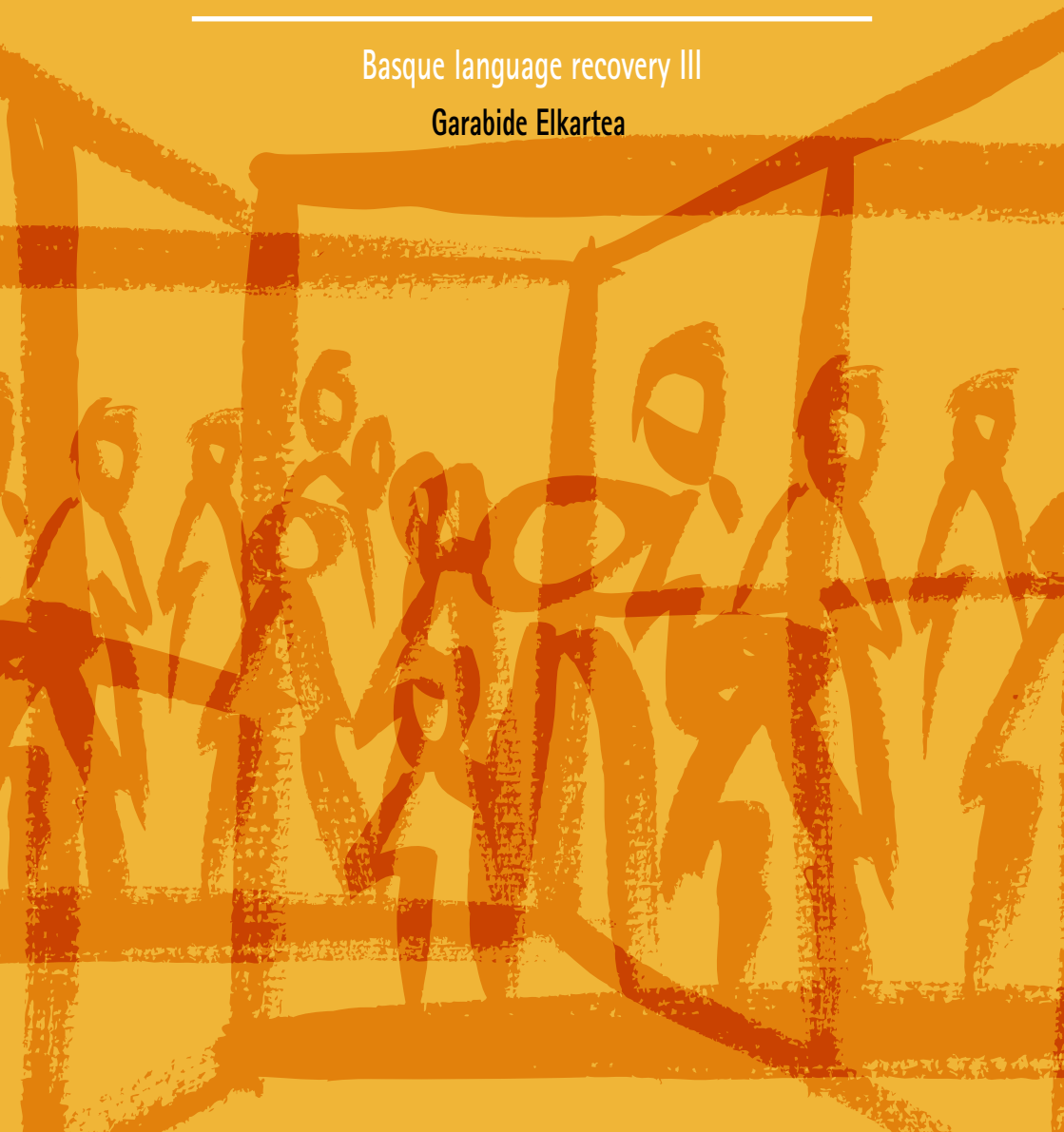


THE PRESS AND MEDIA

Basque language recovery III

Garabide Elkarte





In this DVD, we tried to gather together some of the encouragements, problems and achievements that Basque media organisations encountered during their first years, hearing from the main characters first-hand.

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Basque language recovery III

Garabide Elkartea

Coordinator: Alberto Barandiaran

garabide
erabiar



EUSKO JAURLARITZA  GOBIERNO VASCO

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FOREWORD

The process of reviewing our own story in the light of the mirror provided by other minority languages from around the world has already begun to teach us more about ourselves. Speaking for myself, my perception of our language has acquired enhanced beauty, yet it also reveals some previously unnoticed wrinkles and blemishes.

Given that we cannot penetrate the lost secrets of our language's survival in the distant past, we must concentrate on a search for the keys to our successful efforts in the contemporary period. In the past five decades of intense activity by our language community, we may discern various themes that have played a major role in the course of our resolute defence of Basqueness. One important element has been an emotional commitment and perseverance. We have also benefited from the fruits of a generation's courage to seek unity and develop coherent terminology in the corpus, the language's body so to speak. Then there is the vitality and complexity that we witness in cultural production, achieving a dynamic balance between continuity and openness to change. In education, we have discovered that school models built on a basis of openness within a predominance of the native language give rise to speakers who are fully competent in Basque, both competent and bilingual or multilingual.

As we peer towards the new century, the future still looks uncertain, but our awareness of what has been achieved fuels our capacity to continue to innovate in new directions. In this exchange of experiences with other continents, five lines of action may be highlighted in a synthesis of contemporary endeavours in support of the Basque language, while acknowledging that there are others too, namely: corpus, education, media, cultural production and language transmission within the family. These are the subjects of the parts of this collection. The press and media have constituted

an essential element of Basque language recovery, and there is every sign that they will continue to do so, and that they will make up one of the most important lines of action in language vitalization.

What has the Basque language community done in the area of press and the media? It has kept in tune with the opportunities and needs of each decade, and has dreamt up, organized and implemented those options that were possible in Basque, although I am not so sure that we were always as much in tune as we might have been. Back when regional television was a new frontier, we wasted precious years before we got going in important districts. We have not succeeded in providing more diversity of television and radio programming for the past two decades. But looking back, Alberto Barandiaran's detailed synthesis portrays above all a community resolutely open to new options.

Some of the people who have taken part in that dream were "kamikazes", individuals of great determination and total commitment. Besides such individuals, grassroots groups and networks have often set goals, created resources and given rise to organizations of various types reflecting the aspirations of speaker communities, while public authorities have also involved themselves in this area. There has usually been a need for cooperation between all these layers to address the challenges posed.

Barandiaran has written this summary of our story in this field with the world's language communities in mind. A proper consideration of the emergent trends and tools that will characterize the new generations in this century leads us to conclude that languages that do not advance in the broad area of organized communication will face a bleak future. Those which do have a brighter outlook. Most of all the continents'

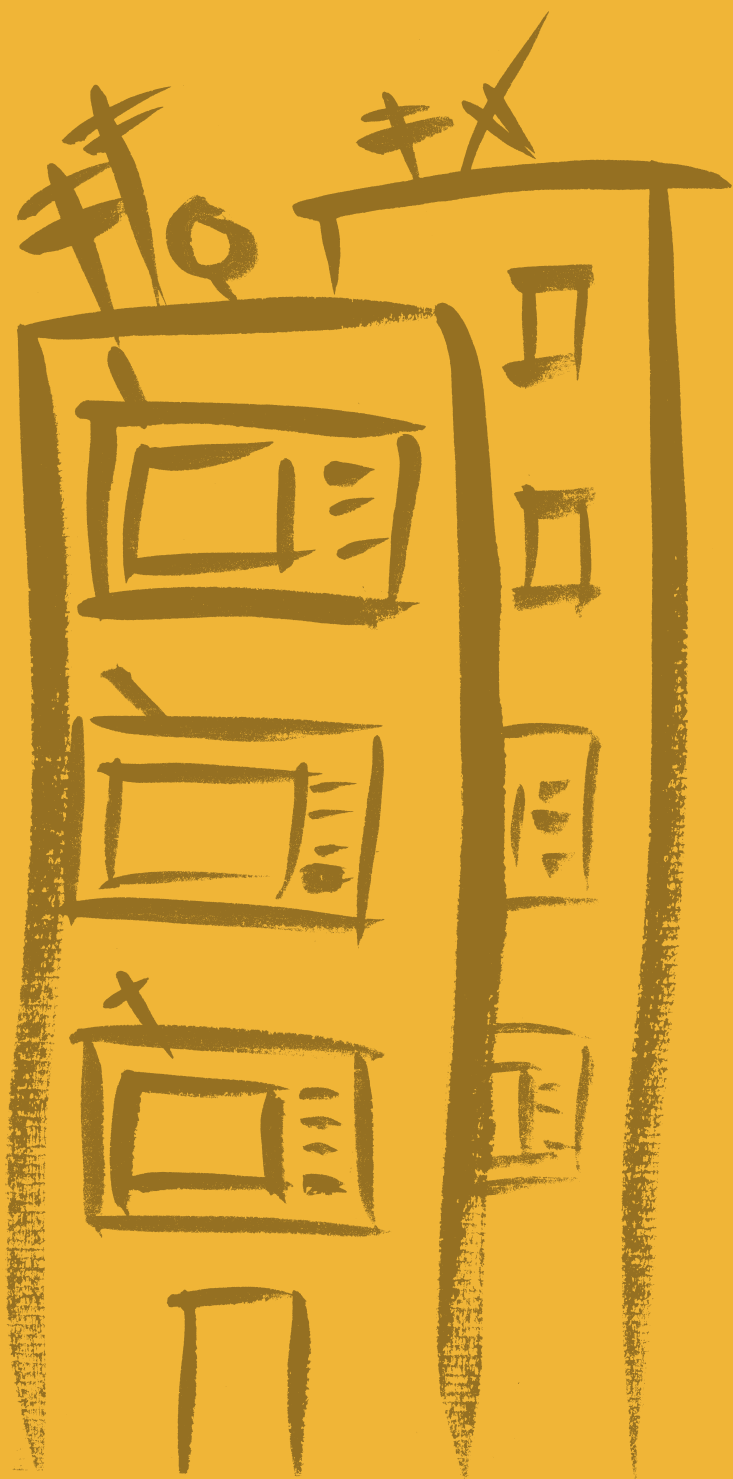
FOREWORD

native languages stand at a disadvantage in this respect by being decades or centuries behind. But there are also shortcuts to be taken: communication technology is more accessible than other, and there are groups of young people in speaker communities who are conversant with it. On-line networks create undreamt-of possibilities for both the large and the small. In the area of media in native languages, history remains to be written!

And there are important side-effects. The language of the media is the crucible of many other varieties. The language is now put to use not only to comment on our own culture and land but to talk about the wide world and all its peoples, providing a new way of doing so provided it is adapted to such use. But this also means that the language must 'grow', in the two senses of broadening both its resources and its horizons.

The subject of the media, then, is a field of importance for native languages on all continents. The word *field*, of course, has an original agricultural sense in English, Basque and many other languages. The land may take many forms, just as there are many kinds of rain; farming everywhere has been greatly affected by mechanization and chemicals, and there is more and more lack of equilibrium. But there are some more primary laws, as all who plant and sow well know.

Jon Sarasua



INTRODUCTION

The media are currently the most effective tool that manifests a language's internal vitality and cohesion. They are windows for the publication of the cultural production of the members of the language community; a reflection of the vitality of the language itself; indicators of the kind of relationship with the world this community seeks; and above all they constitute testimonies to the extent and level of relations between its speakers. Through the media, communities can learn about each other, and through the media they can tell the world about themselves. The importance of media in language recovery processes cannot be overstated, for they represent an open window where we see ourselves and others can see in on us.

We should also not underestimate the social impact of the media, their capacity to spread specific perspectives of the world and their power to create concepts and stereotypes. To an extent, the world is fitted into the image conveyed by the media. This still remains true despite the growth of the Internet, which will pose enormous adaptations on the conventional media such as television and print media if they are to survive.

All that has changed is the manner of communicating. In the last resort, we will have to accustom ourselves to thinking of the Internet as a gigantic media instrument, which aspires to become a kind of universal, free medium but a medium all the same. This presents a new challenge to the members of every language community, who must now find a place for their language in this enormous network.

