

Introduction to a Political History of the Basque Language and Literature

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“Euskara”, Basque, is the language spoken in the Basque Country since the inception of man’s historical memory. Most scholars agree that this language has been spoken in the Basque Country from at least the Upper Paleolithic, approximately 25,000 to 36,000 years ago. This theory is based, among other factors, on two fundamental facts. Historically, after the arrival of the Homo sapiens sapiens, no other human migration of such magnitude has colonized the Basque territory as a whole, permanently and for an extended period of time. On the other hand, recent research on the place name substratum in the European continent, as well as the fact that Basque is a pre Indo-European language, allows the dating of this language in that historical period. Also linguistically, a high number of words of the semantic group made up of terms related to tools used during the Stone Age maintains in Basque the root “haitz” (stone), the material they were made of. In this sense we can mention several examples of such tools used during the Paleolithic and the Neolithic periods maintaining this original root:

Aitzur	Hoe
Aizkor	Axe
Aizkur	Scissors
Aiztaga	Lance
Aizto	Knife
Azkon	Arrow
Orratz	Needle
Suhatz	Tongs

The first archaeological vestiges found until the moment in which inscriptions in Basque appear correspond to the period of the Roman colonization of the Basque Country. Concretely, a multitude of mortuary tablets and Basque inscriptions with names and place-names have been found in the Basque Country, including the territories of Errioxa (Rioja) and the Landak (Landes, Aquitania). Also, tablets with inscriptions in Basque have been found scattered by the routes and battlefields crossed by the legions of Rome, in the ancient Britannia, Italia or Gallia, since there were numerous militiamen or mercenaries of Basque origin in the Roman legions.

The intense romanization of the Ager Vasconum and the Novempopulania, that is to say, of the most plain and accessible parts of the

Basque territory, located in the north and in the south of the Pyrenees, enabled the adoption into Basque of numerous Latin loans during the centuries of Roman colonization: “ezpata” (sword), “gurutze” (cross), “eliza” (church). Also the toponymy of the Basque Country is rich in Latin terms, in fact, the own Pamplona, *Pompaelo*, was given this name after its founder, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great).

The Barbarian invasions and the Visigothic occupation of the southern Basque Country left no deep marks in the native language. Quite the opposite, it was a time of expansion for the Basque language. Place names allow us to establish the area of influence of this language during the 5th century all over an extensive territory as far as the Catalan Pyrenees (Valley of Aran) in the east; Bordele (Bordeaux) in the north; Cantabria in the east; and Errioxa (Rioja) in the south. Besides, there are only few Germanic loanwords in Basque. Some isolated terms like *saboi* (soap) exist, but it is not known whether they were adopted directly from some of the Germanic dialects or, on the contrary, they were introduced in the Basque language through Latin. In the same fashion, Visigothic place name evidence in the Basque territory is quite scarce, reduced to a small sample of names of towns, villages or hamlets like the one of the fortress of *Oligitum* (Olite), a defensive bastion, symbol of the constant attempt at colonization of the old Roman *Saltus Vasconum* by the Visigoths.

The Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in the year 711 A.C. marks the beginning of a long period of Muslim domination of the old *Ager Vasconum* (718-914/1119), that is to say, the southern area of the Basque territory including the southern part of Araba and Navarre and the whole Errioxa. The centuries of Muslim occupation of southern Navarre left many place names, especially in the area of Tudela. However, Arabic influence on Basque was minimal, and loanwords of Arab origin conserved in Basque are very few.

During the Middle Ages the Basque language was consolidated in an area coinciding partly with the present Basque Country and the Upper Errioxa region to the south of the Pyrenees and, approximately until the 13th century, in an extensive part of the present Landak (Aquitania) to the north of the Pyrenees. Known as “Lingua Navarrorum” (the language of the Navarrese), from the 13th century onwards the Basque language begins to lose ground with respect to the emergent Spanish language (Castilian romance) that becomes after the reign of Alfonso X “the Wise”, King of Castile, the language of culture of the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. It is for that reason that from the late Middle Ages onwards the Courts of Navarre and the Parliaments of the rest of the Basque Lordships adopted Castilian romance or Occitan as official languages, even though the population was mainly Basque speaking; on the other hand, most of the religious and civil documents had been written in Latin during the early Middle Ages.

By the end of the 10th century a monk of the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla (also known as San Millán de Suso) in Errioxa wrote the first words in Basque in the Middle Ages on the margins of a wonderful religious document known as Codex Aemilianensis 60. With these glosses on the Codex Aemilianensis the monk translated some sentences of the liturgical manuscript into Basque, since he apparently knew Basque better than Latin. During the reign of Sancho Gartzes (or Garcia), King of Navarre, Basque was still spoken in Errioxa, in fact, the Basque language coexisted with Errioxa's romance till at least the 14th century in most parts of the territory. The two Basque texts written by the monk are indeed the two first complete sentences we know about, till now, in the Middle Ages:

Guec ajutu ez dugu (we have not thrown)
Izioqui dugu (we have lit)

Basque was the vernacular language of Errioxa as shown by its rich variety of place names, beginning by its own denomination, Errioxa (territory on the Oxa river). As it has been mentioned, Basque was still spoken in the Upper Errioxa in the 13th century Basque. Mateo Anguiano in his essay *Compendio Historial de la Provincia de la Rioja, de sus Santos, y Milagrosos Santuarios* (Antonio González de Reyes, Madrid, 1704) mentions that, the kings of Navarre of those times used the Basque language as their own native language, and it was so extended in Errioxa that there is not a mountain or a site that does not have a Basque name. Well-known is also the sentence of the King of Castile in 1239, mentioned among others by Marichalar and Manrique in *Historia de la legislación y recitaciones del derecho civil* (Imprenta Nacional, Madrid, 1862) who gave to the population of Ojacastro the right of holding trials in Basque. In fact, the citizens of that well populated valley took the Judge sent by the king of Castile into prison because of his unacceptable demands of carrying out trials in Spanish "when they had always been carried out in Basque".

Just the same can be said about Aquitania, the old Roman *Novempopulania*. The place names of the Landes clearly reflect the Basque substratum of this territory. As an essay written by J. Gorrotxategi entitled *Estudio sobre la onomástica indígena de Aquitania* (Universidad del País Vasco, Bilbo, 1984) reveals, the suffix "-tar(r)" is without a doubt one of most characteristic of all the Basque-Aquitainian repertoire. In this sense, the Basque roots as well as grammatical morphemes of Basque origin such as the suffixes "-isso" (Oandissen, Andossus) or "-kon" (Caericiocon, Andreconi, Belexconis, Attacconis, Senicco, Siricconis, Ombecco, Sembeconi) are very abundant in Aquitaine. Equally rich are the samples beginning by prefix "Andi-" ("big" in

Basque) in this territory. A culture reflected in the vestiges of its language: from the springs of the river Aturri (Adour) to the river Garona (Garonne).

The oldest literary fragments of Basque literature are the epic poems of the 14th and 15th centuries gathered by authors of the 16th and 17th centuries. Among these first poems or songs are *Beotibarko gudua* (1321), *Urrexola* (14th century), *Olasoren kantua* (1443) or *Mondragoneko erreketeta* (1448). All these poems and many others were carefully gathered and compiled by authors as Esteban Garibai (1533-1599) in his work *Compendio e historia universal de todos los reinos de España* (1571) or Juan Carlos Guerra (1860-1941) in his anthology *Viejos Textos del idioma. Los cantares antiguos del euskara* (1924). Several collections of old Basque proverbs were also published at this time. In this sense it is possible to mention the work by Garibai *Refranes y sentencias comunes del vascuence...* (1596) or those by authors like Jacques Bela (1568-1667) or Lope Martinez de Isasti (1560-) who wrote *Compendio historial de Guipuzcoa* (1624-1626).

After the conquest of Navarre by the troops of Castile in 1512, the Basque language begins to lose ground in the south of the Basque Country. In the 16th century Basque is no longer spoken in Errioxa or in the north of Aquitaine. Basque was also lost in Biarno (Bearn) and begins to disappear in the south of Araba and Navarre. However, a political event gives a new impulse to the publication of books in Basque. After the invention of the press and the fast advance of the Protestant doctrines, at the Council of Trent in 1563 the Catholic Church decided to encourage the publishing of books of Christian doctrine in vernacular languages. This decision supposed a fast increase in the amount of books published in Basque, especially after the death of Joana Albret (1528-1572), Protestant queen of the northern kingdom of Navarre.

The first book written and published in Basque was entitled *Linguae Vasconum Primitiae* ('Novelties of the Basque language'). It is a vindication of the language. Written in the capital of the northern Kingdom of Navarre, Donibane Garazi (Saint Jean de Pie de Port), the book was published in Bordele (Bordeaux) in 1545, year in which the Council of Trent met for the first time. Its author, Bernardo Etxepare, a clergyman, dedicated to the Basque language the last part of his work. Especially charged with emotional significance is the poem *Kontrapas* in defense of the Basque language that the author wrote at the end of his work:

Heuscara ialgui adi canpora	Basque Language go forth
Garacico herria	The town of Garazi
Benedica dadila	Has to be blessed
Heuscarari emandio	Because it has given to the Basque
language	

beharduyen thornuya	The dignity it deserves
Heuscara Ialgi adi plaçara	Basque Language Go forth into the square
Berçe gendec ustezuten Eçin scriba çaiteyen Orai dute phorogatu Enganatu cirela	The people believed That Basque could not be written Now it has been demonstrated That they were all mistaken
Heuscara, Ialgi adi mundura	Basque Language Go forth into the world
Lengoagetan ohi inçan Estimatze gutitan Orai aldiz hic beharduc Ohoria orotan	Among the other languages you were not highly considered Now on the contrary you deserve Award among others
Heuscara, Habil mundu guzira	Basque Language Go forth into the whole world
Berceac oroc içan dira Bere goihen gradora Orai hura iğanen da Berçe ororen gaynera	The rest of the languages have been Above it Now it will rise among others
Heuscara, Bascoac oroc preciatzen Heuscara ez iaquin harren language, Oroc iccassiren dute Oray cerden heuscara	Basque Language All hold the Basques in esteem Although they did not know their Now all of them will know What is the Basque language
Heuscara Oray dano egon bahiz imprimitu bageric Hi engoitic ebiliren Mundu guzietarik	Basque Language Until now you have not been Printed Now you will go through the entire world

Heuscara	Basque Language
Eceyn ere lengoageric	There is not a language
Ez françesa	Neither the French
Ez ez bercerik	Nor any other
Oray ezta erideyten	Which is now
Heuscararen pareric	Above the Basque language
Heuscara,	Basque Language
Ialgui hadi dançara	Go out dancing

Within the frame of the religious Literature of 16th century the translation of the New Testament into Basque deserves a special mention. Joana Albret, queen of Navarre, decided to embrace Calvinism in 1559. The Calvinist synod met in Pabe (Pau), seat of the kingdom of Navarre, and ordered Joannes Leizarraga to translate the New Testament in 1564 so that people could read the sacred writings in their own language. The author finalized his work seven years later, in 1571. This first complete translation of the New Testament into Basque supposed a great impact for the population that heard and read the word of God for first time in their language. However, the son of Joana Albret, Enrique IV of Navarre, converted from Calvinism to Catholicism in order to succeed to the throne of France; “Paris is well worth a mass” he said, and the translation of Leizarraga has its place in history as the first biblical translation into Basque, and not as an attempt at converting the people of Navarre to Protestantism.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the printing of pious books was multiplied: catechisms, sermons and brief poems and narrations or religious texts in Basque were also published. One of the main works published in Basque in the 17th century was *Guero* (‘Later’) by Pedro Axular printed in 1643. The author deals with laziness and the problems that it brings about. A model for Basque prose for centuries, Axular’s *Guero* is still considered one of the most outstanding works in Basque literature.

