuck, trapped in a system they did little to create.

“Ez Gaude Konforme” features Iriondo’s characteristically beautiful voice and a much more diverse cast of instruments accompanying her. In addition to the acoustic guitar present in almost every *Ez Dok Amairu* piece and a drum set, there is also a stand up bass, adding a much deeper instrumental voice to complement Iriondo’s higher voice. Also, the bass provides the central rhythm of the song which bounces along with apparent alternating shortening of notes, which propels the song forward. This groove present in the song adds an element of enthusiasm

which partners well with the subject content of the lyrics and what message Iriondo is trying to convey.

Iriondo begins the song with her refrain “Somos jóvenes y no estamos conformes. Quisiéramos vivir en un mundo más limpio contra la mentira, sin la injusticia” (Iriondo 1). Iriondo describes the world that young Basques have to endure and their goal of ending it. Iriondo writes of an ideal world, against injustice and without lies. Francoism had propagated lies, violence, and corruption. Some of these crimes included Franco and his regime attempting to hide the fact that famine was occurring in large parts of the country and censoring any mention of food scarcity. Iriondo and her peers vowed to fight these injustices. Furthermore, Iriondo explains that their mission is not a vindictive one, “No voy contra nadie, amo la verdad” (Iriondo 1). The young people of Spain and the Basque country were not explicitly against anyone, they desired the pursuit of truth and justice. Later on, almost sardonically, Iriondo remarks about the potential resistance the youth will face in their mission for justice and liberty, “Pero si no nos dejan decir a una sola voz los problemas de nuestro pueblo, preferimos callarnos para siempre” (Iriondo 1). If Iriondo and others would be censored or prevented from voicing their opinions and desires as a singular voice, then they would rather stay silent, as if they weren’t taken seriously then, then they never would have been heard. Iriondo believed the circumstances were so extreme, that the necessity for the youth to enact change was undeniable.

“Ez Gaude Konforme” reinforces the humanistic view that Iriondo held in regards to Basque liberty while also demonstrating the focus on youth that Iriondo strongly supported, through her writing of childrens’ books and financial support of *ikastolas*. Iriondo describes the crisis that youth of the Basque country are facing in general terms, while integrating the

necessity of quickly facilitated change that the youth desired. Instead of focusing on more metaphorical and societal issues in her music, Iriondo focused on the human element of the Basque country and its problems which gave a more nuanced view into the feelings of the Basque people during Iriondo and *Ez Dok Amairu*'s time.

## CHAPTER 4: Conclusion

The advent of an organized Basque nationalist movement spurred by Arana Goiri fundamentally changed the way Basques interacted within the political and social structure of Spain. Initiated by the loss of the *fueros* and the relative safety they provided the Basque country, Arana Goiri and others saw a threat to their way of life, culture, and especially their language. *Euskera* became emblematic for the Basques in that it was a unique cultural feature they possessed that others did not and it also connected the different provinces together. Arana Goiri believed that *Euskera* was the language of Eden, a divine hallmark worth saving. For these reasons, preserving *Euskera* was one of the most important missions for Arana Goiri and the PNV. At times, Arana Goiri's rhetoric crossed into xenophobic territory but his work to establish a Basque nationalist party and to forge a central mythos around *Euskadi* proved vital for groups that attempted to preserve Basque culture later.

*Euskadi* was on an upward trajectory before the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. There was a preliminary government and many parliament members of the PNV were working to establish a more firm claim for *Euskadi* to be a nation. However, these aspirations were soon wrecked by the onset of the war. Even with an armed force assembled, the Republicans and the Basques both were unable to defeat Franco and his troops. Defeat in the Civil War sent the Basque government into exile and commenced the most gruesome period of history the Basques had ever faced. Franco's *justicia al revés*, widespread censorship, and extrajudicial killings targeted many Basques, damaging the culture and families in its wake. Many young people saw

the damage the regime was doing to their culture and its people. Some students decided it was their moment to assume the torch that Arana Goiri and the PNV had first lit. These students and their organization, ETA, became responsible for many revolutionary efforts during the regime, funding education, promoting *Euskera*, and gathering more people sympathetic to the Basque cause. However, ETA soon became too radical for the populace with terroristic activities, kidnappings, and theft becoming commonplace. *Ez Dok Amairu* and its members saw the absence left behind by ETA in the public consciousness and rose to take its place. *Ez Dok Amairu* utilized the foundations established by important and historical Basque cultural institutions. *Bertsolaritza*, *dantzak*, *txokos*, and many other cultural organizations all provided elements that *Ez Dok Amairu* used in their shows that showcased the arts, literature, and music.

To quantify exactly how *Ez Dok Amairu* affected the Basque social and political sphere is difficult. *Ez Dok Amairu* relied on artistic mediums to convey their mission, not government policies or other means. Yet there is a clear lineage linking *Ez Dok Amairu* back to the original development of Basque culture as defined by Arana Goiri. *Ez Dok Amairu*'s activities had a clear goal of fomenting cultural expression, protecting and growing the use of *Euskera*, collectivizing Basques and those sympathetic to the Basque cause, and protecting the future of Basque culture through literature and music for young people. With these goals in mind, *Ez Dok Amairu* was successful.