Many experts see the media as a great source of ideological, cultural and social influence towards unity and uniformity, which have been considered to play an integrating role comparable to that of mythology in older societies. Newspapers, television and the radio represent more than just periodic interpretations of reality, they actually construct reality, a unified reality.

In many smaller language communities, the lack of their own media has entailed an obstacle to the language's vitality. They certainly have not benefitted from the same reinforcing effect from the media experienced by dominant language communities. It seems difficult to find scientific proof of the effects of use of the media on a language's status,

but it is generally accepted in sociolinguistics that the media provide speakers with an opportunity to control the public representation of themselves, to achieve awareness of the ideas, views and issues of other members of their own community, and to nurture the notion of an "us" within the community.

Use of the media is also of fundamental importance for codifying, consolidating and strengthening the language. New communicative domains keep emerging while existing ones get redefined, all of which demands constant updating of the language, hence also of the speaker. Thus the media represent incomparable areas for language development, for better or worse, depending on whether this leads to a given language's consolidation or attrition. The media are in a sense a language's masters, and if it is true that culture is a more important key to a modern country's survival than any army, it is likewise true that no effective culture can be built on the basis of an ineffective language. And the effectiveness of a language depends to a large extent on the media.


The uniformity of which we speak is of special importance in languages striving towards unification. For example, the media have played a fundamental role for the maintenance of a common Spanish language over and above its regional particularities as spoken in Spain and the countries of South and Central America. Some studies even suggest that the media exert more lin-

guistic influence than schools. That is, while education has often been singled out as a determining factor, media are also one of the most important elements that favour language recovery, contributing to the strengthening and consolidation of a language, as much as schools and possibly more so.

In the case of Basque, this was noted long ago. Some even claim that media hold the key to the future, for the Basque of the twenty-first century will be determined by the media, and the kind of Basque that prevails on the radio, on television, in newspapers and on the Internet is also that which will prevail among Basque speakers.

Types of language community

But among language communities many different situations are to be found. What kind of media are needed by the Basque language community? What about the Kichwa community? How about the Inuit of northern Finland, and the Tamazight of northern Africa? One thing to be borne in mind is that communities vary widely with respect to how much central importance they attach to their language. Some communities are firm in their self-



awareness as a nation; others feel they have close cultural and linguistic ties with other communities that coexist within a state. There are also some that view themselves as a minority within the state of which they happen to be subjects.

One example of the last-mentioned kind, where individuals consider that they form part of another state or culture, is the Albanian minority living in Italy. For such a community, local media may be sufficient given the inability of the linguistic group to aspire to a higher level of development. In the second of the cases enumerated, where a community's language is spoken in more than one state, it may be appro-

appropriate for local press and media to be complemented by national media.

But before thinking about the press and media, an important matter to consider is how many people in the community can read and write, particularly if literacy rates in the language in question are lower than for literacy in the state language. The same issue may be encountered even in places where education in the group's language as well as that in the dominant language is on offer, for a variety of reasons. It may be that the older generation did not have a chance to learn to read and write in their language of everyday communication. Or maybe when they went to school there was no specialized,

high-level training in their language. Again, the language of the workplace may not be the same as the language of the home. Finally, perhaps the minority language lacks the image and presence of the dominant language in technical fields or for public use.

More has been done in Europe than elsewhere over the past hundred years to provide support and protection to local languages competing with dominant languages of the state, and it is in Europe that use of the media has been pursued most energetically in this respect. There are some spectacular results in certain language communities of the efforts to promote local media. Great headway was made, for instance, in Catalonia in the nineteen-eighties when the local media took the step of switching from Spanish to Catalan in the press, radio and television. The success they achieved was so great that they became truly competitive with the press and media in Spanish, the state language, and began to publish specialized products. There were also campaigns to include some Catalan content in the major Spanish media and to spread into fields not covered by the state newspapers. Such is the progress that was made, that the two biggest newspapers in Catalonia launched Catalan-language editions, and in both cases these are more widely sold than their Spanish-language counterparts.

The European observatory of minority languages known as the Mercator Centre, which carries out extensive surveys of the situation in Europe, stresses the progress that has been made here since the nineteen-seventies. Experiences vary widely depending on the place and the language's status. In Wales, for instance, the greatest effort has been made to support the development of local press and media, whereas Scotland has limited itself to publishing Gaelic-language articles in English-language newspapers. In Ireland there is a worse situation, while in Brittany there are few nation-wide publications. In Occitania, in the south of France, some papers are published in both languages. Thus for example in the magazine *Lo País Gascon*, the articles published in French are all about Occitania, whereas those published in Gascon may be about any subject. The same applies in Alsace, in the north of France.

The situations of language communities in Germany, Italy, Denmark and Finland vary, but in almost all of them there exist periodicals in the local minority languages. Their circulation, success and influence are closely linked to each community's strength and vitality. But overall, Mercator considers that the press and media play a central role, and in some instances it is these that offer members of the language community the main opportunity to stay in touch with each other.

The centrality of language

Matters are different in other parts of the world. In most South American communities, language does not have the same centrality as in European cultural traditions. In Europe ethnic differences have become blurred and are now much less salient than they were in the nineteenth century. Indeed the general drift of the history of Europe in the last century has consisted of an ongoing, albeit turbulent, drive to overcome ethnicity, emphasizing the individual over the group. A sense of ethnicity or community has been

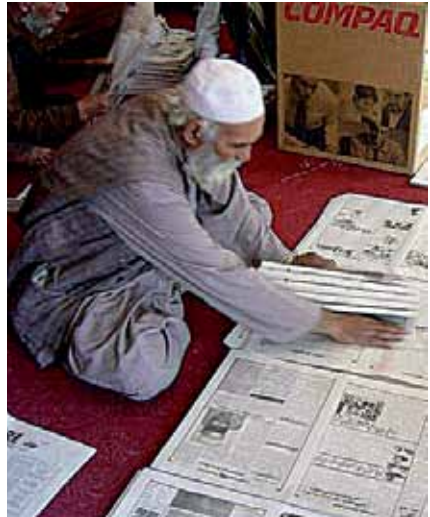
replaced by consciousness of the state, and without it language has become one of the few remaining indices of differences. Thus language has taken on the major function of indicating group membership.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the world the debates over ethnicity are very prominent and very contemporary. The issue may thus be more complex in such places because in their case such communities are not only excluded from the mainstream media linguistically: other aspects of culture are also excluded: their customs, world view, folklore, traditional relationships and territorial attachment are all brushed aside. This points to the urgent need to create media.



It is hoped that this observation will not obscure our message. While it is quite true that in many communities in South America family relations and territorial attachment take precedence over language in defining the community, it is no less true that the domination and assimilation of small communities is hastened when the culture is transmitted through the dominant language. Distinctive characteristics get blotted out; differences disappear. Everything is homogenized in the undifferentiated mass of the dominant language. Hence if there is to be a future it is essential for each community to think about and define what relationship it wishes to have with the media.

It is easy to forget how important this is. For local events to become known internationally, it is still necessary for them to be transmitted by American news agencies. Current events in the US, including its elections, natural disasters, patriotic celebrations or major sporting events, find their way into our living rooms, while large swathes of the world, from Siberia to South Africa and from Ecuador to Thailand, do not come under the public eye at all. Even news about important, powerful countries such as Brazil, Argentina, India or China only find their way into our newspapers, television or radio programmes if and when the world's large-scale, most powerful agencies deem it in their interest that they should. They decide when, if ever, information about us and our country is newsworthy elsewhere.



How do we see ourselves, as a result, in the mirror of the foreign media?

This scenario appears to be changing. The massive, diverse flow of information on the Internet has brought to people's attention information and points of interest that were previously silenced, but here again everything has not favoured small cultures. Benefits may be obtained from the Internet by non-dominant language communities but the absence of infrastructure is still an obstacle. The telecommunications network is controlled by a few, for whom many parts of the world are still outside their main areas of priority. Thus in many parts of South America it is still easier to have access to the radio than to a good internet server.

One response to globalisation is glocalisation: to globalisation, which is

practically inevitable, we can add "localness", immediacy, nearness. This is necessary. But to think globally, a community needs to be in control of itself or at least to consider itself its own boss. It needs to become consolidated, strengthened, and to believe that it has a future. Members of the language community need to believe that they share something in common with its other members.

Media creation

The notion that this sharing can and should be made public, the idea that there is a mass that can hold, cultivate and develop such an opinion, dates back to the end of the eighteenth century. But it was only in the twentieth century that people began to talk about the media. Until that time, most communication was oral, with written communication limited to learned and administrative uses. Naturally, oral transmission was a form of communication, a way to convey and spread knowledge, experience, tradition and all kinds of cultural manifestations. One of the first successful attempts to divulge ideas, information or anything else through the written word took place in the fifteenth century, in Germany in the time of Martin Luther, when reformers used leaflets to spread the word about their principles and demands through-

Newspapers, television and the radio represent more than just periodic interpretations of reality, they actually construct reality, a unified reality

out Europe. This has been called a case of communication to the masses. The first mass media of the modern type emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century. And that was when public opinion came into existence.

The story of radio is different. It is linked to the telegraph, and was invented for the same reason as changeable tyres on cars: from the beginning it was intended to replace it. It is a tool for transmitting messages. That has been,





in origin, the reason for inventing all kinds of media of communication.

Radio had a lot of advantages over the telegraph. It could reach many more places. For example, it can be used on the open sea and in sparsely populated areas. But it did not meet with immediate acceptance for that very reason: anybody can hear the messages if they have a receiver. But once it got into people's homes, first in the United States, then in England and the Netherlands, it became clear what an outstanding means of communication it was. Today it remains one of the chief communicative media. Within ten years or less it will probably remain equally important but the form of transmission will have changed from the conventional kind of transmission to radio stations on the Internet.

When the technical ability to communicate by radio had progressed greatly, the day of television arrived. There were already TV transmissions in the US by the 1940s, but they were mostly used to send war dispatches and make public announcements. The real explosion occurred in the fifties, when it was realised that television might become the most influential medium of all. The following decades merely showed that the forecasts had fallen short of the truth: television came into everybody's homes, as the Internet would one day, and in doing so it changed society.

So what of the Internet? In a book published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1991 called *Technology 2001; The Future of Computing and Communications*, written by a large team of computer experts, not a trace

is found of the terms Internet or World Wide Web. Cyberspace is not mentioned anywhere either. Ten years later, a renowned American university professor would write: "When the history of media in the twentieth century is written, the Internet will be considered the most important advance." Things really started rolling in about 1993, when a network previously used only for communication between universities was opened up to the wide world. It transformed the way we communicate and

brought about the greatest revolution since the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century. And the reason is this: until that time, communication was in the hands of powerful people alone; now it would be in everybody's hands.

This is an important fact to retain in our mind, since if the future of small languages lies in the media, it is necessary to think about the effective media to use, such as the Internet.

Wtrikw.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BASQUE PRESS

The first book in Basque was published in the sixteenth century. That was quite early considering that the very first printing press started working a century earlier in Germany. Surprisingly, we might say that practically all the books initially published in Basque were used like the media. There is little poetry. Enigmatically the first book ever published in Basque, Bernat Etxepare's *Linguae Vasconum Primitiae*, is indeed for the most part a book of verse, but in general poetry is rare. There are few historical books, hardly any academic works, even fewer about public administration. No scientific treatises or epic sagas. Most of the books published in Basque in early centuries were written by churchmen in order to spread their doctrines; nearly everything published before the nineteenth century had to

do with religion. These were church publications, and tools for communicating and spreading the beliefs that the church defended.