Simply wonderful are the Christmas poems written by Joannes Etxeberri Ziburu (1580-) for the Basque whalers and fishermen that spent the winter in Ternua (Newfoundland). The book, entitled *Noelac* (‘Carols’) and written in 1631, is a short, tender and devote compilation of poems to be sung far from home in the Basque fisheries of the northeastern Atlantic coast,

*O Jaun Tobias gaztea ungi begiratu
Guardaritzat bidaldurik Arkangelu Saindua
Eta kostara arraina erakarrarazia
Haren hiltzeko egiten zinoela grazia*

*Guri ere ekarguzu hurbilera balea
 Segurkiago armaren landatzeko kolpea.
 Biziarengatik dugu irriskatzen bizia,
 Arren egiguzu haren gelditzeko grazia.*

Oh Sir Tobias, of our devotion!
 Turned to be our guardian and saint archangel
 You attracted the fish to the coast
 And you allowed us to fish it with facility;
 Take the whale to the proximity of the coast
 Enable us to send our harpoons to it without danger.
 Since to live we risk our lives
 Let us keep it

During the 18th century the Enlightenment also brought its light to the Basque language. Manuel Larramendi (1690-1766), grammarian, lexicographer, historian, confessor of the queen of Castile Maria Ana and an ardent defender of the Basque language and the ancient laws of the country, wrote the work entitled *El imposible vencido. Arte de la lengua vascongada* ('The Impossible Defeated. The Art of the Basque Language') in 1729. The work constitutes a vindication of the Basque language and so it was written in Spanish, addressed to Spanish speakers, without speaking Basque, criticized its complicated grammar or preached on the impossibility to learn it. Larramendi also published in 1745 the Trilingual Dictionary (Spanish-Basque-Latin), the first Basque dictionary of such scope. Joannes Etxeberri Sarakoa (1668-1749) was also a great apologist of the Basque language. He wrote *Escuararen hatsapenac*, an essay in defense of the Basque language and its use and importance for the cultural life of the Basque Country before the French culture and language. He also published in 1718 *Laurdiri gomendiozco carta, edo guthuna* ('Letter to the General Assembly of Lapurdi'). The book is a study of the political and social situation of the language and the institutions of Lapurdi, one of the seven Basque republics. In this work Etxeberri defends the category of the Basque language as a national language and its inclusion in the school system for first time in history.

At the end of the 18th century a literary phenomenon of great importance for Basque literature took place: the blossoming and development of the sung poetry or "Bertsolaritza". Although there exist many testimonies of singing poets previous to the 18th century –the *Kontrapas* by Bernardo Etxepare or the *Noelac* by Joannes Etxeberri Ziburu are two well known samples or precedents to it- this literary genre acquires at the beginning of the 19th century a recognition and a spreading quite unknown until then. The singing poets compose their poems instantly, on the spot. A judge gives a melody to them, the rhyme or the words

that must rhyme or even all of the above. Next, one only poet or several singing poets develop a poetic game of talent that moves the audience to laughter or tears. The winner takes the prize and, even more, the pride of being the fastest or the most perceptive and shrew. In fact, singing poets' festivals are, over all, inventiveness and talent contests in which the poet's wits are stretched to the limits. From the very beginning of the 19th century to the present time the "Bertso lehiaketak" (singing poems contests) regularly fill up all the squares and Basque ball courts of the Basque Country.

One of the main singing poets at the beginning of the 19th century was Pierre Topet "Etxahun" (1786-1862). Nicknamed by the critics as "the damned poet", he had to leave home and still very young underwent prison after having committed a crime of passion. He went on a pilgrimage to Rome and to Santiago de Compostela singing his misfortunes and when he returned to his native Zuberoa he started again singing in weddings, singing poetry contests and other folk festivals. His poems are fundamentally bitter social satires, but many of his writings were burned by his relatives after he died, which is why his extensive work has arrived to us thanks to the oral tradition. During the 19th century the Basque literature was enriched with the work of many other outstanding singing poets, Jose Maria Iparragirre (1820-1881), Indalezio Bizkarrondo "Bilintx" (1831-1876), Juan Petrirena "Xenpelar" (1835-1869), Pello Joxe Elizegi "Peio Errota" (1840-1919), Pello Mari Otaño "Kattarro" (1857-1910) or Joan Manuel Lujanbio "Txirrita" (1860-1936) among hundreds of others.

During the first half of the 19th century two visitors of exception were received in the Basque Country, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) and the Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte (1813-1891). Wilhelm von Humboldt, philologist, poet, politician and founder of the University of Berlin, visited the Basque Country for the first time in 1799 and, later in 1801. During his stay in the country he mainly devoted his time to the study of the language and the Basque legal institutions. He wrote several works, among which "The Basques. Notes on a trip through the Basque Country in spring of 1801" must be mentioned. In this essay he presents some of his conclusions about the distinctiveness of the Basque nation, "the identity of a lineage can be never demonstrated with certainty outside the nature of its language, and the only thing that at sight of the investigation forces as incontestable is that all the Basques constitute a nation and that the similarity of its character altogether can be due to a common origin". In his studies on compared linguistic, that took him to study nearly two hundred languages, he dedicated a great space to the study of Basque, its origin, evolution and to the exam of the keys for its projection in the future.

Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon I and of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, second emperor of the French, also visited the Basque Country around the middle of the 19th century. Dialectologist and grammarian, his

first linguistic work on the Basque language was written in 1847. Between 1856 and 1869 he made five trips to the Basque Country and organized a group of researchers on the Basque language. Among the many works that he wrote and he helped publish on the Basque language, the first studies on Basque dialectology deserve special attention. He was the first in systematizing and identifying the eight Basque dialects and their 25 sub-dialects. In a parallel fashion, Prince Bonaparte encouraged the translation of many works into the diverse Basque dialects in order to facilitate future comparative studies. Among the books that he helped publish we have *Langue basque et langue finnoise* ('Basque Language and Finnish language') (1862), *Curiosidades eúskaras* ('Curiosities of the Basque language') (1866), *Le verbe basque in tableaux* ('The Basque verb in tables') (1869), *Deux cartes des sept Provinces Basques* ('Two dialectological maps of the Basque language') (1869) and *Études sur trois dialectes basques* ('An essay on three Basque dialects') (1872). All of them are still outstanding linguistic essays on Basque, because of their research methodology and because of the systematization of Basque grammar and dialectology.

In 1853 the linguist and philanthropist Antoine D'Abbadie (1810-1897) organized the first "Lore Jokoak" (Floral Games) of Basque poetry. D'Abbadie, former president of the French Academy of Sciences, spoke fourteen languages. Once retired from his occupations in Paris he returned to the Basque Country and decided to give an impulse to its maternal language from its house in Hendaia, which became a center of literary production and patronage during several decades. In a few years the "Lore Jokoak" promoted by D'Abbadie acquired a great popularity in the Basque Country and most of the poets of the country such as the after mentioned Etxahun participated in them. Among many others, Felipe Arrese Beitia (1841-1906), Jean Baptiste Elizanburu (1828-1891) or Gracian Adema "Zaldubi" (1828-1907) won several prizes. During the first ten years the floral games were celebrated in Urruña and, from 1864 to 1876, in Sara, meeting place of many 17th century Basque writers. Thereafter the contests were celebrated year after year in different places. The floral games definitely helped to create a propitious atmosphere for the development of the poetic and artistic creation on both sides of the Pyrenees during the second half of 19th century.

During this flourishing period for Basque poetry, theater also underwent a period of splendor and expansion. Following the example of D'Abbadie, Jose Manterola (1849-1884) organized the well-known "Euskal Jaiak" (Basque Festivals) at the end of the 19th century in Donostia. These were new literary contests to renew literary creativity among the new generation of writers. He also edited a magazine *Euskal-Erria* (1880-1918) where poems and literary works by young talents were published and, at the same time, he published a Basque popular poem and song anthology with the title of *Cancionero vasco* (1877-1880). Among the playwrights of the time were Serafín Baroja (1840-1912), Marcelino

Soroa (1848-1902), Toribio Alzaga (1861-1941) or Avelino Barriola (1885-1944). Until the end of the First Carlist War (1833-1839), the Seven Years War, Basque continued being the main language spoken in the Basque Country.