*Ez Dok Amairu* used the central myth of *Euskadi* and the exceptionality of *Euskera* to develop and foster cultural expression. Their shows, much like how *bertsolaritza* was performed, were public and encouraged the audience to speak in *Euskera* whether it was casually, like how members of the aforementioned *txokos* used it, or in a more performative manner to participate in

songs or other events. Franco's censorship laws slackened while *Ez Dok Amairu* was active, allowing for the group to take advantage of the legal changes to provide more opportunities for Basques to practice their collective culture however they pleased. *Ez Dok Amairu* also indirectly aided in the education of more *Euskera* speakers. While members like Lourdes Iriondo directly provided funds to *ikastolas*, *Ez Dok Amairu* also gave the public songs that became exceedingly popular and have persisted till today, like "Txoria Txori" or "Ez Gaude Konforme." Music is a great mechanism for cultural expression because of its nature as an artistic medium that regular people can recreate through singing or even playing their own instruments to participate. Also, during performances, audiences can connect with the artists through singing or taking part in the music in some manner. Music does not discriminate, young, old, sickly, healthy, or anybody can participate meaning *Ez Dok Amairu's* music was not limited by who it could reach, but rather by how many people it could influence.

Music and songs specifically often become associated with specific movements, events, or feelings. Many of *Ez Dok Amairu's* compositions fall within this distinction. "Gernika" by Mikel Laboa became synonymous with the remembrance of the bombing of Guernica for obvious reasons. However, this association allowed for many people, not just Basques, to understand the horror and indignity that the people of Guernica suffered at the hands of the Luftwaffe and Franco. This understanding allows for people to sympathize with the Basques and the people who lived there on a level of understanding that would not be present without the existence of a song like "Gernika." In addition to this feeling of sympathy and understanding created by listening to the song, there was also a degree of reverence and remembrance created by songs like "Gernika." Other songs, like "Txoria Txori" elicited strong emotions in the

audience through imagery or context. After all, it is no coincidence that “Txoria Txori” became a de facto independence anthem for the Basque country during the dictatorship. Without saying it directly, songs are able to convey complex messages that many people can understand even without deep knowledge of the context or history. In the same way, other songs produced by *Ez Dok Amairu* were able to stir feelings of defiance and pride. The ending of “Zenbat Gera” was an excellent example of these sentiments, “Nuestras intenciones, esperanzas, pueblo, libertad, justicia, paz, verdad, amor. ¿Mitos, palabras vacías?...¡Eso no! ¡Eso no!” (Lertxundi 1). Lertxundi reminds the audience that Basque culture and *Euskadi* is not dead or insincere. “Zenbat Gera” and other compositions serve as rallying cries for the Basques, aiding in collectivizing the sometimes disparate provinces and people who lived within them.

Lastly, *Ez Dok Amairu* possessed a focus on the development of youth as speakers of *Euskera* and practitioners of Basque culture. Lourdes Iriondo’s contributions in this field cannot be understated. For one, her financial support of *ikastolas* provided concrete support to institutions that produced more competent speakers of *Euskera* for the Basque country. Originally organized by ETA and the Jesuits, *ikastolas* were cornerstones of Basque society during the dictatorship. Their prevalence during the Franco regime made them frequent targets by Francoist officials for censorship and other forms of repression. As a result, *ikastolas* were often in dire need of funds or support. Benefactors like Iriondo and others kept them largely afloat. Also, Iriondo’s contributions to childrens’ literature in the form of novels and story books were able to help parents teach young children *Euskera* while also imparting knowledge on the mythos of *Euskadi* and its importance as a nation to the Basques. The humanistic portrayal of Basque liberty that Lourdes Iriondo supported contributed much to *Ez Dok Amairu*’s eventually

nuanced view of how Basque autonomy and sovereignty should be achieved. Instead of relying on more nationalistic arguments for Basque freedom, Iriondo instead proposes a more human rights centric argument for the establishment of *Euskadi*. Accordingly, her argument is very sincere and relatable to the listener or reader. As the only female member of *Ez Dok Amairu*, Iriondo was important not only for her work as part of the collective, but also as a signal of the modernization of Basque culture. In the past, in some cultural institutions like the *txoko* women were excluded. Iriondo's inclusion in *Ez Dok Amairu* demonstrated an overt eschewing of the previously more masculine structure of Basque institutions and culture as a whole.

*Ez Dok Amairu* was able to transcend barriers faced by other methods of Basque cultural expression and acted as a cultural adhesive, allowing Basques from different regions to empathize and collectivize, while also allowing for outsiders to gain an understanding of the situation Basques faced during the dictatorship. Also, Basques gained a new voice to disseminate their beliefs and feelings in a capacity that they no longer had the ability to, due to the results of the Carlist Wars and the Spanish Civil War. These cultural phenomenons, along with the other efforts by *Ez Dok Amairu* to establish strong linguistic foundations for *Euskera* in music and in young people granted *Euskera* the ability to persist through the dictatorship and to still exist today. Although today the Basque government is trying to expand the use of *Euskera* with *Plan General de Promoción del Uso del Euskera*, *Ez Dok Amairu*'s mission was a success, uniting Basques and celebrating their culture, all while preserving it for future generations to come.

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