The first text that may be considered journalism dates from 1766. It appeared in the *Journal Maritime* of Bayonne, and was titled *Jaun Dauphin cenaren eritassouneco circunstancia berecien errelacionea, haren Coffessorak arguit-arar emana* [An account of the special circumstances surrounding the illness of the late Lord Dauphin, by his Confessor]. It looks like a translation from French, but we lack an original. There is a single copy of the Basque version extant at the Koldo Mitxelena Cultural Centre in Donostia. Such "accounts" were a pre-journalistic genre which would inform of an event but took



the form of leisure reading. It was not an official administrative document, but rather somebody's attempt to tell about something, an effort to transmit information to a community. The author states as much at the beginning: "Ene desseinua ez da, agueri den beçala, Jaun Dauphinaren historiao iscribatcea (...). Contentatuco naiz explicatceaz, manera simple eta lano batean, haren azquen circunstancia bereciac (...)". [It is obviously not my intention to write the Lord Dauphin's story. I shall be content to explain in a simple, unassuming manner his last, special circumstances.]

But in fact, the Basque press was a late starter, compared to its nearest neighbours. There were already periodicals in France and Spain in the seventeenth century, and *accounts* had been around

since much earlier. The first Basque texts that we can define as true journalism appeared in the mid-nineteenth century in the periodical *El Correo del Norte*, published in Donostia. The local liberals wanted to publish a periodical entirely in Basque, but the Spanish Ministry withheld permission and they ended up publishing one that was mostly in Spanish. But at least there existed an intention; it was the first deliberate initiative of its kind.

The first all-Basque periodical was in fact published shortly afterwards in Bayonne by the Zuberoan politician, writer and activist Agosti Xaho. He was known in the Bayonne press for his fiery writing. Xaho was a hard-line republican, a lover of the Basque language, a fierce critic of the power of priests and the monarchy; when Paris decided to declare a republic, he stood at the forefront of the people, pouring out ardent declarations and proclamations. Xaho was one of the first to take to the streets behind the banner of revolution. And realising that the press could be an effective means of making himself heard, he became the first Basque journalist.

Bayonne was a good place for that because it was an important publishing centre. There was a printing press at number 40, Victor Hugo Street, right in the middle of the old town, and there, at *Chez Lespes, Lithographe, Editeur des Chants Basques*, Xaho published his magazine, called *Ariel*. He also

published the first Basque newspaper, the *Uscal-Herrico Gaset*a, which unfortunately only lasted for two issues, the first of which came out on the 30th of June, 1848. Its introduction is reminiscent of the way Etxepere set the tone of the first book in Basque, because it also talks about Basque, saying: "Gaset

hounen hasiarekin, ezta txipi izan gure enbrasia, ea zoin herri edo probintzi-atako Uscaraz, Escaraz, Eusqueraz edo Hescuaraz hautu eguin behar gunian izkribatzeko". [Upon founding this gazette we were faced by a difficult decision about the kind of Basque, from which town or region, we should use to write in.]

He worried about what variety of Basque to write in because he was concerned to reach the greatest possible number of readers. The choice he made was to use his own Basque dialect, asking whoever wished to read to make the necessary effort to understand: "What they don't understand, let them learn!" he said. In one article after another he wrote of the republic, the elections and the issues of his day, and then urged Basque language enthusiasts to his cause: "We must be victorious or die,

At the dawn of Basque nationalism the Basque language was seldom accorded more than token value. Other concepts, such as race, were seen as more basic

and I am certain that when the flag of liberty appears on our hilltops, not one of you will delay in coming forward to save the Basque Country."

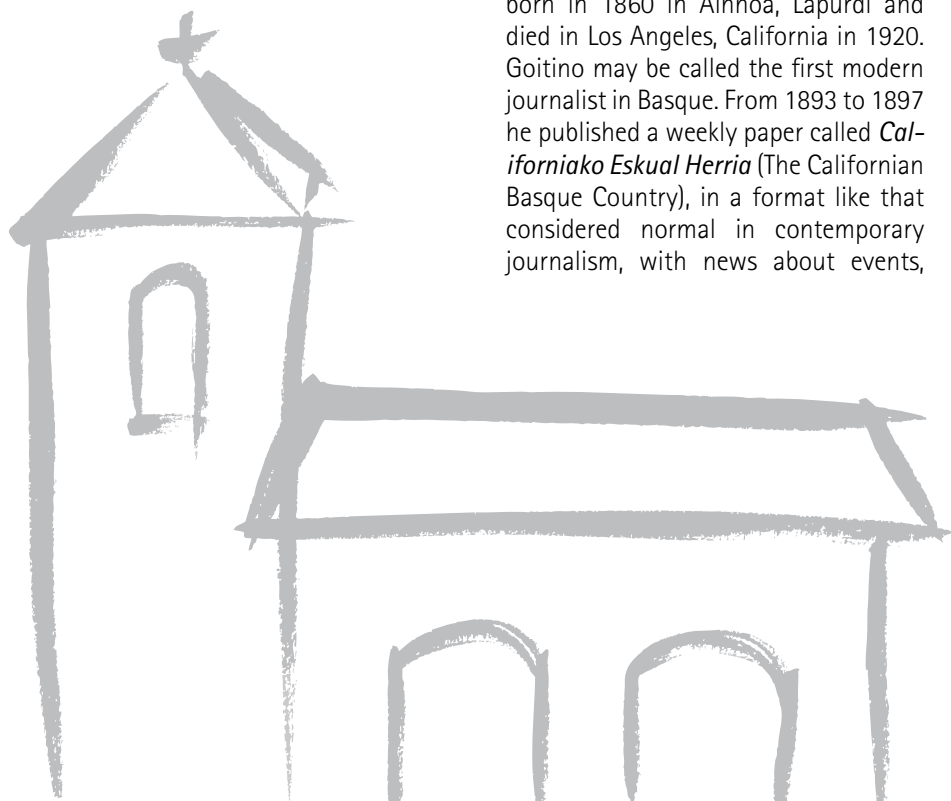
Eskualduna and *Goitino*

Only two issues of *Uscal-Herrico Gaset*a ever appeared, but they seem to have started something off: in 1848 a priest called Etxeberri began publication of *Eskualdun Laborarien Adiskidea* [Friend of the Basque Farmer], and this was followed by several other weekly publications, all in the northern Basque Country. The most important of these was *Eskualduna*, which continued publication until 1944, when it was banned for having supported the Nazi occupation of the northern Basque Country during World War II. *Eskualduna* was the paper of northern Basque conservatives, whose heart and soul, Jean Hiriart Urruti, may be considered the godfather of Basque journalism. Between 1891 and 1915 he exercised as both writer and editor of the paper. His two main achievements were to address the day-to-day concerns of farmers and to cultivate argumentative journalism, particularly in the areas of politics and religion.

The periodical was organised in a way adapted to the editor's own interests. Initially it focused on the concerns of farmers and agricultural workers but as time went by the profile of its readership broadened out. It started life as a fortnightly publication and later became a weekly. It was bilingual, but pro-Basque from the start and gradually growing more so, with the proportion of Basque on its pages increasing progressively, thanks in large part to the efforts of the editor, Hiriart Urruti, and the good command of Basque possessed by his many priest correspondents. The policy followed by

Eskualduna linked religion to language; it was highly ideological; it contained few feature articles and not many graphics. However, its linguistic contribution was enormous: it developed a Basque journalistic style in a literary koine based on the Navarrese and Lapurdi dialects, in a way an early precursor of unified Basque.

Although *Eskualduna* must be given the place of honour in the history of Basque journalism, the first reporter to begin publishing entirely in Basque was Jean Pierre Goitino. He was the first businessman to take a serious economic interest in Basque journalism while free of a specific ideological agenda. He was born in 1860 in Ainhoa, Lapurdi and died in Los Angeles, California in 1920. Goitino may be called the first modern journalist in Basque. From 1893 to 1897 he published a weekly paper called *Californiako Eskual Herria* (The Californian Basque Country), in a format like that considered normal in contemporary journalism, with news about events,



accidents, practical information about communications networks, details of marriages and funerals, court cases, weather-related news, the comings and goings of rich Americans, news about Basques and reports from the Basque Country, verses and songs, writings by Americans, book reviews and so on. The paper held up a mirror to contemporary Basque society, if not in general then certainly for Californian Basques. This was a far cry from other contemporary efforts that pursued religious or political goals. Goitino himself defined the programme of his life's work as follows: "All other nations have their newspapers, and so many of us being spread out all around the Pacific coast it is only right that we should all be joined together by means of a newspaper. Our interest, at least here, is in equality, and we shall be able to receive news about each other in our beautiful language without leaving our homes."

Founded with the help of a group of businessmen, by the first anniversary of its publication Goitino announced that the paper had 3,500 subscribers. The paper had correspondents in San Francisco, Tehachapi, Los Angeles, Mexico and Montevideo. He published two pages, and it cost three dollars a year.

In conclusion, it was chiefly priests from the northern Basque Country and emigrants from the northern Basque Country who developed Basque journalism in the nineteenth century. In the

twentieth, for political and economic reasons, the spotlight moved south. And strangely enough the same thing happened in literature.

Azkue and Kirikiño

In this, as in so many other things in Basque culture, the path blazer was Resurreccion Maria Azkue, the first head of the Basque Language Academy (Euskaltzaindia), who as well as a grammarian, lexicographer,



Resurreccion Maria Azkue

song collector and founder of the first Basque-medium school, found some time to do journalism. In 1897 he began to publish the completely Basque-language weekly *Euskalzale*, which lasted for approximately three years. Until its closure in 1899 it carried news of all kinds, especially culture-related items, and published many literary texts. For example, *Gabonetako ikuskizuna* was a pioneer work in Basque drama. It was not smooth riding: the authorities frequently placed obstacles in the way of publication, demanding that he should print something in Spanish. Azkue steadfastly refused to do comply and in the end the paper was closed. Straight away he began thinking about starting a new paper with another editor, and recruited Evaristo Bustintza, known by the pen name Kirikiño, to take on that job.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the world of Basque-language journalism grew steadily. Some religious orders brought out their own magazines, such as *Jesus'en Biotzaren Deya*, *Jaungoikozale*, *Irugarrengoen Irakaslea* and others; there were also literary journals such as *Euskal Erria* and *Euskal Esnalea*, and farming papers such as *Baserritarra* or *Bizkai-Aldundijaren Abeluin Baso-Ingurtija*.

Growth of the political press

At the dawn of Basque nationalism, when nationalists identified themselves with Sabino Arana's Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), the Basque language was seldom accorded more than token value. Other concepts, such as race, were seen as more basic to a definition of Basqueness, and that was reflected in the printed media they created. Basque was only employed for things related to the rural world or folklore. This was the case in such periodicals as *Bizkaitarra* (1894-1895) or *Baserritarra* (1897), and also in other nationalist papers which came into being existed after Arana's death, such as *JEL* (1907-1908), *Bizkaitarra* (1903-1913), *Gipuzkoarra* (1908-1913) *Arabarra* (which began in 1912 and only appeared irregu-





larly) and *Napartarra* (1911-1918). All except *Napartarra* disappeared when the nation-wide pro-PNV newspaper, *Euzkadi*, was brought out. Basque was given a place in it, in a section called *Egunekoa*. The editor was Kirikiño (Evaristo Bustintza), who had been Azkue's closest collaborator from 1899 to 1910. Kirikiño had also published in the journals *Euskalzale* and *Ibaizabal*, taught as a professor of Basque in Bilbao, and helped Azkue as a colleague and informant in his dictionary-making work.

Although his passion for Basque was nurtured at Azkue's side, the styles of Basque used in *Euskaltzale* and in *Ibaizabal*, respectively, differed significantly. *Ibaizabal*, gravitated to an earlier linguistic standard than *Euskaltzale*, and kept the old way of spelling Basque: for example, it used *ch* rather than the modern spelling *tx* and employed *c* where one would later write *z*; there were similar dif-

ferences in syntax and lexicon. All this was contrary to what Azkue wanted, and sets the two journalists apart. Azkue perceived the importance of the press for the first steps towards establishing some kind of standard Basque, whereas Kirikiño aligned with the Sabino Arana school of thought about the language. When Bustintza took over as editor of the *Euzkelatala* (Basque language section) of *Euzkadi*, he did so with a single major goal: to move unhurriedly towards the gradual spread of the spelling system that was being developed. That was the PNV approach, which in Bizkaia endured for a very long time. Kirikiño's Basque was purist but well-written and his journalism was good enough to allow him to make a living from it. One of his achievements was the creation of an information network between towns for the paper.