However, the genesis of the French state after the 1789 Revolution and the creation of Spanish state after the Seven Years War in 1839 and the Second Carlist War in 1876, carried the imposition of an excluding linguistic policy that without any doubt accelerated the retreat of the Basque language. Both states were strongly centralist, fed the idea of the unique state official language. The Convention of France declared, by mouth of its spokesmen, Monsieur Barère and Monsieur Grégoire, that the Basque language was a *patois* and, therefore, the language of the antirevolutionary fanaticism and a hindrance for the development of the ideas of the Enlightenment, so that it had to disappear. It was not easy anyway, since at the beginning of century neither Spanish nor French were languages known by most of the Basque peoples on either side of the Pyrenees, so both languages had to be imposed. Indeed, in 1792 the French Crown had 28 million inhabitants and only 3 million among them spoke French correctly (11%), as their mother language. About 6 million people did not speak a word of French. Consequently, some of the laws on the prohibition of the use of languages such as the Basque, Breton or Occitan had to be written up repeatedly since the population did not want to and, more to the point, was not in a position to accept them. Here is a brief example of the first dispositions of the French state in this aspect:

1. Law of Termidor 2, in the second year of the French Republic, one and indivisible, by which from the day of its publication, no act witnessed by notary public will be, in any part of the territory of the Republic, written but in French.
2. Law of Fructidor 16, in the second year of the French Republic, one and indivisible, by which the execution of the law of the 2 of Termidor relative to the necessity of writing all public documents in French is suspended.
3. Report of the Committee of Public Salvation, Rapport Barère, on the convenience of using the French language solely. 1794.
4. Report of the National Convention, Rapport Grégoire, on the necessity of destroying every *patois* (regional languages) and of universalizing the French language. 1794.
5. Decree of the National Convention on the prohibition of writing public documents in any language except in French. July 20, 1794.
6. Decree on the exclusive use of French language in education. November 17, 1794.

7. Law on the organization of Primary Education of 28 March 1882. Primary Education will be offered exclusively in French. Exclusion of any other language from the education system.
8. Order of the Inspector of the circumscription of Maule (Zuberoa) on the exclusion of the Basque language from education. Law Guizot of 1833.
9. Order of the prefect of the Low Pyrenees on the substitution of Basque by French in Primary Education. 1846.
10. Law Falloux of education by which the exclusive use of the French language in the schools is regulated. 1850.
11. Law Ferry by which the obligatory use of French in the education system, excluding any other, is stated. 1879-1882.

At the same time, the emergent Spanish state, imitating the dispositions on language policy of the French Republic, tried to impose a unique language. Nevertheless, the Carlist Wars of 1833-1839 and 1872-1876 delayed the taking effect of the state legislation. Thus many of the dispositions were never applied and others came into force at the end of the Second Carlist War in 1876. In fact, the Carlist state that rose during the Second Carlist War (1872-1876), grouping the governments of Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre, organized a bilingual education system and a Basque university. Here are some of the language dispositions adopted by the novice Spanish state between 1766 and 1875:

1. Order by the Count of Aranda, President of the Council of Castile on the prohibition to print books in any language not being Spanish. Therefore, “without a special permit, no license will be given to print books in any language but Spanish, withdrawing the original work on the life of San Ignacio written in Basque; and this provision must be known by the printers”. November 1, 1766.
2. Royal letter by Charles the Third regulating by its seventh article the exclusive feature of primary education in plain Spanish, “in the whole kingdom documents and teaching will only be carried out in Spanish”. June 23, 1768.
3. Royal letter by Charles the Third on the obligation of writing the ledgers in Spanish, “all the merchants and retailers, greater and smaller, natural and foreign, will observe the law of the Kingdom being introduced, which orders to write its account books in the Spanish language”. December 24, 1772.
4. Order by Charles the Fourth to the Real Council of the Kingdom of Navarre on the readmission of publications in Basque. 1800.
5. Instructions for the adjustment of theaters and companies outside the Court on the prohibition to represent works that are not written in Spanish, “no theater company will represent, sing, not even dance pieces that are not in Spanish language”. March 11, 1801.

6. Law Moyano of public instruction on the exclusion of the Basque language from the education system, “Spanish grammar and Spanish spelling regulated by the Spanish Language Academy will be the sole and obligatory vehicle for writing texts in public education”. September 7, 1857.
7. Law for the profession of notary (article 25) on the exclusion of the Basque language from all legal writings. May 28, 1862.
8. Real Order of Isabel the Second on the prohibition of theater representations in any other language but Spanish. January 15, 1867.

Even though, throughout the 19th century the population continued being mainly Basque speaking, which is why the emerging Spanish state resorts to the imposition of sanctions and punishments, especially from 1876 on. One of the most sadly famous was the imposition of the iron ring at schools. Among many other authors, witnesses and victims of this system to impose the Spanish language in schools and society, was Juan Antonio Mogel (1745-1804), author of the first novel written in Basque, *Peru Abarca* (1802) and of works on linguistic or history of the language such as *Demostración práctica de la pureza, fecundidad y elocuencia del idioma Bascuence contra las preocupaciones de varios escritores extraños y contra algunos Bascongados, que sólo tienen noticia superficial del idioma patrio* written in 1802. Mogel gave in his writings a direct testimony of the punishments: “violence reaches such a level, not to say inhumanity and tyranny, that teachers appear with fierce looks, a whip in hand, and threatening that nobody shall speak to me in Basque, but only in Spanish. Public prosecutors are named. Accusations are admitted, and in order to prove the crime, a ring runs from hand to hand among those who have had the weakness to speak a single word in Basque. On Saturday, the teacher acts as a judge and metes out the punishment to those that have spoken Basque during the week and are publicly accused by their own classmates. If the teacher wanted to be lenient the accused would only be caned on the open palms, otherwise students could even be whipped. Then they would retire not daring to spill a tear in which case the punishment could be doubled. All students assisted to this despicable and violent spectacle and this would act as deterrent against speaking Basque”.

The student carrying the ring was forced to be the whistle blower on schoolmates neglecting to observe the Spanish-only rule even during their innocent children’s games. As Eusebio Olo Miranda (1838-1917) remembered, “when I was young I had to wear in several occasions the iron ring, that in this case had thorns in order to cause a wound in the finger. This way I learned Spanish. The student who took the ring could not play with the others and rambled alone by the schoolyard, far from all, since the only way to take off the ring was to accuse to another boy of having spoken in Basque”.

This fact, together with the loss of economic and political independence represented by the old Basque laws at the end of the Second Carlist War in 1876, caused a political and cultural movement, known as “Berpizkundea”, the Basque cultural Renaissance, extended from 1876 to 1936, with an interval of eight years of Spanish fascist dictatorship (1923-1931). In 1877, just a year after the end of the war, the *Asociación Eúskara de Pamplona* arose in Navarre thanks to Estanislao Aranzadi Izkue (1841-1918), Arturo Campion (1854-1937), Hermilio Oloriz (1854-1919), Navarro Villoslada (1818-1895) and Juan Iturralde y Suit (1840-1909) among many others. In 1896 Sabino Arana Goiri (1865-1903) founded the Basque Nationalist Party.

This stage of the history of the Basque Country covers without any doubt a blossoming age of the Basque language and literature: the printings of books written in Basque increased remarkably and the first magazines in Basque appeared, the first schools in Basque were created, the Society of Basque Studies and the Academy of the Basque Language were founded, both of them with the idea of encouraging the study and the spreading of the Basque language, culture, history and science in the country. A multitude of Basque literary contests were established and a nationalist political movement worried about the situation of neglect in which Basque language and culture found themselves and, as a result, the literary production in Basque doubled between 1850 and 1875. All this took place thanks to private capital.

According to the data given by Joan Mari Torrealdai in his book *Euskal kultura gaur. Liburuaren mundua* (Basque Culture Today: The Universe of the Basque Book; published by Jakin in 1997), from 1700 to 1875 the number of books published in Basque did not stop growing. Altogether 671 books were published in Basque during this period of time, an average of 3.8 books a year although in the period from 1850 to 1875 the average was of 12.36 books a year. 78% of these are religious works. Many of them knew several printings since it was not easy to obtain the “imprimatur” or the permission for publication in Basque language. This way certain works like *Exercicio Spirituala bere salbamendua eguiteco desideraduten guiristiñoentçat languça handitacoa* (Spiritual Exercise; published for first time in Baiona in 1718) by Daranatz knew up to 76 editions:

1	1	1	1	1	1	1
700-1724	725-1749	750-1774	775-1799	800-1824	825-1849	850-1875
8	2	5	6	8	1	3
	4	4	5	9	22	09

Books published in Basque (1700-1875)

At the beginning of the 20th century two men took the relief in the fight for the development of Basque language and literature, Resurrección María Azkue (1864-1951) and Arturo Campion (1854-1937). When in 1888 the Government of Bizkaia organized the application for the first University Chair of Basque Language, three candidates applied for the position, Resurrección María Azkue, Miguel Unamuno (1864-1936) and Sabino Arana. Azkue obtained the position and worked there until its closing in 1936. His work was extensive, and included *Euskal izkindea* ('Basque Grammar') (1897), *Diccionario Vasco-Español-Francés* ('Basque-Spanish-French Dictionary') (1905), *Cancionero Popular Vasco* ('Popular Basque Songs') (1918), *Morfología vasca* ('Basque Morphology') (1923) and *Gipuzkera osotua* ('On the normalization of the Basque Language') (1935) marked this period of time in the study of the Basque linguistics, dialectology and morphology. As a member of the Society of Basque Studies he was one of the main promoters of the creation of the Academy of the Basque Language, which would be founded a year later, in 1919, under his presidency. Azkue was president of this institution till his death in 1951. In addition to his studies on the morphology of the Basque verb in the diverse dialects of the language, he was one of the promoters of the process of linguistic normalization of the Basque language, process that will mark the history of the Basque language until the seventies.

Next to Azkue, the Navarrese Arturo Campion became one of the main promoters of the study and development of the Basque culture in the last decade of the 19th century and first third of the 20th century. Campion was a historian, linguist and politician, and a member of the Academy of the Basque Language between 1918 and 1937. As a linguist he wrote several texts on the social disadvantage of Basque and several studies on Basque dialectology. In addition, he was one of the precursors of Basque phonetic studies. Among his many studies on linguistics, some of them may be emphasized such as *Ensayo acerca de las leyes fonéticas de la lengua vasca* ('Essay on The Phonetic Laws of The Basque Language') (1883) and *Gramática de los cuatro dialectos literarios de la lengua euskara* ('Grammar of The Four Literary Dialects of The Basque Language') (1884). As a politician, he was chosen Councilman of Iruñea (Pamplona) in 1881, member of the parliament of Madrid in 1893 and Senator of Bizkaia. He wrote numerous novels and short stories on the origin of the Basque people, Basque history and Basque customs. Among these many may be mentioned, *Pedro Mari* (1895), *Blancos y negros* ('Whites and Blacks') (1898), *La bella Easo* ('The Beautiful Easo') (1909) or *El último tamborilero de Erraondo* ('The Last Drummer of Erraondo') (1917).