Two other important periodicals of the period were founded by Estepan Urkiaga, better known as *Lauaxeta*. In the thirties, the nationalists published a Basque-language periodical called *Euzko*, from which originated, in the Civil War period, the first ever newspaper in Basque, *Eguna*.

The entire Basque-language press was not founded by the PNV or the nationalists; other political parties also had bilingual papers. Or maybe "bilingual" is the wrong word: let us just say that they admitted some Basque in them.

New spaces for Basque: *Argia*

But rather than going into how each party understood and used Basque, the important and interesting question is how, as a result of the efforts of Azkue and some others, and while institutions such as Eusko Ikaskuntza and the language academy Euskaltzaindia were coming into being, the Basque press kept up its forward march. The purpose was clear: to create new spaces for the Basque language and provide Basque speakers with channels of information. The twenties and thirties saw the

At a time when money and opportunities flooded to the Spanish-language press and when irresistible offers were made to many journalists, the press in Basque, or some of its journalists at least, made a choice regarding their language that was to have great consequences

appearance of important all-Basque periodicals, the production of radio programmes, and for the first time journalists started discussing the need for a daily newspaper.

One of the most important papers in the history of this period and of the Basque press is the Donostia-based weekly *Argia*, founded in 1921 by a number of Basque language enthusiasts with the support of *Zeruko Argia*, which had started two years earlier. The latter was produced by the Capuchin monks, as a religious monthly magazine, in a small format and entirely in Basque. *Argia*, on the contrary, was a general-interest weekly magazine, again entirely in Basque. With the onset of war in 1936, both of these fell silent. When an attempt was made in the fifties to revive *Zeruko Argia*, only a few issues came out owing to its prohibition by the Franco regime. Finally, in 1963 *Zeruko Argia* was set going again in representation of both of its predecessors. In the new period the Capuchins held owner-



ship but the publication's appearance and the frequency of issues followed the *Argia's* original design.

The group who gathered together on this project included well-known names in Basque culture who carried weight. The magazine became the ideal place for the publication of chronicles and feature articles by the finest of the period's journalists. On the 1st of November, 1970, *Argia* announced the creation of what amounted to its own publishing company, the objectives were thus stated: "This is for Basques of different persuasions: religious or not, Left and Right, progressive and conservative, from the country and the towns, the educated and the unschooled, old and young, on this or the other side of the border. In some things, we are all as one, for we are all Basques: Basques who have been oppressed, treated with contempt, hurt, attacked and exiled. We would like to grasp firmly all that unites us. To make the fire that holds us together grow. *Zeruko Argia* aspires to be open, unattached to a single group, and a wake-up call to those who are still asleep. It is wide open to all who hold Basque points of view and practise Basque action. All of us, writers and readers alike, will together make *Zeruko Argia* alive, up-to-date and open; a waker up; and Basque."

When, at the end of the seventies, the group was drained by the creation of the daily newspapers *Egin* and *Deia*: journalists, advertisers and other

sources of money flocked over to the new newspapers. It looked as though the bilingual arrangement, with the real information chiefly in Spanish and some additional bits and pieces in Basque, was going to win out over the all-Basque model in the end. *Zeruko Argia* fell on bad times until a group of youngsters took over and turned it into a cooperative, henceforth calling the magazine *Argia*. They gave the venture a new lease on life. This group, with Joxemi Zumalabe as their leading light, were the first complete generation of Basque language journalists.

We will come to that exciting period later, but for now let us return to the early days of *Argia* in the nineteen-twenties



Lauaxeta



and thirties: the first upswing of Basque culture; the birth of a Basque language and culture movement. This was when the Basque language academy and Eusko Ikaskuntza were founded, the first modern writers wrote, the first Basque-medium (*ikastola*) schools opened, and the Basque press flourished. That was when some people started looking at the possibility of bringing out the first newspaper in Basque. One of them was Jose Maria Agirre or *Lizardi*, who was a poet, journalist, politician and businessman to boot. *Argia* might have become that first Basque-only newspaper: Lizardi studied the possibility but it seems that he did not judge such a venture viable. He did not think it would

work economically and the scheme was abandoned when Aitzol (and eventually the PNV) opted for *El Día*.

The dream of a daily newspaper

In those days, a daily newspaper entirely in Basque was a pipe-dream. Nothing was ready: Basque spelling had not yet been standardised, or Basque-speaking journalists trained; a Basque-reading generation educated; channels of dis-

tribution created. The language academy chose a middle path by creating an office to send Basque texts to Spanish newspapers and ask for the support of the big papers in this enterprise, whose goal was to prepare the way for a daily newspaper and train both reporters and readers. But it all came to nothing.

When war broke out in 1936, suddenly the impossible was possible. From the 1st of January to the 1st of June, 1937, the Basque Nationalist Party, which was the strongest party in Euskadi and held a majority in the first Basque Government, published a newspaper, called *Eguna*. Three young journalists ran the company, which was supported by many contributors. The war situation was tough, Franco's side was attacking everywhere and invading, and most of the paper's content was political and war-related. In the first issue the newspaper expressed joy at the fulfilment of a dream, saying: "We are overjoyed, verily weeping for joy. We cannot believe it. That which was the wild, impossible dream of Basque enthusiasts and Basque speakers everywhere is suddenly a reality." But the war was lost, and most of the journalists were forced into exile.

From then until the eighties, practically only *Zeruko Argia* kept going, along with *Herria*, which came out in the northern Basque Country, the successor to *Eskualduna* from 1944 onwards. Piarres Lafitte was its editor from 1944 to 1967. In its best period it reached a

circulation of five thousand. This paper broke away from the pre-war type. It was not overtly nationalist; Lafitte believed that otherwise readers would be driven away, and it was top priority to keep the paper alive. In other respects *Herria* was a loyal heir to *Eskualduna*. Until 1990 every issue included texts, in French in obedience to the laws of France, but it is now all in Basque and plays an important role in the flow of local information.

The bilingual press

As the old dictator Francisco Franco passed on, and democracy was at last feeling its way forward, the Basque press was also looking ahead to the future. Important developments were taking place.

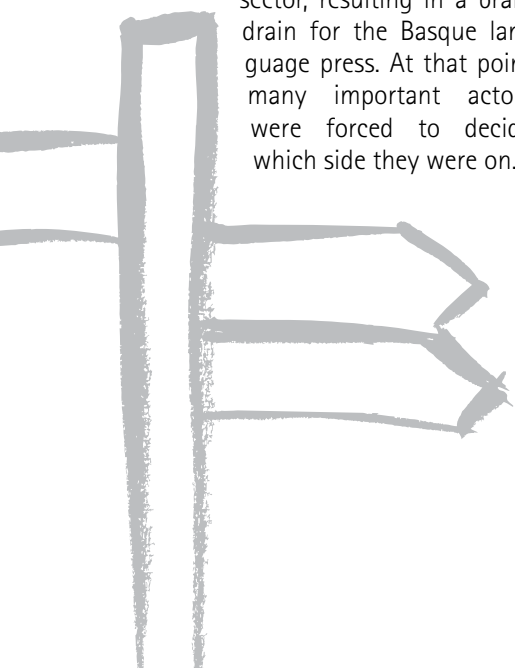
It was an extraordinary time. The Basque Country was filled with immense political, social and cultural ferment; all the movements had great symbolic significance. Censorship had begun to loosen its grip. The government declared freedom of the press. Big initiatives to create new media sprang up all over the place. Most were linked to Basque nationalism. Many believed in the need to opt for a bilingual press, for it was necessary to achieve optimal effective-

ness by reaching the greatest possible number of people, even if in practice this meant that, to maximise circulation, they would have to use Spanish. Thus even for this cause, Spanish had to be used. The new publications denominated themselves Basque magazines or Basque media despite the fact that most of their content was in Spanish.

That development led to further brainstorming about what kind of press was needed: the question of the nature of the Basque press was dragged onto centre stage. The import of the question was not merely demagogical: behind the emerging media stood big business firms and vested interests, including the political parties. Offering terms of employment difficult to turn down, they tempted many writers and journalists over to the bilingual media sector, resulting in a brain drain for the Basque language press. At that point many important actors were forced to decide which side they were on.

The upshot was that a clear line was drawn by those who still believed that the Basque language must have its very own place in the media, who felt that the future of the Basque language was tied up with the media, and who believed that the media would play an important part in Basque language normalisation. Basque press, they said, is press in Basque. Thus when the Basque press was at its weakest, at a time when money and opportunities flooded to the Spanish-language press and when irresistible offers were made to many journalists, the press in Basque, or some of its journalists at least, made a choice regarding their language that was to have great consequences.

That was in 1976, the year that was declared by *Zeruko Argia* to be Basque Journalism Year. The fortnightly magazine *Anaitasuna* and the magazine *Goiz-Argi* likewise ratified their commitment to build a Basque press. *Zeruko Argia* itself implemented a fairly radical facelift: it started printing in colour, began to address topics of current interest (starting with a debate about the highly controversial subject of a nuclear power station being built at Lemoiz, on the Basque coast), and generally paid a lot of attention to the big strategic or ideological issues of the day. This was a critical move because it amounted to a decision to engage in political journalism while demonstrating resolution to place journalism at the service of the wishes and aspirations of the common people. Consider



what was written in its very first editorial in 1976: "The time has come to give new strength to Basque journalism. But journalism can only be made stronger by the journalism that is done. It is time for it to start dealing with broader subjects. This does not mean the traditional ones will be ignored, but it is time to take a good look at the hot topics in society today and throw some light on them. If our people wish to maintain their identity, they will need to tread certain paths, and it is the job of the Basque journalist to give news of those who are doing that. Our country is sure to reach numerous crossroads: it is the job of the journalist to provide illumination to help choose the right way."

To *provide the people with light* so that they can choose the right way!

And also: "We must put Basque in the media. Unless and until we put it in the media and administrative offices everywhere, many people are still going to ask what Basque is necessary for. As long as Spanish is used in all those places, nobody will feel a need for Basque, only a need for Spanish. And this will not be resolved with a weekly TV programme or an occasional page in the newspaper. We must create real Basque journalism. We need a journalism that tells of our views, problems at work, acts and dreams as Basque speakers. A journalism that looks out on the world through a Basque window. A journalism that will bring news of the world to the people of our country."

And that is the second principle: Basque journalism is to be an instrument for providing guidance to the people. And that guidance will be provided in Basque.

Thus at a time when many publications and periodicals were coming out that all seemed to be calling themselves "Basque", the Basque papers decided to draw a line. "We cannot tolerate a single Spanish-language periodical, no matter how 'Basque' it claims to be, if it serves to weaken and impede the growth of Basque journalism," said one editorial of the period, and the following was penned in the same period, in 1976: "Spanish-language newspapers



and weeklies that present a Basque perspective are necessary. But not at the expense of the Basque language. If what we want is to strengthen and spread the use of Basque in the Basque media, then it is the media that are *in Basque* that we must strengthen and spread."

It was not long before the risk was perceived by many: everything was going against the Basque-language media. The Basque-nationalist Spanish-language press was funneling readers away from the Basque press; it was also funnelling off its best writers. The money that the Basque-language press lacked was to be found in the Spanish-language press, and what little the Basque press had was being attracted over by advertising and resources. Everything was conspiring to leave Basque with only the token space of minor news items and folklore-related or language-related articles. The value of the language was being treated as purely symbolic, while the *important* things like politics, economics or sports were all in Spanish.

The worst fears were being fulfilled, and one thing became self-evident: unless Basque-speakers constructed their own Basque-speaking universe, all that could be expected was to get sucked from the bilingual projects into the Spanish-speaking universe. Or as someone at the time put it: It remains to be seen whether the

Basque-language press is capable of making Basque speakers of Spanish-speaking readers; but what is for sure is that the Spanish-language press is capable of making Spanish-speakers out of Basque-speaking readers.

The myth of balanced bilingualism

The debates of that period are very important and merit careful consideration because the years that followed merely served to prove that the myth of balanced bilingualism is a falsehood. The dominant language always wins out, or at the very least always tries to do so. That is why it is dominant. It follows that inevitably the oppressed language needs to seek spaces of dominance. This is not because of a wish to oppress the other language or its speakers, but in order to be able to escape from its own oppression.

In short, the whole debate of the period under consideration showed the following:

- Basque media are media that are in Basque.

- Occasional scraps of Basque [in mainly Spanish publications] are merely a makeshift. What the Basque language community needs is a self-standing and self-referencing Basque-language framework all its own.
- The way Basque is incorporated into the bilingual press is a clear indicator of non-normality, both in terms of its quantity and its content. Perhaps the latter is the most worrying aspect of all: since almost all the information given in Basque concerns Basque issues (in politics, linguistics or culture), it conveys the notion of a Basque language ghetto. Basque is virtually always excluded, in the bilingual press, whenever it comes to subjects of major importance. The main news of the day is always told in Spanish or French.
- The amount of Basque present in the bilingual press does not increase over time, in fact it decreases. In many papers, sometimes under pressure from funding sources, the supplements and so on that were originally published in Basque have gradually tended to disappear.

We have seen that by the end of the seventies the emergence of a Basque-nationalist press in Spanish damaged to the Basque press. *Anaitasuna* closed shop; *Argia* itself, after several months' silence, barely managed to stay afloat. The editors of the veteran

northern Basque paper *Herria* faced a bleak future too. Said its chief editor, Emile Larre: "We need new blood. We absolutely need new blood, or else we are finished. I am 61 years old now. But I don't see any younger people ready to take over from me, I don't see anyone coming up. The Basque Country will have to start increasing its awareness of this."

Aizu, *Elhuyar*, *Anaitasuna*, *Argia*, *Euskera*, *Goiz-Argi*, *Herria*, *Ikastola*, *Ipurbeltz*, *Jakin*, *Jaunaren Deia*, *Karmel*, *Kili-Kili*, *Oh Euzkadi*, *Olerti*, *Saski-Naski*, *Susa* and *Zer*. Those were the magazines and journals published in Basque at the beginning of the eighties. But of these only *Argia* in



the southern Basque Country and *Herria* in the north were general interest publications. In the case of *Argia*, circulation improved on account of a new generation of journalists and it became a central focus for writers and journalists who wrote in Basque. But at the end of the eighties there came a still harder challenge: the challenge to create a Basque language daily newspaper.

The creation of *Egunkaria*

It was indeed a dream. Was a generation of journalists ready to undertake such a challenge? Would there be enough readers? Some held that the only way to answer these questions was to try it. A number of journalists, writers, Basque language enthusiasts and intellectuals joined forces in 1989



to found the Egunkaria Sortzen [Creating A Newspaper] group, which spent a year travelling all over the Basque Country telling of the need for a national Basque-language newspaper. Many concerns were voiced at the meetings: "the time for that has not come yet", "it's too soon", "the Basque language is not ready for a newspaper", "where are the journalists?", "where are the readers?" Despite it all they decided to go ahead.

Then things started happening fast. In November signatures were collected for a petition called *For a Basque Press*. On the 10th of December at the annual Durango book and disk fair, over fifty figures presented themselves to lay down the Basic Characteristics of a Newspaper, and finally, on the 21st of January, 1990, the Working Group for the Creation of a Newspaper was set up in Donostia, with a Coordinating Committee, an Economic Committee and a Journalism Committee. The working group prepared a Project for a Basque Newspaper which was approved by the organising group at its meeting on the 7th of April. From the 15th of May to the 15th of July, the group went from town to town presenting the project and collecting donations. At a big festival held in June, issue number 0 was presented. The name: what else? *Egunkaria* [The Newspaper].

Regular publication of *Egunkaria* was promised for the autumn, but there was a lot to do before that goal could



be reached: some premises had to be found, a technical and computing infrastructure set up, journalists trained and a start-up campaign carried out. Yet on the 6th of December, *Egunkaria* was out.

From them on the questions that had been left in the air began finding answers. There were journalists, although finding them meant sucking *Argia* dry of human and other resources. There

In a successful strategy for local media, the first step was to form a Basque language association; then the association could set up a magazine. In fact, most of the local media in the Basque Country were born out of the needs of the Basque language movement



Arrasate
Euskaldun
Dezagun

were readers: two years after it began, an independent agency calculated the number of buyers of the paper at 11,212. So it had not been too early after all: there *was* a demand. The first years were very hard. The Basque Government refused to give it subsidies, not only holding back on funds but also on government advertising.

The Basque government had hinted that it might create a newspaper of its own; in the end nothing came of that. It forced the project to forge ahead in the most difficult conditions. Such an ambitious initiative, involving a central editorial office, regional offices in each main town, transport to get the paper out on sale every morning, and an effective subscription system: all this and more could hardly be got off the ground without any assistance from public funding.

Eventually, in 1994, *Egunkaria* and the Basque government at last reached an agreement giving the paper a chance to apply for public money and also including it in the government advertisement network. The justification was that *Egunkaria*, as the only Basque-language daily paper, provided a public

service, underlying which was the right of Basque speakers to receive information in their language. In the present case, this public service was provided by a private entity, owned by thousands of shareholders and driven by the three founding principles of independence, professionalism and diversity.

The success of the local media

The creation of *Egunkaria* was one major development in the Basque press in the nineties; another was the spectacular rise of local media. This was a new, innovative option full of vitality: an information source located in the local community and targeting that same community. The pioneer was *Arrasate Press*, the first local magazine published entirely in Basque. It was to serve as a model for many similar projects around the country.

Arrasate Press first came out on the 2nd of December, 1988. A group of friends had had the idea of bringing out a weekly local magazine in Basque, and the venture met with immediate success. This was facilitated by the technological advantages of the eighties, which made it much easier to publish than before. Self-publishing resources had advanced greatly and their cost

had plummeted. And what favoured them even more was the new, flourishing movement of local Basque language associations. Their impact was so great that we must pause to look at how these associations started, because local Basque-language media came into being through bottom-up organisation.

The Arrasate Euskaldun Dezagun ("Let us make Arrasate Basque-speaking") association started in the industrial heartland of Gipuzkoa province, the High Deba district, in the mid-eighties. Its initial goal was the normalisation of Basque in the town and district of Arrasate. Its member wanted it to be as easy and convenient to live in Basque as it was to do so in Spanish. First of all, the group set in motion a language awareness campaign. Its main resource was the energy and determination of its own members, but it did obtain further support because some members of the town council were in favour of promoting Basque; moreover, these were people with the necessary training, coming from the first promotion of university students who had carried out all their studies in Basque. There was even a department of Journalism at the University of the Basque Country where they could study what most interested them: local media. There could now be local journalists doing local journalism.

That was how *Arrasate Press* was born. The ground was ready for sowing, but as always there must also be a seed: in this case, the seed was the dream that

motivated the group. And it was a daring dream, for as we have already seen from the dire situation of *Argia* and *Herria* at the time, it was not clear sailing for the Basque-language press, and there could be no guarantee of success.

Although economics was the first obstacle to be surmounted, it was not the only one. At the time there was a widespread belief that the readers of Basque publications were people with rather high-brow interests, so Basque periodicals must have a minority readership. The founders of *Arrasate Press* realised that there was a lack of magazines in Basque targeting ordinary people, and that there was a demand for something that would inform on day-to-day top-

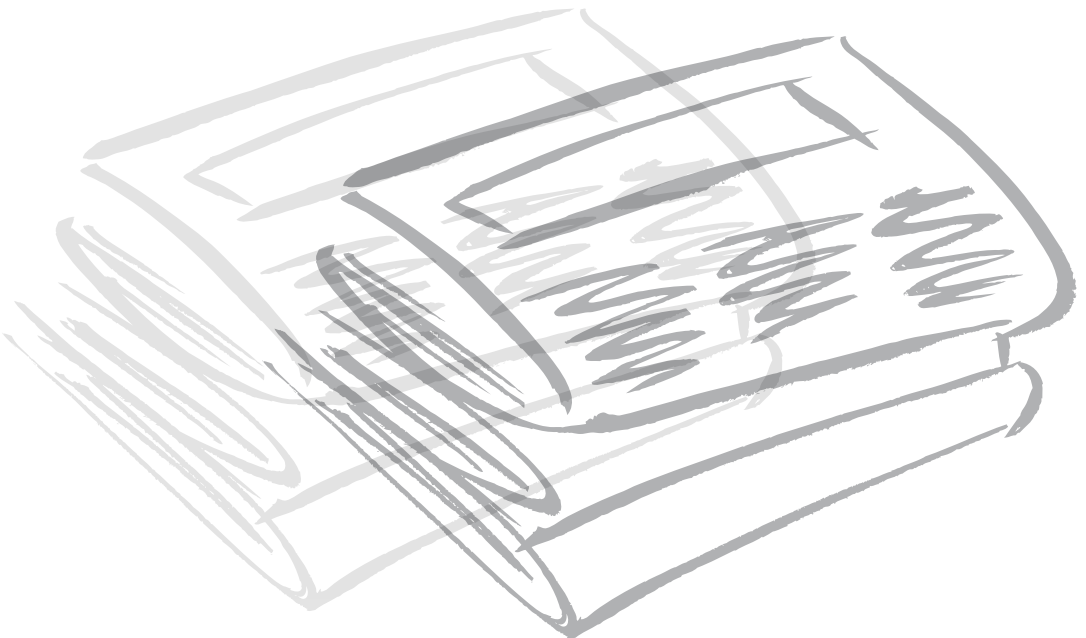


ics. Their primary purpose was to promote Basque and they believed that a magazine might be an appropriate way of going about this. But they also saw this as meaning that there was a need to break away from the traditional type of Basque press, to discuss subjects not usually found there and write in a style that would be more readable.

In search of a formula to solve the funding problem, they looked with interest at the *Ribera Navarra* magazine published in Tuterá, in southern Navarre, whose model they adopted.

The main source of income was to come from local advertisers, through modest, affordable ads by local shops and businesses. The magazine was made viable through a multitude of small payments for adverts, and so could be distributed free and come into thousands of local homes, an attractive proposition for local advertisers.

But in addition to their creative advertising policy, they also sought, and obtained, funding from the Basque government and the Arrasate town council. Thanks to the income from advertising



and from these public institutions, *Arrasate Press* was able to expand the group by hiring professional journalists.

The first issue was distributed free of charge in 1,700 homes in Arrasate; by 1990 it had reached a circulation of 7,000 copies all distributed free in Arrasate and the surrounding area. Arrasate has a population of about 20,000. Copies were also being mailed to neighbouring towns and further abroad, in Spain, Catalonia and further afield. In 1993 the amount of colour used was increased; by 1998, the availability of digital cameras made possible further modernisation.

But the most notable change that occurred was in the way the weekly magazine was run. In 1990 *Arrasate Telebista*, a local TV station, was started, and Arrasate Euskaldun Dezagun created ARKO, the Arrasate Media Company. In 2001 the Basque associations of the High Deba and the Aramaio Valley founded Goiena Communication Services. Today it is a cooperative business which produces four media and provides 52 jobs.



The Basque associations

The Arrasate formula was so successful that a similar projects spread to other areas of the Basque Country. The first step was to form a Basque language association; then the association could set up a magazine. In fact, most of the local media in the Basque Country were born out of the needs of the Basque language movement. They are not typical media organisations or ordinary businesses, they are media created by grassroots organisations. It is worthwhile to look at all this in more detail, because the whole project was underpinned by a great deal of careful thinking.

In the late eighties, it was noticed in many places that although associations and institutions were active in language normalisation in areas such as education, Basque literacy, corpus work, language rights and so on, not much was being done about language *use*. Indeed this was, and continues to be today, one of the greatest obstacles to language normalisation. Analysts interested in normalisation reached the conclusion that it was not enough to carry out campaigns telling speakers to use Basque at all times and in all places if the resources were not in place to allow them to do so. The Basque asso-

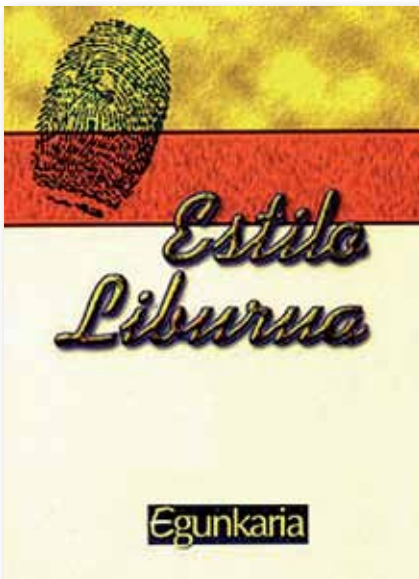
ciations were thus founded in order to promote Basque language use.