One of the greatest benefits of the Basque Renaissance was the development of the Basque press. From 1877, year in which the magazine *Fedearen propagacioneco urtecaria* was first published and until 1936, year in

which it was prohibited, 120 magazines and newspapers completely or partially written in Basque language were edited. Among many others we may mention *Almanaca berrie eta Egunaria* founded in 1879 by Arturo Campión, *Bizkaitarra* (1893) by Sabino Arana, *Euskaltzale* (1897) by Resurrection Maria Azkue or *Euskal Esnalea* (1908) by Gregorio Mujika. One of the greatest promoters of the Basque media was canon Jean Hiriart Urruty who founded and directed in 1887 the magazine *Eskualduna* in Baiona and the yearbooks from 1908 to 1910 under the title *Egunaria edo almanaca*. At this time magazines in Basque were published also in America, such as the ones that appeared in Uruguay or in California, *Kaliforniako Eskual Erria*.

In 1914 a historical event in the history of the Basque language took place: the first school in Basque was created. In spite of being illegal, lessons were taught solely in Basque. It was named "Ikastola" (school). The first Ikastola was named *Koruko Andra Mari* was created by M. Muñoa in Donostia. Students from 3 to 13 years old studied all the subjects in Basque. Following the example of Muñoa many other *Ikastolas* opened their doors: Tolosa (1922), Errenteria (1928), Soraluze (1932), Bergara (1932), Iruñea (Pamplona) (1932) or Lizarra (Estella) (1932). Between 1920 and 1932 the Government of Bizkaia ordered the creation of 125 municipal schools in which lessons were taught in Basque, all of them illegal or, at least, "non legal". Since the number of Basque schools grew steadily and, since all of them had to face similar or identical problems (lack of economic resources and imposition of every type of political and administrative difficulties by the state), *Eusko Ikastola Batza*, the Association of Basque Schools, was created in Bilbo in 1932.

In 1918 *Eusko Ikaskuntza*, the Society of Basque Studies, was created in Oñati. Angel Apraiz (1885-1956) inspired by the works of Louis Lucien Bonaparte in Baiona in 1857 was its promoter. The new society was born with the main objective of promoting all type of works of investigation on the Basque culture, history, language and science. Between its foundation in 1918 and the outbreak of the war in 1936 the society organized five National Congresses. In the first meeting of the society arose the idea of the urgent creation of an Academy of the Basque Language which would promote the development of the Basque language and would channel its process of normalization. Only a year later *Euskaltzaindia*, the Academy of the Basque Language, was created. As we have mentioned above, Resurrección Maria Azkue was chosen as the first president of the Academy. *Euskaltzaindia* has played since then a fundamental role in the study, normalization and development of the Basque language and has been a fundamental reference for the language, as much in the Basque Country as in the exile following the military coup d'état of 1936.

Despite all, the Spanish government approved on November 21, 1902, for the third time in half a century, the Royal Decree signed by king Alfonso XIII

(1923-1931) on the exclusion of the Basque language from the educative system. The Decree known as “Decreto Romanones” established for the first time in the legislation of the state a penalty on the professors who would not accept the new norm: “teachers of primary instruction teaching Christian doctrine or any other subject or discipline in a language or dialect that is not Spanish, will be punished for the first time with a reprimand by the provincial inspector of primary education, that will give an account of the incident to the Ministry of the Kingdom; and if the teacher were to incur it a second time after the reprimand, he will be dismissed from his official teaching post, losing whichever legal rights he may originally have had”. On August 5, 1915, the new regulation of the mortgage law was passed and the Basque language was consequently excluded of the administration once again.

At the same time the French state continued legislating along the same lines. On October 23, 1925, a document issued by the Ministry of Public Instruction and Arts on the exclusion of the minority languages from education was signed in Paris. On August 9, 1936, the French government dictated the Law on Primary Education. This law established the obligation of schooling students in French, that is to say, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Occitan and Basque were excluded from education.

The dictatorship led by King Alfonso XIII forced *manu militari* the closing of numerous Basque schools:

1. Royal decree on the measures and sanctions against separatism. Article two on the exclusion of Basque from any official act. September 18, 1923.
2. Order of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Arts on the exclusion of the Basque language from education. 1923.
3. Royal Order on the exclusion of the Basque language from education. October 27, 1924.
4. Royal Order on the confiscation of all the books written in Basque. October 13, 1925.
5. Royal decree on the sanctions to the teachers who do not use Spanish at school. June 11, 1926.
6. Royal decree on the exclusion of the regional languages from official books of registries, official documents and communications. June 9, 1930.

In the brief breath of fresh air from the end of the dictatorship of king Alfonso XIII in 1931 and the revolt of Generalissimo Francisco Franco (1892-1975) in 1936, the Basque language lived a short but intense age of recovery. The new Constitution of the Spanish Republic, approved on 9 December 1931, gave the Basque language, for the first time in history, a character of co-officiality. All Basque citizens would first comply with the obligation to learn and to know Spanish, but they would also have the right of learning and speaking Basque at

school. The Spanish state recognized for first time the right of the Basques to speak Basque, but Basque was still excluded from the administration of the state.

The *Euskal esnalea* magazine and the governments of Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia, as well as, crucial private organizations such as the Savings Bank of Gipuzkoa or associations such as the *Euskaltzaleak* society in Tolosa, organized a great number of literary contests in the twenties. These were warmly welcomed by the young writers and the Basque community in general. As the floral games of the 19th century these contests helped to develop a new generation of Basque poets, writers and translators. Jokin Zaitegi (1906-1979) and canon Jose Ariztimuño Olaso “Aitzol” (1896-1936) were among the main precursors of the literary contests. The new group of Basque writers was given the name of “Aitzol Generation”. President of the *Euskaltzaleak* society, Aitzol was the director of Basque magazines such as *El Día* or *Yakintza*. He wrote several works among which *La muerte del euskera o los profetas de mal agüero* (“The Death of The Basque Language or The Prophets of Ill Omen”) (1931) can be mentioned. The essay deals with the idea spread by certain politicians and writers that the Basque language must necessarily disappear because that was its “natural” historical course compared with other more widely spoken and “richer” languages like Spanish or French. This theory of culture and languages that has its basis on the centralist political ideas of the 19th century, was firstly shaped by Miguel Unamuno, who basically defended that:

- Peoples and cultures are naturally superior and inferior: Spanish and French are superior while Basque is an inferior language.
- The Basque language is not a language of culture: it is only useful for family life.
- Basque is dying and there is nothing to do to stop its death.
- Since Basque cannot develop anymore it has become a fossil language, a prehistoric cultural fossil.
- The reason of the death of the Basque language is internal: the Basque language has an innate lack of capability to survive due to its prehistoric grammar unsuitable for modern life.
- Due to the fact that the death of the Basque language is a natural phenomenon, no one should try to keep it alive, since death is a natural part of life.
- It is very difficult to learn Basque and that is due to the fact that it is prehistoric and therefore no longer useful.
- To think or to speak in Basque is dangerous: depending on the author, it makes people “nationalist”, “Catholic” or “fanatical”.

Some of the most excellent figures of the Generation of Basque poets of 1930 that was developed around the central figure of Aitzol were Jose Maria Aguirre “Xabier Lizardi” (1896-1933), Esteban Urkiaga “Lauaxeta” (1906-1937)

and Kepa Enbeita “Urretxindorra” (1878-1942). Xabier Lizardi was, along with Aitzol, a member of the *Euskaltzaleak* society. He wrote his first poetic anthology in 1932 with the title of *Biotz-begietan*. His poetry participated in the new symbolism that made the brilliant Generation of Spanish poets of 1927 (Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Cernuda, Jorge Guillén, Pedro Salinas and many others) known beyond national boundaries. Basque poetry reached with him one of its highest expressions in the 20th century. After his death the *Euskaltzaleak* society published a new poetic anthology with the title of *Umezurtz olerkiak* (1934).

Lauaxeta, an ordered priest, directed the page in Basque of the nationalist newspaper *Euzkadi*. Very young still, he received the first prizes in poetry in diverse literary contests. Between his works *Bide barriyak* (1931) and *Arrats beran* (1935) may be mentioned. His Basque is of difficult understanding due to the great amount of neologisms that he employed, however, his writings are of great lyric beauty, balance and resonance. Some of his poems like *Itauna* (‘The Inquiry’) or *Amayur gaztelu baltz hori* (‘Amaiur, The Black Castle’) have been sung by diverse Basque musicians thereafter. In 1974 a complete compilation of his poetical work was published for the first time under the generic title of *Olerkiak* (‘Poems’). Kepa Enbeita, nicknamed “Urretxindorra” (Nightingale), became one of the most representative singing poets of the generation of Basque authors before the war. The commitment to the Basque cause, the Basque language and the Basque political fight are among Enbeita’s main topics. His complete poetry was compiled and published by Santiago Onaindia in 1966 under the title of *Enbeita olerkaria* (‘Enbeita, The Poet’).

The result of the Basque political and literary movement developed between the end of the Second Carlist War in 1876 and the beginning of the War of 1936 definitively promoted the printing of books in Basque. According to the data provided by Joan Mari Torrealdai in his book *Euskal kultura gaur. Liburuaren mundua* (‘Basque Culture Today: The Universe of the Basque Book’; published by Jakin in 1997), between 1850 and 1875, 309 books were printed in Basque; 403 between 1876 and 1895; 426 between 1896 and 1915; and, 1,422 books between 1876 and 1935. This is, with an average doubling the publications of the first half of the 19th century, the number of books written in Basque steadily increased for almost a century.

The number of editions in Basque constantly grew from 1850 to 1915.