The other distinguishing feature of these associations is that they were rooted in a particular town or district. The people who started the movement believed that awareness campaigns would be far more effective if they were carried out on a more local level, both by and for the local people. So these were the features of Basque language associations when they started up: they were created by local people, in the local town or district, for the local town and district, its members were individuals, and those individuals were Basque speakers. So we may define these as associations formed by Basque speakers for Basque speakers, as grassroots movements. The Joxemi Zumalabe

Foundation defines these as follows: "A grassroots movement is any kind of organisation that is formed outside the domain of official policy to respond to particular needs of citizens. Grassroots organisations believe in direct participation and solidarity, without delegating or competing. Thus the grassroots movement today promotes values that represent a basis for an alternative way of organising society. Working in different fields, the grassroots movement seeks solutions to many of the problems faced by society."

But why the media? Why look to the media when seeking ways to promote language use and awareness? Because the members observed that publishing local media was indeed an effective way to promote language use among Basque speakers. To understand how effective it could be, we should bear in mind that the Basque Country has one of the highest indices in Europe as consumers of the press.

Another basic characteristic of these organisational forms aiming to bring about social initiatives was established from the start: there would be no distribution of any profits among its members or shareholders. If there was any money made from an activity, it was to be funnelled back into the same activity or others with a similar goal: to provide resources for a magazine, start new projects for audiovisual media, or invest in other activities to promote language use such as children's pro-





grammes, programmes to help language learners practise their Basque, or cultural programmes.

Taken together, the Basque language associations today have a cumulative total of 20,000 members, 400 staff members, 3,000 volunteer workers and 95 different local associations. Most of them belong to a federation called Topagunea ("Meeting Point"). At a conference in February, 2011 a document was approved called *Euskaldunon elkarteen oinarriparrak* [Basic Principles for Basque-Speaking Associations], which includes a detailed review of the present-day situation and the work of the Basque associations, as well as discussing multilingualism and universalism.

"Where multilingualism is concerned," we read in this document, "the premise is: first Basque, then other languages. Universalism starts in the home. We need to be cautious, for there are plenty of discourses around which claim to support multilingualism or interculturality yet are really a front concealing quite different policies. This is not just a theoretical, but also a strategic issue. We Basques have survived until today, and are now better prepared than we have ever been in our history, yet paradoxically we may also be worse off than we have ever been before if we get into a multilingual dynamic in which Basque is no longer our number one language. A minority language cannot afford the luxury of allowing Basque bilinguals to cede Basque's first place on the list."

Basque in the media

We have seen that the media and press have the power to give a language prestige, vigour, a compact speaker community and a robust standard form: in a word, to contribute to a language's normalisation. And the need for standardisation is most critical in the written language which is where rules are most needed.

EL MEJOR DE LOS MEJORES EN EL MUNDO DE LA ASISTENCIA PSICOLÓGICA EN EL TRANSPORTE UNIVERSITARIO. EN SACO EN ALZOS EN TRANSPORTES CON RED PÁJARO.

Encierros y huelga de hambre en la UPV

José Ramón Etxebarria inicia un ayuno para impedir que se pague a concurso. Enrique López le acompaña y decenas de alumnos se encierran en el Rectorado. La Euzkadi desahoga a los estudiantes.

Jose Ramón Etxebarria, presidente de la UPV, se encuentra en el Rectorado de la Universidad del País Vasco, rodeado por una multitud de estudiantes que se han encerrado allí para protestar por la decisión de pagar a concurso el servicio de transporte universitario. Etxebarria, vestido con una chaqueta de cuero, mira hacia los estudiantes con una expresión seria.



El Rectorado de la UPV, en un momento de la huelga de hambre, rodeado por una multitud de estudiantes que se han encerrado allí para protestar por la decisión de pagar a concurso el servicio de transporte universitario.

Galerna quiere funcionarios por decreto

El Gobierno vasco quiere que los funcionarios públicos se nombren por decreto, según ha anunciado el ministro de Sanidad y Seguridad Social del Gobierno Vasco, Enrique López. López, vestido con un traje oscuro, mira hacia la izquierda con una expresión seria.



El ministro de Sanidad y Seguridad Social del Gobierno Vasco, Enrique López, ha anunciado que los funcionarios públicos se nombren por decreto.

The achievement of the Basque-language daily press in this field is noteworthy. When *Egunkaria* started in 1990, the adoption of modern standard Basque in daily newspapers was still a new phenomenon. The young journalists working on the new project were called on to solve countless problems in all subject areas on a daily basis. Some words and expressions had already been coined and standardised, but what about the countless scientific terms that had not? How should they express in Basque the new concepts being invented in international economics almost daily? What exactly were to be the Basque names for all the sports recognised in the Olympic Games? Or all the terms that refer to modern in-

frustrate? The right solutions often emerge from inside the language or from contact between languages, but everything is much easier when this has already been going on for a long time. In the case of Basque, it had hardly been going on at all.

The Basque press managed a further step forwards with the publication in 1992 of *Egunkaria's* Style Book. The Basque press has played a virtually prescriptive role, in many senses, in the modernisation of the language. Two basic notions underlay the book, which played an important role in regulating spellings and stylistic issues. One was the decision that clarity of expression was the top priority, and the authors took the position that clarity must be sought from within the language's own resources. The other was the decision to be very cautious in the use of loans. Since they had in mind readers all over

El CGV reconoce a la Comisión Representativa de Vizcaya Probable remodelación de la asistencia psiquiátrica provincial

La Comisión Representativa de la asistencia psiquiátrica de Vizcaya ha acordado por unanimidad el reconocimiento oficial de que fue objeto un acuerdo firmado por parte del director del departamento de Sanidad y Seguridad Social del Consejo General Vasco señor Larrazaga. La decisión afecta a la vida de esta entidad, que en sus tres meses de funcionamiento ha tenido que enfrentarse con la más abrumadora carencia de recursos en los medios oficiales.



La asamblea de la Comisión Representativa de asistencia psiquiátrica, celebrada ayer en el Colegio Oficial de Médicos, en su comienzo. Luego se reunirá más tarde.

El señor Larrazaga, ministro de Sanidad y Seguridad Social, ha acordado la creación de un departamento de Sanidad y Seguridad Social en el País Vasco en el futuro. Tal y como dijo el doctor Fernando Larrazaga en la asamblea de ayer: "En el momento de la creación de la Comisión Representativa de Vizcaya se nos reconocieron. Ahora estamos en camino de hacer algo por nuestra iniciativa, sin tener que aceptar financiación sin límite ya existente por las limitaciones que actualmente se encargan del problema".

El proyecto debe ser llevado a término. En este sentido, quedó en claro que una vez recibida oportuna, a fin de analizar los estudios necesarios para el buen funcionamiento adecuado a las necesidades actuales, etc., era necesario. En la asamblea quedó bien patente que la Comisión no está dispuesta a admitir una política de hechos consumados que tratan de ignorar la situación psiquiátrica existente en Vizcaya. En la primera reunión, que en principio ha sido fijada para el día 17 de junio, se creará un comité de trabajo que consista en la planificación asistencial psiquiátrica de Vizcaya en el futuro.

the Basque Country, in their choice of words sometimes they borrowed from Spanish and sometimes from French, but in other cases, rather than use a loan word, they opted to employ a rather more common Basque word, giving it a new technical meaning through semantic extension.

Above all, the authors of the *Egunkaria* style book said that writing had to be clear and accurate, concise, lively and free from redundancy. Others have focused on the need to try to bring written Basque closer to spoken Basque: the written word must *sound* right. As an exercise, all young journalists were encouraged to try reading their own writing back to themselves: if their ear did not approve, then it was not well written.



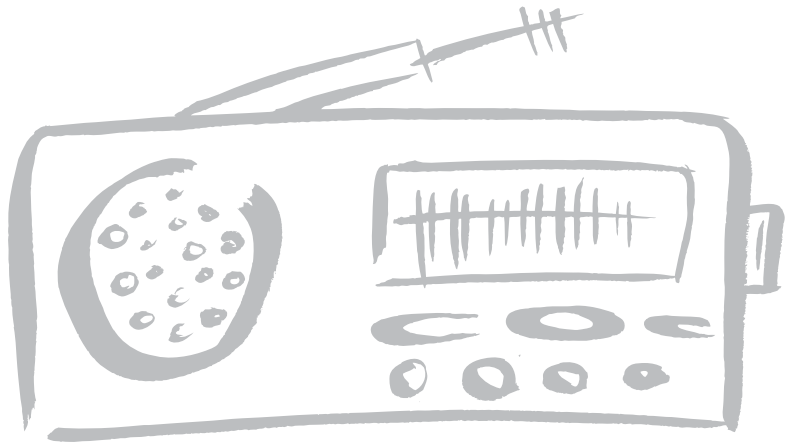


BASQUE AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

Like the print media, Basque radio emerged out of the efforts and aspirations of many individuals. The Basque language was largely absent from the radio in the Basque Country until the eighties. The closest thing to an exception is to be found in broadcasts by *Radio Euzkadi*, sponsored by the Basque Government in exile in the 1950s during the middle years of the Franco regime, but these were mostly in Spanish. Then there was the *Basque Program* (1956) which catered to the Basque shepherding immigrants to the American West for almost forty years with Basque-language broadcasts from Buffalo, Wyoming. During the fifties and sixties, numerous radio stations run by the Church started to include a little Basque in their programming, mostly in programmes related to religion or farm life.

Then in the seventies, almost simultaneously with the new upsurge in Basque-language production in print media, the rising demand for local media was greeted with the commencement of Basque language programmes on *Radio Popular de Bilbao* (later to be renamed *Bizkaia Irratia*), and a "24 hours in Basque" campaign by *Radio Popular de San Sebastián* and *Loiola Irratia* in demand of recognition of the legitimacy of a Basque radio station and the need for Basque media. *Loiola* played a key role for the Basque language.

In the meantime, little by little, the northern Basque radio stations which had been founded in the eighties, *Gure Irratia* (1981), *Irulegiko Irratia* (1982) and *Xiberoko Boza* (1982), became more interesting, stronger and more permanent. All three stations were kept



going by Basque language enthusiasts and lacked a proper business plan or a strong support group that would wholeheartedly get behind the idea of giving the Basque language pride of place. Important progress in the development of Basque schools was taking place in the *ikastola* movement. The effort and hard work of many parents and teachers to develop a Basque-language network in the schools provided a model for emulation by those who wanted to have Basque-language media in the northern Basque Country too. As a journalist of that period said: "The *ikastolas* have shown the way... That is one of the greatest truths of the past decade: Basque should be supported and taught *in* Basque; that seemingly simple notion is the great revolutionary breakthrough."

The enthusiasts took successful advantage of the opportunity. In the eight-

ies the free radio movement spread throughout France, and with the victory of the Socialist Party in 1981, the monopoly of state radio was broken and free radio stations were made legal. New broadcasters started popping up everywhere. Everything seemed free, an open field. On the Lapurdi coast, the most highly populated part of the northern Basque Country, a group of Basque language enthusiasts who supported *Gure Irratia* obtained permission to place an aerial on a hilltop, and in spite of difficulties, interference and the lack of experience, the station began broadcasting on Christmas, 1981, completely in Basque. Around about the same time, *Irulegiko Herri Irratia* and *Xiberoko Boza* also started to broadcast, mainly in Basque.

It should be emphasised that at the time these radio stations got started, the same discussion about the bilingual

press that was underway in the southern Basque Country was taking place among the local Basque movement. They needed a radio station in Basque, otherwise with the existing bilingual model the information would at best remain stereotyped as always, with Basque only used to talk about verse singers, concerts, religious services, farming and sheep, while news relating to the towns and modern life would be in French.