- From 1850 to 1875, 309 (12,3 a year)
- From 1876 to 1895, 403 (21,2 a year)
- From 1896 to 1915, 426 (22,4 a year)
- From 1916 to 1935, 593 (31,2 a year)

Although the Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia was endorsed quite rapidly, fearing the strong Basque pro-independence movement led by the two

main nationalist parties, the government of the Spanish Republic deliberately delayed for five long years the approval of the Statute of Autonomy for the Basque Country. Once the War of 1936 broke out and after observing that the Basque Nationalist Party opted for being on the side of the Republic and thus opposed to the Fascist military rising led by Generals Emilio Mola (1887-1937), José Sanjurjo (1872-1937) and Francisco Franco, the Statute of Autonomy became effective on October 4, 1936. Under the protection of articles 1 and 7 on the co-officiality of Basque language, in the heat of war and, therefore, besieged by the Nazi bombers and the Italian artillery, the first official Basque schools in the Spanish state were founded. Navarre was excluded from the Statute, which is why the Basque language did not get to be official in this territory. On the other hand, the fascist military occupation of Navarre and Araba in July 1936 set off a process of prosecution of the Basque language that asphyxiated the Basque culture until the death of Generalissimo Franco in 1975.

From October to December 1936 the new Basque government under Jose Antonio Agirre tried to secure peace and normality in the streets and to maintain the school year's schedule. The first textbooks were translated into Basque but, due to the Nazi bombings of towns such as Gernika, Otxandio or Durango children under 16 had to be evacuated. The bombings and machine-gunning of the civil population by Hitler's Condor Legion came to be more and more frequent. After the bombardments of Durango and Gernika in March and April 1937, more than 32,000 children had to leave the country by boat in less than five months. Many of them would never return; many others would do it years later. In spite of the efforts of the Basque military services, all of them civil volunteers, Bilbo was occupied by the fascist troops on June 19, 1937. Nearly 15,000 to 20,000 executions were ordered by the new regime in the Basque Country between June of 1936 and the end of 1937. Among many others Lauaxeta and Aitzol were shot against the wall. Lauaxeta was twenty-two years old and Aitzol thirty and he was a priest.

Near one hundred fifty thousand women and men were exiled, among them the above-mentioned thirty two thousand children (approximately 20% of the children under sixteen living in the Basque Country controlled by the Basque Government) and tens of thousands were jailed. The new regime imposed arbitrary torture, detention, expropriation of property, censorship and the suppression of human rights. That way the Basque Country suffered a political, economic, cultural and social countermarch that delayed the country's development until 1955 and lowered its economical indexes to levels equivalent to those previous to 1935.

The regime led by Generalissimo Franco (1937-1975) did not invent much new on language policy, in essence, the legislation that had been passed during the 19th and early 20th centuries was simply recovered and imposed. After the

public burning of books of the publishing house owned by Ixaka Lopez Mendizabal in Tolosa at the beginning of 1937, a long period of forty years of prohibitions, oppression and persecution began. Some of the new dispositions bordered on the caricature of language legislation: for instance prohibiting the word *agur* ('good-bye'), or Basque digraphs such as "tx" or "tz", or the Basque use of first names or nicknames with "separatist" meaning like "Iñaki" and "Kepa". Others prohibitions happened to be grotesque, such as the order given to the relatives and proprietors of the tombs or pantheons where inscriptions or names in Basque were written, to retire these slabs and replace them by others written in Spanish. This was ordered on October 27, 1949, in Gernika, thirteen years after the bombing of the city by the Nazi air force, a military experiment under the command of General Hugo Sperrle on April 26, 1937.

The following are some of the dispositions of the New Regime on linguistic policy:

1. Ordinance by the Military commandant of Lizarra (Estella) prohibiting the word *agur* (meaning "good-bye" in Basque). September 25, 1936.
2. Ordinance by the Governor of Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa to prohibit the use of Basque spellings, so that the characters "k", "tx" and "b" were forbidden. December 7, 1936.
3. Public document on the fulfillment of the prohibition of speaking Basque. April 1937.
4. Public document on the imposition of sanctions to anyone infringing the disposals on the prohibition to speak any language or dialect different from Spanish. May 29, 1937.
5. Ordinance by the Commander's office on the prohibition of using the Basque language at church after eight o'clock in the morning. June 1, 1937.
6. Agreement on the destitution of the professors occupying the chair of Basque language Tomás Aguirre Urdalleta and Jose de Altuna. Official Bulletin (Hansard) of the Basque Country, November 13, 1937.
7. Ordinance by the Delegate of Public Order of Gipuzkoa on the prohibition to hold sermons in Basque. December 17, 1937.
8. Ordinance on the prohibition of using names with 'separatist' meaning like "Iñaki" and "Kepa". May 21, 1938. Official Bulletin of the State, May 26, 1938.
9. Ordinance by the Ministry of Organization and Trade-union Action on the prohibition of the use of any language other than Spanish in the titles, trade names, statutes, and in the call and celebration of the assemblies of the dependent organizations of the Ministry of Commerce. May 21, 1938. Official Bulletin of the State, May 26, 1938.

10. Ordinance by the Commandant's office on the prohibition to hold sermons in Basque language. May 30, 1938.
11. Ordinance by the Ministry of Justice on the exclusion of the Basque language from the Registry. August 12, 1938.
12. Ordinance by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce on the exclusion of the regional languages from the Registry of the Industrial Property. May 20, 1940.
13. Circular of the Civil Governor of Gipuzkoa on the use of Basque names. October 30, 1940.
14. Procedural norms for the lodging of appeals before the Court of Marine Preys. December 21, 1940. Article 13 on the exclusion of any language that is not the Spanish. Official Bulletin of the State, December 25, 1940.
15. Decree on the Regulation of notaries of June 2, 1944. Article 148 on the exclusion of any language other than Spanish from public documents. Official Bulletin of the State, January 8, 1945.
16. Ordinance by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce on the prohibition to designate merchant ships with non Spanish names. January 15, 1945. Official Bulletin of the State, January 24, 1945.
17. Communication N° 2486 by the Fourth Office (*Negociado*) of the Civil Government of Bizkaia, on October 27 1949, requiring that the relatives and owners of the tombs or pantheons with inscriptions in Basque replace such inscriptions with others in Spanish. October 27, 1949.
18. Authorization by the Provincial Delegate of Information and Tourism for the broadcasting of certain programs of the Popular Radio of Loyola in Basque and the prohibition to make publicity in this language. October 30, 1964.
19. Law on primary education of February 2, 1967. Article 7 on the exclusion of any language other than Spanish from education.

Due to the repression, the Basque culture took the way of the American exodus. As we have mentioned before in the twenty-five years that separate 1850 and 1875, 309 books were printed in Basque, between 1876 and 1895, 403 and, 426 between 1896 and 1915, that is to say, with an average of 22 books a year, the number of editions in Basque was duplicated from 1850 to 1915. This number reached its zenith in the period from 1916 to 1935. 593 works were printed in those fifteen years, that is to say, an average of 31 books per year. After the rise of the Spanish military in 1936 and due to the prohibitions and to the services of the Office of Censorship imposed by the new regime, the literary production in Basque stopped almost completely. In fact, until 1955 the indexes of Basque editions went back to those of the beginning of the 19th century, that is to say, an average of 20 books a year. The great majority of books published in Basque up

to 1950 were printed in the French state or in America. From 1936 to 1975 only 1,733 books were published in Basque.

During the Franco years, Basque culture survived in exile; that cultural exile covered three generations. Three are the authors who stood out in the years immediately after the war, Nikolas Ormaetxea “Orixe” (1888-1961), Telesforo Monzon (1904-1981) and Jokin Zaitegi (1906-1979); the three of them went to America in exile. Orixe composed one of most beautiful epic poems of the Basque literature *Euskaldunak* (‘The Basques’) written in 1935 but not published until 1950. In this long poem Orixe reviewed the pastoral life, the customs and the traditions in the Basque rural world he knew in his youth. His poetry is strongly romantic and anti-modernist. Telesforo Monzon, Minister of the Home Office of the Basque Government during the war and in exile, wrote the poem book titled *Urrundik* (‘From Far Away’) in 1941 during his trip to exile on board of the “Alsina”. Published in 1945 in Mexico, his autobiographical poems have a great expressive force and a deep emotive character. Jokin Zaitegi stood out as much in the poetic production *Goldaketan* (1946) as, fundamentally, in the translation.

The translation into Basque was one of the great challenges of Basque literature and linguistics in exile. The aim of translation into Basque was double:

1. Against the thesis sustained by Unamuno and other Spanish authors, the translation into Basque of world literature classics became a way of demonstrating that the Basque language was, as any other language, capable of expressing anything written in any human language. Languages are not superior or inferior and are enriched by reciprocal influences.
2. The normalization of the Basque language demanded that from all the Basque dialects one should be taken as the axis for the common Basque language “Gipuzkera osotua” or “euskara osotua” or, as it was denominated later “euskara batua” (unified Basque language). Translation was a good way of creating a literary tradition whose aim was to help generating that unified language.

With these two goals, Zaitegi created in 1950 in Guatemala the magazine *Euzko Gogoa* (‘Basque Soul’) dedicated fundamentally to the publication and diffusion of works translated into Basque. In this aspect Zaitegi himself stood out with the translation of the tragedies by Sophocles and the dialogues by Plato. In the same way Andima Ibiñagabeitia (1906-1967) translated works by Virgil and Ovid into Basque. Bingen Ametzaga (1901-1969) also completed the translation of nearly 69 works, among them some dramas by Shakespeare, such as *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night Dream*, *Julius Caesar* or *Macbeth*; he translated also *Platero y yo* by the exiled Andalusian poet Juan Ramón Jiménez; the *Rubayyat* by Omar Khayyam and some classical tragedies like *Prometeus Bound* by Aeschylus.

Ixaka Lopez Mendizabal (1879-1977) and Andrés Irujo Olló (1907-1993) created *Ekin*, a Basque publishing company in Argentina, one of greatest

achievements of the Basque culture in the American exile. With no interruption, practically without funds and, during the years of dictatorship of Colonel Juan Domingo Perón, under the threat of constant controls and forced closings, the publishing house edited more than 100 books on various Basque issues, many of them in Basque although the printers did not know this language. One of the most outstanding successes of this editorial with regard to the book edition in Basque was the publication on December 3, 1952, of the translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by Bingen Ametzaga. Along with *Ekin* other publishing houses arose in the Basque Country during the fifties such as the one of the Franciscans of Arantzazu, *Itxaropena* or *Kulixka Sorta* collection. The magazine *Egan* (1948) directed by Koldo Mitxelena (1915-1987), was during the fifties the only periodic publication written exclusively in Basque in the Basque Country and a meeting point for poets, narrators and translators from inside and outside of the country.

In 1949 a group of Basque exiled authors brought together by Manuel Intxausti (1900-1961), a Basque businessman, politician and philanthropist, organized the first *Euskara Eguna* (Day of the Basque Language) that was celebrated in the Basque Centers all over Europe and America thereafter. The day chosen for the celebration of this festivity was the 3rd of December, day of Saint Francis Xabier, patron saint of Navarre and of the Basque language. The celebration was a complete success and soon became a symbol of the resistance of the Basque language and culture in the American exile. Since 1949 and to the present the festivity of the Basque language has continued being yearly celebrated. Under the protection of this initiative the first "Clubs of the Basque book" in the Basque Centers of America were founded. It also helped decidedly to promote the creation of societies of friends of the Basque language *Euskaltzaleak*, along the lines of the one of the *Laurak Bat*, the Basque Center in Buenos Aires. These initiatives invigorated the edition and publication of works in Basque, but always with private capital.

Since 1955 a stream of political as much as cultural resistance grouping a progressively greater number of writers began to shape in the Basque Country. Simultaneously, the beginning of the economic development of the nation produced a certain improvement of the quality of life, which allowed for a very timid liberalization and some kind of opening of the dictatorship, especially after the entrance of the regime in the United Nations. However, the Basque language continued being persecuted in absolutely all its manifestations. In spite of this, from 1955 onwards, the first *Ikastolas* of the postwar period started opening their doors in Gipuzkoa. The first of them was just a small academy created in 1944 in Elvira Zipitria's house, an old teacher at *Koruko Andra Mari Ikastola* in Donostia. This initiative was immediately followed by many others and, in the early sixties, tens of small Basque schools or day-care centers in which the youngest could learn Basque were created all over the Basque Country: Bilbo (Bilbao) (1957),

Iruñea (Pamplona) (1963), Gasteiz (Vitoria) (1966) or Baiona (1969). In 1969 the *Gipuzkoako Ikastolen Elkartea* (Federation of Ikastolas of Gipuzkoa) was created in order to face the constant political and administrative problems that these centers had to face in order to teach in Basque. The aid and the shelter of the Basque Catholic Church was fundamental during these first years, in fact, many of these first schools were lodged in old monasteries or seminaries in disuse freed for this purpose. In 1964 there were around 596 students at these Basque schools and, only six years later, they grew to about 8,255.

Basque Literature began to emerge in the sixties. Among the first sparkles of the Basque production of this decade we may mention the new height of *Bertsolaritza* or sung poetry. In 1960 the first national sung poetry contest was celebrated after the outbreak of the war. In 1961 Antonio Zabala (1928-), a well-known theorizer of Basque sung poetry, created the publishing house *Auspoa* (Bellows) exclusively dedicated to the publication of the works by singing poets. Among the most outstanding *bertsolariak* or singing poets of this time we may mention Fernando Aire “Xalbador” (1920-1976), Manuel Olaizola “Uztapide” (1909-1983), Inazio Eizmendi “Basarri” (1913 -), Jose Migel Iztueta “Lazkao Txiki” (1926-1993) and Martin Treku “Mattin” (1916-1981).

With regard to the written poetry we must mention the figure of Santiago Onaindia (1909-1996) who founded two magazines *Karmel* (1950) and *Olerti* (1959), this last one dedicated exclusively to the publication and spreading of the postwar period poetry. In addition he compiled 1,000 poems of later authors of the Aitzol generation and published this anthology with the title of *Mila euskal olerti eder* (‘One Thousand Beautiful Basque Poems’) (1954). Together with Onaindia the parish priest of Zarautz Salvatore Mitxelena (1919-1965), overcoming many legal hurdles and requirements and the official Spanish censorship, published the first book in Basque south of the Pyrenees after the war with the title *Arantzazu, euskal sinismenaren poema* (1949), a beautiful poem dedicated to the virgin of Arantzazu. Other poets of these years were Nemesio Etxaniz (1899-1982), Jose Ignazio Goikoetxea (1908-1983) or Xabier Dihartze “Iratzeder” (1920-2008). With regards to the production in prose Agustin Anabitarte (1891-1981) wrote a novel of a great impact entitled “Poli” (1958); also Eusebio Erkiaga (1912-1993) author of six novels of success, Jon Etxaide (1920-1998), Agustin Zubikarai (1914-2005) and Jose Antonio Loidi (1916-1999) are among the best known novel writers of this period.

Since *Euskaltzaindia*, the Academy of the Basque Language, was founded in 1919, the standardization of the Basque language was one of the main challenges of this institution. War had held up, completely blocking the advances that in this sense had occurred in the twenties and in the thirties thanks to Azkue. However, from 1960 onwards, the debate on the unification of the diverse dialects of the Basque language in order to create a common official language arose.

Specifically at the meeting of *Euskaltzaindia* in 1968 in the sanctuary of Arantzazu, during so many years considered the cradle of the defense of the Basque language, one of the first controversies around the standardization of the Basque language took place. Against the theses of Federico Krutwig (1921-1998) of modeling a literary Basque language based on the dialect of Lapurdi and, more concretely, on works by authors of the Sara school of the 17th century, Koldo Mitxelena or Luis Villasante (1920-2000) defended the thesis of building the common Basque language on the base of the dialects from the center of the Basque Country, fundamentally on the one spoke in parts of Gipuzkoa and Navarre enriched with contributions of the rest of the Basque dialects. On the other hand, these authors defended a Basque language closest to the popular and contemporary speech. The thesis of Azkue of adopting the Gipuzkoan dialect as a base for the unified language definitively prevailed. It was not an easy choice; the confrontations between the diverse positions forced the resignation of the president of *Euskaltzaindia*, Manuel Lekuona (1875-1987), in 1970. Despite the controversy arisen around orthography, spelling or morphology, the “Euskara batua” or standard Basque language was diffused in the *Ikastolas* of the Basque Country in quite a short period of time.

One of the authors who helped to consolidate the idea of the standardized Basque language was Gabriel Aresti (1933-1975), a fecund poet of the sixties and one of the maximum exponents of the Basque poetry produced in the last years of the Franco era. By influence of the writer Jon Mirande (1925-1972), he adopted the literary dialect of Lapurdi in his first writings, however, in the early sixties, in accordance with the decisions adopted by *Euskaltzaindia* on the standardization of the language, Aresti opted for a more popular language as well as for a more socially engaged poetry of political denunciation. An avid reader and friend of the poet Blas de Otero (1916-1980), Aresti wrote -like him- poems charged with a sharp social and political criticism, which brought the official censorship down on him and problems with the Spanish justice. Among his works we may mention *Harri eta herri* (‘Country and Stone’) (1964), *Euskal harria* (‘Basque Stone’) (1967) or *Harrizko herri hau* (‘This Nation Made of Stone’) (1970). Along with Aresti, Mikel Zarate (1933-1979) and Luis Mari Mujika (1939-) were two of the more outstanding poets of the Basque literary movement of the last decade of the Franco era.

Two are the main prose writers of the seventies, Jose Luis Alvarez Enparantza “Txillardegí” (1929-) and Ramon Saizarbitoria (1944-). Txillardegí introduced existentialism in Basque literature. This way, his characters sometimes adopt a genuinely Sartrean psychological profile as in the case of his two first novels *Leturiaren egunkari ezkutua* (‘Secret diary of Leturia’) (1957) or *Peru Leartzako* (‘Peru of Leartza’) (1960). Influenced by the French novel trend known as “Nouveau Roman” Saizarbitoria introduced new technical, stylistic and

thematic features in the Basque novel that thus entered a post-Franco period. Marked by the political events of the transition into democracy, we may mention his novels *Ehun metro* ('One Hundred Meters') (1975), *Ene Jesus* ('Oh Jesus') (1976) for which he obtained the *Premio de la Crítica* of 1981 or *Hamaika pauso* ('Steps') (1995), which also won the same prize in 1996.

In the last years of the Franco era another event of importance for Basque literature took place, the sprouting of the musical current "Ez dok amairu" (1965-1972). This group of young artists looked for new ways of renovation of Basque folk music and will mark the new musical tendencies in the seventies. They adopted for their songs old Basque literary texts or composed and sang their own poems arranging old melodies from Basque folklore. Among the members of this group it is possible to mention, among many others, Mikel Laboa (1934-), Benito Lertxundi (1942-), Joxean Hartzabal Artze (1939), Xabier Lete (1944-) or Lourdes Iriondo (1937-).

Together with the relative economic and social liberalization, a tentative advance in the political situation started to take place. Before an increasingly evident reality, the regime began to open the ways for the legalization of the hundreds of academies that from 1950 had been opening illegally all over the Basque Country. With these measures the government tried to regulate the situation of the already open centers and, at the same time, to paralyze administratively or to prevent the opening of new ones. Here we have some of the measures adopted in the last twenty years of the Franco era among which, once again, we may find the exclusion of the Basque language from the school system and the administration of the state:

1. Agreement of the Government of Navarre on the creation of the Section for the Promotion of the Basque language on November 28, 1956. Official Bulletin of Navarre nº139, November 20, 1957.
2. Agreement by the Government of Navarre on the organization of education in Basque. 25-1-1967. Official Bulletin of Navarre, nº26, March 1, 1967.
3. General law of Education 14/1970 on August 4, 1970. The law ratified the principle that education would be held solely in Spanish. Official Bulletin of the State, nº187, on August 6, 1970.
4. Agreement by the Government of Navarre on the creation of bilingual centers and aids to them, on October 16, 1970.
5. Agreement by the Government of Navarre on the reorganization of the institution *Príncipe de Viana* on March 7, 1972 by which the Section for the Promotion of the Basque language was created. November 28, 1956.
6. Agreement by the Government of Navarre of December 15, 1972, on the promotion of the Basque language. Official Bulletin of Navarre, nº5, on January 10, 1973.

7. Agreement by the Government of Navarre of November 24, 1973, on the modification of the agreement on the education and promotion of the Basque language. December 15, 1972.
8. New law of Navarre. No mention of the Basque language was made on it. 1973.
9. Decree 1433/1975 on the incorporation of native languages in the programs of Kindergarten and Primary Education on May 30, 1975. The new law provided, for the first time, the possibility of introducing the Basque language as an elective subject in education. Official Bulletin of the State, nº156, on July 1, 1975.
10. Decree 2929/1975 on the regulation of the use of the regional languages. October 31, 1975. The law included under the category of “regional languages” the Catalan, Basque or Galician languages that thereafter could be taught at school as elective subjects. Official Bulletin of the State, nº274, on October 15, 1975.