Gure Irratia was immediately well received and represented a big development for the local Basque language movement. Soon after starting, its broadcasting hours were increased and again the response of listeners was very positive. Among its achievements were some of sociological significance: the individuals who got the radio going recall that it had the effect of getting people whom they knew talking in Basque for the first time, and in many areas it managed to achieve reporting scoops.

Irulegi Irratia began broadcasting in 1982 out of the countryside, with fifteen volunteers and one paid employee. It broadcast for an hour a day, and its promoters were clear about what they hoped to achieve: first and foremost, to broadcast in Basque; secondly, to create something that local people would find useful.

The radio became a true hub, putting the inhabitants in touch with each

other in the chiefly rural areas of inland Lapurdi and Low Navarre, faithfully reflecting their present-day concerns and interests. One of its presenters, looking back several years later on the station's contribution, thought it had made a difference towards getting rid of the inferiority complex of Basque speakers: "They had always been taught by their parents' generation that Basque was a useless minority language, but hearing it on the radio every day somehow legitimised it. We tried to show that it is possible to live in Basque and use it to communicate."

The third station in the north was *Xiberoko Boza*, the Voice of Zuberoa, which also served a mountainous rural district and a predominantly farming and sheep-herding population. It began broadcasting in 1982 from premises lent by the Maule town council on the first floor of the castle at Gotaine-Irabarne. *Xiberoko Boza* developed along similar lines to its two sister stations, aiming to stimulate Basque culture, although Zuberoa's situation was more complex than that of Lapurdi and Low Navarre.

The profile of present-day Basque cyberspace is marked by two main features: the fact that Basque is a minority language used diglossically, with under a million speakers; and the material wealth of the Basque community



Zuberoa is the most remote part of the Basque Country, cut off from the remaining areas by linguistic, political, cultural and sociological factors. At first the radio used French about 40% of the time, more than the other stations, but the proportion of Basque eventually increased.

Given that these three stations shared a common project despite local contrasts, in 1997 they joined forces to form the Euskal Irratiak federation, which has had four members since 2001 with the addition of Hendaia's *Antxeta Irratia*.

According to the most recent data the federation provides 31 paid jobs and is supported by hundreds of volunteers. Apart from the good results, what is

most striking about this project is the way it was built up out of nothing, and the pride of place accorded to the media in language recovery.

Almost simultaneous with the birth of the three radio stations in the northern Basque Country, but with very different conditions and origins, was that of Euskadi Irratia as part of the Basque government's plans for a public broadcasting service. Getting a general-purpose, government-funded radio service going, broadcasting 24 hours a day and with full coverage of local and foreign news entailed challenges, but thanks to the solidity and stability of a strong, strategic, government-sponsored project, Euskadi Irratia eventually achieved the goal of becoming the most impor-

tant Basque radio station in the country, reaching the largest audience.

Television

Basque was used for the first time on television in broadcasts of the finals in the handball championships of 1965 and 1966 on Spanish Television. The broadcasts were in Spanish and Basque, with the journalist Jose Mari Iriondo as the Basque language presenter. It was a one-off, minor though significant; a mere exception to the general ban on Basque in broadcasting under the

Franco regime. Not long afterwards, in 1971, France's public television channel *France 3* inaugurated a 75-minute Basque-language magazine programme which ran on the first and third Saturday of each month at 6:30 pm. This and Spanish television's regional programme *Telenorte*, which included interviews and some fixed slots in Basque, some with Iriondo, were to remain the only television programmes in Basque for twenty years. This situation continued until the Basque Government created Basque Television (ETB) in the early eighties. Given the minor scale of what had been done until then, for practical purposes the real history of Basque language television began with ETB.





Creation of this brand-new public station was approved in 1982 by the first Basque government set up after the end in 1975 of the Franco dictatorship. It was a momentous event of symbolic significance; for the first time ever, a public institution had demonstrated real determination to promote Basque-language media. The law that was passed to implement it, although plagued with technical and political issues, had written into it a declaration about the importance of the media for fomenting language and culture: "Respecting the concept of essential public service, the present Law configures the social mass media, to which the same refers, as a capital instrument for

information and for political participation by Basque citizens, as well as a fundamental medium of cooperation with our own educational system and for the fomentation and diffusion of Basque culture, bearing in mind the fomentation and development of Euskara, all of this as a basis and foundation for the adequate development of the rights and freedoms of the citizens of this Autonomous Community."

The Basque Minister of Culture at the time, Ramon Labaien, was also clear about the objective of the new public television service: "One of our main priorities was to protect and promote the Basque language, because we were

convinced of the broad principle that there can be no Basque Country without the Basque language. But we also believed that without Basque-language mass media, the language could not survive. So the Basque Government declared in its 1980 programme its intention to create a television station that would support the Basque language."

This development made big waves in the world of Basque culture. A generously funded, publicly controlled broadcasting company meant unprecedented opportunities to develop specific cultural models and new audiovisual content. There was also a sociological impact: from the beginning domestic productions alternated with dubbed foreign programmes. A good many viewers were amazed the first time they saw a black person in an American series speak Basque.

ETB put out its first news broadcast on the 1st of February, 1983, setting off a new polemic: the Spanish television authorities were quick to call to account those in charge of Euskal Telebista because they held the view that the latter's news programmes should limit themselves to covering *local* current events. It was not supposed to compete with Spanish television; it wasn't supposed to be a *proper* television station! There was an outrage. What, a real television station in *Basque*? How preposterous! What a scandal! A rival service that competed with the Spanish-language media, in *Basque*? Unheard of, absurd!

The Spanish authorities assumed their language had the immovable right to monopolise the media.

Basque television stood its ground, however: its news programmes would not be limited to local-interest stories. When the uproar died down, ETB carried on exploring new terrain. In April the first Basque-language film was aired.

Initially the station alternated Basque and Spanish, but in 1986 the government launched a second channel, ETB2, to be all in Spanish, while the original ETB1 became a Basque-only channel. The move was met with widespread criticism from Basque language enthusiasts who feared the new Spanish-language channel would have the effect of limiting the social use of Basque. Nonetheless the new arrangement went ahead and has become established. Today the two channels have distinct programme schedules and their own content, although they share common resources.



In addition to public television stations, in the wake of the success of the local press, local television stations have sprung up all over the Basque Country. Many of these are linked to print media; one project stands out in particular, Hamaika Telebista, which has emerged as a common project backed by several communication groups aiming to promote Basque-language television all over the Basque Country. This channel currently broadcasts from Bilbao and there are plans to start another station in Donostia.

The Internet

Back in 1996 before most people realised that the early version of the Internet then available was about to turn into a rapid, general-use medium of communication, Vicent Gil de Paules, a writer who had published erotic tales

in Basque in several written media, placed one of his stories on the Internet before publishing it in print. In this curious manner, *Goigoñoei maittea-maittea* ushered in the era of Basque language on the Internet. Since then, countless people have set out to put the latest technological advances to work for Basque. Thus, following in the footsteps of paper, sound and visual media before them, the resources of cyberspace were harnessed to advance the cause of Basque language normalisation and promotion. Today, although we are still learning how to make the best use possible of those resources, enormous progress has already been made. It is now possible to find a wealth of Basque-language productions, materials, resources and information on the Internet. As always, there have been some notable leaders in the field.

One such landmark is a blog called *sustatu.com*. The portal began in November, 2001, as an Internet news service, after creating Goiena Komunikazio Zerbitzuak, a trailblazer in local press projects, and an Internet service company called CodeSyntax. This was not the first ever Basque blog, but it was one of the earliest and its influence and example were felt by many; indeed it introduced a lot of people to the Internet as a Basque-language medium, and out of the idea sprang many new initiatives. Today, *Sustatu* is a collective blog whose main articles can be posted by its readers.



But there were some significant advances before *Sustatu*. One was the development of *Xuxen*, an automatic spell-checker for Basque, by Basque-speaking IT specialists in the Computer Science faculty of the University of the Basque Country. This involved many collaborators who took the Basque grammar and lexicon to pieces one word at a time, running through all the possible forms each word can have. It was a milestone because it brought the Basque language into the realm of modern information technology, and demonstrated to the world that Basque was a language that could be adapted to modern technology. Use of the tool, which was found very useful, became very widespread, and has even contributed to the standardisation of the language, by correcting people's spellings.

By 1997, the digital edition of the weekly magazine *Argia* (*Sareko Argia*) and a new portal called *kaixo.com* went on line, and the following year the cultural organisation Eusko Ikaskuntza began publishing its electronic weekly newsletter *Euskonews*.

In spite of the flurry of activity, experts well acquainted with possibilities afforded by new technology worried that opportunities were being lost. The alarm was raised at the First Congress of Journalists in Basque, which took place in 2004, by Josu Landa, a journalist who had worked in the field of Basque journalism since the end of the



seventies: true, he said, Basques have always lagged behind in the development of the media; they had had a late start in comparison with their big neighbours, and had to do the best they could with limited resources. All very well, but in the age of the Internet those arguments no longer hold water. "This time round we had a chance to join the race at roughly the same time as everyone else, so we can't put it down to a chronological delay. As for the lack of resources which is claimed to be a disadvantage of being a minority language, money factors do not play such a big part in creating media of the new kind as they used to. With a few honourable exceptions, I find the meagre attempts of the traditional media to put something on line an utter disappointment. They merely upload whatever they have printed, often in a way that is awkward to access; they store items too lengthy to print, such as reports and declarations, on a website of unlimited size; they pose questions



for discussion; and that is pretty much it.”

Landa was referring to what the conventional media were doing to exploit the Internet, but perhaps he was looking in the wrong place. The real news was not about *switching over* to the Internet, but what was emerging *on* the Internet itself and being created *for* the Internet. Take the blogosphere. Following the appearance of *Sustatu* in 2001, there was a proliferation of blogs. Blogger communities arose such as *Eibar.org*, *Goiena.net* and *Uztarrria.com*, where countless people started their own blogs. But the real explosion came from 2005 onwards, when the first automatic blog platforms appeared, such as *Blogari.net*, *Blogak.com* and *Mundua.com*. Since no special courses or training are needed for anyone to be able to start their own blog, their numbers shot up, with 5,400 blogs created within two years of which some three thousand were really functioning, with entries and replies.

According to analysts, the profile of present-day Basque cyberspace is marked by two main features: the fact that Basque is a minority language used diglossically, with under a million speakers; and the material wealth of the Basque community, with an economic standing slightly above the European average. While the former point is an obstacle to the use of Basque in the new media, the second factor works in its favour. A 2003 study found that Basque ranks in the fortieth position in a listing of languages ordered according to the number of Internet pages in existence, and a more recent survey puts it at number thirty-four! According to Basque government statistics, within the Basque Autonomous Community the proportion of Basque-language pages is on the rise, having increased from 15% in 2004 to 24% in 2008. The statistics show that the number of people who log on in Basque is larger, in proportion to the population, than the percentage who do so in English!

One of the most visited sites is *berria.info*, the electronic portal of the only national Basque-language newspaper. It gets about 13,000 hits per day. The Basque-language version of the broadcasting company's website, *Eitb.com*, gets about 7,000 visits a day, followed by the websites of *Elhuyar*, *Argia* and *Hitza*.



THE BASQUE-LANGUAGE PRESS AND MEDIA TODAY

The Basque media have flourished during the past two decades as they had never done before in all history, and there is now unprecedented diversity both in the press and in audiovisual media; not to mention the Internet where there are general information portals, individual web pages, specialist sites and so on and so forth. Then there are the institutional media, those run by organisations, business projects and local programmes. Some of these have become permanent fixtures and serve as points of reference in their respective fields. Others face difficulties to keep going, and depend on the availability of funding. But there are still gaps. There is no sports paper in Basque, for instance; more daily papers are needed, and more specialist journals and magazines. Many things are missing, but a great deal has been done.

The following list is not exhaustive but gives a fairly complete picture of what there is today:

Print media

Daily papers

- **Berria:** The only national daily newspaper. Founded in 2003, three months after its predecessor *Egunkaria* was forcefully closed down by Spain's Guardia Civil. Published daily except Mondays, with offices in all the major cities of the Basque Country. Has its own print centre and distribution network.