From 1900 to 1975, after undergoing two dictatorships and a suffocating linguistic policy for more than 200 years, the Basque language evidently backed down. The national languages of both states almost disappeared from the urban scope and were pulled out to the rural villages and home. Completely exiled from the institutions and the school system and prosecuted for about two centuries, the Basque language at the end of Franco’s dictatorship turned into the second language of the Basque country spoken by less than 40% of the Basques.

In the French state, where the Basque language withstood an exclusive linguistic policy, the situation did not improve from the beginning of the century. The Basque language, with the Breton, the Occitan, the Corsican, continued having no legal status in the French state. Just as in the Spanish state, in order to silence the internal and international critics on the situation of the languages, the French government regulated the study and the use of these languages at university or at language academies. In spite of the situation of these languages, the French government, worried about the incipient weight internationally gained by English, created in 1966 the High Committee for the Defense and Expansion of the French Language. Here we have some of the most consequential norms on linguistic policy of the French state between the end of World War II and 1975:

1. Law on Primary Education. Any language other than French is tacitly excluded from the school system. Approved on 22 May 1946. Journal Officiel, 23 May 1946.
2. Law nº48-51 “Deixonne” on the education in regional languages or local dialects. Approved on 11 January 1951. Journal Officiel 483, 23 January 1951.

3. Decree N°62-1173 on the reform of the education of second degree. Approved on 29 September 1962 and modified by decree N°74-34, 16 January 1974.
4. Decree N°66-203 on the creation of a High Committee for the Defense and the Expansion of the French Language. Approved on 31 March 1966. *Journal Officiel*, 7 April 1966.
5. Decree N°70-650 on the education in regional languages and dialects. Approved on 10 July 1970.
6. Decree N°73-194 modifying the decree of 31 March 1966 on the creation of a High Committee for the Defense and the Expansion of the French Language. Approved on 24 February 1973. *Journal Officiel*, 28 February 1973.
7. Decree N°74-33 on the education in regional languages and dialects (only about Corsican). Approved on 16 January 1974.
8. Decree N°74-34 on the reform of secondary education. Approved on 16 January 1974.
9. Law N°75-620 on education. Art. 12 sanctioning French as the sole language of education. Approved on 11 July 1975. *Journal Officiel*, 12 July 1975.
10. Law N°75-1349 on the use of French. Speaking French as a compulsory duty and fundamental right of every French citizen. Approved on 31 December 1975. *Journal Officiel*, 4 January 1976.

At the death of Generalissimo Franco in November 1975, the Basque language acquired for the second time in history the character of co-official language within the Spanish state. By virtue of article 3 of the Spanish Constitution passed in 1978, Basques were again imposed the duty of knowing Spanish and only the right of knowing Basque. Consequently, the Constitution only obtained the support of the 30.86% of the Basque population of the Basque Autonomous Community. 55.35% of the Basque population abstained and a 10.51% voted against the constitutional text. In Navarre 11.29% of the population voted against the Constitution and 33.42% did not vote.

The specific regulation of the linguistic norms in each one of the territories of the state would be completed by the respective statutes of autonomy. On May 10th 1979, the Royal Decree 1111/1979 on the co-official status of the Basque language was passed and, in October of the same year, the new Statute of Autonomy for the Basque Autonomous Community, known as Statute of Gernika, was passed by referendum. It obtained the endorsement of 90% of the Basque population. By virtue of the Statutory law 13/1982 of Navarre, approved on August 10, 1982, the Community of Navarre was created as an independent province (separated from the rest of the Basque territories of Araba, Bizkaia Gipuzkoa that are included thereafter in the Basque Autonomous Community).

Under the protection of the Statutes of Autonomy the Basque language would have again access to the classrooms, the administration and, in general, all areas of everyday life in these two parts of the southern Basque Country. In July 1982 the Report on official languages in education and on bilingualism carried out by a special committee created in April 1982 by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science was publicly released. Four months later, the Law 10/1982 on the normalization of the use of the Basque language, published in the Official Bulletin of the Basque Country (Nº 160), was passed by the Basque Parliament on December 16 of that year. According to the new legislation:

- All the citizens of the Basque Country have the right to know and to use both official languages, as much orally as in writing.
- The following fundamental language rights are recognized to the citizens of the Basque Country:
 - Right to communicate in Spanish or in Basque, orally and/or in writing, with the Administration and with any Organism or Organization within the Basque Autonomous Community and in one of the three linguistic zones of Navarre.
 - Right to receive education in both official languages within the Basque Autonomous Community and in one of the three linguistic zones of Navarre.
 - Right to receive periodic publications, to listen to radio or TV programs and other mass media in Basque.
 - Right to develop professional, labor, political and union activities in Basque.
 - Right to express oneself in Basque at any meeting.
- The public administration public will guarantee the exercise of these rights in their territories.

The law 10/1982 on the Basque language of the Basque Autonomous Community and the law 18/1986 of the Historic Community of Navarre, regulate the most important subjects related to the Basque language, which are:

- The linguistic rights of the citizens and the linguistic duties of the public administration.
- The use of the Basque language in the Public Administration.
- The use of the Basque language in the mass media.
- The social use of the Basque language: development of programs of education and alphabetization for adults, the promotion of the use of the Basque language in different social scopes.
- Normalization of the language. The law attributes to the Basque Government the responsibility of guarding the unification and normalization of the Basque language, in agreement with the directions by *Euskaltzaindia*, the Academy of the Basque Language.

The regulation for the use of the Basque language in Navarre was delayed up to four years regarding the one in the Basque Autonomous Community. On December 15, 1986, the Parliament of Navarre passed the Law 18/1986 on the regulation of the use of the Basque language. The law recognizes the right of every student to receive education in Basque and, at the same time, settles down the obligation of knowing the official language not chosen by the person, in order to guarantee the bilingualism. In both territories the education system is structured in four educative models:

- Model D, education solely in Basque with Spanish as a subject.
- Model B (G in Navarre), equal education in Basque and Spanish.
- Model A, education solely in Spanish with Basque as a subject.
- Model X, education exclusively in Spanish.

However, the law in Navarre happened to be a highly polemical regulation sprinkled by hard confrontations. Although Spanish law allowed the elaboration of a similar law to the one endorsed in the Basque Autonomous Community, the opposition of the rightwing forces in Navarre, forced a law that divided Navarre (a community of 500,000 inhabitants) into three linguistic zones, each one of them with its own linguistic profile and rights: the Basque speaking area, the mixed area and the non Basque speaking area. This way, although in the so called “Basque speaking area” the use of Basque is totally guaranteed within education, in the South of Navarre or “Non Basque speaking area” there is no provision for state schools in which classes in Basque can be offered. Thus, the use of Basque in the south of Navarre remains outlawed and consequently, parents cannot elect Models B or D for their children in this area.

Linguistic Models in the Systems of Education in 2008	Basque Autonomous Community Proportion of Students per Linguistic Model	Community of Navarre Proportion of Students per Linguistic Model
Only Spanish Without Basque	Model X 0,1%	Model G 56%
Only in Spanish With Basque as a subject	Model A 19,9%	Model A 19%
In Spanish and Basque 60% & 40% respect.	Model B 23%	Model B 0,1%
In Basque With Spanish	Model D 57%	Model D 24%

In Spanish and English With optional	Does Not Exist	Models TIL y British 0,9%
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Parents are free to elect one of the five different Linguistic Models (if available in their Linguistic Areas).

In this sense, the different linguistic policies have increased the cultural and social differences between the south and the north of the small Community of Navarre.

Linguistic Zone	Model G Spanish	Model A Spanish/Basque	Model D Basque
“Basque speaking”	0,0%	14,18%	85,82%
“Mixed”	52,9%	20,03%	27%
“Non Basque speaking”	71,85%	25,85%	2,3%

Increasing cultural and linguistic differences between the different linguistic areas in Navarre in 2008.

The statutes of autonomy of Navarre and the Basque Autonomous Community and their respective laws on linguistic normalization allowed for new Basque schools to open again and for the legalization of already existing ones. The Basque language began to be present in the public administration and, for the first time in the history of the Spanish state, the government began to support financially the recovery of the language. For first time in the history of the Basque language, the development of the language did not depend solely on the effort and personal capital of people like Manuel Larramendi, Joannes Etxeberri Sarakoa, Luis Luciano Bonaparte, Antoine D'Abbadie, Arturo Campion, Sebastián Amorrortu or Manuel Intxausti.

Under the protection of the new legal reality, the situation of the Basque language improved remarkably in a few years. In 1970 there were 8,255 students registered in Ikastolas. In 1980 they were already 62,763 and 66,541 in 1982. Thereafter the number of students registered in Basque schools has constantly grown. Publication of books in Basque also increased considerably. Since the celebration of the first Fairs of the Basque book in Durango the number of books published a year has increased up to 1,106 in 1994. Indeed, in the 38 years of the Franco regime 1,733 books were printed in Basque at a rate of approximately 45.6 per year; in the 18 years between 1976 and 1994 12,525 books were printed in

Basque in the Basque Country at a rate of 695.8 books a year (new editions and re-editions).

It is true that languages die out because their speakers no longer speak them; we should also consider, however, the reasons why people may no longer wish to speak their own language. Thirty years of timid linguistic policies have promoted the Basque language up to levels not even expected in 1975. Language policy is, without any doubt, the key for the diffusion and protection of small languages.

As a result of the law proposed by the Secretary of Culture of the Basque Government Martin Labaien, the Basque Radio and public Television “Euskal Irrati Telebista” (EITB) were created (May 20th, 1982). Eight years later and thanks to the initiative of several private groups, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* the first newspaper written completely in Basque came to light on December 6th, 1990. The project, under the direction of the writer and exiled journalist Martín Ugalde (1921-2004), was welcomed with great enthusiasm by Basque society and steadily increased in the number of subscribers and readers from that date to its closing on February 20th 2003, when a judge ordered *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* to be closed down under the accusation of being an instrument of separatism controlled by ETA. The case never was taken to court and may never reach the actual courtroom. None has ever been found responsible for the expenses and the violation of fundamental human rights they have carried out.