- **Hernaniko Kronika:** published since 2000, daily, carrying local news for the Hernani area. Published by the local Dobera Basque Association.



- **Hitza:** A chain of local daily newspapers, originally set going by the company that published the now-defunct *Egunkaria*, with editions serving several different districts Tolosaldea, Lea-Artibai, Urola Kosta, Goierri, Oarsoaldea and Donostia. Their joint circulation reached 45,000. Today, most have become local news offices for the *Berria* newspaper.

Periodicals

General-interest magazines

- **Argia:** The standard-bearer of the Basque-language press. Published weekly.
- **Herria:** Weekly serving the northern Basque Country.
- **Aldaketa 16:** Weekly publication by the Madrid-based company that produces the Cambio 16 magazine. Began publication in 2003. General news and opinion.



Scientific, medical and technical magazines and journals

- **Elhuyar:** Science and technology magazine. Published monthly since 1974.



- **Aldiri:** Architecture journal. Published every three months.
- **Ekaia:** Science and technology journal of the University of the Basque Country.
- **Lanabesa:** Economic and business review.

Human and social sciences

- **Jakin:** A cultural journal. Started in the fifties. Underwent a complete overhaul in the seventies, finding its niche as a cultural journal.
- **Larrun:** A journal of thinking, published as a monthly supplement with *Argia*.
- **Uztaro:** The Human and Social Sciences journal of the Basque Summer University.
- **Kondaira:** Electronic history journal.
- **Gogoia:** Journal of the University of the Basque Country on language, knowledge, communication and action.
- **Eleria:** Basque legal journal, founded in 1996.
- **Bat:** Sociolinguistics journal.

Literature and culture

- **Hegats and Kalegats:** Literature journal published by the Basque Writers' Association.
- **Maiatz:** Literature magazine of the northern Basque Country.
- **Karmel:** Three-monthly magazine of culture, ecclesiastical subjects and opinion.
- **Bertsolari:** Journal of verse-singing.
- **Entzun:** Music magazine.
- **Nabarra:** Cultural magazine.
- **Gaur 8:** A weekly review of general and cultural subjects, published as a supplement with *Gara* newspaper.
- **Erlea:** A literature journal published by the Basque language academy.

Education, teaching and language

- **Aizu!**: A monthly magazine in easy Basque published by the Basque adult language school network AEK.
- **Administrazioa euskaraz:** Magazine published by the association for the use of Basque in public administration.
- **Euskararen berripapera:** Periodical publication of the Vice-Ministry for Language Policy of the Basque Gov-



ernment which informs of work on Basque language and normalisation.

- **Euskera:** Journal of the academy of the Basque language (Euskaltzaindia).
- **HABE:** Magazine published by HABE, the government institution for the teaching of Basque to adults.
- **Hik hasi:** Magazine for teachers.
- **Litterae Vasconicae:** Journal that publishes research on Basque language and literature.
- **Senez:** Journal about translation.
- **Tantak:** Education journal of the University of the Basque Country.
- **Hizpide:** Journal on Basque language teaching published by HABE.
- **Xabiroi:** Comic book produced by the Basque Federation of Ikastolas.

Leisure, travel and consumer interests

- **Nora:** Magazine about leisure and cultural activities, published as a supplement of the Berria newspaper.



- **Aisia biziz:** Magazine about leisure activities.
- **Zazpi haizetara:** Travel magazine.
- **Eroski:** Magazine for consumers.

Local news and information

- **Aikor** (Txorierrri, Bizkaia)
- **Aiurri** (Beterri, Gipuzkoa)
- **Aldaize** (Idiazabal, Gipuzkoa)
- **Anboto** (Durangaldea, Bizkaia)
- **Artzape** (Getaria, Bizkaia)
- **Baleike** (Zumaia, Gipuzkoa)
- **Barren** (Elgoibar, Gipuzkoa)
- **Begitu** (Arratia, Bizkaia)
- **Berton** (Mahatserri, Bilbao, Bizkaia)
- **Danbolin** (Zestoa, Gipuzkoa)
- **Drogeteniturri** (Ermua-Mallabia, Gipuzkoa-Bizkaia)
- **Eta Kitto!** (Eibar, Gipuzkoa)
- **Galtzaundi** (Tolosa, Gipuzkoa)
- **Gaztezulo** (Donostia/San Sebastian, Gipuzkoa)
- **Geu** (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Araba)
- **Goienkaria** (Debagoiena, Gipuzkoa)
- **Gauixe** (Sakana, Navarre)
- **Kalaputxi** (Mutriku, Gipuzkoa)
- **Karkara** (Aia-Orio, Gipuzkoa)
- **Karrika** (Iruñerria/Pamplona, Navarre)
- **Mailope** (Araitz-Betelu, Larraun and Lekunberri, Navarre)
- **Noaua!** (Usurbil, Gipuzkoa)
- **Otamotz** (Urretxu-Zumarraga, Gipuzkoa)
- **Pil-pilean** (Soraluze, Gipuzkoa)
- **Prest** (Deustu, Bizkaia)
- **Pulunpe** (Ultzama, Anue, Odieta, Atetz, Imotz, Lantz and Basaburua, Navarre)
- **Ttipi-Ttapa** (Bidasoa, Navarre)
- **Txintxarri** (Lasarte-Oria, Gipuzkoa)
- **UK** (Uribe Kosta, Bizkaia)
- **Uztarría** (Azpeitia, Gipuzkoa)
- **Xaguarte** (Zerain, Gipuzkoa)
- **Xuka** (published by the Euskarabidea service in Navarre)

Radio stations

- Euskadi Irratia
- Bilbo Hiria Irratia
- Gure Irratia
- Irulegi Irratia
- Xiberoko Boza
- Antxeta Irratia
- Oñati Irratia
- Arrasate Irratia
- Zirika
- Oiartzun
- Txolarre
- Bizkaia Irratia
- Arrate Irratia
- Euskalerrria Irratia
- Esan Erran Irratia
- Xorroxin
- Beleixe
- Karrape
- Aralar Irratia

Television stations

- EITB
- Hamaika Telebista
- Tokiko Telebistak



ZKUNTZA

HIZKUNTZA



SYNTHESIS: KEY POINTS

Basque has never enjoyed a privileged position. It was not a dominant language, or a language of prestige, or supported by governments and money, or protected by a state of its own, nor a language with a great literature. But in the nineteenth century, and even more so in the twentieth, those who loved Basque came to realise that unless they were to become fully aware of the importance that the language had, it would not survive long. And also that if they lost their language they would not survive as a distinct people. This idea fuelled the movement and gave it the determination to make great efforts to achieve linguistic unity, build a Basque-language education system and create the Basque-language media which took off in the nineteen-sixties.

The Basque press and media formed part of that drive. As in the other sectors, it was the efforts and initiatives of certain individuals that set the

pace, and of language clubs, small associations, groups of friends even. It may seem at times that they were striking out in the dark without a ground plan, yet in a broader perspective we see that they were guided by certain intuitions, which showed them the way forward and made their endeavours ultimately beneficial.

From this experience, let us attempt to extract some general ideas which may be of use to other language communities.

- The press and media are a fundamental component of the language recovery process because they act as an open window: through them we open up our world, and through the window the world reaches us.
- Newspapers, television and radio are more than just a periodic interpretation of reality: they are the construction of reality, a collective

reality. Hence it is important that the language community should have builders taking part in the construction work, so that everyone can help decide what kind of house we want to build.

- The media give speakers of a language a chance to control the public representation of themselves; to share the ideas, viewpoints and issues that concern other members of the same community; and to incorporate the notion of a collective Us in the community. Thus the media are an incomparable place for developing the language in either a positive or negative direction, either consolidating it or degrading it. For language communities wishing to advance towards standardisation, the press and media are indispensable.
- When one attempts to inform about the culture of minority communities through the medium of dominant languages, the result is to increase the subordination and assimilation of those communities. Given that today the future of minority languages will depend on the media, ways must be found to achieve effective media, such as on the Internet.
- The press and media are also fundamental to the regularisation, consolidation and strengthening of a language. A language that must be used to communicate about all kinds of subjects in a wide range of fields is forced constantly to adapt, and

the media provide an incomparable opportunity to develop the language. We might say that the media are a language's teachers, and if it is true that culture is more important than any army for the survival of a modern people, then it is also true that an enduring culture cannot be built on the foundation of a non-durable language. The press and media share in the responsibility for keeping the language alive.

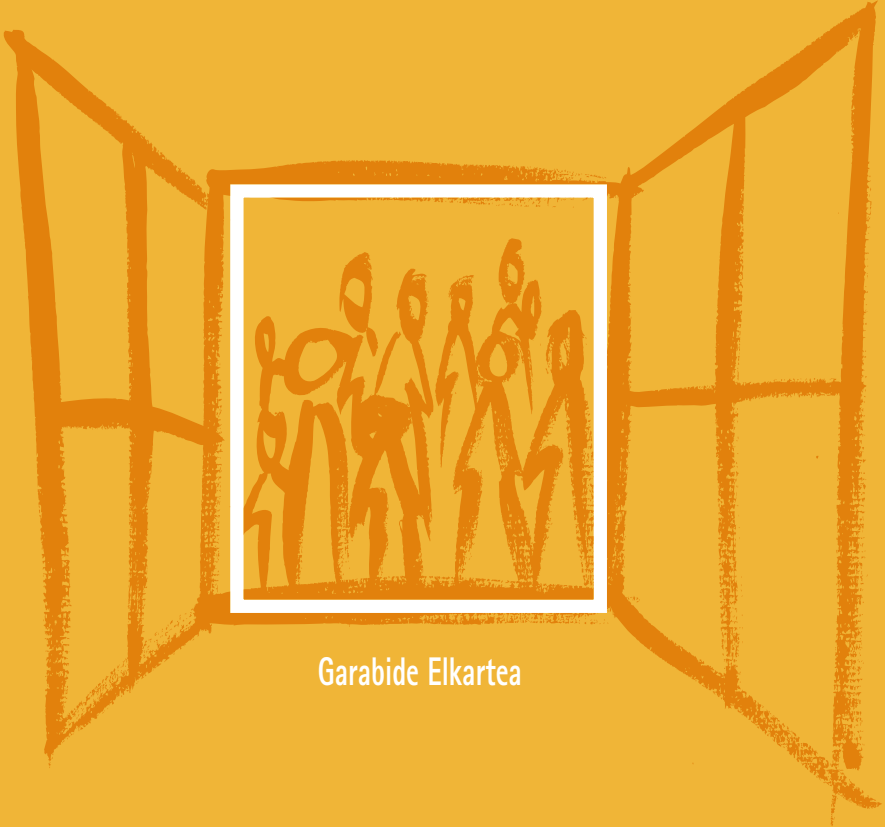
- When Basque began to be used in the media it rarely achieved much more than a token presence which was often subordinated to political interests. Only when the Basque-language media began to come into their own and started to make their own way forward did Basque achieve a status in the media comparable to that of Spanish or French; only then could Basque begin to encroach on the territory hitherto occupied by the dominant languages alone.
- Thirty years ago, the press and media of the Basque Country had to answer the basic question: What are Basque media? They concluded that bilingualism was the wrong way to go, because it always meant that Basque was ultimately kept back as a second-class language. So the decision was made that Basque media are those that are in Basque, and that the Basque language community needed self-defined models whose only language was Basque.

In other words, there was a need for a press, radio and television that looked straight to the heart of the Basque language community.

- Most of the media that were created at that time, whether they were newspapers, magazines or radio stations, came about through grassroots initiatives, with the single exception of EITB (the public Basque radio and television corporation) which the Basque government created. Thus it was demonstrated that sometimes a strong will suffices to bring about media. Various business structures were tried out, one of the greatest challenges being to achieve the right balance between militancy and professionalism.
- The local press has undergone tremendous growth over the past two decades. They are media that have been created by cultural associations supporting Basque language normalisation, hence born of grassroots action. They serve a small region, being produced locally and targeting local readers. One of their premises is: "First Basque, then other languages."
- The Internet offers a great opportunity to languages without a previous written tradition. Let us not miss this train as it passes through our station! Whatever spaces one's own language fails to occupy will be grabbed by English, Spanish or another dominant language!

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