The response from the people in the Basque Country was massive: several demonstrations that congregated nearly 150,000 people each crossed the streets of most Basque cities. After six months from the closing of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* and since the “preventive closing” ordered by Juan del Olmo did not seem to have an end in sight, a new newspaper in Basque *Berria* was founded with private capital and the subsidy of the Basque Government.

In order to help the *Ikastolas* in their march ahead, the first festivals of the Basque language were celebrated in the eighties, *Kilometroak* (in Gipuzkoa), *Ibilaldia* (in Bizkaia), *Nafarroa Oinez* (in Navarre), *Araba Euskaraz* (in Araba) and *Herri Urrats* (in Iparralde). All of them were organized in order to finance Basque private schools once again with private capital. They are great annual celebrations, one in each one of the Basque territories, in which all type of activities are organized, from exhibitions of rural sports to concerts and special areas for children. All participants eat, drink and enjoy themselves among the people who meet around the project of a common language for a nation. From the first celebration in Gipuzkoa, the number of visitors has progressively increased. The number of participants in the first years of the 21st century highly exceeded the 100,000 (four times a year). The funds are dedicated to the rehabilitation, building or rebuilding of old *Ikastolas*. Also the *Korrika* is organized in the whole

country once every two years in order to help the institutes teaching Basque to adults.

The Basque language has also timidly entered the universities. There still exist great gaps, however, in the scope of education in Basque: for instance, several university degrees can be completed using Basque only at the University of the Basque Country, such as Journalism, Law, History, Basque Philology or Teaching. On the other hand, the scope of technical and scientific education is more limited, despite the constant efforts to improve the situation. Basque in higher education is almost non-existent in Navarre.

Efforts are also being made to promote the alphabetization of adults who speak Basque but can hardly write it, as well as to supply classes of Basque for those workers who request a leave of absence from work in order to study Basque. Here are some of the most important linguistic norms approved in Navarre in the last 25 years:

1. Agreement by the Government of Navarre on the aids to bilingual centers or to centers offering classes in Basque on 2-2-1977. Renewed on January 12, 1979.
2. Agreement by the Government of Navarre on the indefinite suspension of the aids to bilingual centers or to those offering classes in Basque on March 9, 1979.
3. Agreement by the Government of Navarre on the incorporation of the Basque language in the secondary education system on July 3, 1980.
4. Agreement by the Government of Navarre on the concession of subsidies to organizations promoting the teaching of Basque to adults for the years 1981 and 1982 on October 29, 1982. Official Bulletin of Navarre, nº 137, November 16, 1982.
5. Law 15/1983, on July 27, 1983, by the Basque Parliament on the creation of Euskal Ikastolen Erakundea-Instituto Vasco de Ikastolas (Institute of Basque Schools).
6. Decree 159/1988, passed on May 19, 1988, by the Government of Navarre on the incorporation and use of the Basque language in secondary education. Official Bulletin of Navarre, nº67, July 1, 1988.
7. Agreement on the Regulation of the Conditions of cooperation with Euskaltzaindia, the Academy of the Basque Language, among the Government of Navarre, the Basque Government and the Governments of Araba, Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia. On October 7, 1989.
8. Order by the Government of Navarre on the creation of a Euskaltegi (Basque Academy) for Government of Navarre employees in order to guarantee the citizens' right to be attended by the Administration using Basque. 1990.

In 1995 the group *Egunkaria Sortzen* summoned a meeting that brought together numerous people concerned about the necessity of opening new forums of performance and aid for the Basque language. After years of meetings and the exchange of ideas and different positions regarding these issues, in March 1997 the conference *Euskararen Unibertsoa* (The Universe of the Basque Language), in which nearly 400 people took part, was celebrated in Donostia. During the conference, a special committee was entrusted the creation of a permanent Council including the most outstanding social, political and cultural institutions in favor of the Basque language. On December 6th 1997 the constituent assembly of *Kontseilua* (The Council) was celebrated at the Historical Museum of Durango, an institution that thereafter dedicates all its efforts to create initiatives, to exchange ideas and to defend the normalization and socialization of the Basque language in the Basque Country.

One of the *Kontseilua*'s most forceful interventions in Basque public affairs occurred on February 21st 2003, a day after the newspaper *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was closed down by judge Juan del Olmo. The President of *Kontseilua* denounced the judge's decision by pronouncing the following words:

“In view of the attack recently suffered by *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*, the Basque Council wishes to make known that this is not an isolated attack. Today the aim were *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*, Basque immersion schools, the journals *Jakin* and *Argia* and *Plazagunea*; previously, *AEK*, *Zabaltzen*, *Euskal Herrian Euskaraz*, *Abokatu Euskaldunak*, *IKA* and many other institutions that promote the Basque language suffered the same fate.

It is clear that here there is a strategy at work. All resources available to the State are being used to interrupt the standardization process. This strategy is not, then, an isolated or temporary campaign. It is much more serious and deeper than that. They have tried to give a blow to the standardization process the Basque language has recently undergone, and for that purpose they have attacked the only newspaper published in Basque.

This Council thinks that the objective of all these judicial and police actions is to destroy the most important components of the identity of the Basque Country, and to stop the process of standardization Basque. This attack against *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* is just another step towards punishing all the initiatives in favor of our language's standardization.

It is unacceptable for anybody to attack our language, the most fundamental element of the identity of the Basque Country and a heritage we all share as citizens. For this reason, we want to make two appeals: first, to Basque society, to ask it to be an active agent in the defense of the Basque language and in the efforts to achieve its standardization. Secondly, to all institutions, social and otherwise, to unions, and political parties to ask them to get involved in the defense of the social movement for the promotion of Basque. In fact, we think

that it is time for us to make a broad political and social commitment in favor of the Basque language. Most of Basque society shares this favorable position, and we think that everybody should contribute to achieve the means for such an commitment.

This Council wants to call on all citizens to give a vigorous response to this particularly serious situation. In this sense, the Basque Council invites everybody to participate in the march that this Council has convened tomorrow in San Sebastian under the slogans “*Egunkaria* aurrera. Bai Euskarari” (Go on *Egunkaria*! Say yes to Basque). We also want to ask everyone who is planning to attend the demonstration that they bring with them an issue of *Egunkaria*, because *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* is alive, despite all obstacles.

This Council also wants to express its solidarity with the friends who have been arrested and with their families, and for that purpose it will take part in the popular initiatives set up to promote and improve the standardization of the Basque language. They cannot destroy the social role *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* is fulfilling, and they will not destroy it. Signed in Andoain, February 21st, 2003.”

One of the most important challenges nowadays is taking the Basque language into the public administration, that is to say, to courts, police, city councils and, in general, to all those public sites where the citizens have to interact with civil servants. Although great progress has been made, the Basque language continues not having its own space at the courts of justice. In this sense, the sentence n°635, signed on February 1st 1992, by the Superior Court of Justice of the Basque Country, was favorable to the decision of the Basque municipalities to live and to work in Basque. However, there is still a long way to go, especially in Navarre where Basque in the administration is almost nonexistent and in Iparralde (within the French state) where it is absolutely nonexistent.

The situation of the Basque language is very different in the three different administrations in which the Basque Country is divided today. In the Basque Autonomous Community the Basque language enjoys the protection of the Basque Government, and a more favorable linguistic policy. This is not the case of Navarre where, even though the advances in the recovery of the language initiated in the eighties and nineties, the political situation has changed radically. From 2000 to 2006, the Basque language has suffered a linguistic policy of harassment supported by the central government in Spain from 1996 to 2004.

In the French state, Basque, as well as Breton, Occitan or Corsican continue being in the political and economical shade of the “Francophonie”, a program set up by the government in the hope to have French compete with English on the international scene. Suffice it to mention that the teaching of French is heavily subsidized in Africa, Asia or Latin America, meanwhile the above mentioned national languages are not taught in French schools.

Basque literature has flourished considerably over the last twenty years. Among the many remarkable writers of the moment we can mention three: Anjel Lertxundi (1948-, *Ajea du hurturik* (1971) or *Azkenaz beste* (1996); Joxe Irazu known as *Bernardo Atxaga* (1951-), probably the best known and most internationally recognized contemporary Basque writer, who obtained the *Premio Nacional de Literatura* with his novel *Obabakoak* (1988); and Joseba Sarrionaindia (1958-) with works like *Marinel zaharrak* (1987), *Ni ez naiz hemengoa* (1985) or *Narrazioak* (1983). The list of the most outstanding contemporary authors writing in Basque is in the hundreds and is unfortunately well beyond the scope of this brief article.

With regards to sung poetry, after one decade of silence, *Euskal Herriko Bertsolari Elkarte* (Basque Federation of Sung Poetry) was created in 1985 with the aim of promoting annual contests at local and national levels. Sung poetry has flourished since the establishment of this federation. Tens of *Bertso eskolak* (Sung Poetry Schools) have been created and the contests have been multiplied in few years. Among the most representative authors of our time we may mention Lizaso, Mañukorta, Peñagarikano, Egaña, Murua, Sarasua or Mendizabal. Today a new generation of singing poets is emerging in which, for first time in the history, female singing poets play an outstanding role.

In spite of all the progress made since the death of the dictator, at the beginning of 1990, the Basque language was catalogued as a “language in danger” and it was included in the Red Book listing languages in danger of extinction by UNESCO after the Helsinki conference on December 31st 1993. At present, Basque is spoken by about a million speakers over a total population of approximately 3,000,000 inhabitants. This means that only 35% of the Basque population over 16 years old speaks Basque (about 45% of the total population). On the other hand all Basque speakers are bilingual (Basque-Spanish or Basque-French). The data for the future are, however, encouraging. The majority of children in the Basque Autonomous Community and about 30% in Navarre study in Basque or have Basque as a subject. The situation in Iparralde is very different, since the French state does not yet recognize the Basque language as an official or co-official language, so it is not taught in public schools. However, once again thanks to the private initiative and private funds, the first private Basque schools are opening their doors in the northern Basque Country. Maybe out of a sense of shame, the French government signed in 2003 an agreement with the Government of the Basque Autonomous Community according to which for every euro invested by the Basque government in the diffusion of Basque language in Iparralde, the French government will invest another one. In 2008 the French National Assembly passed a norm allowing the discussion of a law on the “regional languages” within the French state. It is certainly a step in the right direction for a brighter future for the Basque language.

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